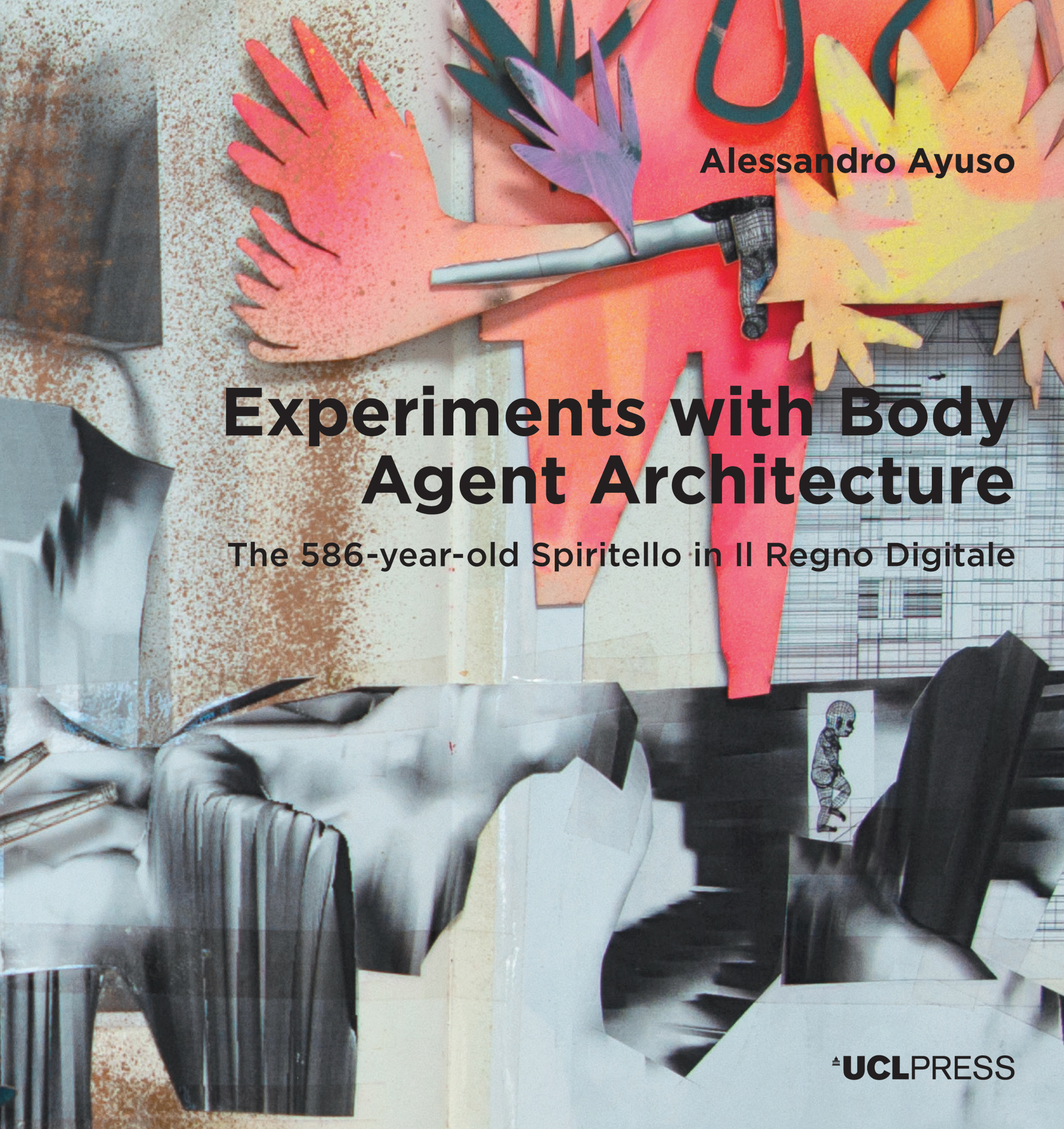

Alessandro Ayuso

Experiments with Body Agent Architecture

The 586-year-old Spiritello in Il Regno Digitale

UCLPRESS

Experiments with Body Agent Architecture

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Experiments with Body Agent Architecture

The 586-year-old *Spiritello* in *Il Regno Digitale*

Alessandro Ayuso

UCLPRESS

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In memory of Marco Frascari (1945–2013) and
Walter Pichler (1933–2012).

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are derived from Le Corbusier's painting Deux Femmes Assises, 1929. The monochrome rendering of the painting shows P_1435's perception of the figures being cast from concrete. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

132 **Figure 9.12** Alessandro Ayuso, A Group Portrait of Le Corbusier and the Cast of Le Poéme de l'Angle Droit, analytical collage incorporating mythological figures from *Le Poéme de l'Angle Droit* by Le Corbusier and a photograph of Le Corbusier, 2011.

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148 **Figure 11.2** Alessandro Ayuso, diagram overlaying the drawings of Walter Pichler's figures discussed in this chapter. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

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152 **Figure 11.5** Walter Pichler, Lagenplan, Eggental (detail). Ink and tempera on paper, 2008. © Estate Walter Pichler.

153 **Figure 11.6** Alessandro Ayuso, diagram overlaying the various figures that Pichler showed as colossal presences in the landscape. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

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172 **Figure 12.2** Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot of design process showing design of an armature for Torso_2.0's left leg, 2013. In the initial sketches, Pichler's Torso's internal truncated structure of branches was extended to make the structure for Torso_2.0's new arms. Instead of fusing them directly with the existing branch structure, in this iteration a support armature with an ornamental branching form connects with the hollow pipes at the base of the figure.

173 **Figure 12.3** Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot of design process, showing Torso_2.0 leaping from plinth in digital reconstruction of Walter Pichler's House for the Torso, 2013.

173 **Figure 12.4** Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, Torso_2.0 movement study v4, 2013. Investigating how to extend further from the body, components were constructed that were linked to Torso_2.0's body. Torso_2.0's animated choreographed movements caused components linked to parts of his body with position constraints to move correspondingly. Evenly incremental snapshots of the components' movements were made over time. In this case, the snapshots accumulated to form billowing arches around the figure, making for a close relationship between the body and spatial artefact.

173 **Figure 12.5** Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, Torso_2.0 movement study v3, 2013. A highly textured, curving wall resulting from Torso_2.0's animated movement and gestures.

174 **Figure 12.6** Alessandro Ayuso, Sketch for Torso_2.0 Niche, 1:2, 2013. The aedicula niches on the facade of the fourteenth-century Florentine building Orsanmichele informed the design. Each offers a concise scenario to investigate the potentiality of the relationship of figure and architectural frame. The design of Torso_2.0 niche functioned as a cipher to determine the traits and performance of Torso_2.0. The exploratory nature of the drawing process brought up further ideas of architecture as an extension of the body, where the gap between figure and frame was bridged by architectural extensions of the body.

175 **Figure 12.7** Alessandro Ayuso, GIF animation still, Torso_2.0 Terms v1, 2013. Animated vignettes that functioned as generative sketches to reinterpret the figure as an architectural element. In the film loops, the figures made mesmerising movements.

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176 **Figure 12.9** Alessandro Ayuso, sketchbook pages with studies for the Body Agent Tempietto, 2013. Photograph by Can Sangunes.

177 **Figure 12.10** Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, showing figures walking through emerging space, 2013. As the Torso_2.0 Terms transformed to become a spatial enclosure, additional animate figures (referred to in the P_1435 journal excerpt as the 'boring people') representing potential visitors to the space were animated walking through and around it. In the software, cameras capturing tracking shots were inserted to follow their paths to show their movement through the structure and were linked to their eyes to show their point of view. The spatial enclosure was tested in various schematic site conditions; in this instance, with a balcony looking down onto it where what P_1435 describes in the narrative as a 'boring figure' looked down on it from above.

177 **Figure 12.11** Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, showing figures walking through emerging space and cameras placed in scene, 2013. In digitally animated vignettes, figures moved through and became embedded in the architectural construction, affecting attractor points and meshes that were attached to their bodies. The aim was for the design to encourage a bodily engaged mode of encountering the structure. In the animation sequence the visitor figure steps further into the interior; looking up, she sees P_1435 looking back down at her, perched at the edge of an oculus, an opening at the top of a large shell in the shape of a truncated cone.

178 **Figure 12.12** Alessandro Ayuso, section collage of Tempietto under a dome, 2014. Digitally augmented photograph of sketchbook. The

design sketch collage on the left shows the imagined movement sequence of a visitor and the first iterations of the dome of the Body Agent Tempietto site. The overall design began to reflect a diagram consisting of four zones: a thick poché of structure and ornamental skin, an entry porch, an interior drum and a cantilevering apse with a stage. The tracking camera that approximated the visitor figure's movement and revealed her viewpoint the most closely became important in considering the sequence of views and experiences in the interior. The rendering on the right shows a cladding detail incorporating the Torso_2.0 figure as ornament. Original photograph by Can Sangunes.

179 **Figure 12.13** Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot showing P_1435 at the lip of the oculus of the central drum in Body Agent Tempietto, 2013. In the animation, P_1435's performance was both operative and evocative. The operative function arose from the deflection of attractor points embedded in the mesh planes. Because of these, when the body agents moved, the meshes would distort correspondingly. These planes gradually transformed to define a spatial volume. The evocative aspects of P_1435's actions stemmed from the cinematic quality of the animations, which incorporated his point of view and his dynamic image. The visualisations were intensified by the simultaneous composition of P_1435's narrative. His biography compiles a vivid set of practices forming an intensely hybrid habitus. It situates the imagination of his contact with the neutral, malleable planes from the reference point of a specific corporeality.

180 **Figure 12.14** Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model, 2014. SLS printed nylon and card, scale 1:10. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

181 **Figure 12.15** Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model, detail, 2014. SLS printed nylon and card, scale 1:10. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

183 **Figure 12.16** Alessandro Ayuso, sectional perspective of Body Agent Tempietto in situ, 2014. Digital rendering. The Body Agent Tempietto site. Enshrouding the Body Agent Tempietto is a concentric extension of the Body Agent Tempietto at its centre. An exoskeleton consisting of scaffolding and balconies and a dome, it was designed to choreograph views and movement into and around the Tempietto by the body agents and visitors, and to form an armature to enable the extension of further structures.

184 **Figure 12.17** Alessandro Ayuso, view from the threshold of the Body Agent Tempietto in its site at midnight, 2014. Digital rendering. The Body Agent

Tempietto is meant not as a manifesto, but rather as an exploration of embodiment. The body is engaged on a sensorial level from changing spatial scenarios, textures that evoke skin and fabric, structural narrative that shows bones and carapace, front and back, and so on but also the figure as ornament, coming face to face with figural ornament and other visitors.

185 **Figure 12.18** Alessandro Ayuso, view of Body Agent Tempietto from a dome window on March 1PM, 2014.

185 **Figure 12.19** Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model in open container with etched mappings of site, 2014. With thanks to Harpreet Lota. Photograph by Ksenia Zizina.

188 **Figure 13.1** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH positioned in site 1, 2016. Timber, acrylic, spray paint, 1,500 mm × 300 mm × 3,150 mm. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

192 **Figure 13.2** Lauriane Hewes, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Portrait of the Millennial Family, 2020. Digitally altered pastel drawing.

193 **Figure 13.3** Shaden Meer, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Scientist's View of Oncomouse, 2019. Acrylic on paper, 420 mm × 297 mm.

194 **Figure 13.4** Megan Woods, 4th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Frame from '1926' Graphic Novel, 2020. Digitally augmented pen-and-ink drawing.

195 **Figure 13.5** Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Triptych of the Handler's Studio, 2020. Digital rendering. Narrative imagery shows prosthetic devices designed in the Handler's studio and the Subject being exposed to allergens.

196 **Figure 13.6** Alessandro Ayuso, Laura Kershaw, Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz et al. Screenshot of working process for plusFARM Exquisite Corpse project, 2020.

196 **Figure 13.7** Alessandro Ayuso, Laura Kershaw, Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz et al., screenshot of working process for plusFARM Exquisite Corpse project, 2020.

198 **Figure 13.8** Alessandro Ayuso, In the Sky, 2015. Mixed media, 760 mm × 560 mm.

199 **Figure 13.9** Alessandro Ayuso, Ghost Organism 2 (detail), 2018. Pencil, ink, acrylic on paper, 760 mm × 560 mm. Photograph by Can Sengunes.

200 **Figure 13.10** Alessandro Ayuso, LEAP scale figure models, 2018.

Card, marker pencil, ink, scale 1:25. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

201 **Figure 13.11** Alessandro Ayuso, FI_a_3. CNC cut plywood, timber, acrylic, spray paint, 3D printed ABS, 1,850 mm × 350 mm × 2,300 mm, 2018. Photograph by Can Sangunes.

202 **Figure 13.12** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH fabrication process, 2016. Components in the midst of being transported. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

202 **Figure 13.13** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH fabrication process, 2016. Components in the midst of being transported. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

203 **Figure 13.14** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH situated in site 1, detail, 2016. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

203 **Figure 13.15** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH situated in site 1, 2016. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

204 **Figure 13.16** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH wandering Fish Island, vignette 1, 2018. Composition of draft film clip stills, camera tracked animation of digitally rigged model (background image of animation of digitally rigged model).

205 **Figure 13.17** Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH Portrait 1, 2018. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 1,010 mm × 1,010 mm. Photograph by Can Sangunes.

206 **Figure 13.18** Alessandro Ayuso, FI_a_3 Portrait, 2019. Oil on canvas, 1,010 mm × 1,010 mm. Photograph by Can Sangunes.

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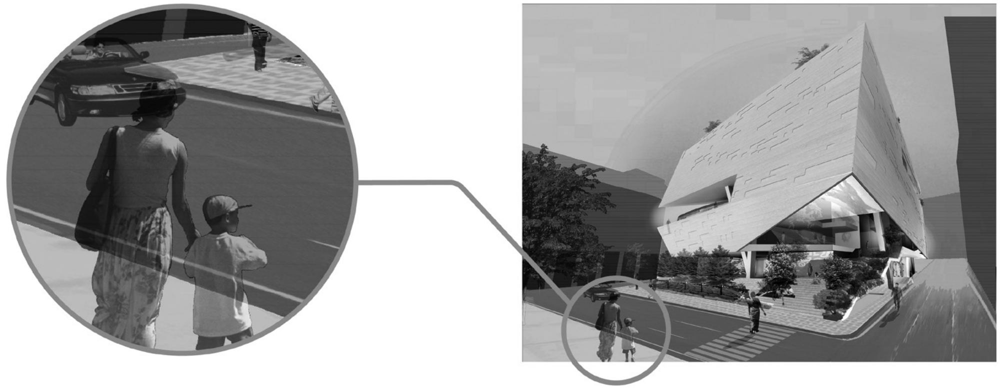
Prologue: Who is P_1435?

A preliminary note by Alessandro Ayuso explaining the nature of the following narrative and the initial research question which gave rise to the work in this book.

The following chapter was written as part of the creation of a ‘body agent’. It is a journal entry from the viewpoint of a *putto*, an ornamental figure who is ‘resurrected’ throughout history to participate in architectural projects. *Putti*, or *spiritelli*, are an ancient Roman figural type, consisting of male toddlers, usually nude, sometimes depicted with wings. Their imagery was revived during the *quattrocento* in Italy. The occasion for the appearance of *putti* varied in Roman times. Innocent and mischievous, they could be found not only as ornament on funerary monuments mourning the death of a child, but also in illustrations of Bacchanalia. In his book *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, Charles Dempsey notes Willhelm Bode’s description of Renaissance sculptor Donatello’s *putti*: ‘Summoned into existence by the artist, the putto gives him a hand, helping him and ornamenting his work everywhere’.[1]

The fictional account of this particular *spiritello*, P_1435, which is excerpted throughout this book, was conceived of in the spirit of *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf. Like Orlando, P_1435 is a protagonist who has been reincarnated. He has experienced multiple vantage points throughout time, space and cultural situations, changing form and identity slightly with each new situation. In this narrative, the reincarnation of P_1435 takes place due to the actions of artists and architects, who evoke him through designs that involve his image. One of the parameters of P_1435’s literary scenario is that once he has a role assigned by a particular designer, he exists as a muse, a sketched figure and sometimes even as a physical aspect of built architecture. In effect, he is a representation with a point of view.

In this case, P_1435 was ‘summoned’ by me at the beginning of a PhD by Design beginning in 2010 where I explored the representation of the body in architecture. P_1435’s references to Wates House pertain to the building which housed the Bartlett School of Architecture until a more recent renovation, after which it came to be known as 22 Gordon Street. The PhD topic arose from my frustration with digital media when I was working as an architectural designer. As an undergraduate architecture student, I had made drawings where buildings and the figures



P.1

P.1 Alessandro Ayuso and MAKE Design, view of Beirut House of Arts and Culture, proposed project, 2008. Detail showing scalies.

inhabiting them were depicted with equal care, and I was frustrated with the predominate digital means of design at the time, which I felt lacked the capability for integrating the nuanced representations of figures (or much of any bodily or tactile engagement whatsoever).

The diminished presence of the figure was epitomised by 'scalies', or raster images of photographs of people cut from their surroundings, placed to give 'people texture' in architectural presentation renderings[2] (Figure P.1). These figures are such an afterthought and are so interchangeable that often the same smiling child or fashion model taken from common online libraries can be seen in different practices' competition boards from around the world. In a *New York Times* article published when I was embarking on my initial study, design critic Rob Walker says of the scalies, 'Where did these uncanny little citizens come from, and what are they really up to?'[3]

Walker's question is apropos. The perception of scalies' uncanny quality comes from our recognition of their ostensible specificity sitting uneasily with their anonymity. From the most cursory glance, they may seem to be convincing inhabitants, but if one looks for a moment more, it is evident that they lack any tell-tale signs of a backstory that could situate them in their locale. The one-dimensionality of scalies' implied narratives matches the flatness of their spatiality. As the finally added layer in a raster image, they are not entwined with architecture, signalling a passive and ultimately disembodied mode of existence. At the start of my research, I saw scalies' anonymous personae and unconsidered embodiment as indicative of a larger, unresolved issue of how to portray human beings in contemporary design – what I considered a 'missing figure'. At the beginning of my research, I identified the missing figure as one that left unaddressed 'lived embodiment', a notion similar to what is described by feminist cultural theorist Rosi Braidotti 'as neither a biological nor a sociological category but

rather as a point of overlapping between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological'.[4] My invention of body agents started with an exploration of how the figure could be reintegrated into architectural design as a way to reintroduce qualities of lived embodiment. From there, my pursuit of the invention of body agents opened up further questions and possibilities.

Notes

1. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 20.
2. Rob Walker, 'Go figure'.
3. Walker, 'Go figure'.
4. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 4.

Chapter 1 | Our Narrator's Present Circumstance

A collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 in which P_1435 describes his predicament at Wates House and his present corporeal state.

25 Dicembre Anno Domini MMX 02:34[1]

I am a 575-year-old *spiritello*. You can just call me P_1435. I recall little from my formative years, millennia ago in *Roma*. My first clear Memories I can relate to you begin when I was awakened by Signor Donato[2] in the *quattrocento* era in *Firenze*. I was reincarnated many times by Artists and Architects far and wide, and I mischievously thrived on the margins and pediments of European Architecture up until the XX *Secolo* Starting then, my rhetorical and narrative presence was no longer needed in the design of Edifices, and so I lay dormant for many years, leaving facades and structures unadorned. I plan to recount this history to you through the writing of this Journal.

First though, I must explain my current State. Recently, I have undergone a resurrection due to activities on the ground floor of Wates House. I now type this Journal Entry while sitting in the building's stairway. The bewildering physicality of my reborn Body is emphasised by the fact that my Flesh materialises and dematerialises sporadically. Often, my most dematerialised condition occurs not when I am exploring Wates House but when I am in the new setting where design takes place. Here, everything is dematerialised, or simply absent. Even the Ground itself is nearly non-existent. In its place is something that reminds me of those Grids carefully drawn by Signor da Vinci, receding infinitely into the distance. My Skin often has a similar appearance to this Grid, as if it had been overlaid onto my Body. When this dematerialisation occurs, I can be seen through and through my Carapace. It is nothing more than a fleeting net outlining my shape.[3] And alarmingly enough, from this Vantage point, one can easily see that I am reborn as a Baby Without Organs.[4]

Aside from my Gridded Shell, I possess only three interior Articulations. One is my mouth; it contains a tongue which allows me to lick and thirst for *vino*, but lacks teeth, and thus gives me teething pains and causes me to bite, gnaw and slurp on every surface I find. The others are my eyes; those two globes are laden with lines of latitude and longitude float within their gridded sockets.

Although one *can* see through me, the periodic absence of my Skin is not the most shocking omissions of my Anatomy. The primary loss I have suffered is that I have found myself Neutered. My amorous Libido has been dealt a stifling blow due to this carnal exemption from my prepubescent erogenous zone. And obviously, this has decimated my physical ability to create parabolic jetties of angelic urine, which was one of my favourite pastimes both for its pleasurable aesthetic and ludic effect. Another form of castration I have suffered is that I have been stripped of my wings, causing me to resort to literally pedantic means of transport.

If you cannot tell by now, it is true, dear Reader – I am dealing with a deep depression on this Christmas Day. It stems from my own aforementioned physical

1.1

1.1 Ornamental *putto* 'holding up' a cornice, Church of San Domenico Maggiore, Naples. Photograph by Mimmo Jodice. © Mimmo Jodice.

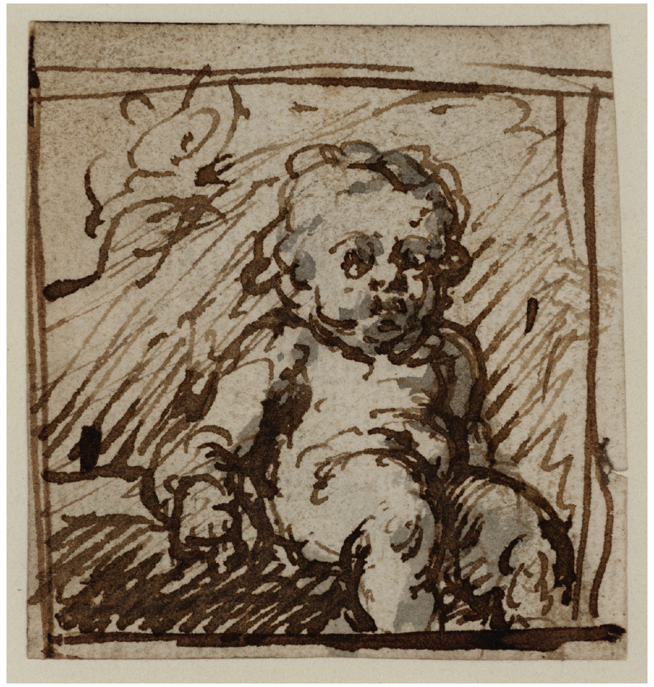
state and my new dwelling, this Wates House. And yes, I find this Wates House an entirely depressing Edifice in every respect.

You may expect me not to dwell on *Architettura* as a subject matter, thinking me a carefree Sprite, but Reader, I assure you, my newfound home is causing me to recognise just how much Architecture has mattered and continues to matter to me. I have been part of some of the most grand and important *Architettura* – and I mean I have really been part of it! I have helped to design it, and I have appeared on it and within it, so intimately and closely connected with it that you could even say my entire existence is tied up with *Architettura*. Reader, I can appear pious at times – I have spent many centuries inhabiting various ecclesiastic structures, and this has affected my outward disposition – but ultimately, I am a hedonist, and my aiding in the construction of Buildings, my caress of their surfaces, gentle support of their protrusions and their envelopment of my Body by their niches and crevices are for me indispensable opportunities for sensual Pleasure.

This is why I find Wates House's planar enclosures impoverished. They are far from the voluptuous *rigonfiamenti Barocchi*[5] and curves whose idiosyncratic folds I am accustomed to supporting, its shadowy tympanum and frieze scenes I am accustomed to illuminating and celebrating within, its complex, festooned Decorations that I am accustomed to dancing and playing my pan, and its cornices that I have supported through (my now lost) powers of flight, flute amongst (Figure 1.1). The painted board, planes of glass and cold surfaces of its floors lack the olfactory, sonic, textural and gustatory graciousness of my preferred environment.

Tonight, I type from my hacked iPhone (yes, I have obtained one of these ingenious Devices and, after reviewing the YouTube tutorials, have succeeded in 'jailbreaking' it), and I am perched in one of Wates House's most horrible locations – the staircase. The scale and materiality of the place are completely oppositional to my Nature. The *scale*[6] treads are out of proportion for the long climbs upward and downward, and they are fashioned from a frigid material I must traverse upon now with my bare feet. There is no sunlight and no moonlight to speak of penetrating into this Dreary place, save from some stingy windows at the very top. For the most part, the only sounds I hear now are my own grumblings and the occasional rustling of a scurrying mouse, ricocheting from the drab walls. Even my ears derive no Pleasure from this place.

The predominant use of the building by its Inhabitants seems extremely staid. I have adorned structures where those who visited were even more reserved, even solemn, but at least *I* was able to play. In this Wates House there is no opportunity to frolic with other *spiritelli*, let alone Cherubs and Satyrs. How could such a ghastly Edifice be



1.2

1.2 Joseph Highmore, Seated *Putto*, eighteenth century. Ink and watercolour on paper, 56 mm × 52 mm. © Tate. CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported). https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/highmore-seated-putto-verso-fragment-of-a-figure-holding-a-staff-t04198.

conceived? What gruesome bedevilled band of *Architetti* could create such a punishing assembly of materials? Were there no *modelli* made? Surely if there were, such a catastrophe could have been averted. Since the *Architetti* were clearly not able, why did they not consult craftspeople or sculptors to help them consider *intagli* or *Figure* to bring some dignity and beauty to their design?[7] I suspect that the *Architetti* who were responsible for this horrid Structure had no idea that such Figures could help them.

As you can see, I am still a bit sore that *Architetti* no longer have need for fashioning Characters such as myself, and that they let me languish for so many years. And now, here I am, surrounded by Architects! Considering the scenario, I prefer to go unnoticed, only emerging under cover of night after they have all left for the day.

I am a creature that is conjured by a fertile union of material and imagination. Before I continue with my story, I realise that I should further clarify this aspect of my nature. In the past, when I have been evoked, there is always some physical aspect that gives rise to a new manifestation of my Body – whether it was gestural strokes of chalk residue on a sheet of paper or the carved subtractions from a marble Monolith. My physical Frame has had many Incarnations, but the alterations in my physical composition were minor, from my formative Roman past, which was revived again and again, from the *Rinascimento*[8] onwards.

The physical characteristics of my depiction always endow me with particular abilities and dispositions. If I am, say, drawn with gestural flourish, athletically, and in the midst of windsailing, I am endowed with great strength and feel the need to run or sail insatiably about.[9] If I am modelled phlegmatically in clay or am sketched with spattered ink, appearing brooding and corpulent, I will be much more subdued and possibly in a foul or brooding mood until I am evoked again (Figure 1.2). And now I am created as a Gridded Shell-being, with Flesh as intermittently existent as the clouds that I observe overhead. When my Flesh materialises, I feel sensations – pain, pleasure, heat, cold – but if I am at that moment manifest as the hollow Net, I do not.

I am an idea, passed through generations, and I appear when called upon to take part in a design. This provisory condition is the reason why my physical attributes can change so drastically, and my life has endured through the ages. Typically, my Body changes with each of my incarnations, and sometimes if I am built into the fabric of a building, my Body merges with the material. I am part of a greater pool of Figures that appear in a similar way over the epochs, such as Griffins, Gargoyles, Saints, Gods and *Ignudi*.

Altro che, you would like to ask, 'Why, then, do you suffer from such a depression in your current

1.3

1.3 John Donnelly, Detail of West Pediment, Parkway Central Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1925–7. In the narrative, P_1435 would have been unaware of the neoclassical revival in the United States and this instance of *putti* with paper and typewriter, and he explains that 'Signor Alessandro' has informed him of it. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of user takomabibelot.

State when you claim that you are used to this shape shifting, when you have accommodated and aided in the initiation of so many diverse designs and works so readily in the Past?'

Allora, dear Reader, this is not difficult to answer. As you shall see from my story, I have certainly undergone Mutations, and dare I say, I have been crucial to revolutionary changes in the shaping of Architecture! And yes, as the *Architetti* and their aims have changed, my Form has changed with them. But there has always been continuity amongst these changes, which I have helped to provide. For instance, my rebirth in the revolutionary age of the *quattrocento* was part of an attempt to connect with *cose della storia passata*[10] – a past that was Dionysian, Roman and Pagan – and, at the same time, to show something completely new, as I will explain in later entries. So, you might say that each reincarnation was a modification of the Past, not a complete overturning. The overturning of certainty and continuity occurred more recently.

I am familiar with pens, brushes and chisels, but keyboards and typing are new to me. Signor Alessandro assures me that other *spiritelli* have endeavoured to master such equipment, and this gives me faith to continue this Journal writing (Figure 1.3). I plan to recount my activities in the Centuries before I arrived here. I will also describe what I am doing now in Wates House. Fortuitously, I have discovered a few things about myself and my new Environment which are allowing me to make the situation tolerable.

Buon Natale, e buonanotte.

Notes

1. As a hybrid character caught between eras, P_1435's consideration of time combines temporal metrics. In the case of his diary dates, this is evident from the use of both Roman and Arabic numerals.
2. Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi was the full name of the renowned *quattrocento* era sculptor known as Donatello. Dempsey discusses Donatello's role in the 'invention' of the *spiritello*, also discussed further in Chapter 3. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 47.
3. P_1435 is referring to the mesh shell that defines his body in the animation software that helped to conceive him initially.
4. P_1435 makes an accidental reference to Deleuze's 'body without organs'. Following Artaud, Deleuze describes the body without organs as 'opposed less to organs than to that organization of organs we call an organism' and 'sensation is not qualitative and qualified but has only intensive reality'. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 44, 45.
5. Italian translation = 'baroque bulges'.
6. Italian translation = 'stairs'.
7. P_1435 uses terminology here relating to the division of labour involved in constructing a building in Renaissance Tuscany which entailed three categories: *quadro* (architecture), *intaglio* (ornament) and *figure* (figurative sculpture). Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 108.
8. Italian translation = 'Renaissance'.
9. An example of a *putto* figure windsailing can be found in the apse mosaic of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, by Jacopo Torrito, ca. 1295.
10. Italian translation = 'things from past history'.

Chapter 2 | Situating P_1435's Predicament

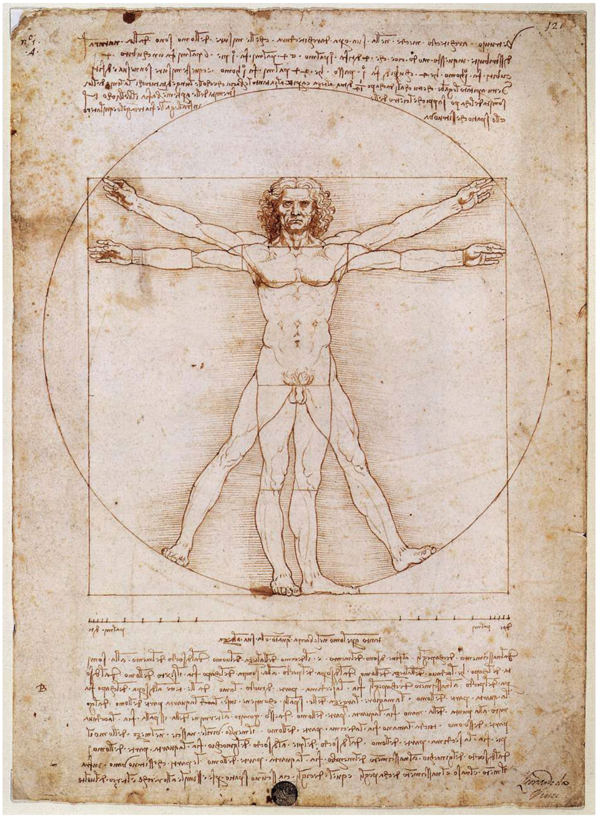
A discourse by Alessandro Ayuso, in which the impetus for the research in this book is explained and situated, and the structure of the book and its argument are outlined.

Body Agents' Antecedents

Delving into the topic of the figure in architecture, it became clear that many of the most urgent questions tied up in the figure defied pragmatic solutions. Bolstering this approach, as I examined examples from the past, I realised that many of the most well known lacked many of the qualities that I sought. I noticed that often, in an effort to enter the human into the equation of design, architects often overly instrumentalised their figures. In these cases, when architects represented humans in optimistic and uncritical terms dictated by technological promise, they also often tended to overly idealise or overly reduce the human subject. In short, they fell into a one-size-fits-all trap in spite of the consideration they would give to the figure. To my contemporary eye, these examples seemed to avoid the very humanity of the figure they meant to capture.

However reductive these figures appeared, they were often distinctive in that they clearly came from a time and place. These figures, as all images of bodies are inevitably, are products of their authors and of their authors' epistemes. As such, they enact an ontology, to paraphrase philosopher Judith Butler, that declares which 'bodies matter'.[1] Antiquated representations of bodies, with their antiquated ontology informing an implicit declaration of which bodies matter and which do not, can make past examples jarring in their implication of 'what is "human" about humanity'.[2] As Braidotti has pointed out, in a case such as Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man drawing of 1490 – probably the most famous and resonant figurative representation to inform design – placing a white European male at the centre of his universe makes an implicit declaration of who is considered a subject and who is considered a specular other[3] (Figure 2.1). In architectural design, such image making does not only alter architects' conception of subjects. Since image making gives rise to building designs, image making amplifies the construction of subjectivity by imparting it in buildings which people inhabit and use.[4]

I knew immediately that scalies of the present and the idealised emblems of the past would be what body agents were decisively not. So, which figurative 'relatives' from architectural history were most like body agents? I saw that the notion of

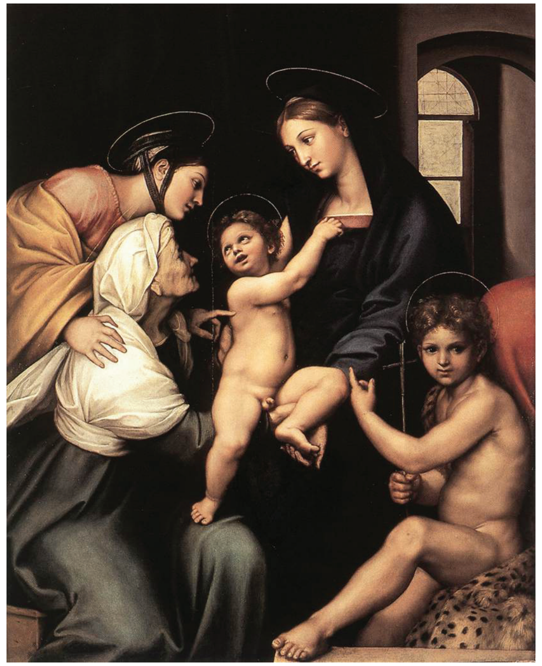


2.1

2.1 Leonardo da Vinci, Vitruvian Man, 1492. Pen, ink, watercolour and metal point on paper, 343 mm × 245 mm. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of Galleria dell'Accademia, Vitruvian.jpg.

the user – possibly dynamic, personal and situated – clearly held potential for what I thought body agents could be. However, the notion of the user also could be problematic when viewed through a historical lens. While the term is almost taken for granted by most contemporary architects, Adrian Forty observes that the notion of the 'user' as such was a relatively recent phenomenon that had a fraught history of phases in modern and contemporary architecture.[5] Jonathan Hill acknowledges that architects since the modernist era established an ambivalent relationship with the notion of the user, but often hubristically anticipated a specific proper use, relegating the user to a minimal, prescribed role that ultimately valorised the architects' own agendas and, in many cases, prevented the agency of actual users in built works.[6] Both see a tendency by modern architects to conceive of the user as a generalised abstraction. Kenny Cupers' edited volume *Use Matters* shows how the notion of the user was a product and a generator of constructing subjectivity in the modern era – for instance, the scale figures appearing in Ernst Neufert's *Architect's Data* of 1936, performing normative, socially prescribed roles as part of a mass subjectivity.[7] The figures present an ontological frame that excludes many potential users, be that spontaneous, unscripted individual actors, with their unpredictable nuances or, simply put, non-normative others. Neufert sought instrumentalisation of his figures to such a degree that his figures may seem to us (as they do to P_1435 in Chapter 9) like robots.

On the other hand, I was reminded of many of the other examples I had come across while studying abroad in Florence, Italy, where representations of figures flourished in Renaissance architecture. While the Vitruvian Man was not the antidote I sought, I found the Renaissance figures described in architectural historian Robin Evans' essay 'Figures, passages, and doors' offered a promising avenue for such rich versions of subjects. In his essay, Evans finds an increasingly eviscerated notion of embodiment in architecture that coincided with the rise of rationalism and functionalism. He contrasts functionalist representations of the body with representations in Renaissance paintings and architecture. While the former was pared down, diagrammatic and deterministic, the latter comprised a rich entangled notion of embodiment (Figure 2.2).



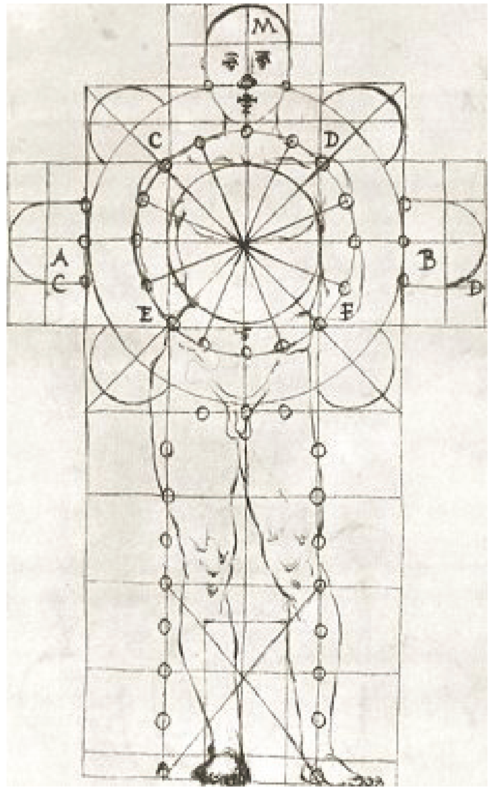
2.2

2.2 Raphael, Madonna dell'Impannata, 1513. Oil on panel, 1,580 mm × 1,250 mm. Evans featured this painting in his essay, writing 'It was only in the sixteenth century that bodies were attenuated into the graceful or magnified into the sublime, then brought together in peculiarly intense, carnal, even lascivious poses'. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of Pitti Palace, Madonna Impannata.jpg.

Scale figures in architectural drawings often did more than simply indicate scale or even use. Anderson has pointed out the specific ability of scale figures to project the perceived presence of immeasurable qualities of human experience into drawings.[8] The more recent compendium of scale figures without architecture by MOS Architects shows the figures' ability to impart the signature presence of their author.[9]

These ideas of the potentialities of scale figures as distinct active presences in design process are discussed in my former teacher Marco Frascari's 1987 essay 'The body and architecture in the drawings of Carlo Scarpa'. Frascari is critical of the 'biped balloons with pointed feet and floating heads' – the scalies of the time, which he saw in postmodern architects' drawings – and wrote his essay with the hope that it would initiate 'a new practice of body/building topology'.[10] Frascari focuses on Scarpa's design for the Brion Vega Cemetery, completed in 1978, and in particular Scarpa's use of what Frascari called 'metonymic' figures that were enmeshed with design and enacted aspects of lived embodiment through the imaginations they catalysed. Following Scarpa's comment that he had 'a powerful desire to work within tradition, but without making capitals and columns', Frascari distinguishes between Scarpa's figures and the metaphoric models of the Renaissance such as those in drawings by Francesco di Giorgio Martini[11] (Figure 2.3).

While di Giorgio's 'metaphoric' figures are meant to guide the composition of a design through isomorphism, metonymic figures enabled a mode of operation that is more specific and steeped in tactile qualities and material imagination: 'metonymy works through the privileged status of perception . . . drawing a handle results from a mould in the form of a hand that grasps, rather than a formal representation of the hand itself'.[12] Frascari's analysis shows that Scarpa's fragmented images of figures, including nude female dancers and comical self-portraits, contrasted with the bipeds: Scarpa's figures were entwined in the designs they help to shape, entering



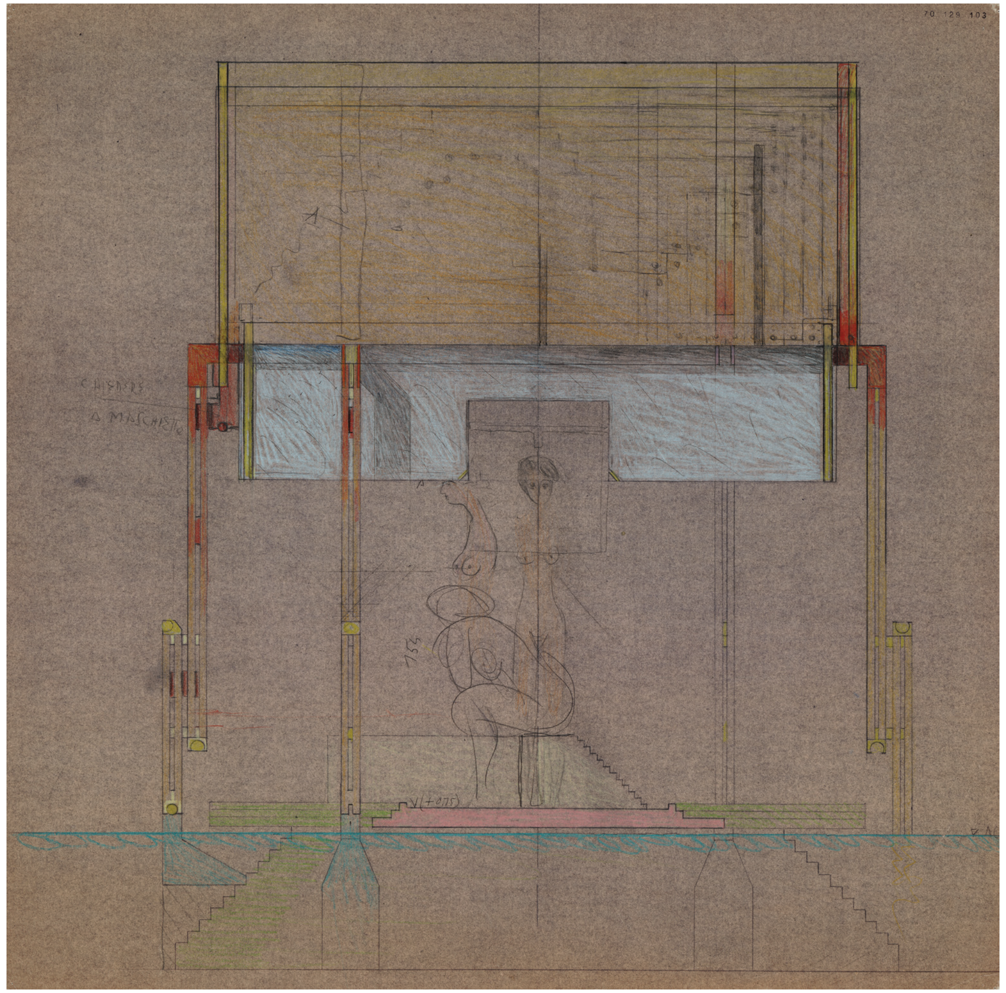
2.3

2.3 Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Church Diagram, from *Trattati di architettura*, ca. 1478–81. Wikimedia Commons, FGMartini2.jpg.

directly into the design process and operating in the drawing as a varied cast of generative devices which raised playful questions about architectural possibilities, directly affecting the shaping of the architectural design[13] (Figures 2.4 and 2.5).

Writing of observing a Giacometti portrait, James Elkins describes a 'first seeing' and 'second seeing', where an observer oscillates between a 'relaxed and languorous' pleasure in seeing a figure and 'a restless nomadic way of looking' that often results from distorted, grotesque or extreme presentations of bodies common in contemporary art.[14] Elkins' idea of multiple 'seeings' suggests that a property of portrayals of the human body is that they are uniquely prone to provoke wonder and fascination with the portrayed subject. In this sense, the figure inherently becomes an object of fascination, and Scarpa's figures likely were that for him. Yet, Scarpa's figures do not exist only for contemplation; they *do* things in the drawing. As the metonymic figures interact with their world in the virtual construction of the drawing, the figure is not simply a particularly alluring object amidst objects. The inherent fascination of portrayals of the body likely gives way to a seeing and feeling *through* the figure. Depicted moving through and touching the designs, they become proxy sensors, devices that catalyse design ideas and alterations.

Scarpa's figures appear throughout the design process as if they are old friends returning to inhabit and inspect the design – a process that reinforces their particular situatedness. In this way, the figures could arguably be thought to enact 'subject positions' – a term coined by Bronwyn Davis and Rom Herré, where a perspective or position is intentionally taken within a discursive practice or scenario to provide a particular vantage point.[15] Intersubjectivity entails an intercorporeal relationality between embodied subjects and other embodied subjects.[16] Given Scarpa's palimpsestic drawing technique, which engaged his own tactile sensations and which created palpable physical artifacts, and his careful rendering of the particularities of the bodies of his figures, the intercorporeal dimension inherent to his figures is intensified.[17] Scarpa's drawings suggest that the presence of subject positions in design drawings via the depiction of the figure opens up the potentiality for virtual intersubjective exchange – between the architect and the depicted figures, the depicted figures themselves and the metaphoric body of the building. Given the operativity of the metonymic figure to impact the design, I asked: could body agents' simulated actions in design representations embed opportunities for intersubjectivity into the architecture?

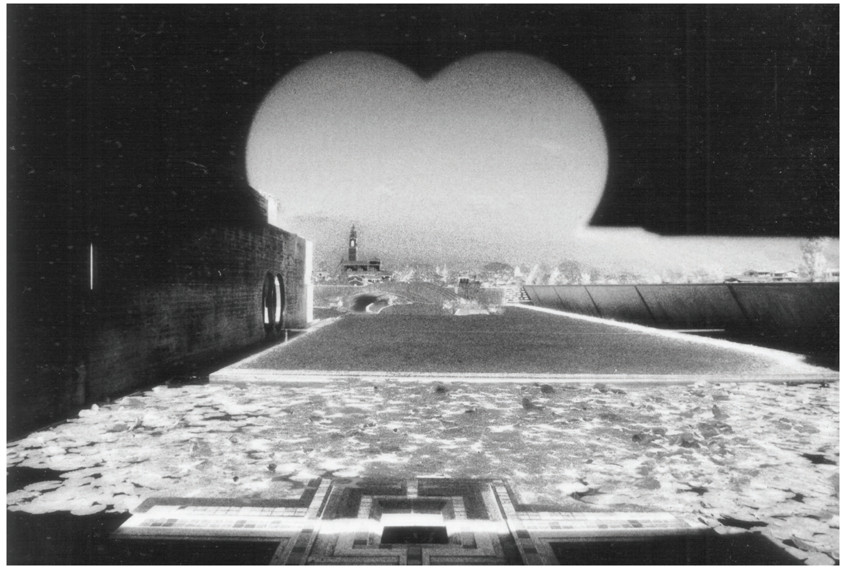


2.4

2.4 Carlo Scarpa, detail section drawing of Brion Cemetery island pavilion, ca. 1968–78. Heliographic copy, pencil and coloured pencils on paper, 470 mm × 475 mm. The three dancers are examples of what Frascari would call 'metonymic' figures. Courtesy of Maxxi Museo Nazionale Delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Roma. Collezione Maxxi Architettura, Archivio Carlo Scarpa.

The Problems Presented by Il Regno

Yet, only two decades after Frascari's essay, the prevailing design process in a digitally permeated climate imposed obsolescence



2.5

2.5 View through the 'binoculars' integrated into the soffit of the Brion Cemetery island pavilion ca. 1968–78, by Carlo Scarpa, San Vito d'Altivole, Italy. The location corresponds to the position, height and sight line of one of the metonymic dancers in Figure 2.4, framing the view of the tombs and church. Photograph by William Haskas.

on the applicability of the metonymic figure – as the figures which arose from hand-drawn and often handcrafted techniques were being eclipsed by digital media. The 'methodological crisis' of the design image brought forth by the proliferation of digital media spurred many of the broader questions at the heart of this research.[18] At the start of the 2010s, digital media in certain privileged and innovative contexts (such as cutting-edge practices and universities in the United States and Europe) had diversified with an array of manifestations that would be difficult to generalise, from hyper-real graphics to virtual reality–driven environments to processes that completely avoid representation in lieu of scripting. Although my own design work shown throughout this book is a product of hybrid processes, where work was produced through the interplay of various types of traditional and digitally based media, a more or less typical PC-based software-driven virtual design environment was a constant, and in the narrative, P_1435 is thrust into it. This transposition was meant to initiate a problematisation of the design regime that many architects in practices in much of the world spend an inordinate amount of time immersed within. In the narrative, P_1435 spends so much time in this virtual space that he develops a nickname for it: *Il Regno Digitale* (and he finds himself so often immersed in it, he even begins calling it *Il Regno* for short). This term echoes literary critic N. Katherine Hayles' term 'Regime of Computation', by which she means a contemporary fourth order of cybernetics or a 'penetration of computational processes not only into every aspect of biological, social, economic and political realms but also into the construction of reality itself'.[19]

In part, the narrative in the book is meant to immerse the reader in a defamiliarised viewpoint of this virtual space, and the design work itself explores different ways of approaching it, bringing many of its innate properties to light. Operating within virtual regimes is nothing new for architects. Paper and orthographic drawing are themselves technologies enabling virtual immersion. However, when set against traditional methods, specific aspects of the software-driven virtual design environment's properties that break with traditional design could be considered as obstacles for both figures and subject positions to play a significant role in design.

One such aspect is that the digital image redefines the relationship between the image and material at a basic level. The nature of this technology changes the physical corollary with the virtual. For instance, as William J. Mitchell recognised, digital media prevents the physical traces inherent in past drawing methods.[20] Along with the loss of the physical trace, the engagement of the physically active body of the architect is diminished: although the interface options are expanding through touch screens and stylus, for the most part, the software-driven design environment remains accessed through the passive mode of staring at the monitor and clicking mouse buttons.[21] The loss of the interplay between physicality, bodily awareness and imagination in the image-making process reduces the potential for the image to be a locus of what Frascari, following Henry Corbin, calls a 'mundus imaginalis' or an 'imaginal world of construction and construing'.[22]

At the same time, in significant ways, the software-driven three-dimensional digital design environment is not necessarily a break from historical regimes but rather a distillation. For instance, the environment is based on deep-seated legacies of visual regimes privileging perspectival projection. While this Cartesian perspectivalism is nearly ubiquitous in contemporary Western visual culture, the image of a grid at the origin point of an infinite Cartesian space that meets software users when they open nearly any three-dimensional modelling application has implications for the subjective mode it engenders. Speaking of the impact of perspective on art history, historian Martin Jay writes:

> 'The abstract coldness of the perspectival gaze meant the withdrawal of the painter's emotional entanglement with the objects depicted in geometricalized space. The participatory involvement of more absorptive visual modes was diminished, if not entirely suppressed as the gap between spectator and spectacle widened. The moment of erotic projection in vision . . . was lost as the bodies of the painter and viewer were forgotten in the name of an allegedly disincarnated, absolute eye'.[23]

Taking this argument into account but going a step further with respect to digital media, in her book *Abstract Space*, architectural theorist Therese Tierney describes how abstraction is built into digital media, not only because it is underwritten by code, but also because it is predicated on assumptions and visual regimes that privilege abstraction. She charts this instillation of abstraction from Cartesian perspectivalism to the influential discourse surrounding modern art. While the medium arguably privileges abstraction, in everyday practice, the design image presented via the software is schizophrenic. On the screen during the manipulation of geometry, the image is schematic and abstract, but when it is rendered, the image becomes hyperreal. At this point, the images are arguably evidence of a 'pathological' aim for verisimilitude and accuracy, resulting in what architect Marjan Colletti calls 'hyper-fake hyper-realism'.[24]

Another schizophrenic aspect of digital media is that, as discussed above, aspects of it are physically disembodied, yet it can also be somatically immersive. The software-driven design environment, while in many ways disembodied, allows for an intense spatial immersion through the cinematic effects of zooming, panning and moving through spatial environments.[25] While in many ways immersion has undoubted benefits, social psychologist Sherry Turkle has recognised several potential 'vulnerabilities' in simulations such as those offered by virtual reality systems. Observing the effects of virtual reality style simulations, she notes that immersion in a digital design simulation can lead to a loss of reference points, which in turn engenders misleading perceptions and unwanted outcomes.[26]

While the aspects of the software-driven design environment cited above can be taken as a critique of a technology whose impact is to alienate the subject, bringing the contemporary subject further into focus amidst this scenario shows a more complicated set of relationships. As suggested above, technology in the digital age is changing embodied subjectivity, as a co-construction of embodied subjectivity and technology is taking place. Architects spending the majority of their waking hours immersed in digital environments are a case in point, but for large numbers of non-architects whose lives are also saturated by digital technology, subjective experience and, with it, the definition of the body and self are being subtly redefined. For instance, the sense of the body's interface with the world is arguably changing as kinaesthetic sense undergoes a transformation.[27] Even something as commonplace as the use of touch-screen interfaces on mobile phones and tablets affects the sense of the physicality of the body, through changed sensorimotor schema, where one's sense of touch and its causal effect vis-à-vis the world becomes gradually accustomed to swiping and zooming on the surface of screens, and of seeing the actions' effects on virtual layers in conjunction with the actual.[28] In this sense, the swiping, panning and zooming which enable virtual immersion are not only vehicles for simulations of embodied experience but also part of what constitutes bodily experience.

Encounters with others through digital media also affect the sense of embodied subjectivity. As Elaine Graham notes, this can be seen in post-bodied activity through digital networks, for instance interactions that augment face-to-face interaction with online communities of avatars, virtual identities and alter egos.[29] In these cases, identities can become 'multiple drafts' and are integrated through networks that expand and fracture one's notion of self, encouraging new connections in one's relationships with others.[30] Such virtual networks become a finely tuned, ever-changing overlay onto the experience of the real, augmenting the experience of it.

In this context, the notion of the 'body proper' is also in the midst of a transformation and expansion. Blurred boundaries are a somatic reality, and the human body can be considered, as Hayles describes, the 'original prosthetic', a starting point to augment and alter.[31] As original prostheses, through direct reconstruction and reshaping, the body becomes an assemblage, in some cases, of distinct parts, but in others, of processes that extend through the body at a molecular level.[32] Not limited to the addition of mechanical components, genetic modification, pharmaceuticals and nanotechnology play an increasing role in altering the body, distorting the delineation between an individual human and what could be considered *outside* the body, and making the clear boundaries of humanist figures – such as the Vitruvian Man and his clearly demarcated geometrical boundaries – seem all the more antiquated.[33] In this deterioration of boundaries, post-human subjects are opened to intensified conditions of alterity or otherness. In media theorist Joanna Zylinska's words, these transformations in embodiment create a condition of 'the human as always already "intrinsically other", i.e. existing in relation to, and dependent on, its technology'.[34] This otherness is part of an intensification of 'profound relationality', where the subject is interdependent and in a deeply reciprocal engagement with context, and where the agency of individuals has more potential avenues.[35]

Zylinska's view of a relational post-humanism with expanded avenues for agency stems in part from discourse based on cultural theorist Donna Haraway's notion of the cyborg in her seminal essay 'A cyborg manifesto'. Emerging from the discourse of 1980s feminist theory, Haraway's idea of the cyborg established an emancipatory potential to the post-humanist body; the 'leakiness' of the cyborg's boundaries allowed it to offer alternatives to rigid essentialist or dualistic notions of embodied subjects.[36] While Haraway's idea of the cyborg provides a signpost for an 'enchanted' idea of post-humanism, the idea of the cyborg, a vision of a human that is once familiar and uncomfortably nonhuman, is still closely associated with the uncanny, a Freudian notion of the unhomely, where unconscious fears surface from that which is ostensibly familiar.[37] In this sense, while Haraway's cyborg is vastly more complex and promising as a picture of the contemporary subject, it has brought us full circle back to the scalies described at the beginning of this chapter, which were aptly described by Walker as 'uncanny citizens'. Given the uncanny nature of contemporary subjectivity and the schizophrenic aspects of digital media, I asked: could digitally immersed body agents aid in providing a co-evolving station point in a potentially alienating and schizophrenic design milieu?

History and the Figure's Roles in the Approach to Body Agent Design Experimentation

History

If people in the milieu described are to some degree becoming more and more like uncanny cyborgs themselves, it becomes crucial for cyborgs 'to feel at home' in architecture, as architectural historian Antoine Picon, following observations from Mitchell, puts it.[38] Picon offers an idea for an approach with implications for designs that address such a subjectivity which seems to arrive continuously at encounters with the uncanny, writing: 'It may prove preferable to approach (subjectivity) in terms of a constant pulsation, a movement of expansion followed by a tendency to contract in order to resemble once more a traditional subject'.[39] Picon goes a step further in positing how traditional subjectivity could inform contemporary notions, precisely defining a possible corollary with the past, writing:

> 'Renaissance architecture was intimately linked to the new vision of the subject developed by humanism. In a similar way, digital architecture is becoming more and more dependent on key characteristics of the contemporary individual like his renewed interest in the sensory dimension and above all the importance of the various mediations established between him and his environment'.[40]

Picon develops his critique further in his analysis of the ornamental patterned surfaces found in the buildings designed by many elite practices of digital architecture. The ornamental surfaces define spatial, complex or fluid compositions, which in many ways are meant to be apprehended through an affective mode of perception, that is, encountered by precognitive experience.[41] Picon suggests that in general, 'digital architecture is . . . oblivious to the historical dimension as if the men or women it was meant for lived in an eternal present'.[42] Nowhere is this more evident than digitally derived ornamentation. As Picon points out, the patterned surfaces profoundly differ from traditional ornament and do not present a way to address the gaps left behind in the omission of traditional ornament's function. For instance, they do not provide indications of scale, articulate spatial modulation, suggest collective meanings or histories or proclaim programmatic function.[43] The surfaces may address the affective body, but the lived body – that locus of 'the overlapping between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological' – is not necessarily addressed as contemporary ornament once did (or at least did in its most successful instances). Furthermore, as architectural historian Robert Levit writes, the ornamental surfaces seem to evoke inadvertent figures of uncanny alien imagery – results of a process in which the designer, as Tierney recognises, becomes more akin to an interpreter of data that digital processes generate.[44] As with the media that give rise to it, these designs stemming from digital media show a schizophrenia. The slippage in between characteristics of the patterned surfaces – in that they are ornamental but do not have ornament per se, and where they are figural but unintentionally so – present a perplexing dilemma, but also an opportunity for the introduction of body agents as a mediating device.

Could body agents help to provide a grounding historical continuity to address a subjectivity which 'pulsates', 'expanding' towards technological permeated alterity and contracting towards traditionally inflected familiarity? The contemporary condition is arguably novel enough to suggest the opportunity for the complete 'reinvention' of the human image. Yet, while the notion of body agents stemmed from the need for new images, it was also predicated on the need to avoid the urge, more fitting to pre- and inter-war modernists in Europe, to attempt to break with the past entirely. Finding validity in both Scarpa's innovations and his impulse to work within tradition, body agents were conceived as figures that could enact both contemporary subjectivities and connections with the past. I aimed for body agents to find kinship to those somatically engaged figures that Evans found in Renaissance paintings rather than to the functionalist representations that minimised and prescribed use, making abstractions out of individuals and their lived experience.

The figure

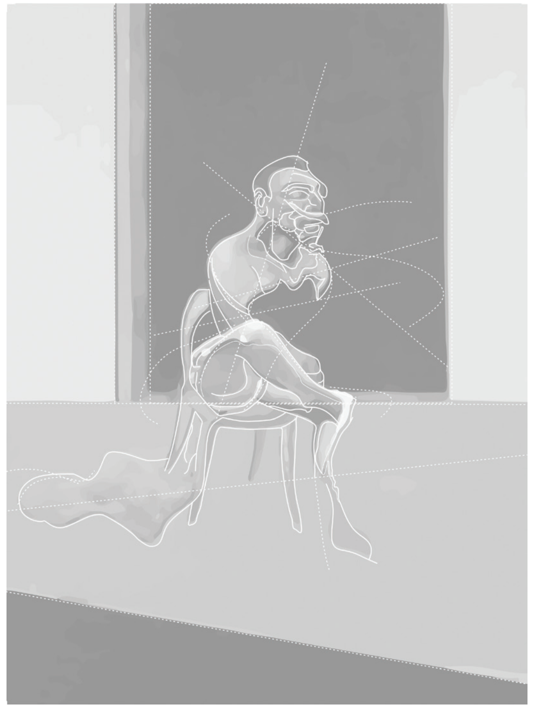
The efficacy of portrayals of figures as the entry point into the inner world of a subject is described by art critic and philosopher Arthur C. Danto in his essay on portraiture, 'The body/body problem':

> 'The disembodied self, the ego, cannot thus be spatially extended, which is the condition of picturability. So we peer at our mirror images, or indeed our portraits, wondering if that is really us . . . the body is less a picture of the soul than the soul itself in the medium of flesh, so a picture of the body is a picture of the soul. And because the body itself can have changed but little since ancient times, the picture of the human soul can have changed little, if at all, in this period'.[45]

Writing in 1999, Danto noted that the body has changed little, but the picture of digital-age subjectivity described above raises questions about the stability of the body: how can the body as a reliable 'metaphor we live by' be reconciled with the seemingly unreliable sense of the body emerging today?[46]

Discourse surrounding Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the figural – or that which stands outside of, and in tension with, the discursive realm – offers a fruitful avenue to how the figure could be reimagined. Gilles Deleuze expanded Lyotard's initial ideas directly in his discussion of Francis Bacon's portraits. To Deleuze, Bacon's distorted images of the body act 'directly on the nervous system' through 'coefficients of bodily deformation'[47] (Figure 2.6). By this, Deleuze means that Bacon's figures are apprehended via affective perception, making the Deleuzian figural relevant to contemporary architecture discussed above. Affect also recurs as an important aspect of theories of contemporary embodiment, particularly with respect to those which take into account increased roles of relationality, alterity and the fluidity of the body's boundaries.[48]

For Deleuze, there are 'two possible ways of escaping the figurative' or traditional representation of the body, which he viewed as offering an inferior mode of passive contemplation: 'toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely Figural, through extraction or isolation'.[49] Deleuze's idea of figures distorted by forces and sensations rather than formal abstraction is meant to convey continuous 'becoming' (a quality appropriate to



2.6

2.6 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing the coefficients of bodily deformation of the figure depicted in a panel from Triptych by Francis Bacon. With thanks to Laura Kershaw. Adapted from the original painting: Francis Bacon, Triptych, 1972. Oil on canvas, 1981 mm×1473 mm.

the unstable, ever-evolving subjectivity discussed above). There is an inherently figural potential for representations of the body in the digital design environment described above, as contingency and coefficients of deformation are integral to the operations performed in design in that virtual space.

In his writing on the figural, Deleuze makes another unlikely connection to the Renaissance. He finds the figural's beginnings in the angular and distorted paintings of El Greco and the twisted muscular bodies painted by Michelangelo.[50] While for Deleuze the purely figural examples transcend narrative, mannerist and baroque figures were able to create intersubjectivities in part precisely by incorporating narrative and recognisable corporeal forms with figural qualities. While the figural addresses only pure sensation, philosopher Dalia Judovitz has noted that baroque works have the possibility of 'open[ing] up an understanding of the body as an intersubjective and intercorporeal exchange functioning in the modality of an address whose philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical character derives from an engagement with the world'.[51] This is one way that historical figures show potential to inform the present and how baroque and mannerist figures gain importance as precedents in the design work in this book.

Another idea which informed my approach and which relates to Lyotard's notion of the figural (and also to Haraway's methodology in reconceptualising the cyborg) is Braidotti's concept of a 'figuration', which she describes as a polyglottic, 'politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity' enacting a way to 'learn to think differently about the subject, to invent new frameworks, new images, (and) new modes of thought'.[52] Figurations work through games of 'as-if', involving ritualised, fetishistic representation and impersonation, in order to 'open up in-between spaces where new forms of political subjectivity can be explored'.[53] Braidotti also writes that this version of a nomadic subject is 'a performative image (which) allows me to weave together different levels of my experience; it reflects some autobiographical aspects, while also expressing my own conceptual preference for a post-metaphysical vision of subjectivity'.[54] Both Deleuze's figural and Braidotti's figuration were ideas which helped to frame the approach to the invention of Body Agents who could aid in mobilising particular sensations and subjectivities across images and text.

Notes Regarding the Methodology of the Design Experiments

The open-ended nature of speculative design

In my approach to research by design in this book, design itself, and specifically the design process imbued with digital technology and the figure, was the central focus of the enquiry. The main mode of investigation was speculative design, an open-ended methodology. P_1435 spends much of his time described in the narrative as architects do (virtually) in their everyday design endeavours – hence, in this book, instead of polished renders, there are many screenshots and narrations of design adjustments and evolutions. However, the strategy for exploring this potential was not limited to the screen: precedents were part of an iterative, synthetic, open-ended process involving writing, drawing, three-dimensional modelling, digital fabrication, hand-crafting, rendering and animation. Forms were altered, recombined and set in motion. Through redesign and narrative writing, the aim was to rethink precedent figures beyond the generalised understanding inherent to taxonomic categorisation. In this sense, forms were not fixed, but rather evolved along with other variables in the design, particularly due to the animate nature of the digital format and body agents and the combination of different media (which necessitates recurring moments of translation from one media to the other, enabling mutations and slippages which in turn catalyse the evolution of forms).

The promises and problematics of historical precedents

I aimed for body agents to aid in the interjection of particular historical vantage points into what is essentially (as described above) a medium that encourages an eternal present. The tactical motive is aligned with Giorgio Agamben's observation that 'those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect, are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it'.[55]

The intention behind finding precedents in Renaissance and baroque figures was to pick up on aspects of them that I felt could be intensified or reinterpreted to address contemporary subjectivity, but along the way, questions arise about the ontological baggage that goes with the precedents. Even in the most figural representation of the body, which may seek to bypass narrative reference points, an inescapable dimension of representations of the body is that they inevitably indicate what Michel Foucault would call the inscription of the body, meaning that all subjects are socially embedded, and in that sense the body could be considered the surface upon which social orders and power structures are imprinted. This makes representations of the body that much more complex and specific. Yet, it also necessitates further criticality concerning what social paradigms are instilled in the representations. In this sense, some of the figures that are precedents in this book fit a profile – ostensibly white, male and able bodied – that on its face seems to bolster antiquated hegemonies. My design work is meant to activate the fixity of these models in order to make them malleable.

In my selection of the precedent figures, especially within the familiar genres of Renaissance and baroque art and architecture, I was looking for figures that I thought could be conducive to an aim to elevate secondary or peripheral actors. Figures that played marginal roles in the imagery they were featured in, such as *putti* and *ignudi*, who were literally in the peripheral and interstitial spaces of a composition, I saw as allegorical others, pushed to the edge. I was interested in mobilising these marginalised figures as central actors as a way to provoke reconsideration of the legacies of prominent humanist figures such as the Vitruvian Man in architectural design, but more broadly as an invitation to other designers to consider marginalised figures of any category to assume a more central position in their own work.

I was also looking for historical representations of body types that did not fall easily into contemporary categorisations or seemed to be in a state of becoming. These figures held the potential to transform, and this state seemed potentially applicable to the ideas of contemporary subjectivity and embodiment described above. For instance, I looked for figures that were sexually ambiguous, such as the *ignudi* and Pichler's Torso, which have androgynous qualities. As Dempsey described, during the Renaissance, *putti* were considered as *erotes*. In this role, *putti* theatrically acted out sexual desire but remained peripheral to the carnal situations that they appeared to encourage. In this respect, *putti* could be considered nascent sexual beings.[56] (This situation is particularly complicated for P_1435, who, as described in the narrative, initially does not have genitals as part of his new digital body.) Disability is another category that is not addressed as a central theme, but I searched for precedent figures who suggested different abilities – the diminutive P_1435 navigating an adult-scaled world is one example, but the limbless Torso who appears in future chapters is another. I looked at these bodies with different abilities as opportunities to question the normative body and to explore the body as a site of design in the vein of an original prosthesis. I hope my work is taken as a step towards challenging antiquated hegemonic ideas of the body, where much more work needs to be done not only to deconstruct sclerosed images but also to provide productive alternatives.

History and theory informed the parameters of the design method but did not dictate its outcomes. In this way, history and theory's role differs than in most history and theory-based research. The design is not understood as a demonstration or exemplification of historical or theoretical points, nor is design undertaken with the aim of making a conclusive finding on historical or theoretical points. For some readers, the primary aim of generating design potentialities rather than discursive conclusions may necessitate a shift in expectation.

The unreliability of narrative voices

Since the narrative voice of P_1435 predominates much of the book, there are a few things the reader should take into account about his character and how it affects the presentation of history in the book. In the book as a whole, the narration through body agents is meant to catalyse juxtapositions in design modalities and disparate temporalities and theoretical territories. Much of what is described in the narrative from P_1435's point of view is based either on my own analysis and observation or on the work of other scholars who are cited in the annotations and notes. However, it should be noted that in the narrative, P_1435 recounts 'his' own impressions and memories and, as a character, has delusions of grandeur, can be excitable and is sometimes even inebriated. This makes him an unreliable narrator at some points. He sometimes overstates his role in works, assuming that his actions were the reasons for aspects of designs, or even misinterprets works based on 'his' viewpoint, and he sometimes assumes that he is the subject of a work to which he is only peripheral. As a character steeped in part in an antiquated ontology, some of his views are reactionary. These aspects of his personality were part of what shaped the narrative and my own design projects that react to and incorporate it. Within the scenario, his narrative defines 'his' desire and gives him the motivation to aspire to have ever more agency in the work, and helps to give him a critical and sometimes even outraged stance.

My hope is that P_1435's 'unreliability' further engages the reader in a productive dialogue with the content, but it is important to recognise that this literary device is not just a matter of presentation. Much of the narrative writing was performed in conjunction with the design and research, and it was a crucial aspect to the critical thought process. P_1435's 'infiltration' of the text altered its substance and outcome. The book is a product of a 'dialogue' with P_1435 and other body agents. In this way, P_1435's narratives are a textual demonstration of the operativity of body agents as presences that inform, challenge and catalyse. P_1435's narrative uses history as a source, but one that is sublimated into the literary conceit of narrative writing. Part of the methodological aim of mobilising historical elements and subject positions into the design experiments is that the narrative viewpoint *presumes* that figures in the precedents enabled subject positions. While the overall reading of the precedents put forward in the book aims to make a convincing argument that figures did indeed perform in this way, the narrative often ventures beyond veracity or even presents a viewpoint in contradiction with scholarly consensus. In these cases, the notes contain important clarifications.

The Structure of This Book

There is a rhythm to the organisation of this book, based on the alternation of four types of chapter. This chapter as well as Chapter 13 do not contain writing from the point of view of body agents, but the other chapters feature particular combinations of narrative and discursive text. The particular combination of narrative writing, annotation and discursive text is indicated in the argument (or synopsis prefacing the body of the text, a form common in Renaissance texts) at the start of each chapter. Chapters 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 are composed almost entirely of narrative, taking the form of curated journal excerpts written from the viewpoint of body agents, with sparse annotation in my 'own' discursive voice which strikes a more familiar tone for academic writing. Chapters 4, 7 and 11 take the form of dialogues between body agents and my 'own' discursive voice. Overall, the chapters and journal excerpts work together to chart a fragmentary but chronological historical timeline. Chapters 5, 8 and 12 focus on my design experiments, tracing a timeline that is more or less faithful to the evolution of the projects, interweaving the parallel history and character developments described in the other chapters. These chapters are composed of curated journal excerpts from the point of view of body agents, as well as occasional excerpts from design logbooks and extended image captions and annotations, various manifestations of my 'own' voice. Each design folio begins with the design of a body agent and moves on to a design vignette for a small architectural proposition to test the operativity of the body agent.

The reader will have already encountered Chapter 1, which initiates the predicament of P_1435 through a journal excerpt written in his narrative voice and not only introduces his character but hints at questions of embodiment, subjectivity and the historical in digital media. This chapter, Chapter 2, foregrounds the territory of the research in the book, as well as outlining the methodology of the research and the structure of the book itself. Chapter 3 is a brief collection of journal excerpts written in P_1435's voice, where he embarks on a recounting of his personal history by describing what he refers to as his 'rebirth' in works made during the *quattrocento* in Italy by sculptors such as Donatello. This narrative grounds his subjective viewpoint amidst the epicentre of the humanist tradition and solidifies the stark contrast between his antiquated *weltanschauung* and the contemporary condition into which he is thrust.

Chapter 4 is dialogue focusing on the design of the New Sacristy by Michelangelo Buonarroti. It shows the operative aspect of the figure to catalyse design imagination and dynamically enact intersubjectivity through drawing. The chapter starts with P_1435's narrative, illustrating how Michelangelo constructed an a priori conception of the body through his early drawings, sculptures and paintings to create a distinct understanding of embodied subjects with architectural implications. P_1435's narrative describes the role of a dynamic cast of figures through the sequence of design drawings for the New Sacristy. Throughout this series, figures derived from Michelangelo's a priori construction continued to develop and morph in a dynamic exchange with the imagined architecture. In the final section of the chapter, P_1435's narration abruptly ceases due to his resignation at not being included as a sculpted figure in the built project. The evolution and nature of the figures cannot be understood without acknowledging the sculpted figures in the built work. Notes concluding the chapter briefly discuss the figures. They are integral to the architecture, to the point that they even seem to assert ownership over the space.

Chapter 5 is a design folio which begins with the design of P_1435. These experiments were directly informed by the imagination of P_1435's dreams and his virtual occupation of Wates House, which are intimated in the included journal excerpts written from the viewpoint of P_1435. The main design vignette described is a kneeling window, which used Michelangelo's own design for a kneeling window at Palazzo Medici Riccardi and an empty niche in the New Sacristy, and P_1435's imagined interpretation of them, as starting points. Part of the exploration concerns the collapsing of virtual spaces of films and digital design environments with the real space of a full-scale physical drawing as a way to engage my actual and P_1435's imagined 'habitus' (or small culturally inflected habits of the body) more immediately in the design.

Chapter 6 is a collection of journal excerpts written from P_1435's point of view. In them, P_1435 resumes his recounting of his past, where he claims to have been involved in numerous mannerist works following his participation in Michelangelo's work. He describes the distortion of the body, and in spite of the playfulness of his performances, he finds mannerist architecture lacking in comparison to the plasticity of Michelangelo's architecture. He suggests that he found many of these missing qualities while performing in Gian Lorenzo Bernini's early work.

Chapter 7 is a dialogue which moves into the baroque era, focusing on *putti* designed by Bernini and his atelier, mainly in St Peter's Basilica. The ornamental *putti* in the vast interior of St Peter's appear to assert themselves theatrically. They are individual in their detailed nuances and lifelike expressions. In his design of *putti*, Bernini takes overt liberties with respect to the deformation of the body itself. Through their attributes, expressions and positioning relative to the architectural space and the visitor, the *putti* take on qualities ranging from the quotidian to the celestial. They demonstrate possibilities for ornamental figures to become both empathic entry points and enactors of an unreality principle as part of an effort to communicate a complex narrative of power and transcendence.

While Chapter 5 focused on designs that could be said to explore the 'body in architecture', Chapter 8, the next design folio, focuses on my own design vignettes where the 'architecture of the body' is explored. Here, the physical expression of Michelangelo's *ignudi* introduced in Chapter 4 are reconsidered to make for the next figures in the cast of body agents. The *ignudi* are reinterpreted through the use of digitally based processes such as physics simulations and animation. Following the design of the 'D_I' figures, the chapter turns to the design of a full-scale model that investigates the expressive 'anatomy' and materiality of the D_I figures. The piece explores an expression of the merging of technology and the body and the collapse between the distinction of the metaphoric and metonymic figure inherent in the operations of the digital media used in the experiments.

Chapter 9 is a collection of journal excerpts written from the viewpoint of P_1435. Here, the timeline of the book takes a historical leap into the modern era. The narrative highlights several important developments with respect to the figure during architectural modernism whose legacies remain influential and problematic in architecture. After describing some of his experiences in Mexican baroque work, P_1435 returns to reminiscing on his appearances in Europe. From his vantage point in France in the eighteenth century, P_1435 describes the Enlightenment era's early scepticism of ornament, a seed in the diminishment of the figure in Western architecture. Not having experienced it first hand, P_1435 then researches on his own into projects of the early twentieth century, where he discovers the emergence of post-human figures of the early Bauhaus and then the normative figures that emerged later drawn by Neufert, which he finds akin to idealised Renaissance figures. He then discovers the post-war work of Le Corbusier, where he puzzles over figures that informed Le Corbusier's work, from sketched nudes to the Modulor. While Le Corbusier's figures could be seen as part of a wider post-war movement to humanise architecture, like many of the other modernist figures discussed, they bring up problematic issues of reducing and instrumentalising conceptions of the subject.

Chapter 10 is composed of one journal excerpt from P_1435's point of view. In this excerpt, P_1435 introduces the voice of another body agent, Torso_2.0, whose design was based on a sculpture by Austrian artist-architect Walter Pichler. Torso_2.0's narrative sets the stage for the discussion of Walter Pichler's work in Chapter 11, as well as my design experiments shown in Chapter 12.

Chapter 11 is a dialogue between my own discursive voice and brief rejoinders taking on the guise of Torso_2.0. The figures in Pichler's extraordinary work discussed in Chapter 11, cultivated amidst the radical art and architecture scene of 1960s Vienna, presents an alternative to many of the problematic aspects of the modernist figures discussed in Chapter 9. The focus of the chapter is Pichler's House for the Torso, a small building that houses several of his figural sculptures in his repurposed farmstead, but the chapter makes several diversions at the prompt of Torso_2.0's narrative voice. The diversions explain the role of Pichler's figures in the conceptualisation of the landscape and the small 'citadel' of his repurposed farmstead, and then the design of a garden door at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. These two examples begin to build up a catalogue of operative traits of the figures, which appear fluid, fragile, often tormented, and I argue, post-human. Figures in Pichler's drawings for the House for the Torso exhibit these properties, contributing to a design where the figure and architecture are interwoven.

My own design experiments shown in Chapter 12 begin with the design of prosthetics which transform the Torso into Torso_2.0. Considering architecture as an extension of the body, the design experiments explore how architectural designs could be closely linked to the body itself. Starting with forms generated from the interaction between components and the animated Torso_2.0, and incorporating P_1435, this design expands from a niche with an interior boundary close to the body of Torso_2.0, to a *tempietto*, to a final concentric layer making for an ideal site condition for this micro-building. The designs are described through annotation in my own discursive voice, design logbook entries in my own voice and journal excerpts written from the point of view of both P_1435 and Torso_2.0.

Chapter 13 reflects on salient aspects of the efficacies and limitations of work and methodology, and seeks to identify potentialities by discussing my work since the research shown in the preceding chapters was undertaken. This work includes collaborative design projects, teaching and studio-based projects. My hope is that by showing the work that emerged from the initial study, it will inspire readers who are themselves artists and architects to consider their own avenues of invention to become co-conspirators in inventing new figures for design.

Notes

1. The phrase is derived from the title of Butler's seminal text *Bodies That Matter*.
2. Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 13.
3. Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 15.
4. This statement is taken from the aphorism by Winston Churchill in a 1943 speech: 'We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us'. Winslow, 'We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us', 239.
5. Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 312–15.
6. Hill, *Actions of Architecture*.
7. Cupers, 'Introduction', 5.
8. Anderson, 'On the human figure', 238.
9. Meredith et al., eds, *An Unfinished Encyclopedia*.
10. Frascari, 'The body and architecture', 124.
11. Frascari, 'The body and architecture', 128.
12. Frascari, 'The body and architecture', 125.
13. Frascari, 'The body and architecture', 129.
14. Elkins, *Pictures of the Body*, 5.
15. Davies and Harré, 'Positioning: The discursive production of selves', 46.
16. More expansive than the notion of empathy, the concept of intersubjectivity can consider psychological exchange amongst communities or even subjects and objects. Anselm and Cantor. `Conversation', 14.
17. The idea of intersubjectivity is linked to philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of intercorporeality, a theory that broke with notions of embodiment that were either predicated on Cartesian dualism (where the mind and body were considered separate) or closely related mechanistic analogies. Instead, intercorporeality conceives of the body and mind as inseparable and, following this, intimates that subjects construct meaning and social relationships through embodied experience. Intersubjectivity is succinctly explained by anthropologist T.J. Csordas with reference to text by philosopher Gail Weiss, who 'writes that "To describe embodiment as intercorporeality is to emphasize that the experience of being embodied is never a private affair but is always mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies"'. Csordas, 'Intersubjectivity and intercorporeality', 119, referring to Weiss, *Body Images*, 5.
18. The nature of this crisis is articulated by Tierney: 'With this transformation of the architectural image comes a methodological crisis in the architectural field: a crisis that calls for a considered judgement of the origins, nature, and possible consequences of the crisis'. Tierney, *Abstract Space*, 9.
19. Hayles, 'Unfinished work', 39.
20. The loss of discernible traces in digital images starting with the invention of Photoshop is discussed in Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye*, 18.
21. Computer interfaces introduced a sensorimotor schema of micro-movements. McGrath and Gardner, *Cinemetrics*, 25.
22. Frascari, 'The pneumatic bathroom', 172, 180.
23. Jay, 'Scopic regimes of modernity', 8.
24. Colletti, 'Digital figural ornamentation'. The term 'pathological' is used by Picon to describe rendered images in *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 157.
25. Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 12, 124.
26. Turkle, *Simulation and its Discontents*, 45.

27. Both Picon and Ana Munster have suggested the impact that digital media has on human kinaesthetic sensorium. Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 107; Munster, *Materializing New Media*, 19.
28. Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 12, 154–5.
29. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human*, 5.
30. Turkle describes the idea of multiple drafts with reference to philosopher Daniel Dennett who also speaks of the notion of the 'flexible self'. Turkle, *Life on the Screen*, 261.
31. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 3.
32. Blackman, *The Body*, 114.
33. Zylinska, *The Ethics of Cultural Studies*, 123.
34. 'Intrinsic otherness' is discussed with reference to Emmanual Levinas in Zylinska, *The Ethics of Cultural Studies*, 123.
35. 'Profound relationality' is discussed in Blackman, *The Body*, 117.
36. Haraway, 'A cyborg manifesto', 149–82.
37. The link between cyborgs the uncanny and unhomely is discussed in Grenville, 'The uncanny', 20. The 'enchanted' view of post-humanism is discussed in Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human*.
38. Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 108.
39. Picon, *Ornament*, 140.
40. Picon, *Ornament*, 13.
41. Levit, 'Contemporary ornament', 73. With reference to: Moussavi and Kubo, eds. *The Function of Ornament*.
42. Picon, 'Continuity, complexity, and emergence', 156.
43. Picon, *Ornament*.
44. Levit, 'Contemporary ornament', 82; Tierney, *Abstract Space*, 107.
45. Danto, 'The body/body problem', 198.
46. The quoted text refers to one of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal texts, *Metaphors We Live By*.
47. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 7, 37.
48. The prominence of affect as a central concern of contemporary body studies is described in: Blackman, *The Body*, and Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies*.
49. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 2.
50. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 7, 161.
51. Judovitz, *The Culture of the Body*, 172.
52. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 1.
53. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 6, 7.
54. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 7.
55. Agamben, *Nudities*, 11.
56. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 86.

Chapter 3 | Memories of an Awakening at a Great Height

A collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 in which P_1435 describes recent revelations about himself and recounts his memories of his (re)birth through his work with Donatello.

08 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXI 03:13

Buon anno, dear Reader! Typing again from the staircase. I have been adjusting to changes in Wates House as the students and staff are returning and the place has become livelier and noisier during the day. There was *una festa*, and many bottles of wine were left behind. So, I was able to quench my thirst for *vino*. I may have overdone it a bit, I must admit. It was not so bad though, for I have had some revelations as I lay nursing my Headache the morning after my binge. Considering my predicament and my new Body, I have noticed more advantages to my newfound state. As I reflect on the loss of my organs, appendages and the 'certainty' of my Flesh, these previously dismaying attributes are eclipsed by some of my newfound qualities and the opportunities brought about by my chimerical, Digital state.

First of all, I noticed that when I had some *vino*, I felt more energetic than ever, and I discovered from bounding up and down the stairs at night, I am amazingly fit and athletic. I have realised that one of my other favourite attributes that I have retained are my hands, which were always disproportionately strong, and I have noticed that they have become even more so! By rubbing them against walls, I can wear away bits and pieces of it.

Although the floor of the staircase is as cold as ever, I find solace in its extreme verticality that reminds me of my earlier perches on the heights of soaring *Volte*[1] and their supporting Capitals. I walk up and down them, reciting chants I learned from my years inhabiting cathedrals. As the monotony of my steps up the horizontal slabs are rhythmically aligned with my whispered verses, I feel soothed as I make my way upwards towards the 5th floor landing and then down again. This meditative activity wears me out, and then I find I can sleep. In fact, I feel the need to drift into this state at this very moment.

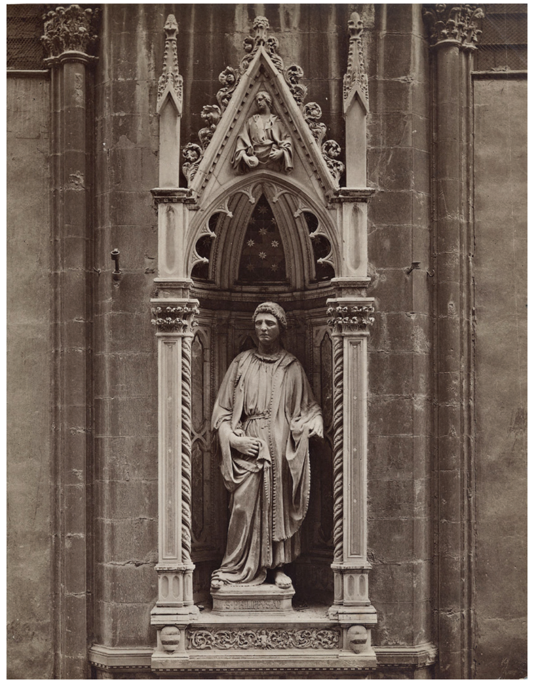
Buonanotte, dear Reader.

10 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXI 01:19

Reader, you will recall I mentioned I started considering things I could do to make my life here, and perhaps the building itself, better. For starters, with the help of Signor Alessandro, I am considering an attachment to this handrail that would fit my proportions. It could also be outfitted with protrusions which I could hold onto and swing from. I could not imagine wearing shoes, and this Device will allow me to avoid the cold floor.

I have been spending more of my time on the roof of Wates House, certainly one of my favourite locations in the Building. It is cold and rainy here, but I can glimpse the Moon through intermittent gaps in the clouds as they drift by. I find that this is the best place to recover quietly from my Hangover.

Allora, back to the personal History that I promised. I mentioned before that Signor Donato



3.1

3.1 Nanni di Banco, frieze of the tabernacle of San Filippo, Orsanmichele, Florence, ca. 1410–12. Photograph by Fratelli Alinari. © 2016 Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Piazzetta Giorgio Morandi, 2, 40125 Bologna, Partita IVA: 10561041004.

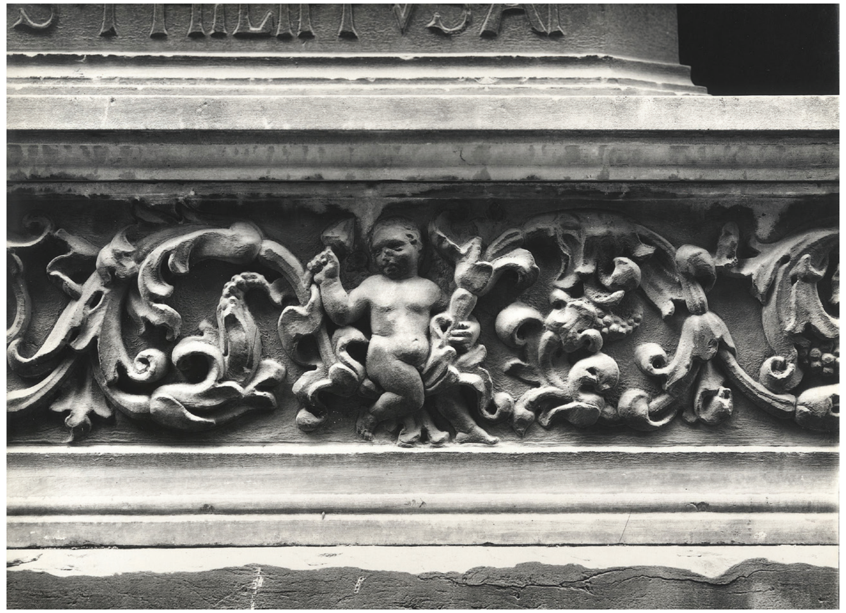
reinvigorated me, and this should be clarified. Of course, my Genesis was not wholly instantaneous at that moment, and perhaps to credit Signor Donato so wholeheartedly is not entirely accurate. Admittedly, there was an evolution of sorts, and Signor Donato pushed that evolution forward past a threshold. Signor Donato gave me licence to express my Spritely nature.[2]

Before Signor Donato, I was present in the funerary and Bacchic images of the Romans; I was called upon as a *Genius*, a protective and guiding Spirit, but I don't remember it well, dear Reader. It was, after all, two Millennia ago.[3] I suppose many of my personality traits can be accounted for from that time. For instance, I still do adore *celebrazione* and have a taste for *vino*, likely having acquired these desires during the many Bacchic Celebrations I participated in. I sometimes find myself feeling quite Melancholic – an emotion that I likely became comfortable with in my funerary Roles. When not acting as a Guide to another, I feel aimless and lonely, a holdover from my days as a *Genius*.

I also have hazy memories of when I was present in the architecture, manuscripts and paintings of the *Epoca Medievale*. An observant churchgoing peasant or monk at that time may have noticed me balanced on a Pilaster playing my pan flute. But the passer-by of the present age would notice my stiff Pose and a vacant look in my eyes. Indeed, I was in a period of semi-consciousness during that time, only vaguely aware of my actions, as if sleepwalking. During the *Epoca Medievale*, I lacked the robustness and independence that I have gained since. If I was called on to appear as part of *Architettura* at that time, I was often as in *bassorilievo*[4] as opposed to being *a tutto tondo*.[5] I view this inert phase of my History as an incubation period.

My quasi-slumber during the *Epoca Medievale* was pleasantly disturbed when Signor Jacopo della Quercia, Signor Donato's distinguished predecessor, gave me an appearance on the Tomb of Ilaria del Carretto in San Martino in Lucca in Anno Domini MCDVI.[6] Signor della Quercia fashioned my Companions and me in the *feste romane* style in 'high relief' to decorate a *poveretta*[7] Sarcophagus.[8] Ilaria died in childbirth, and the appearance of us Sprites was meant to bring a bit of joy to this sombre Occasion.[9] Our presence in the piece was also meant to evoke the Celestial and Spritely – but in a particularly Roman way. In writing this, I question my aforementioned accreditation of my reawakening by Signor Donato even further, as Signor della Quercia made such an incredible stride in making Us (the Sprites, I mean) appear lifelike, nearly in the round, and with so many details that made me – if I do say so – appear quite splendid. Here, I was given a torch and Signor della Quercia sculpted me in the process of attempting to reinvigorate its flame.

3.2 Nanni di Banco, frieze of the tabernacle of San Filippo, Orsanmichele, Florence, ca. 1410–12. Photograph by Gino Malenotti. © 2016 Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Piazzetta Giorgio Morandi, 2, 40125 Bologna, Partita IVA: 10561041004.



3.2

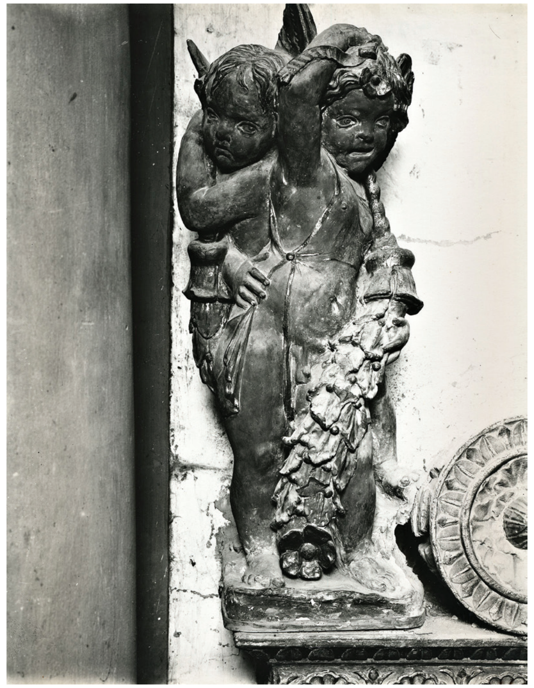
3.3 Nanni di Banco, tabernacle of the art of the Stone and Timber Guild (detail), Orsanmichele, Florence, ca. 1415. Photograph by Gino Malenotti. © 2016 Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Piazzetta Giorgio Morandi, 2, 40125 Bologna, Partita IVA: 10561041004.

3.3

Allora, I have been treading up and down the stairs as I type. My feet are numb, and I am exhausted. *Buonanotte*, dear Reader.

13 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXI 01:19

Continuing my story: I began to receive many more Roles after my appearance in the Tomb. I was called on to emerge from the depths of a church wall and blow out torches, but I also remember when I worked with Signor Nanni di Banco: We played a Game where Signor Nanni encouraged San Filippo, above me, to move from side to side while I stayed in place[10] (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). In this case, I did not mind staying still because I was able to be exactly at the central axis of the Niche. Me, just a Sprite, able to appear as a sculpted Figure in the centre! With this, I had gotten a taste of how I could really move and express myself, and now I realised it was possible that I could sometimes be the centre of attention! *Che spasso!*[11]



3.4

3.4 Donatello, Cavalcanti Altar, Sta. Croce, Florence 1435. Detail showing surprised *putti*. Photograph by Gino Malenotti. © 2016 Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Piazzetta Giorgio Morandi, 2, 40125 Bologna, Partita IVA: 10561041004.

Just a few years later, I worked with Signor Nanni again on a Niche on the Facade of Orsanmichele. This time, I appeared in the midst of being sculpted by a stone carver. I had even more prominence in this instance. I was larger than I was in the Tabernacle of San Filippo, visible to all who passed by in the street, as I projected outward from the surface of the wall, my Body strong and almost like a grown-up's. As the sculptor honed my Body, I began to feel gradually more virile, sophisticated and elegant (Figure 3.3)!

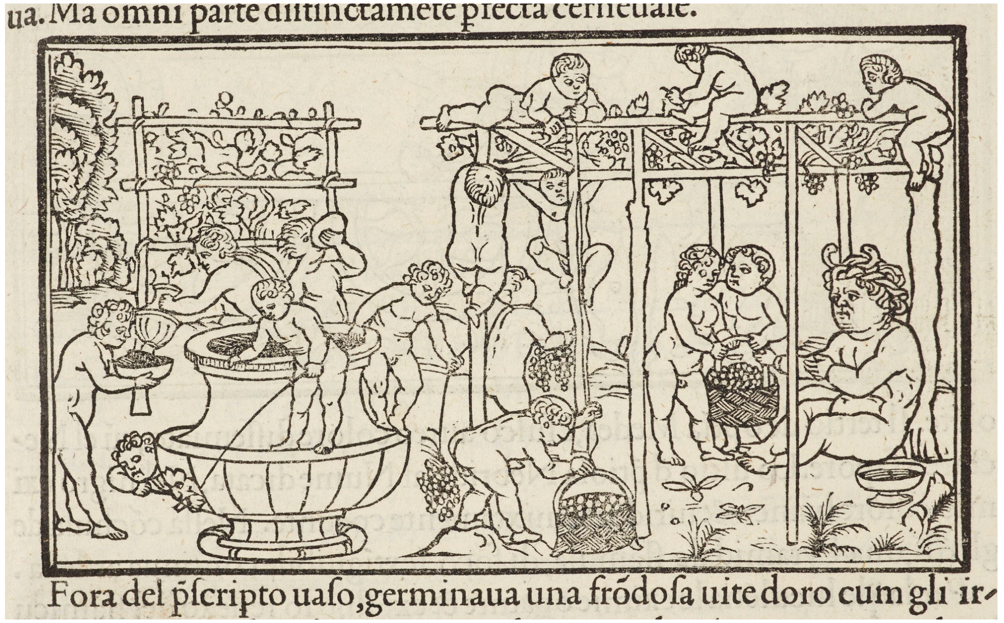
I am getting restless just typing about it. I will never fall to sleep at this rate. I will continue with my story tomorrow so that I can calm down.

Buonanotte.

21 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXI 05:15

I spent the last couple of nights looking around at the workshops here. I think that through the use of the tools, I will be able to care for my physical needs and the lifting of my once-spritely Spirits. I should be able to rectify the current physical shortcomings of my own Carapace through extensions and adornments more suitable to my own use and tastes. I think that by multiplying and manipulating my Digital Flesh I will be able to augment my attributes. *Putti* are known to be good with tools. So, this should not be a problem. Ultimately, I imagine with a few online tutorials, I will be able to use the fabrication equipment at Wates House. Also, I have discovered a miraculous function in *Il Regno Digitale* known as Ctrl + C and Ctrl + V which gives one the ability to duplicate any entity![12] I will clone myself so that my Bacchanalia will be extremely fun and crowded. Ah, yes, well, of course, I am planning a Bacchanalia! But more about that later.

Now, where was I in my recounting of my past . . . ? Yes – Signor Donato. One of my first Roles in assisting Signor Donato was as a sculpted Sprite embellishing the Cavalcanti Altar in Santa Croce, *Firenze* (Figure 3.4). This was in Anno Domini MCDXXXV, and it was an incredible Role for me – one where I suddenly realised the Gravity of my position. And I do mean Gravity. Signor Donato had asked us to hold garlands as *putti reggifestone* of the Romans would, but then he placed us at the very top of the tall altar. When We worked with Signor Donato, We were imparted with a poignant awareness of Our own condition. I can only attribute this to the sheer attentiveness to detail and the rekindling of Our Roman pasts through lifelike Proportions – thus, in this instance, my realisation that We four *putti* were teetering at such a great Height! Reader, you can observe from my startled expression that I was keenly aware of my altitude.[13] I was so startled that I dropped my garland! And this, I would say, is when I achieved a certain Consciousness, an awareness of my surroundings, and suddenly, I felt that perhaps I could even interact and affect the other things around me. This moment jolted me out of my sleepy medieval hibernation so decisively that I credit it as the moment of my rebirth!


ua. Ma omni parte diſtinctamete piecta cerneuale.
Fora del p̄ſcripto uaſo,germinaua una frõdoſa uite doro cum gli ir-

3.5

3.5 Francesco Colonna, illustration from *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in 1499. Courtesy of Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021.

After this momentous event, my Roles became more exuberant and celebratory. Even in my more marginal Roles in manuscript frontispieces, I felt my Dionysian spirit reinvigorated with many *giochi dei Bachhanali*, for instance, brandishing my *Larva* mask to frighten my Companions – what a thrill![14] I felt invigorated, animated and ebullient! I was very proud to work with Signor Colonna on *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, where my Role was to appear in a woodcut illustration, harvesting the heavy grapes of autumn (Figure 3.5).[15] I did so, expertly climbing a trellis. I played a stretched drumhead and sampled the grape juice we made, perhaps imbibing more than I had anticipated. I fell asleep, having the most pleasant dreams as I lay on the soft grass in that delightful garden.[16]

Oh, speaking of slumber, I have been carried away with reliving fond memories of my reawakening. *Al primo canto dei galli*[17] has passed me right by! The sun is rising through the misty London sky. I will return to the lift shaft for some sleep. (I have taken to sleeping atop the west lift. I find the combination of the absolute darkness of the lift shaft, the constant motion of the carriage and the steady whirring of the mechanisms puts me right to sleep.)

Buonanotte, dear Reader.

Notes

1. Italian translation = 'vault'.
2. Dempsey describes how Donatello imbued *putti* with dynamism and personality rather than the static precedents of the Middle Ages. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 34.
3. Dempsey describes the original association of *putti* with Roman *genii* and ancient protective spirits. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 4.
4. Italian translation = 'low relief'.
5. Italian translation = 'in the round'.
6. Dempsey described this tomb as one of the notable early appearances of *putti* in the

early *quattrocento*. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 10.

7. Italian translation = 'poor thing'.
8. Dempsey describes the *feste romane* as 'a type of festival decoration that is especially associated with the ancient Roman forms of ornament'. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 8.
9. Dempsey describes della Quercia's sprites 'do not so much mourn (Ilaria's) death in the manner of *pleurants* as celebrate her life'. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 10.
10. P_1435 refers here to an ornamental niche by Nanni di Banco at Orsanmichele, Florence, 1410–12. A *putto* appears in the ornamental frieze below the effigy of St Philip, where St Philip's stance is slightly off-centre, and the *putto* figure is on the central axis.
11. Italian translation = 'What fun!'
12. P_1435 uses the term *Il Regno Digitale* and simply *Il Regno* to indicate the Digital Realm in which he is now immersed.
13. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 38.
14. An example of *putti* in illuminated margins brandishing larva masks can be seen in Gaspar da Podava's frontispiece to *Lives of the Caesars*, ca. 1474. Ink on parchment, 276 mm × 180 mm.
15. Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 175.
16. Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 175.
17. Italian translation = 'The first song of the roosters'.

Chapter 4 | Figures Becoming Architecture

Michelangelo's New Sacristy Drawings

A dialogue in which P_1435 describes his observations on and experience in Michelangelo's early works, particularly the drawings for the New Sacristy, with interspersed notes and introductory remarks by Alessandro Ayuso.

Introduction

Before Michelangelo took on the design of his early architectural work the New Sacristy in 1519, he had constructed a subjective conception of the body through his sketching, painting and sculpting of figures. In many respects, his representations resulting from this a priori construction of a conception of the body through sculpting, drawing and painting reflect what turn-of-the-twentieth-century art historian Heinrich Wölfflin would call a 'body sense' – or a conception of embodiment that corresponds to a zeitgeist.[1] In many other respects, Michelangelo's figures were intensely personal and broke with canonical form and common practices of the day. The figures in Michelangelo's early work discussed here convey dynamism, hybridity, flux and contextual enmeshment.

Michelangelo's a priori Construction of the Human Figure

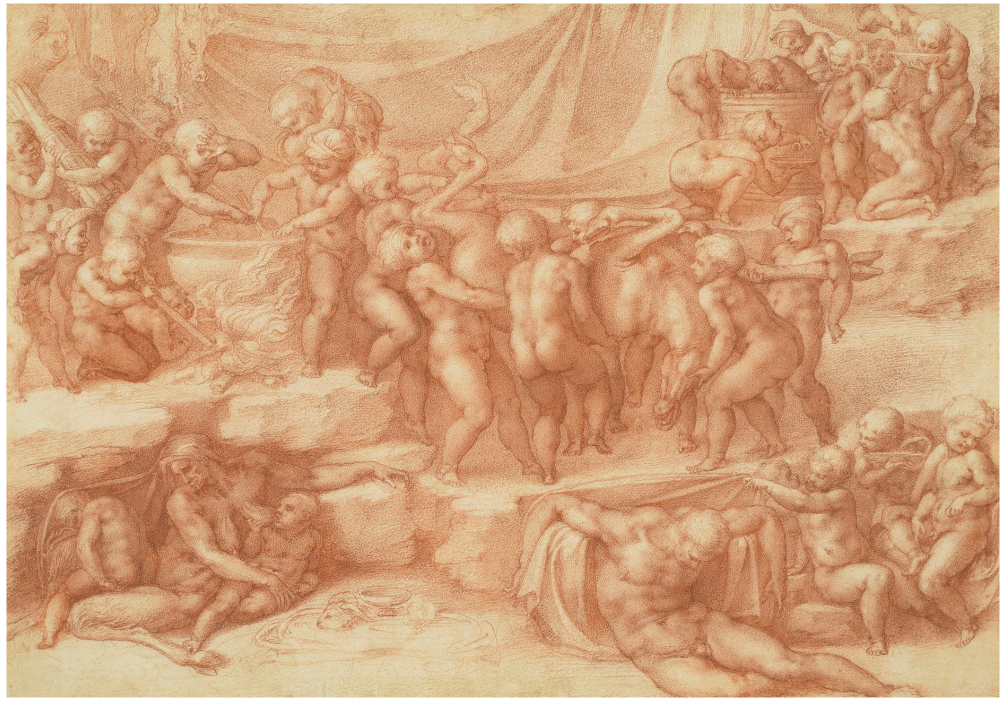
Fragmented, enmeshed and expressive figures

Signor Alessandro, *mi dispiace*, but were you there? No, you were not! Please, allow me to explain. It was one of the greatest honours of my existence to have been a Muse and an Actor for Signor Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Il Divino*.[2] In the early projects attributed to him, one finds me appearing in many Instances. Indeed, I say with more than a hint of pride, I appeared in his first sculpture![3] In addition to his sculptures, my Form took shape often in his *disegno* when he used chalk and paper. One of the finest and most delightful that I can remember was the sketch for the Children's Bacchanal in which I can be seen drinking the *vinum sanctum* – that is me on the upper right-hand corner, with the bowl to my mouth – while my Companions do the usual stuff: wrestling a horse (*allora*, this should have been a goat, but who am I to question *Il Divino*'s creative liberty with the Ancient themes?), kindling a fire and taking care of those who have had too much from the fruit of the vine. There were so many of us Figures packed into one scene, it was very crowded, as it should be (Figure 4.1)![4]

Hide-and-seek

There were other *Giochi* that *Il Divino*'s way of drawing gave us: one was where we would play peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek! In this Game, we Figures would hide in a mist, only showing bits of ourselves

4.1 Michelangelo Buonarroti, A Children's Bacchanal, 1533. Red chalk on paper, 274 mm×388 mm, RCIN 912777. Courtesy of Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021.

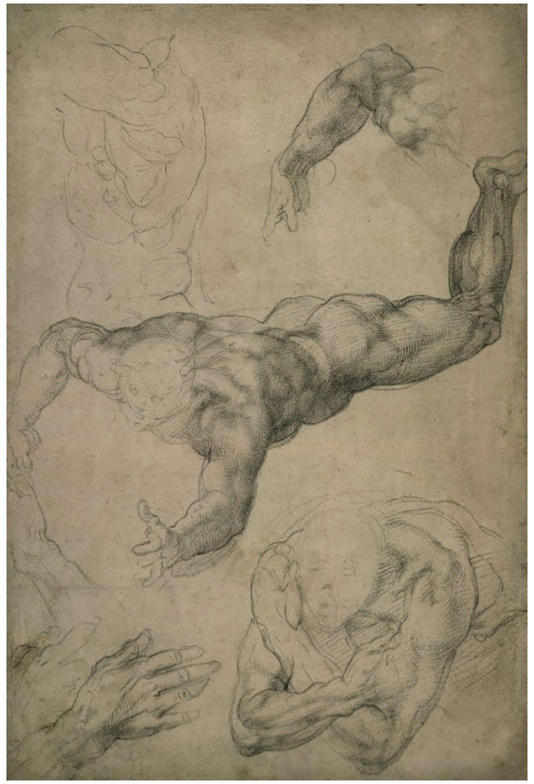


4.1

before fading back into it (Figure 4.2). You can see the *Giocchi del nascondino*[5] in the study drawings the *ignudi* worked with *Il Divino* on, where the *ignudi* never completely reveal themselves, just showing an elbow here or a calf there, and then leaping forward or twisting back. When *Il Divino* drew us, we Figures often leapt forward or backward, twisting away from the viewer, in all manner of torqued, twisting and agile Poses! Previously, I had been ecstatic when Signor Donato had drawn and sculpted me in what I found then as dynamic poses, but now, I felt almost superhuman! When *Il Divino* drew me, I always felt like doing gymnastics, and he never failed to equip me with extra muscles to do so!

This Game also worked in sculptures. In a tondo I worked with *Il Divino* on, I played the role of the infant San Giovanni, and I am half submerged in the *marmo di carrara*, as if I could be swallowed up by it. This was the ingenious manner of *non finito*, where the hide-and-seek Game was played amidst physical Material.[6]

In his discussion of the drawings of twisting and turning figures, P_1435 brings up two important elements of the expressivity of Michelangelo's figures. One is the postures. The dynamism of the figures in the studies to which P_1435 refers breaks with antiquity's static canonical of contrapposto pose. In what amounted to a library of more than two thousand fragments of gestural poses, Michelangelo was able to arrange and invent a myriad of new postures.[7]



4.2

4.2 Michelangelo Buonarroti, study for the Last Judgement, 1534–5. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of British Museum, 1534, 1860,0615.5.jpg.

Another important element contributing to the expressivity of the figures is what P_1435 refers to as the 'hide-and-seek' game. This is an effect achieved through a drawing method where only fragments of figures are visible on the page. The portions of the figures that are not in the study's purview seem to recede, foreshortened and gently fading out of the view. The *non finito*, or unfinished state, of the studies makes for figures that seem to be submerging into or emerging from a substrate. This could be read as simply a by-product of the process of making, but this recurring trademark element of Michelangelo's work indicates that there was important significance to the unfinished elements left as if on purpose in an arrested state of becoming. The 'hide-and-seek' game is also enabled by foreshortening which distorts the figures. As Helmut Klassen puts it, defining 'the indefinite point of view of someone engaged with the world, not from a static or abstract point of view, but within a dynamic entanglement'.[8]

Diagrams

Entanglement – yes, I suppose that is not a bad way to put it. *Allora*, another method of *Il Divino*'s that was different. He never drew the flat, stiff Figures with *lineamenta* extending through them, as sometimes did Signor da Vinci and Herr Dürer. *Il Divino* so loathed this work of Herr Dürer! he said that these Figures were far too stiff, flattened and governed by measure.[9] Many others had devised such schematic drawings, such as Signor di Giorgio, and perhaps I am simply jealous, for I never was able to be the Figure governing the entire proportions and arrangements upon which an edifice was made to resemble. That Role was always given to an adult. But I do not think the designs resulting from such approaches were as good as what We were able to do for *Il Divino*, which was to impart motion and feeling!

P_1435's relaying of Michelangelo's exact words cannot be verified, particularly regarding the stiffness of da Vinci's figures. His summation of Michelangelo's critique is founded, however, particularly with reference to Michelangelo's criticism of Albrecht Dürer's figures in *Four Books on Human Proportions* as stiff and immobile.[10] As P_1435 points out above, another practice of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors that Michelangelo avoided was the utilisation of the body as a metaphorical diagram in the manner of di Giorgio and others who often treated the body as a schematic idealised abstraction, inscribed along proportional guidelines.[11] As Catherine Ingraham notes, the outlines of these 'anthropomorphic devices' had a clear definition between interior and exterior, and their wholeness derived from a combination of proportional parts in a harmonic ratio, where the stiffly posed figures were most often depicted in elevation.[12]

Anatomy

While many *Artisti* worked with these so-called Devices (I rather like this term for them, as they were shackled to *Geometria e Matematica*), all of the respectable *Artisti* and *Archetteti* at that time in *Toscana* were chopping, slicing and peering around into any Cadaver they could get their hands on. It was very frightening to behold. In fact, even now, recalling the horrible cutting open of Bodies, I am trembling and feeling queasy with disgust! It always alarmed me, but *Il Divino* stood apart in this arena as well, for even as he took part in this practice, the cadaver Figures who worked with him also played the hide-and-seek Game![13] Other *Artisti* would show the Figure as if sawn in half, through and through, but *Il Divino* would show the unfortunate Fellow as he saw them, with the flesh peeled carefully back, in an elegant pose fading gradually into the surroundings.[14] I feel lucky I was spared the chopping block. But can you imagine: an infant San Bartolomeo?[15] That would be preposterous. (Although I suppose perhaps if the Role were taken to aid in *Il Divino*'s execution of it, the realisation could somehow be gentle and beautiful.)

Elkins points out that while Michelangelo's gestural studies were his primary source for accurately representing anatomy in his final compositions, the inner structure of the body was important only insofar that it gave legibility to the expressive content of the figure.[16] Klassen notes that the emphasis on studying the outward expression of the body, even in deriving information on its internal structure from how the body appeared on the outside, shows that Michelangelo was less interested in exposing the literal interior of the body through rational practices of orthographic projection and scientific dissection, and more concerned about appearance.[17]

Perspective

Another way that *Il Divino* drew that was different from many other *Artisti* at that time, especially in Toscana, is that the others would often begin a picture by drawing a Grid that receded infinitely into the distance and converged at a point in the middle of the page.[18] *Il Divino* never did this! Others would draw the Grid first, and then they would draw Figures and Architecture on top of it. (This Grid is the same one that I now find in the blank Mathematical Desert of *Il Regno Digitale*. *Il Divino* would be very unpleased by this!) The way that *Il Divino* drew, he would have us leap from the atmosphere of the page, towards the viewer, and without any Grid whatsoever. This way, part of our Role was to entice the viewer's eye, drawing them in.[19]

Trust me, *Il Divino* could do it – he *could* have drawn *in Prospettiva*. He simply chose not to. (There was a time later in a drawing for the *La Biblioteca Laurenziana* where he did, but it was an isolated occurrence, I tell you.)[20] He did not choose to draw in this manner, which made Figures mere objects placed on the Grid and which fixed the view to one point. This would offend *Il Divino*'s sensibilities as *un*

scultore genial. He thought of all Figures in motion: reaching out recoiling, turning, moving, touching.[21]

Il Divino realised that Figures themselves could make a whole scene, without any Grid or even objects or landscape at all! In the Children's Bacchanal, which I spoke of earlier, and which I played a Role in, myself and many other *spiritelli* worked together to achieve an effect similar to this.

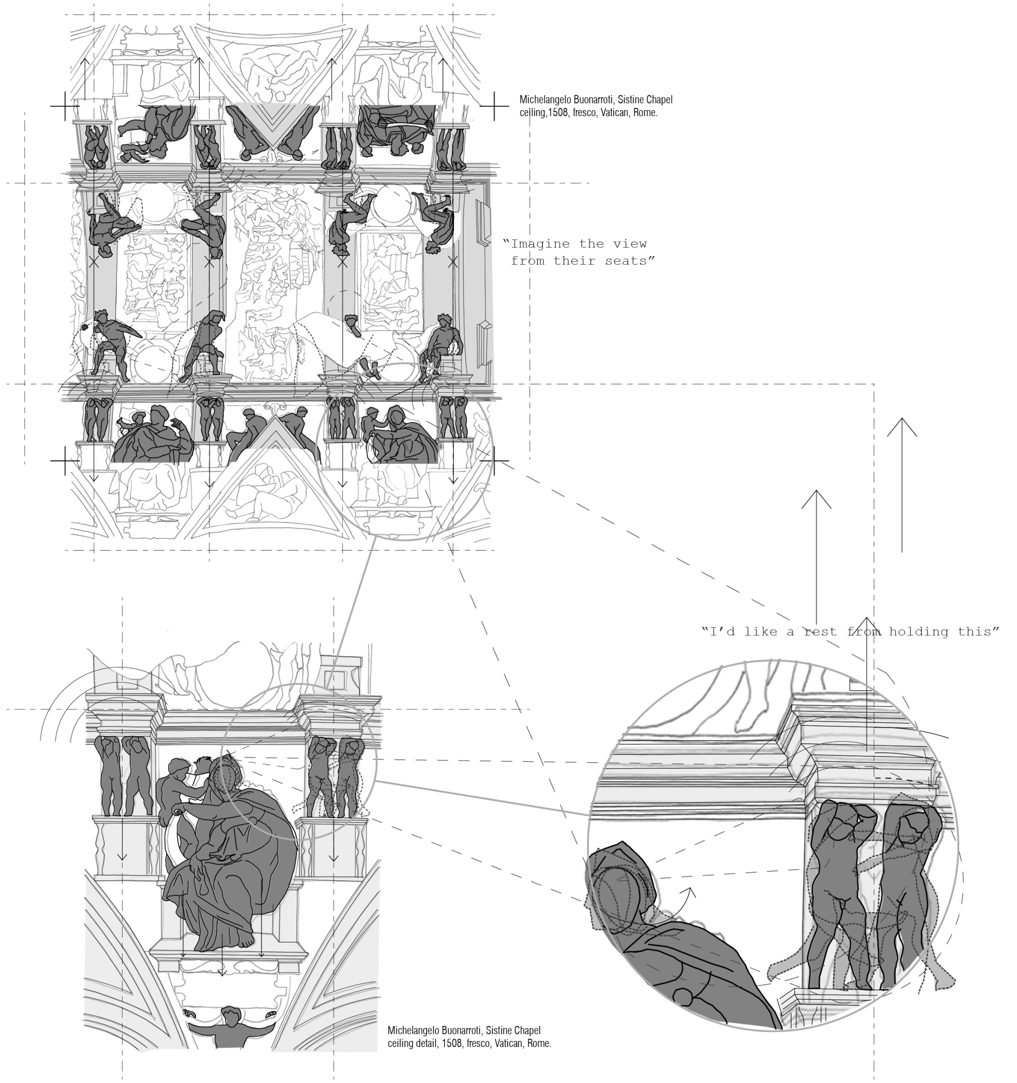
As P_1435 suggests above, Michelangelo avoided the use of linear perspective, even though the newly invented technology was practised with particular fervour in Tuscany at the time. Michelangelo was known to have said that perspective was a 'waste of time'.[22] Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Luis Pelletier note that 'In contrast to a growing number of his contemporaries, Michelangelo was resistant to the possibility of making architecture through projections, as he could only conceive of the human body in motion'.[23] This impacted not only the way he portrayed figures in space, but also his conception of space. In Jay's parlance, Michelangelo avoided 'the abstract coldness' of the 'perspectival gaze' and remained 'emotionally entangled' with the objects depicted in space.[24] While in the narrative P_1435 asserts that the Children's Bacchanal is an example of the figures delineating a space, Michelangelo's early relief sculpture Battle of the Centaurs of 1492 demonstrates this phenomenon even more clearly. Architectural historian Cammy Brothers has shown that this piece is also an early example of how, by deploying his library of sketched fragments of the body, Michelangelo's representations of the figures themselves could produce a non-perspectival space.[25] The orgy of twisting and turning naked bodies makes for a matrix of nooks and crannies, in-between zones and liminal voids, a space made from expressive figures.

Ignudi: narratives of ambiguous desire

Enough of this talk of the studies and drawings. I would like to tell you about how I appeared in *marmi* as part of the *Architettura* – aha, but I cannot because I never did! You may detect bitterness in my jest, Reader, and you would not be incorrect. However, jesting aside, at *La Cappella Sistina*, I appeared *as if* I were part of *Architettura*, and for this, I am immensely Proud. And it was in *La Cappella Sistina* that I felt like not only could I express myself, but I could do so and impact the rest of the scene (Figure 4.3). Typically, and in the past, and even with Signor Donato, we[26] aimed to effect the onlooker by capturing the onlookers' wandering attention, to startle and redirect their attention to the theme at hand.[27] In this composition, what we did seemed to follow that Convention: our presumed task – to adorn architectural Elements and assist in their structural Support – seemed straightforward as well, and to attend to the Prophets also seemed quite a usual endeavour for a Sprite. However, *Il Divino* allowed us freedom in the manner of a Role suited to an appearance we would have in an illuminated manuscript. We were allowed to act Inappropriately![28]

Il Divino gave us more freedom than any previous Artists to interact with the other 'stars' in the scene, including the Prophets who were busy reading adjacent to us. We had a delightful time distracting them with our horseplay, making them look every which way. And what fun it was![29]

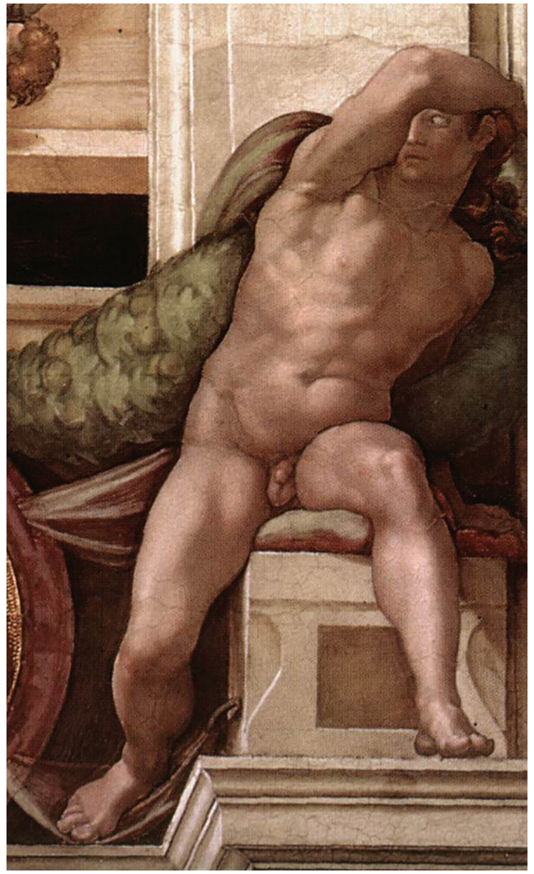
I remember those other Fellows who were part of the same work, who sat above me. While my Companions and I were helping support the Cornice above us, but also having so much fun playing Games and looking at all the magnificent scenes around us, these Fellows just sat, moving slowly to and fro and


Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sistine Chapel ceiling,1508, fresco, Vatican, Rome.
“Imagine the view from their seats”
“I'd like a rest from holding this”
Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sistine Chapel ceiling detail, 1508, fresco, Vatican, Rome.

4.3

4.3 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing *putti* and *ignudi* depicted in Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling fresco. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

twisting on their Plinths (Figure 4.4). They wrapped themselves in shawls that slightly billowed from a breeze and held bushels of acorns at their sides. I have no idea why *Il Divino* decided to give them such a prominent position and such a luxuriously languid task. I would have very much enjoyed a break from holding up the Cornice simply to sit on a Plinth. At that position, I could have seen very clearly all the calamitous and sublime events taking place in the rest of the painting, such as Adam and Eve being excommunicated from their garden, and Gionah being eaten by the whale (my favourite of the scenes – very scary!). I do not think I would have remained so inertly on the Plinth. I would have jumped into the scene. Maybe I could have attempted to ride on the back of that whale, or at least I could have poked or tickled Adam and Eve. (My, they looked like they needed some cheering up!) But those other Fellows, they just slowly shifted and turned, not saying a word. Looking back on it, I think they were just showing off, and I think that *Il Divino* was most interested in them, more than anything else in the whole Fresco, even more than the huge Fish that would eat Gionah! Some things about *Il Divino* I just will never understand.



4.4

4.4 Michelangelo Buonarroti, detail of *ignudo* figure, 1508, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City, Rome. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of the Vatican, Michelangelo, ignudo 08.jpg.

The *ignudi* that P_1435 refers to above are the 20 figures painted by Michelangelo in his Sistine Chapel ceiling: athletic, nude males at each corner of the five smaller narrative scenes. In the fresco, these figures twist atop plinths punctuating a *trompe l'oeil* structure of cornices, beams and pilasters. The *ignudi* have emblematic and idealised qualities. Yet, they do not have an outwardly anthropometric function nor are they reductive. In this case, they are gratuitous 'punctuation marks' in the composition, framing the narrative scenes taking place around them, without being directly involved.

Art historian James Hall makes several observations of the *ignudi* that help distinguish them from more abstract anthropometric models and speak of their apparent liminality. One is that their spatial function is one of stitching together the disparate as they occupy an intermediary space in the vertically hierarchical composition in a stratum that is in between the space of the biblical content depicted in the 'fictional' *trompe l'oeil* architectural space and the 'real' architectural space inhabited by the viewer.[30] As 'parallel presences', they work in conjunction with the architectural structure (consisting of both real and fictitious pilasters and beams), not only defining the boundaries between each of the narrative vignettes, but also exerting 'pressure' on them with their size, posture and connotations.[31]

Their location in the composition associates them with the divine. Much like Bernini's *putti* discussed in Chapter 7, the *ignudi* are liminal figures, somewhere between mortal and divine, and between real and depicted. Brothers also notes that the indicated materiality of the *ignudi* – where the tone of their skin was rendered similarly to the architectural surround – added to their ambiguity, making them seem as both part of the architecture and simultaneously as flesh and blood subjects such as those that they helped to frame.[32] While Hall recognises the *ignudi* as a celebration of masculinity, others have argued that their ambiguous gender contributes to their liminal state.[33] Of the *ignudi*, the poet Randell Jarrell states 'a dreaming, acquiescent femininity is made to transfigure a body factually masculine'.[34] The construction of an ambiguous gender of the figures added another modality in Michelangelo's means of making figures appearing ever in the midst of becoming. Rather than material *non finito*, ambiguity has to do with an elegant intensification of depicted traits. As ambiguous as the figures may be, the *ignudi* are unambiguously homoerotic. Art historian Carmen C. Bambach notes that the figures exhibit a sensual celebration of the male body intrinsic to Michelangelo's art.[35] As figures at the intersection of carnal desire and architecture, the *ignudi* bring to mind what Frascari saw in Scarpa's drawings where 'his architecture, like his figures of women, is a continuous research into tangible beauty, not a canonical and abstract one'.[36] In many respects, the *ignudi* are the clearest distillations of Michelangelo's a priori construction of the figure discussed above: twisting, entangled, spatial, ambiguous, transgressive and erotic.

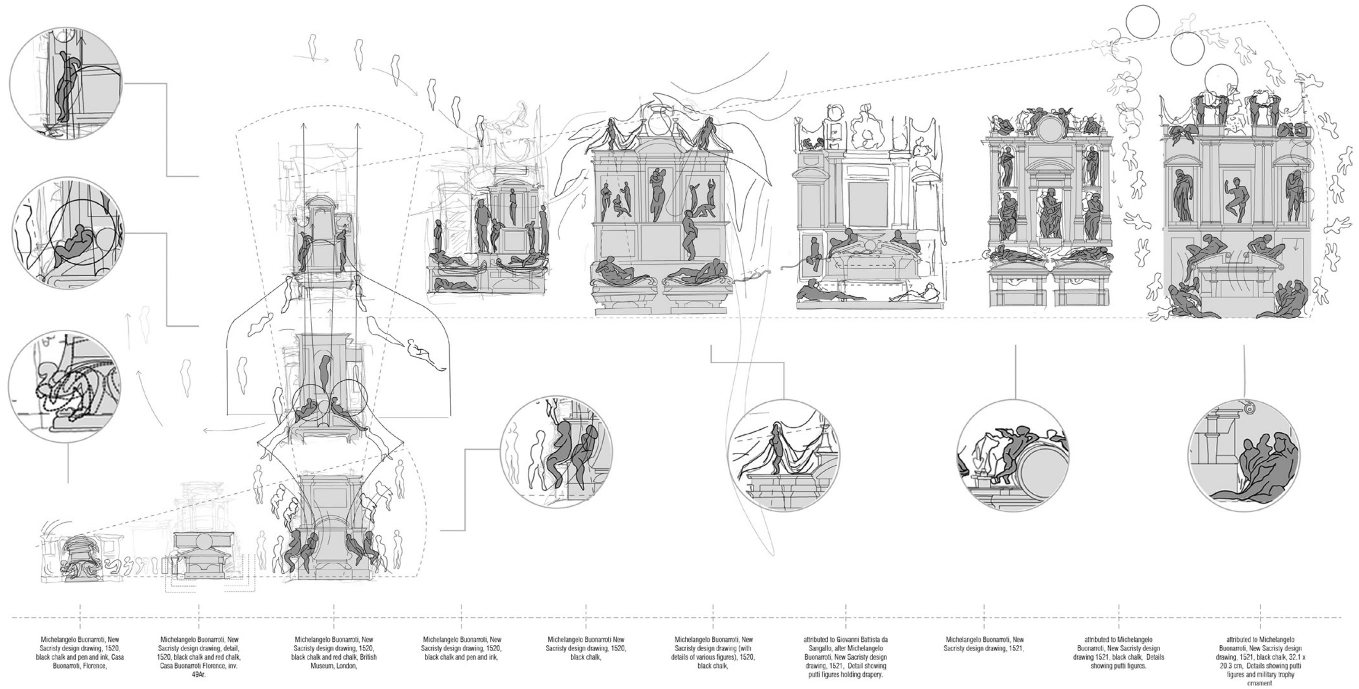
The New Sacristy drawings: figures inhabiting and shaping architecture

La Sagrestia Nuova did not work out exactly as I hoped, and I should have known when *Il Divino* did not include any *Figure* in his proposal for the facade of *Chiesa di San Lorenzo*, and then when I was sketched but never included in the *Tomba di Papa Giulio II*, but I ignored this and mistakenly took my appearance in *La Cappella Sistina* – where I became a part of the Architecture – as auspicious forecasts of future designs in which I would work with *Il Divino* and continue to be a part of Architecture. I think of my experience in *La Sagrestia Nuova* and the fond memories and lost opportunities there often.

What I can tell you is that in the drawings, many Figures aided *Il Divino* in his design sketches. There were so many Games involved in the drawings, but particularly in shaping the *tetto spezzato*[37] of the Medici Tomb.

You must understand, *Il Divino* drew Sculpture and Architecture together, having a hand in all aspects at once, without distinguishing between them.[38] And as I have told you already, he hated drawing in *Prospettiva*, even when designing *Il Quadro*. When he would draw, he would use the paper to imagine a multitude of different scenes, sometimes all of the same project, sometimes a bit of another. *Il Divino* did not only help us to find Poses that *showed* motion. As *Il Divino* would sketch, elaborate and sketch again on top of the original, our positions would change; we would move! As a painter, *Il Divino* was well versed in this process of accumulating *pentimenti*.[39] And when we Figures were erased and repositioned, we moved and affected the things around us. And they could affect us! All of us, *Figure* and *Il Quadro*, were unusually lively on the page.

As P_1435 describes, a single page drawn by Michelangelo often contains archipelagos of design ideas from multiple projects and studies that overlap and inform one another. In the New Sacristy drawings, there are locales on the page where a series of affinitive propositions, 'invention' drawings or small vignettes for design possibilities were considered intensely and with proximity on the page (Figure 4.5).[40] The process of *disegno* – the Renaissance practice of exploring design through drawing on paper — in this case intensified through practices informed by painterly and sculptural techniques – endowed Michelangelo's design with specific qualities. P_1435 claims that from his viewpoint, he and the other figures moved, and that this proto-cinematic phenomenon occurred where the contours of the figures showed overlapping, changed positions.[41] *Disegno*, with its many iterations, allowed the author to engage the page dynamically, overlaying versions of figures atop one another, implying sequential motion. In the drawings, when the figures are drawn with a gesture that implies motion, there is often a resultant action or changed component that responds to that motion.

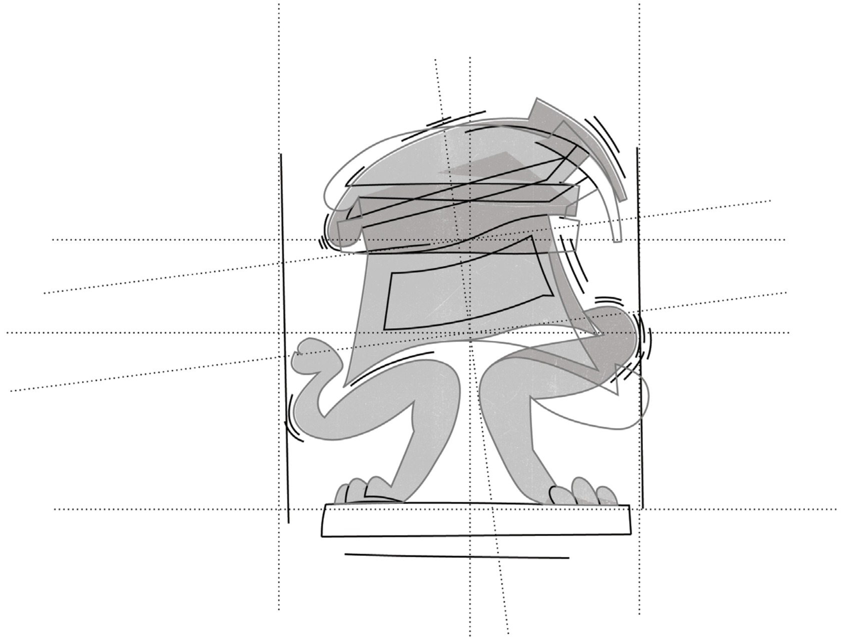

Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1520, black chalk and pen and ink, Casa Buonarroti, Florence,
Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, detail, 1520, black chalk and red chalk, Casa Buonarroti Florence, inv. 49Ar.
Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1520, black chalk and red chalk, British Museum, London,
Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1520, black chalk and pen and ink,
Michelangelo Buonarroti New Sacristy design drawing, 1520, black chalk,
Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing (with details of various figures), 1520, black chalk,
attributed to Giovanni Battista da Sangallo, after Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521, Detail showing putti figures holding drapery.
Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521,
attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing 1521, black chalk, Details showing putti figures.
attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521, black chalk, 32.1 x 20.3 cm, Details showing putti figures and military trophy ornament

4.5

4.5 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing the movement and interaction of figures in the drawings and the progression of the design through the chronological sequence of Michelangelo's design drawings for the New Sacristy. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

Casa Buonarroti 71ar

Signor Alessandro, I have no idea what this Proto-Cinematic is that you speak of, but please allow me to continue without interruption. *Allora*, I did not appear in the drawings until later, but I remember the first of *Il Divino*'s sketches for *La Sagrestia Nuova*. I remember well. It was of Sarcophagus (Figure 4.6).[42] At first, he was part lion and very energetic, bouncing around and changing shape. In fact, whenever he appeared, I heard percussive Music. As is the case with so many things in *Il Divino*'s drawings, the legs of Sarcophagus could and did change form. In this case,



4.6

4.6 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing the exaggerated movement of the tomb and leonine legs from Michelangelo's drawing as described by P_1435. Adapted from a detail of the original drawing: Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1520. Black chalk and pen and ink, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv.71Ar (corpus183r).

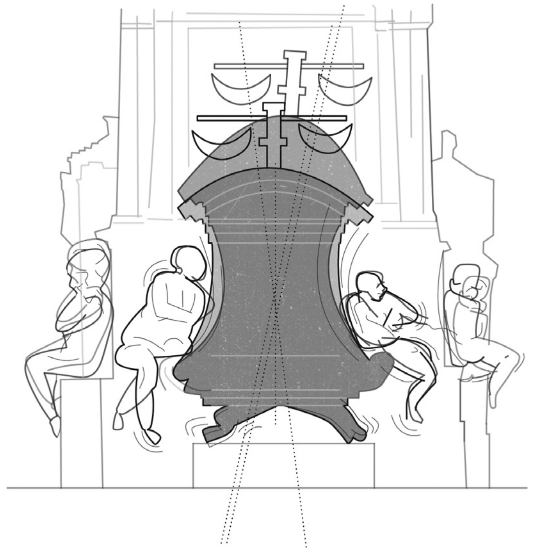
they eventually became the scrolls you see today, but they never lost their energetic Restlessness.[43]

The sarcophagus that P_1435 describes in the Casa Buonarroti 71ar drawing is supported by gargantuan leonine legs that appear elastic and powerful. P_1435 suggests that the imagination of their movement associated with their pose aided in deformations of the sarcophagus. The centre point of the sarcophagus lid does appear pushed upwards as if by the exertion of forces, causing its outer edges to curl inwards with scroll-like finials curling downwards and its sides to bow in, expressing the first instance of the exertion of point loads from below that, as the design progresses and eventually 'breaks' the lid completely.[44]

Casa Buonarroti 49ar

In the next drawing, Sarcophagus had grown in size and was still hyperactive, shaking about, squatting, but ultimately deciding to crouch very low, and then making a Game of balancing a Roundel above him, but to do this, he became more still, stopping his bouncing and becoming rigid.

P_1435's observations of the sarcophagus supporting a roundel can be seen in the drawings Casa Buonarroti 49ar and Wilde 25r. While the leonine legs have transformed into a version of the architectural scroll that we see in the final design, they seem to remain imbued with vertical action: horizontal lines suggest the capitals in the attic story were tested at various heights. The restless leonine legs, transformed into architectural scrolls, imply buoyant vertical force as if they could move the upper stories up and down, continuing to influence the proportions.



4.7

4.7 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing the exaggerated movement of the tomb from Michelangelo's drawing as described by P_1435. With thanks to Laura Kershaw. Adapted from a detail of the original drawing: Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1520. Black chalk and red chalk, British Museum, London, inv. 1859-6-25-545r (W 25r Corpus 184r).

Wilde 25r

And in the next sketch, the very sleepy melancholy Ladies arrived (Figure 4.7). These somnolent women seemed quite the opposite of Sarcophagus, and I thought they would cast a pall on his jovial mood. Rather than bouncing around exuberantly, they seemed to be in need of a Nap. At first, they seemed, at best, boring.

The broad hips and legs tapering to small feet and the curvilinear and rotund features of the quickly sketched figures P_1435 describes in the Wilde 25r drawing are arguably feminine traits. However, P_1435 does not mention their physical attributes, and instead gives a dismissive description of the 'somnolent women', seeming to assume that passivity itself signals femininity, thus reflecting a world view situated in what Haraway would describe as the patriline.[45] As Patricia Simons has argued, as charming and funny as *putti* appear, they often function in Italian Renaissance imagery to assert an exclusively male bravado and virility. It follows that P_1435 would assume a correlation between agency and the male body.[46]

Mi scusi per favore Signor Alessandro, this portion of my tale was not yet complete. Your interruption is rude, and I take issue with many of your statements – at least, with those that I understand. To continue my oration, although sleepy, the manner in which the women acted reminded me of those mute *ignudi* from *La Cappella Sistina* (you may recall, those who you referred to as idealised *male* Figures). *Allora*, the women slid from the top of Sarcophagus, and then, as if exhausted, they leaned on the sides of the Sarcophagus and pushed them back in, causing Sarcophagus's sides to bow inwards and his top to stretch upwards (Figure 4.7)! Indeed, Signor Alessandro, when I witnessed such *agency*, I found it thrilling, and I was eager for *Il Divino* to include me as well so I could also help to sculpt *Il Quadro*!

It is true that the identity of the figures in the Wilde 25r sheet is not clear. They have been called 'slumping figures', 'male nudes', 'youthful nudes' and 'mourners', and they have been recognised as 'similarly composed as the Sistine *Ignudi*, precursors of the reclining figures on the tombs as executed'.[47] P_1435, then, joins many scholars in puzzling over their identity and also recognising the impact the figures seem to have on the configuration of the tomb form.[48] P_1435's patrilineal lens remains a consideration in his perception of the drawing's contents nonetheless.

Casa Buonarroti 88ar

Bah, Signor Alessandro, I don't know what you are talking about. *Allora*, I remember one of the Medici appearing next – I could not make out which one, for he was a Ghost, faintly outlined in a Niche above Sarcophagus.[49] But this Medici was standing above Sarcophagus and the depressed and sleepy women, who had succeeded in changing Sarcophagus's shape and had climbed on top of him, propping up their elbows on the Roundel that he balanced on his back as they laid. (By this point, I realised that the material that *Il Divino* sketched was, like our own Bodies, stretchy and bouncy but heavy too. The stuff around us – be it a pilaster, wall or Cornice – sometimes sprang back to its original shape and sometimes, as in this case, retained the imprint of our own shaping.) The melancholy women appeared to be content with – well, perhaps not content but resigned to – this position, and began to get comfortable there, striking a pose, showing off, as the most important Figures right in the middle of the whole design, but also, I think, just preparing finally to sleep. Around this time, they began to Transform. Their Bodies began to get stronger. In fact, they began to look like the *ignudi* more than ever, and I think it was the strength that they gained with this change that allowed them to hang on to Sarcophagus's curved *tetto* as he shook about but also as he began to grow and, in this drawing, become gigantic.

Although the sketch is gestural, as P_1435 observes, the physique of the figures has transformed to the more defined musculature which P_1435 sees as similar to Michelangelo's Sistine *ignudi*. Through the evolution of the project, these figures morph, becoming more *ignudi* like and then becoming more like the allegories that appear in the final work. This transformative property of the figure itself correlates with the changes to the architectural elements that are associated with it.

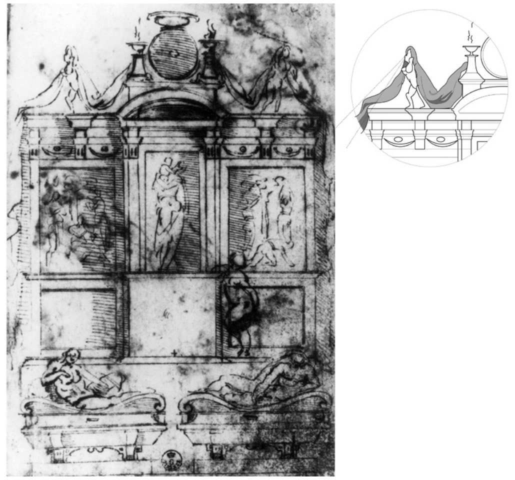
The verticality of the tomb in the Casa Buonarroti 88ar drawing which P_1435 describes coincides with a faint sketch of a figure above the roundel, the first standing figure in the sketches. The triangular composition enacted by the three figures solidifies the nucleus of the pyramidal arrangement which perseveres throughout the project from that point onwards. The appearance of this figure also corresponds with an increased verticality and size of the tomb, and the appearance of the indication of a shadow to the right of the pilaster flanking the niches. The wall gained increased plasticity in this drawing as the relief of the niches and pilasters became more pronounced.[50]

Wilde 26v

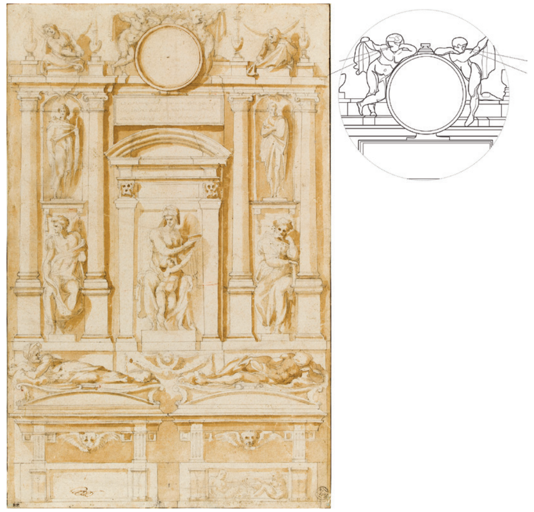
In Wilde 26v, likely the next drawing in Michelangelo's drawing process, Michelangelo explored not only another freestanding tomb scheme, but also a wall tomb scheme.[51]

Scusi, Signor Alessandro, please leave the explanation to me. Yours is just incredibly boring. The next drawing that we helped *Il Divino* with was a quick sketch of the wall. When the Nobleman stood up in the centre, as soon as he left, he inspired the women, who seemed to be gradually looking more and more like the *ignudi*, to stand up suddenly![52]

They gave Sarcophagus such a start that he went stiff with fright![53] When women stood, even the Roundel became rigid. As if to imitate the women, it transformed into a tall volume with ledges for the Women to lean on, and Sarcophagus grew less tall. The force of the women's legs pushed him down.[54] Wonderful hanging garlands also sprung forth, and niches that I knew were to be occupied by other Figures began to open up. And that's when I got my hopes up, as I thought perhaps *Il Divino* would draw me in one of the Niches.



4.8



4.9

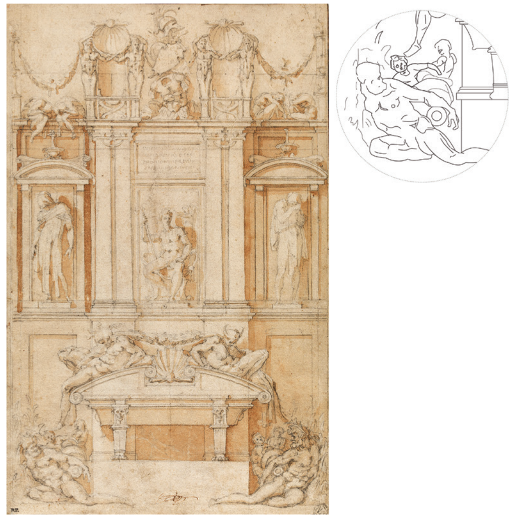
4.8 Attributed to Aristotile (Bastiano) da Sangallo, after Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521. Paper, pen and brown ink, 200 mm × 136 mm. Uffizi 607E. Courtesy of Gallerie degli Uffizi. The detail diagram to the right shows the detail of the figure P_1435 claims to be in the narrative. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

4.9 Attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521. Wash with brown and black chalk on paper, 321 mm × 203 mm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 837r (Corpus 194r). Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Christophe Chavan. The detail diagram to the right shows the *putti* figures who P_1435 claims to be in the narrative. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

Wilde 26r

There were many more Figures in the next drawing! *Il Divino* drew Maria – she was enormous – in a deep Niche right in the centre. She stretched her Body upwards, and the Women stretched as if to try to match her height! It was as if they had no Bones and could reach any proportion they wished! (You see, all this Morphing at will that is part of *Il Regno* is also not so new to me – I have experienced it before!) Now, Sarcophagus was Cloned (yes, this too – the esoteric capabilities of Ctrl + V and Ctrl + C – is nothing new to me!) and, happy to have a Friend and feeling comfortable again, he loosened up – his legs never showed themselves to be lion-like again, but they became curved and springy once more, and at that moment even more Figures began appearing. For instance, *Fiume* arrived, and then his Companion, both of whom for some reason insisted on laying on the floor under Sarcophagus's belly.[55] Many of us Figures are often drawn to Niches and cavernous grottoes, feeling comfortable when we are as much part of the wall as possible, while others yearn for a central Position, like Maria, while still others, like me, enjoy being at such a height as is possible, for instance on the uppermost Cornice, but *Fiume* always seemed in the mood to lay on the floor. (Incidentally, I was very jealous of *Fiume*, since *Il Divino* had taken the time to sculpt him from clay. I wondered why I could not also be sculpted. But in the end, as *Fiume* was not included in *il Progetto* either, my envy of him waned.[56])

Then, inspiring Sarcophagus to become even more curved, *Duca* Giuliano de' Medici arrived, looking as muscular as an Atlantid. He lay down on top of Sarcophagus who, having relaxed and gained his elasticity, began to arch his back and twist about, forming what seemed to be a splendidly comfortable Surface for Duke Giuliano.[57]



4.10

4.10 Attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy design drawing, 1521. Wash with brown and black chalk on paper, 321 mm×203 mm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 838r (Corpus 186r). Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Philippe Fuzeau. The diagram to the right shows a detail of the drawing; the small figure behind the reclining River God is the figure P_1435 claims to be, fallen from above. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

Uffizi 607E

Finally, dear Reader – and Signor Alessandro, you too – pay attention to this portion of my Tale. Finally, in the next drawing, which was one for the design of a double-wall Tomb scheme, I was able to make an appearance – and though I enviously had eyed Maria's Niche as the ideal Perch, I made my entrance all above her on the Cornice, which I thought was even more preferable (Figure 4.8)! Yes, you may credit me with aiding *Il Divino* in the design of the uppermost stories of the composition of the Tombs. Although Signor Alessandro tells me that the sketches by *Il Divino* himself are no longer available, you can see from copies drawn by Signor Sangallo that I played my Role with vigour, as my Companion and I supported Festoons high above the other Figures![58] I had been able to practise such a Role in my work in the design of the facade of San Lorenzo.[59] This swath was quite long and heavy, and we struggled to hold it in place as it billowed and fell down the sides of the Tomb, but I had grown accustomed to such ardours and was not frightened by the height nor the task as I had been a Century earlier at *Chiesa Santa Croce*.[60] Since I was able to keep calm, I was also able to marvel at what was happening below me.

Wilde 27r

At that point, with our diverse movements and our interactions with the walls of the room, we Figures had urged *Il Divino* to consider three wall Tombs (two walls with one Tomb, and then one wall for the two *Magnifici*). As *Il Divino* continued to draw, the Women laid down again, going through still more transformations. They had aged tremendously, and two became Men![61]

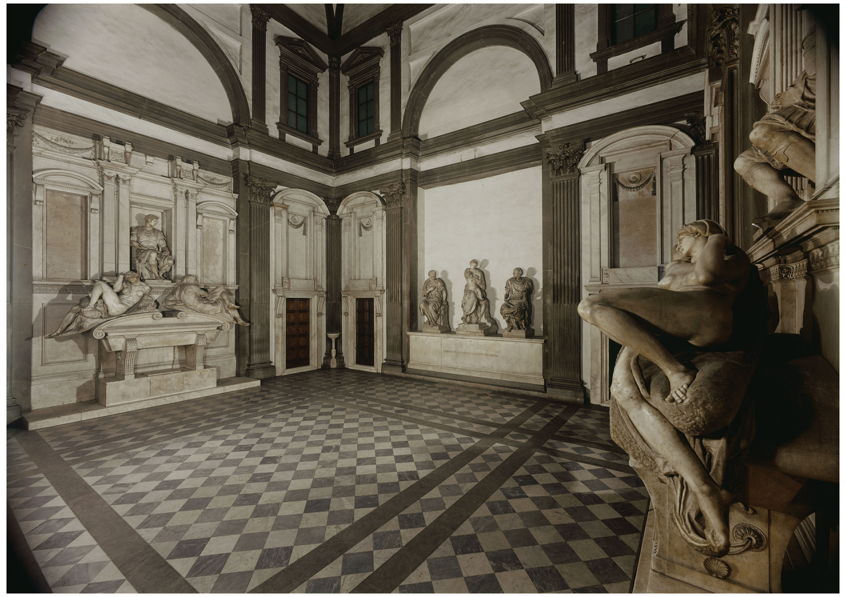
Sarcophagus and his Friend also went through many more changes there, flipping their *tetti*[62] up and down in many elegant shapes and then merging together as one, and then nearly splitting apart again but not all the way.[63]

Louvre 837r

I made my way to the highest point of the earthly domain as I could, atop the Cornice.[64] There, I held a Roundel with my Companion (Figure 4.9). This was a fine position. I was above everyone else and in the centre, and I attempted to perform my Role dutifully. I had brought my trusty *Larva* mask with me, for I thought that although the ambiance was sombre, I could do my part to bring levity, and sure enough, *Il Divino* began to draw more of these masks throughout the entire *progetto* – whenever I saw one of these in an unexpected place, it gave me a gleeful fright![65]

Louvre 838r

In the single-tomb drawing that followed, my Companions and I remained on the Cornice, but then it began to get very crowded there (Figure 4.10). We were joined by Mourners, who were sobbing and wailing uncontrollably – first, there were only two, but then two more arrived, and the exasperating sound gained a raucous and disturbing volume.[66]



4.11

4.11 View from floor of Night, Day, and Giuliano de' Medici figure by Michelangelo Buonarroti in the New Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence, 1520–33. Photo Scala, Florence, courtesy of the Ministero Dei Beni e Delle Attività Culturali e Del Turismo.

Then, four Herms arrived, holding large shells aloft. It became difficult to maintain one's balance with the crowd growing up there, and the chorus of wails coming from the distraught Mourners – but then I was given such a start from a strange Apparition atop the Cornice that had so intrigued me: behind it, a suit of armour was exposed, seemingly abandoned, yet moving ever so slightly.[67] My Companion and I were curious, so we balanced our way over to it, holding our breath as not to disturb whatever Phantasm might inhabit this suit. And when we were quite close, and I slowly craned my neck to find if, through the gaping opening of the collar, anything could be seen, a hideous Annelid raised his prostomium through it, making for a truly Grotesque head![68]

This was much more frightening than the *Larve* that *Il Divino* had been drawing adorning the various capitals and mouldings![69] My Companions and I screamed, and one of us – I cannot remember who was first – lost his footing and then grabbed onto the other, who, in turn, then lost his footing, and we all plummeted downwards! Luckily, Sarcophagus's top was as bouncy and springy as ever. So, we landed on him, bounced upwards and wound up on the floor with *Fiume*!

Reader, I tell you, this gymnastic Feat, although somewhat terrifying and mostly accidental, was such fun! But the memory is bittersweet because after all this, *Il Divino* stopped caring much for the project, and although Signor Tribolo and Signor Vasari did try their best to help the *progetto* along, they simply could not keep *Il Divino*'s attention on it, so distracted was he with matters in *Roma* and so unimpressed was he with the younger Medici who were the benefactors and subject matter of the Tomb itself. So, I was never built into the final project, much to my dismay, although sometimes I like to think that perhaps if *Il Divino* had been able to pay attention to the project in the later stages, I would have been present.

The New Sacristy interior: notes on figures as architecture

All of the efforts I made to hold the Roundel were for naught. The double-wall tomb was realised in a paltry manner without me there. The single-wall tomb designs were greatly reduced, leaving out most of the Figures, including myself. This stung my pride. I had gathered my expectations, but they diminished by the day as *Il Divino* spent more time in *Roma*, and when he did design details, oh, he drew *Figure*, yes – *Fiume, Duchi, Notta, Giorno* – but never *spiritelli*. Yes, I remember when he drew the pilaster base which became *un profilo urlante arrabbiato*,[70] I heard *Il Divino* conversing with *Notta* and *Giorno*, and even writing poetry with them![71] That is the moment when I knew he was more enchanted with the others and had no use for me in the project.

Admittedly, I maintain a degree of envy with respect to the Figures that were immortalised *in marmo* there in the lower levels of *La Sagrestia*. Indeed, the upper levels are even worse in their paucity of *Figure*. Their surfaces are blank, without even *Intaglio* to speak of. I admit the play of light in the soaring upper levels is beautiful, even without the *Figure* meant to appear there, fine, but I also must admit that Signor Bernini would have achieved a much better solution to signifying the heavenly Realm, as he would employ *putti* to catch the light in the uppermost reaches of a *Cupola*.[72]

Allora, I am bored of this topic of *La Sagrestia Nuova* now, since I did not make an appearance in the final work, something I will never forgive *Il Divino* for. So, I will leave Signor Alessandro to explain this portion of the tale. Signor Alessandro, please be brief, but be sure to explain the frightful Delight one can experience from encountering *Duca* Giuliano, and also please explain how my *Larva* is included in the project. *Notta* took it from me and uses it to frighten those who visit. I maintain that this task should have fallen to me!

Although P_1435's narrative abruptly ends before an explanation of the built project itself, it is worth adding a few notes on the sculpted and ornamental figures that were built and included in the New Sacristy. The sculpted figures impart many of the a priori qualities discussed in the beginning of this chapter into the interior space. As they tangled with the architecture in the virtual realm of the drawings (and were sculpted through clay studies in physical reality – an important part of Michelangelo's process largely left out of P_1435's description here), they gained specific attributes that make them particularly strange and compelling. The figures on the tomb walls clustered in triadic groupings, embedded in three of the four walls, are a part of the substance, space and ornamental language of the architecture.

Embodied and Embedded Leitmotifs

The idiosyncratic DNA of the chapel's ornament is legible in the figures, as if presented by them. The figures' accoutrements are displayed and then reiterated elsewhere in the chapel, connecting across space and scales. An example is Night's mask, its visage positioned to be visible and potentially touched by a visitor standing in the New Sacristy. A similar visage to the mask, a lion decorating Duke Giuliano's armour can be seen above Night. To either side, above and below her, yet more masks are found in the friezes on the wall as well as the capitals of pilasters above the Duke's head. These recurring larva, which in the text above P_1435 claims a role in implanting, are examples of leitmotifs or recurring themes that run through the chapel, reinforcing interconnecting, socially situated and evocative themes throughout the space.[73] These refrains are one way that figure and architecture are interwoven in the project.

Fluid Iconographies

The built figures have an emblematic dimension, as they are representations of persona signifying religious, political and mythical themes. Their iconography worked at multiple registers for Michelangelo's contemporaries. For instance, while the signification of Catholic iconography was likely completely obvious to any Tuscan of the day, other symbolic meanings would be likely accessible only to the *literati*: take the significance of the masks or larvae, which was associated with ancient Roman iconography, and arguably signified the emptiness of the Dukes' earthly aspirations due to premature deaths.[74]

To this day, the meaning of the figures' more cryptic symbolic vocabulary is a source of endless fascination precisely in part because the figures' traits are so particularly crafted. Yet, much of their significance is obscure. Michelangelo's intentionally esoteric and opaque approach to the symbolic language engenders multiple readings made possible by the numerous and layered iconographic details.[75] One example is the pupil-less eyes of the Duke Giuliano figure. Creighton E. Gilbert writes that the lack of pupils coincides with an overarching narrative of the futility and injustice of the Medici deaths, where the figures lie imprisoned only to hear and not see, in 'a blind response to the world', likening this metaphorical device to the depiction of Homer in Raphael's Parnassus.[76] The figure is positioned so that he was immediately visible upon entry, portrayed vainly craning his neck to view the visitor entering the space confrontationally. As Gilbert puts it, 'The stone men respond when they notice us, the flesh men, coming into their room'.[77] Even today, the confrontational gesture reinforced by this strange detail would likely prompt a 'flesh' visitor passing through the original entry to notice one's echoing footsteps in the tall chapel, perhaps treading lightly so as not to disturb the Duke.

Transient Materiality

The figures are profoundly hybrid – a quality that again surfaces at multiple scales and registers. For instance, in Hall's analysis of the breasts of the figures, he notes that Giuliano's 'tumescent' breasts and 'distended' nipples signify a maternal quality. Yet, they are fused with a 'militant' torso and armor.[78] In this reading, the Giuliano figure's body is an enmeshment of masculinity and femininity, flesh and equipment, militancy and maternalism.

The resonance of many of the details evoking hybridity are contingent on materiality. The seamless melding of Giuliano's armor with flesh relies on the precise crafting of the figure from a block of marble, making for a visual continuity across depicted leather and flesh.[79] The sensual surface quality of the marble's finishing shows a great range, from the *non finito* elements, where swaths of marble are left without finishing (e.g. the rough-hewn mass that Night's left arm merges with), to the finely polished elements (e.g. Night's belly, which is honed to a fine sheen). In these moments, the definition of the body becomes unstable, arguably evoking a body in the midst of becoming. In the case of the figures at the New Sacristy, materiality invites an oscillatory perception of first and second seeings.[80]

Material Continuity

The seamless quality exemplified by Giuliano's armor is extended to the junction between his body and the architecture itself. As Alina Payne points out, hewn from the same marble that comprises the architectural surround, the figures seem to be a part of it, blurring the boundary between architecture and figure.[81] This hybridity with architecture is reinforced in the apparent forces and formal echoes, where the figures appear to engage the fluid plasticity of the massing of the wall through their postures, gestures, scale and position.[82]

The formal massing of the architecture seems to be caught in a dynamic interplay with figures. For example, the seated figures of the Dukes occupy niches deeply recessed into the thickness of walls which can be thought of as carved out layers of wall mass. In the text above, P_1435 notes the mismatch of scales between the Duke figure and niche. In fact, as Hall notes, the niche's dimensions – not deep enough to enclose the Dukes' seated bodies fully – causes the figure nearly to teeter on the edge, and the height is so low that the figures would surely smack his head if he were to rise.[83]

In this mismatch lies a tension that recalls the vertical push and pull of elastic bodies and architectural elements in drawings such as Wilde 26v. P_1435's narrative describes the effect of the standing Medici, first appearing in Casa Buonarroti 88ar, which according to Brothers initiated a correlation between the figures standing postures and a change in scale and vertical proportions in the surrounding architecture.[84] The Dukes still appear as if they may rise, bringing attention to the chapel's height. It is nearly identical in plan but taller than its nearby precedent, the Old Sacristy. Details such as the skewed window surround punctuating the attic story overhead reinforce the verticality of the interior and make for a forced perspective when viewed from floor level, reinforcing the perception of an unexpectedly tall space. For a visitor, the interior dome and the high walls of the chapel loom.

The spatial positioning of the four 'Times of the Day', located at the feet of the Dukes, projecting out from the wall, in the proxemic space of the visitor, gives the sculpted figures' expressions and precarious positions prominence. As P_1435 describes they did as the women in the drawings, in the built work the transformed figures appear to slide off their scrolled pediments, twisting and turning, seemingly arrested in a descent down the inverted volutes they rest on.[85] In cases such as this, the figures convey a similar dynamic reciprocity with the architectural surround that occurred in the design drawings. In this sense, the figures' active presence in the drawings is latent in the great spatial, formal and volumetric range, caused by a dynamic pushing and pulling that ripples through the Sacristy. In their gestures, positioning and materiality, the figures seem to assert ownership over the space, with dispositions ranging from disinterest or unawareness to outright

annoyance of living human presence. Yet, who can blame them? They are the original inhabitants, and as an integral part of the architecture, they *are* the room.

Notes

1. Payne, *From Ornament to Object*, 124–8.
2. P_1435 uses the term *Il Divino* to refer to Michelangelo. Pon notes that Michelangelo was first called *divino* in Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* of 1516, but the term was used often thereafter. Pon, 'Michelangelo's lives', 1015–37.
3. P_1435 refers here to Michelangelo Buonarroti's Madonna of the Stairs, ca. 1490. Marble, 567 mm × 401 mm.
4. P_1435 is oblivious to the symbolic significance of the work, which Livio Pestelli posits 'was a visual exemplum of what (Neoplatonist philosopher and teacher of Michelangelo, Marsilio) Ficino considered the threats posed to the human soul by the excess of love for the elemental body'. Livio Pestilli. 'Michelangelo's Children's Bacchanal', 374.
5. Italian translation = 'hide-and-seek games'.
6. P_1435 refers to the Taddei Tondo, a relief sculpture by Michelangelo of 1504–5.
7. Klassen, 'The image of the human body, artifice, and architecture', 75.
8. Klassen, 'The image of the human body, artifice, and architecture', 67.
9. P_1435 refers here to Albrecht Dürer's Proportions of an Infant from his *Four Books on Human Proportions*, ca. 1532.
10. Condivi wrote that when Michelangelo 'reads Albrecht Dürer, he finds his work very weak . . . [Dürer] discusses only the measurements and varieties of human bodies for which no fixed rule can be given, and he forms his figures straight upright like poles; as to what was more important, the movements and gestures of human beings, he says not a word'. Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, 99.
11. 'The organic life [that da Vinci's] figure suggests, inside the astronomical and cosmological frame that both inscribes him and is inscribed by him, is that of a complete "outline", a finality and totality that is formed from the human body's status as both instrument of measurement and 'immediate datum'. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 45.
12. The term 'anthropomorphic devices' was originally used by Rudolf Wittkower. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 45.
13. By the time of Leonardo da Vinci, Beatriz Colomina states that 'The central reference for architecture was no longer a whole body but a dissected, fragmented, analysed body'. With the practices of anatomical dissection, the body became an object of scientific scrutiny. Colomina, 'X ray architecture', 34.
14. This description is indebted to Klassen, who argues that da Vinci consistently showed section cuts through the entire body, while Michelangelo's sketches are likely more faithful to what he saw with the naked eye. He showed a body that has layers peeled away. The sketches acknowledge the body's physicality rather than the sectional cuts imagined and illustrated by da Vinci. Klassen, 'The image of the human body, artifice, and architecture', 66–7. An example of such a drawing is Michelangelo Buonarroti's Anatomical Studies of a Male Leg, ca. 1520. Red chalk on paper, 28.2 cm × 20.7 cm.
15. P_1435 refers here to St Bartholomew, often depicted in paintings and sculptures with flayed skin and exposed musculature.
16. Elkins, 'Michelangelo and the human form', 179.
17. Klassen, 'The image of the human body, artifice, and architecture', 67.
18. A beautiful example of the type of drawing P_1435 refers to is Leonardo da Vinci's study for the Adoration of the Magi, 1481. Pen and ink, traces of silverpoint on paper, 1,630 mm × 2,900 mm.
19. P_1435 speaks of foreshortening, the effect of which is to connect 'seer and seen', as discussed by Klassen. Klassen, 'The image of the human body, artifice, and architecture', 75.
20. Instances of perspectives in Michelangelo's drawings are rare, but there are a few examples, including the drawing Casa Buonarotti 92 Ar, a sketch for the stairs at the Laurentian Library.
21. Ackerman discusses Michelangelo's avoidance of perspective drawings stemming from Michelangelo's idea of 'the observer being in motion . . . [he] hesitated to visualize buildings from a fixed point'. Ackerman argues that Michelangelo's determination to locate himself inside the space through non-perspectival drawing was a 'direct critique of the early Renaissance theories of architecture which emphasized ideal mathematical proportions based upon a perfect image of a human body, rather than the experience our bodies offer us in movement in space'. Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 47.
22. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 102.

23. Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 'Architectural representation beyond perspectivism', 7.
24. See discussion in Chapter 2. Jay, 'Scopic regimes of modernity', 8.
25. Brothers' analysis shows that to compose the Battle of the Centaurs, Michelangelo called on his catalogue of fragmented poses and musculature, which he had committed to memory. It allowed him to accumulate permutations of three poses to comprise this dense field of figures. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 41, 42.
26. By 'we', P_1435 refers to himself and other *putti*.
27. Starting in the late fifteenth century, *putti* in the marginalia of manuscripts had the job of 'enacting the thousand little distracting fancies that invade the reader's thoughts as his attention wanders from his studies and he daydreams over the pages'. Dempsey, *Reinventing the Renaissance Putto*, 90.
28. As described by Hall, in medieval marginalia, *putti* were used in this way to bring the reader back to the task at hand. 'In illuminated manuscripts, flanking images of frolicking and fighting *spiritelli* can signify the random thoughts that arise in the reader's mind as his attention wanders from the elevated object of enquiry'. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, 90.
29. The mischief that P_1435 refers to here is what James Hall describes as 'a cacophonous restless world' depicted in the Sistine Chapel fresco, 'where thought has to be sifted, debated, monitored and perhaps even censored'. Hall recognised the *putti*'s role in contributing to an underlying sense of scepticism that pervades the content of the scenes. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, 119.
30. 'Michelangelo created a category of figures that occupy an unstable intermediate zone between the narrative and architectural components of the ceiling: this includes *ignudi*, the *putti*, and the bronze figures, poised between the spandrels'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 100.
31. 'The *ignudi* are parallel presences who put an unmistakable pressure on the central narratives'. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of Human Body*, 127.
32. Michelangelo's 'vacillation about the status of the *ignudi* is apparent in their skin tone, which ranges from a cold alabaster, blending in with the fictive marble frame, to a warm tan, similar to those of the figures within the scenes'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 100.
33. 'The Sistine Ceiling *ignudi* would seem to represent an all-male pagan golden age'. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of Human Body*, 126. 'They celebrate the power of the penis'. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of Human Body*, 127.
34. Jarrell is quoted in Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image*, 99.
35. Bambach, *Michelangelo*, 136.
36. Frascari, 'The body and architecture', 129.
37. Italian translation = 'broken pediment'. Payne, 'Reclining bodies', 109.
38. Michelangelo avoided collaboration with sculptors to handle the sculpted elements and insisted that he handle the design of all the work and indeed as much of the actual fabrication of the sculpture that he could manage. This allowed him to synthesise figure, ornament and architecture seamlessly. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 108.
39. Italian translation = 'traces of previous versions in layers of a painting'.
40. Hirst, *Michelangelo and his Drawings*, 97.
41. The term 'proto-cinema' was used by Werner Herzog to describe graffiti in Chauvet cave which had a similar quality of overlapping figures that suggested movement. *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, directed by Werner Herzog, IFC Films, 2011.
42. P_1435 asserts here that the drawing 49ar Casa Buonarotti Florence is the first sketch of the New Sacristy design by Michelangelo.
43. The leonine legs of the sarcophagus are the predecessors to the volutes that Payne described as 'The scroll placed directly below the knee joints of the seated figure [Giuliano] . . . replete with connotations of mobility'. Payne, 'Reclining bodies', 109.
44. Payne discusses the *tetto spezzato* and 'the curve and counter-curve of the sarcophagus lid': Payne, *Reclining Bodies*, 109.
45. Mirzoeff uses Haraway's term to indicate a context where 'the transmission and reproduction of cultural value was envisaged as a purely masculine affair'. Mirzoeff, *Bodyscape*, 50.
46. Simons, 'Manliness and the visual semiotics', 361.
47. Brothers writes that they are 'slumping figures'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 132. Lingo sees them succinctly as 'male nudes'. Lingo, 'The Evolution of Michelangelo's Magnifici Tomb', 93. The British Museum notes that the 'youthful nudes' or 'mourners' sitting on either side of the sarcophagi are 'similarly composed as the Sistine *Ignudi*, precursors of the reclining figures on the tombs as executed'. British Museum 'Collection Online'. Accessed 9 August 2014. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=716111&partid=1&output=People%2F!!%2FOR%2F!!%2F114829%2F!%2F114829-2-9%2F!%2FDrawn+by+Michelangelo%2F!%2F%2F!!%2F%2F!!!%2F&orig=%2Fresearch%2Fsearch_the_collection_database%2Fadvanced_search.aspx&currentPage=4&numpages=10.
48. For instance, Brothers notes that these gentle figures, leaning against the sides of the tomb, appear to have exerted a pressure on its sides, causing it to heighten and reinstating the inward bow of its sides. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 132.
49. In the built work, the effigies of the Medici appear in the wall niches, as discussed below in the section 'The New Sacristy interior: notes on figures as architecture'.
50. Brothers writes that in this stage of the design, the 'horizontal proportions of a sarcophagus are stretched vertically to make an entirely new and barely recognizable form'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 132.
51. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 135.
52. P_1435 refers to the drawing known as British Museum Wilde 26v, which Joannides confirms is a sketch that precluded the more elaborately drawn Wilde 26r. Joannides, 'A newly unveiled drawing', 255.
53. P_1435 describes that at this point in the evolution of the project, the sarcophagus is even less curvilinear, without the curving and buoyant legs or the curving sides.
54. Joannides refers to a high second tier whose central feature, a rectangular base perhaps intended to contain a relief or inscription, breaks forward to provide a support for two mourning figures who lean against it'. Joannides, 'A newly unveiled drawing', 255.
55. Referencing Gaetano Milanesi's Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florence, 1875, 453, states that 'There is . . . evidence that [a] group of reclining figures was almost from the start included in the projects for the tombs, those known as River Gods or *fiumi*, as Michelangelo simply called them, intended for the lowest zone of the monuments'. Neufeld, 'Michelangelo's times of day', 273–84.
56. This drawing shows how the cast of figures continued to multiply throughout the design, as 'below the left Sarcophagus [Michelangelo] sketched a reclining river god with his right arm resting upon an urn. Male nudes, allegories or perhaps effigies of the Magnifici, recline upon the concave lids of the sarcophagi'. In 26v, Lingo notes the presence of a River God in the elevation along with the figures in question. Lingo, 'The evolution of Michelangelo's Magnifici Tomb', 93. Gardner notes that many scholars recognise the River God as representing 'brute matter', explaining what P_1435 describes as the figures predilection for laying on the ground. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages*, 613.
57. While P_1435's claim that the reclining figure is Giuliano, Lingo notes that 'Male nudes, allegories or perhaps effigies of the Magnifici, recline upon the concave lid of the sarcophagi'. Lingo, 'The evolution of Michelangelo's Magnifici Tomb', 93. Brothers notes that the drawings in Wilde 26r 'illustrate ideas unconstrained by material limits: they allowed Michelangelo to envision multiple figures that would have been too costly and time consuming to produce'. She goes on to say that 'the figures resist their own skeletal structure, and its qualities of straightness and support. Instead they lean, they lie, and they bend'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 133, 135.
58. P_1435 refers to the copy sketch of the Magnifici Tomb after Michelangelo accredited to Bastiano da Sangallo, Uffizi 607E.
59. P_1435 insinuates that he appears as one of two shadowy *putti* drawn by Michelangelo in an elevation of the facade of San Lorenzo in Florence. This is supported by the observation of Morrogh. Morrogh, 'The Magnifici Tomb', 576.
60. P_1435 refers to growing accustomed to heights from his appearance in Donatello's Cavalcanti Altar, discussed in Chapter 3. Lingo describes the situation depicted in Uffizi 607E: 'Two *putti* support a curtain which falls down the sides of the monument. In character and pose the *putti* resemble the torchbearers used by Andrea Sansovino on the attics of his tombs . . . such *putti* also appear on Quattrocento tombs'. Lingo, 'The evolution of Michelangelo's Magnifici Tomb', 93.
61. P_1435 insinuates that the female figures take on male attributes, becoming the sculptures known as the Times of Day.
62. Italian translation = 'roofs'.
63. In Wilde 27r, 'the upturned volutes have been flipped to face downward'. Brothers,

Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture, 138.

64. The 'earthly domain' which P_1435 refers to here is a symbolic vertical stratification of the architectural composition, where the lower registers connote earthly and mortal existence, and the upper regions signify the celestial. Argan and Contardi, *Michelangelo*, 90.
65. Dempsey refers to the empty masks used by *putti* as larva, signifiers of 'a deluded fancy of the sort drink can induce'. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 56. Larval masks can be seen in drawings Louvre 837 as column capitals and in Louvre 838r on the brackets for the sarcophagus. Hersey points out the masks are likely transformations of the egg and darts pattern on the dado above them, and suggests that Michelangelo's drawing process was part of the conception of the transformation. Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*, 104.
66. P_1435 refers to the two mourning figures in Louvre 837r and the four in 838r. P_1435 asserts that he was drawn in the single-tomb scheme above the cornice.
67. P_1435 refers to the ornamental military trophy drawn in Louvre 838r.
68. P_1435 refers to two ornamental military trophies with the heads of worms raising from the shell of armour chest pieces, ultimately not included in the final constructed project.
69. P_1435 refers to the larva motif along the cornice of the New Sacristy.
70. Italian translation = 'angry screaming profile'.
71. P_1435 refers to the study drawing Casa Buonarroti Florence (10 A recto), in which Michelangelo drew series of pilaster base profiles, the last of which resembles a screaming man. P_1435's reference to the discussion between the figures Night and Day, and the poetry they wrote together, is a reference to Michelangelo's writing on that page which 'imagines a conversation between Day and Night, who meditate on the death of Giuliano de' Medici'. Bambach, *Michelangelo*, 119.
72. P_1435 refers to the demonstration drawing Casa Buonarroti, Florence, (127A) by Michelangelo for an unbuilt detail in which figures are shown embellishing the New Sacristy's coffers.
73. Citing Vasari's description, Dempsey explains the significance of the mask: for Michelangelo larva 'did not function literally, (for Michelangelo was no Pagan), but metaphorically, standing for the empty bogeys, or childishly panicked dreams of mortal desire'. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 22.
74. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 228.
75. 'Since the sixteenth century, scholars have attempted to explain the meaning of Michelangelo's sculptural program for the Medici Chapel. It obviously employs a symbolic vocabulary of considerable complexity, so cryptic that the astute minds of many generations have failed to decipher it to anyone's satisfaction'. Balas, *Michelangelo's Medici Chapel*, 1. 'The iconographic program of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo, Florence, has been a subject of much debate in the art historical literature. Neoplatonic, political, and Christian readings, of the chapel's iconography have been proposed'. Lingo, 'The evolution of Michelangelo's Magnificent Tomb', 91.
76. Gilbert, 'Texts and contexts of the Medici Chapel', 404.
77. Gilbert, 'Texts and contexts of the Medici Chapel', 397.
78. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of Human Body*, 148.
79. Hall notes '…with these sedentary figures, Michelangelo was evidently doing something deliberately ambiguous, by making the armour and leather appear to give way to real flesh.' Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, 149.
80. Elkins describes a 'first seeing' and 'second seeing', where an observer oscillates between a 'relaxed and languorous' pleasure in seeing a figure and 'a restless nomadic way of looking' that often results from distorted, grotesque or extreme presentations of bodies common in contemporary art. Elkins, *Pictures of the Body*, 5.
81. Payne, 'Reclining bodies', 109.
82. Payne notes the formal echoes associated with the figure. Payne, 'Reclining bodies', 109.
83. 'Michelangelo clearly wanted the deceased to seem to extrude out of the niche, so that they are half inside the sacristy and half out'. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, 144.
84. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 132.
85. Hall among many others notes this. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, 144.

Chapter 5 | The Design of and Designing with P_1435

A design folio concerning the initial designs of P_1435 and interventions at Wates House, composed of a collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 and excerpts of entries from the design logbook of Alessandro Ayuso, with preliminary notes by Alessandro Ayuso.

Preliminary Notes

Further to the discussion in Chapter 2 about why *putti* attracted my attention and seemed appropriate as a precedent, one reason is that it seemed fittingly provocative that a figure who undergoes his own 'rebirth' during the Renaissance (recounted through the journal excerpts in Chapter 3) should have an appearance in the digital era, particularly considering the digital-age subject's potential affinity to the Renaissance age subject, discussed in Chapter 2. The second reason was the endurance of the *putto* as an ornamental type: because *putti* remained a repeated presence in architectural works of past epochs beyond Italy's *quattrocento*, a *putto* body agent could offer a perspective that spanned a great historic and geographical breadth. The prospect of a cyborg-like or digitally modified *putto* presented an opportunity to consider the return of premodern themes through current technological and digital means. Third, *putti* are marginal and playful. The *putti* of illuminated manuscripts and architectural ornament are delightfully devious and easily distracted from the task at hand, but their playful activities are always on the periphery of the main focus of the composition.[1] As discussed in Chapter 2, the intention at the outset was to mobilise marginal actors in order to experiment with means of mobilising subject positions of alterity (which were understood as metaphorically outside or peripheral). I wondered how a playful *putto* body agent might subvert a situation or site, especially if given agency beyond the margins in which they normally dwell.

I saw *putti*, who sometimes appeared as human toddlers with bird's wings, as animal–human hybrids. *Putti* have strong connections to ancient mythical themes: in their appearances in images, they have played roles in Dionysian narratives, as well as Christian narratives of ascension and communication with the divine. In their hybridised and mythical nature, it struck me that they have common ground with Haraway's notion of the cyborg, who she writes 'appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed'.[2] I wanted to put into play the unlikely common traits of hybridisation and myth that the two figurations shared.

The last reason pertains to the angelic associations of *putti*: a *putto* is not, strictly speaking, an angel, but they often played such a role and often evoke angelic connotations. An angel on Earth residing in quotidian settings evokes a fallen angel – P_1435 is perhaps a figural angel fallen out of favour with designers. As Dempsey emphasises, the term *spiritello* is closely related to the idea of the Roman *genius*, a guardian spirit that accompanies an individual from birth.[3] This association of an individually suited companion spirit seemed apropos to the potential of body agents, liaisons for designers and others within the context of design.

P_1435 Augmentations and the Penthouse for Moonlit Bacchanalia

Design Logbook
Date: 18 Jan 2011
Topic: Designing P_1435

I'm starting on the design of P_1435's body. The idea is that P_1435 is the first in a cast of body agents I'll be creating, and that with each body agent, I will design the figure itself and will then test the operativity of each agent by deploying the figure to create an architectural space (likely small structures that are akin to extensions or outer layers of the figure, similar to the Renaissance 'small architecture', which Payne notes was known by turn-of-the-century German art historians as kleinarchitectur).[4] *I will consider P_1435's generic mesh shell as his original prosthesis. In this way, he will become a hybrid assemblage (I have in mind the 'fine enmeshment' of the digital post-human subject.) According to my 'Rules for Constructing Body Agents' which I've arrived at based on my initial research, P_1435 will have to be animate, non-ideal and subversive.*

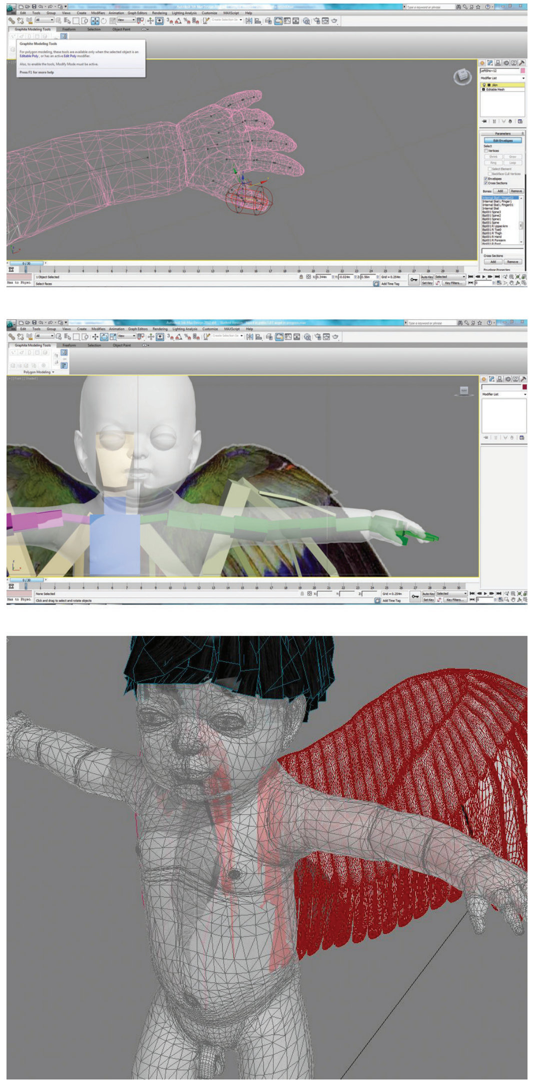
Rules for Constructing Body Agents:

1. *They must be in situ; they exist dynamically with their contexts.*
2. *They mobilise their versions of histories within which they have been situated.*
3. *They are bodies in the midst of 'becoming'.*
4. *They are mediators providing continuity between different types of design media.*
5. *They enact a psychic disposition of emotions and desires.*
6. *They are non-ideal.*
7. *They are hybrids.*
8. *They are playfully subversive.*
9. *They should surprise.*

22 Genniao Anno Domini MMXI 04:03

Signor Alessandro has been Skinning and Rigging me (Figures 5.1 and 5.2) so that I may move about in *Il Regno Digitale*. It is a very tedious process where I must stand completely still with my arms outstretched so that what is referred to as my Bones can be aligned with the gridded surface which comprises *la trama dell amia pelle*,[5] which I have learned is called a Mesh. When Signor Alessandro makes errors in this process (and Reader, let me tell you, he makes many errors), the most random and gruesome distortions of my Body occur. As I have described previously, in certain manifestations that it takes, I feel nothing from the Mesh, and in other instances, I feel quite intensely. And at these moments, the Distortions are quite painful. In any case, I look forward to being able to move in *Il Regno Digitale*, as I understand I will be able.

Buonanotte.



5.1

5.1 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot showing the evolving process of altering P_1435, 2011. The top frame shows the magnitude of distortion that bones would exert on each vertex. The mesh was repeatedly readjusted to calibrate movements with possible deformations of the mesh in the skinning and rigging process. The middle frame shows P_1435 with his new wings based on Dürer's drawing visible. The lower frame shows P_1435 with hair and genitals.

22 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXI 10:21

I had a dream where I wandered through a strange landscape of draped forms in *Il Regno* (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). I wandered yet could not find my way. Everything is strange, dear Reader, and yet everything is also strangely familiar. I remember much billowing and sheltering drapery from my time assisting design during *L'era Barocca*.[6] Trying to get back to sleep now, but it is nearly *intorno al mezzodi*.[7] The students and tutors are arriving and making a clamour. Bah.

05 Febbraio Anno Domini MMXI 02:10

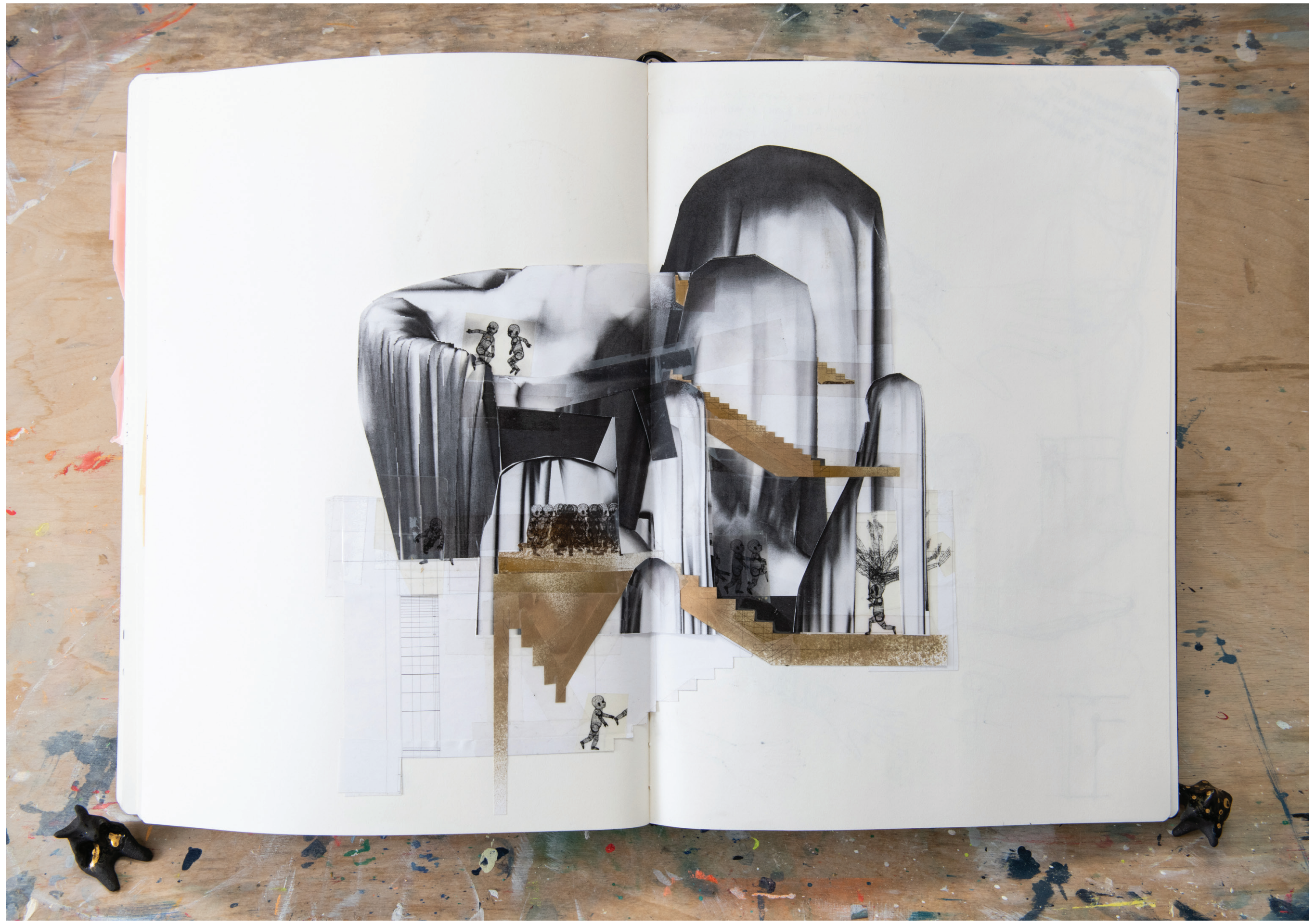
I am considering constructing a *Larve* of sorts. The original *Larve* (or masks) that I wore were meant to strike fear into the hearts of the Goats that would snip at the buds of grapevines.[8] The depletion of the vine's fruit is thus a depletion of the *vino sanctum* – a crucial element in any successful Bacchanalia.[9] In the past, the Dionysian impulse compelled my spritely Companions and me to fight these Beasts with whatever means were at our disposal at the time, ultimately aiming to tether and thus immobilise the Creatures. Looking back now, apart from the frenzy of the *feste*,[10] and with the relative solemnity that accompanies my 580 years of wisdom, I have to wonder if the *Larve* really did anything to frighten the Goats. I must confess that perhaps the immobilisation of the Goat was only part of the game being played. We sprites often turned the Masks on one another and worked ourselves up into a rollicking mass, exuding a mood somewhere between fear and giddiness, sometimes with a tumultuous Goat in our midst.

Aha, how I long for those days. For now though, sleep.

Buonanotte.

14 Febbraio Anno Domini MMXI 03:47

Allora, dear Reader, happy Valentine's Day. I say this with more than a tinge of sarcasm. I am fatigued by seeing all of the 'cupids' prancing about as echoes of their true Dionysian selves. They make me sick, although for me, there has been a significant positive



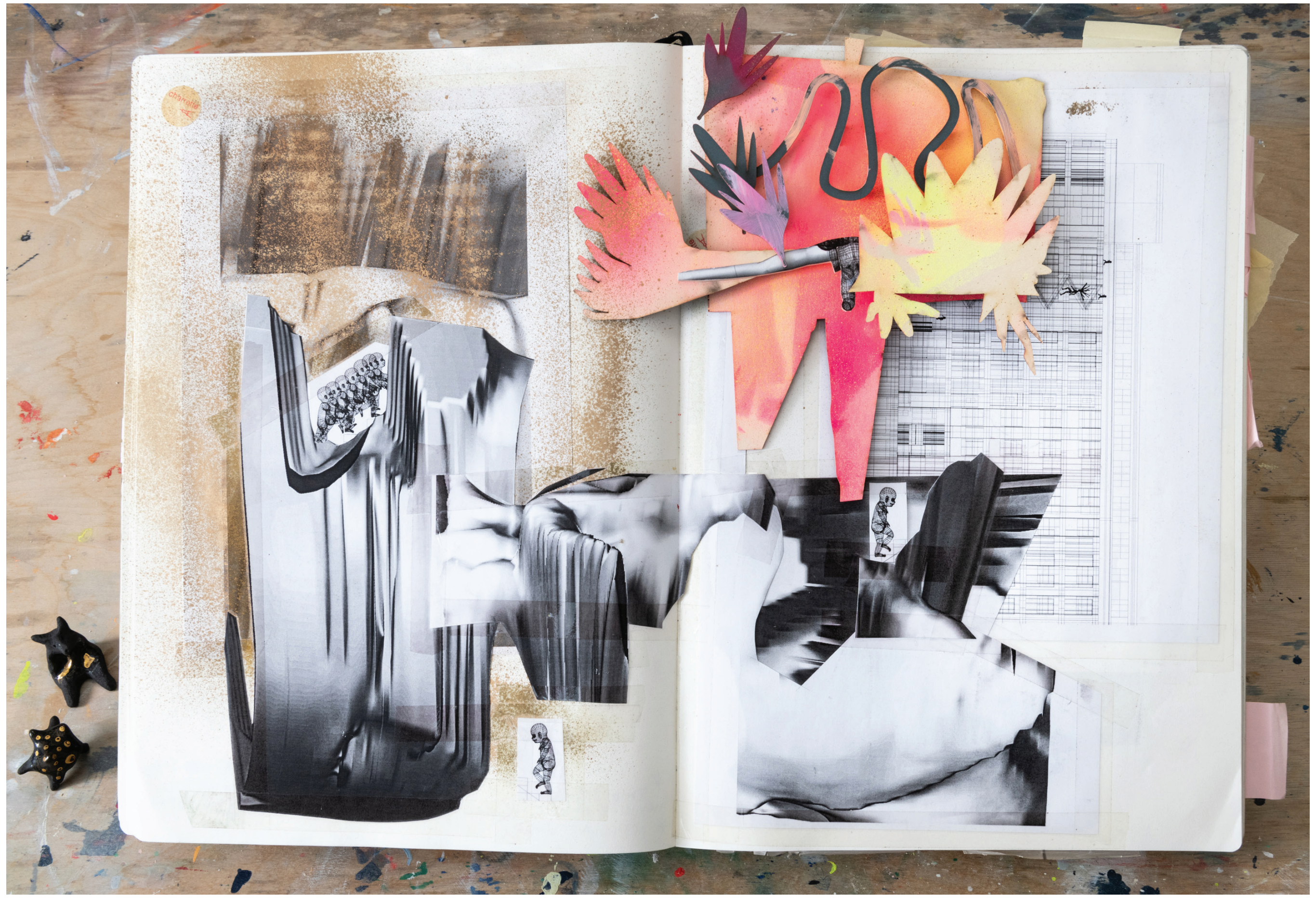
5.2

5.2 Alessandro Ayuso, sketch collage of P_1435's dream of wandering through a draped landscape, 2011. Ceramic figures by Krista Zvirgzda. Photograph by Can Sengunes.

development here, which has appropriately culminated on this day associated as it is with *Eros*. Signor Alessandro has three-dimensionally modelled my spritely Genitals and attached them to my Mesh *Epidermide*.[11] This appeared to be a somewhat odious and arduous process for Signor Alessandro for what reason I know not. Oh, what a relief, to be reinstated as *un maschietto*.[12] Although here I am ready to take up my role as an *Erote*, and encourage Lovers to submit to their carnal Passions, I am alone in a dark lift shaft. Nevertheless, I am glad that I am not called upon to participate in Valentine's Day. Imagine, appearing on a greeting card? What self-respecting Sprite would do such a thing? I will not degrade myself! Not I, who once helped Signor Piero di Cosimo to evoke Venus's ecstasy![13]

Instead, I am here in the empty staff lounge with a bottle of *vino* to myself. Fine.

Ah yes – *vino*! More good news: I have found the Staff Kitchen Room on the first floor, and I have



5.3

5.3 Alessandro Ayuso, sketch collage of P_1435's dream of wandering through a draped landscape, 2011 (with LEAP panel maquettes overlaid, 2018). Ceramic figures by Krista Zvirgzda. Photograph by Can Sengunes.

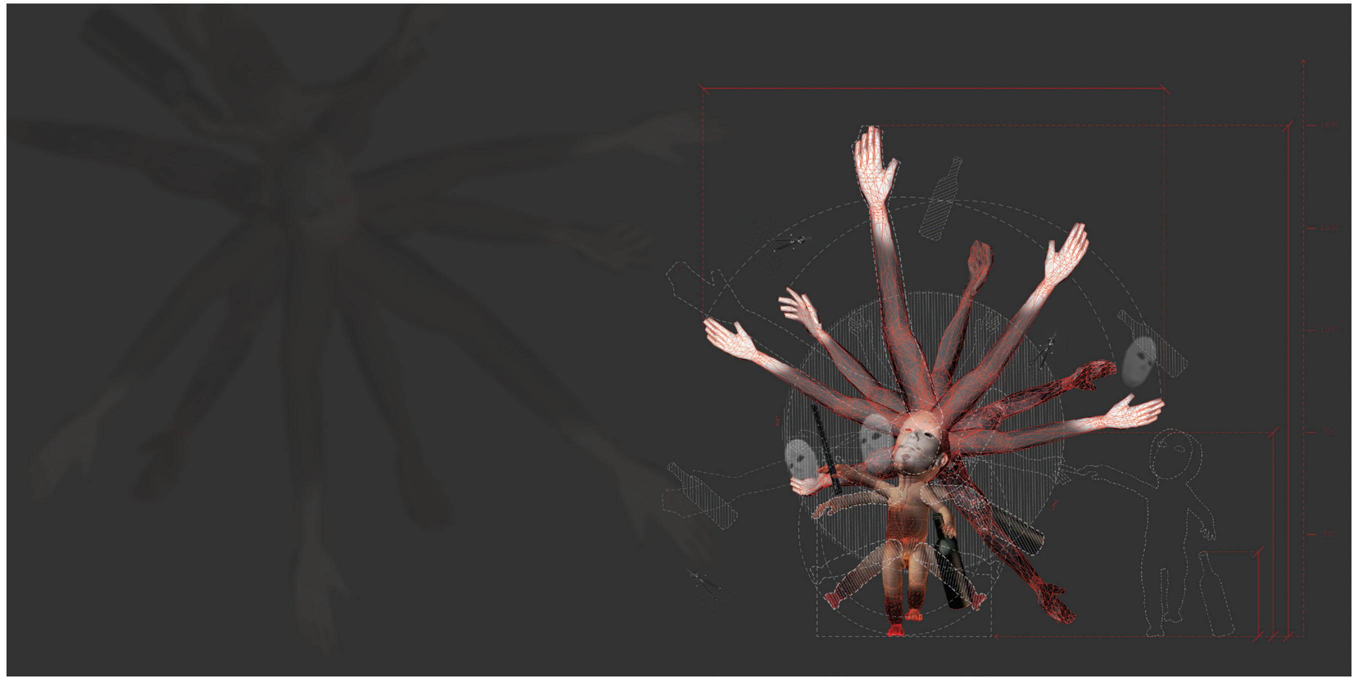
been sampling the stocked wines there. I prefer a *vino santo di Montepulciano* of Anno Domini MCDXXIII, and while the Pinot Grigio that the staff here seem to have a penchant for leaves much to be desired, it gets me through a lonely Night like this.

Admittedly, feeling a bit tipsy now. And sleepy. *Buonanotte.*

10 Marzo Anno Domini MMXI 12:15

Typing from the staircase again. After watching a number of YouTube Tutorials, I know how to pick the locks to the utility Cabinets on the east landings; there is a fantastic array of electrical and internet cables there that I can connect to the outlets in my Mask. These cabinets are a cosy scale for me, especially since I enjoy being embedded in architectural Niches.

Signor Alessandro has now equipped me with hair as well (Figure 5.1). I am happy to have hair, but rather than my usual blond wisps, I have ridiculous dark planes atop my crown. Sometimes, I really wonder about Signor Alessandro's Competence.



5.4

5.4 Alessandro Ayuso, Anti-Vitruvian Sprite, P_1435 with Medusa Helmet, 2011. This image was an attempt to define P_1435's habitus (i.e. the particularities of small habits of his body) more precisely and how this could shape details and space through a 'metonymic' procedure. Using drawing formats reminiscent of Vitruvian Man (circumscribed in geometrical forms) and normative figures of modernism discussed in Chapter 9, the drawing revealed that clear definition of instrumental principles is in direct contradiction to this non-standard and continuously evolving figure. With thanks to Sylwia Poltorak.

I should mention also that we are still working on wings for me, and these are coming along better than my hair.

Buonanotte.

20 Marzo Anno Domini MMXI 01:35

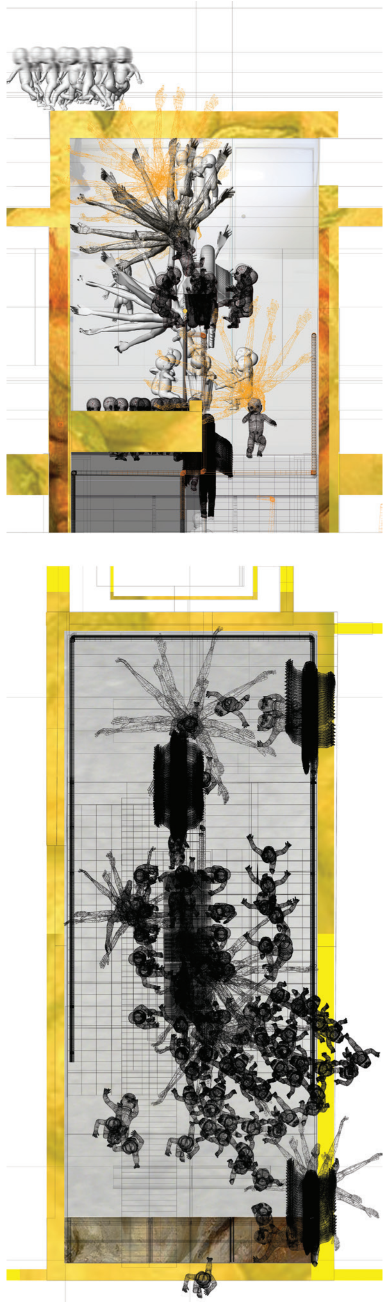
I have gotten my Wings back! And, of course, I chose to model them after the Wings that I always would have most liked to have had – those painted by Herr Dürer. As much as *Il Divino* criticised Herr Dürer, I cannot deny the splendid Beauty of the fine Wings that he depicted.[14] The Wings provide me with a modicum of balance, but I am grounded by my own shattered Faith (and technological limitations), and I have no illusions of flight.

I will now describe an occasion when I wished I had my Wings yet did not. It was during one of my first Roles in assisting Signor Donato . . .

(Excerpt truncated as extensive narration on P_1435's appearance in Donatello's Cavalcanti Altar of 1437 follows, a version of which is related in Chapter 3.)

02 Aprile Anno Domini MMXI 06:15

Reader, there was yet another lag in journal entries, but this is because I have been hard at work with Signor Alessandro on several *progetti*, the most exciting of which is a Helmet (Figure 5.4). I imagine my fellow *putti* would find it wonderfully frightening. It is a Medusa-esque visage with projecting arms emanating from its crown. For the times that I am alone, the inside of the mask is fitted with media feed devices so that I can hear and watch *Family Guy* episodes (I have discovered this satirical serial and enjoy the character of Stewie, an intelligent and canny young man). The arms are extensions to my own mind, and with strength and reach beyond that of my own hands, they can grasp, pull and shake. This way, I can swing through the staircase as well, hold multiple bottles of *vino* at once and, once I build my rooftop Trellis, pluck fermented grapes by the bushel whilst standing on the ground eating them.



5.5

5.5 Alessandro Ayuso, plan and section study showing movement and occupation studies composed of animation stills of P_1435 and his cloned companions, 2011. The accumulation of frames from animations of P_1435 occupying the stairwell site overlapped to obscure a definite reading of the figures as bodies, instead defining an ambiguous spatial form. This experiment tested the spatial potential of the site beyond the narrative itself.

01 Maggio Anno Domini MMXI 04:15

I have been dreaming of modifying Wates House again. My fantasies of edification are lofty and may take a while to realise. So, I suppose I will work with what the situation has given me in the meantime. I think I will start with adorning myself and then move onto the building later . . .

I sign off now with the aid of an 'Emoji'. I have been introduced to these wonderful marginalia Figures during my traversals upon the World Wide Web. ;-)

Buonanotte.

27 Giugno Anno Domini MMXI 05:10

Once more I type from atop *la trombe delle scale*,[15] where I have been exploring, imagining the small augmentation that could be built here (Figure 5.5). It could punctuate the verticality of the stair with an *Oculi* to communicate with the celestial Spheres overhead. I could host moonlight Bacchanalia for myself and my multiplied Selves there – it would be *bellissimo*! I imagine *un Attico* that could evoke the lushness of a grove at night, replete with places to lounge, hide within and scamper about, and to drink *vino* in the Shadows.

Buonanotte.

12 Agosto Anno Domini MMXI 04:12

Reader, let me tell you about the *Attico* for Moonlit Bacchanalia that we are envisioning (Figure 5.15). I enjoy imagining my invited Bacchanalia Companions' excitement when they would enter via the stairs we've designed. The stairs are arranged in an arc that springs from the uppermost story of the existing stairs of Wates House, but of course they are at a scale fit for smaller strides. From the stairs, the Celebrants would see the suspended floor of the *Attico*, and when they emerge into it, they can see the grand central Room, where there is likely to be much revelry around the Table at its centre! If they were to look upwards still, they would see the Pergola which has a hydroponic system for grapes to be harvested for the making of *vino*. But I doubt we will actually accomplish the production of wine. Truly, the Pergola is ideal for climbing on and swinging from. Beyond that, they would see what I think of as a Cupola. Winding through its mass are a series of stairs and enclosed passageways. This is perfect for Games of hide-and-seek! A part of the upper story is tiered. Here, a sprite can perch, spy on those below or throw projectiles onto or jump down onto unsuspecting Companions. Projecting from the west side of the Cupola is a balcony Platform where I can display myself to passers-by below on Gordon Street. However, I will be positioned at an extreme Height – I do not think they can see me, only hear my howls of Celebration. Perhaps Signor Alessandro and I can devise a more visible Stage for me to be seen.

Buonanotte.

Design Logbook
Date: 27 Aug 2011
Topic: Portrait of P_1435

AU: sentence structure is confusing; please confirm this reads as intended

Objects in Vanitas portraits are not just objects; they tell the story of a subject outside of the frame. Perhaps I could design and portray architectural elements in a similar vein, suggesting particular aspects of P_1435's 'life', and how he works as a body agent, through them.

Le Corbusier's depictions of the Modulor Man come to mind, as they define a set of operations inherent to the figure, but this piece demands similarities and departures from Le Corbusier's depiction of the Modulor. The Modulor's rationalised, standardised concept of the body is, as Maria Luisa Palumbo puts it, 'based on a single and univocal model' made 'to reaffirm the principle of the Vitruvian figure'.[16] *P_1435, on the other hand, should be a non-idealised, dynamic, emotional cyborg, steeped in a cumulative and unfinished history.*

From working on the sketch of the Penthouse door, I noticed a particular advantage to drawing at full scale. This allows for a more immediate bodily sense of engagement with the design, and I think it will be more effective in imagining P_1435's habitus. Another thing I would like to do, with the aim of ensuring that the body agents I design are inherently dynamic, is to add elements of film and animation to this portrait. So, I'll be filming the drawing act itself, deriving parts of the drawing from animations and augmenting the films with layers of animation.

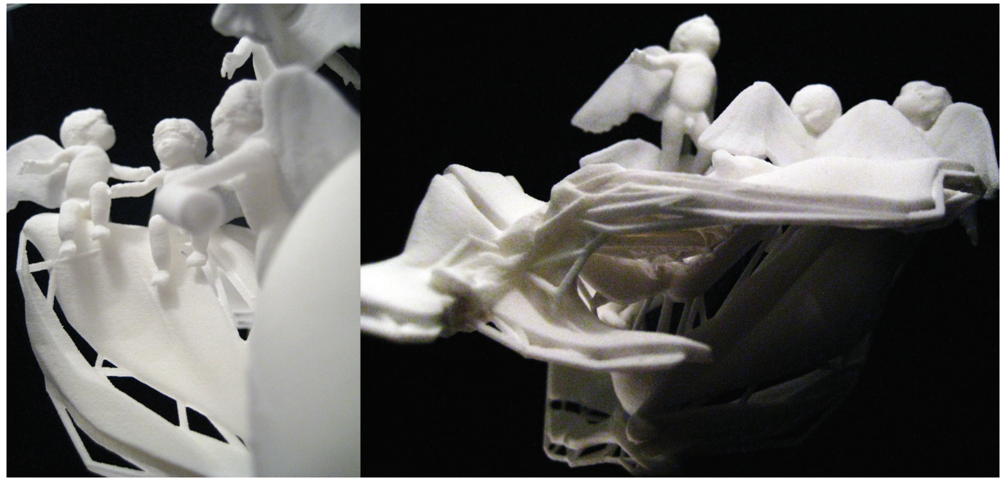
The Kneeling Window

23 Settembre Anno Domini MMXI 02:53

Although I do not feel we have yet completed the design of the *Attico* for Moonlit Bacchanalia, Signor Alessandro has moved onto a smaller project. Something about working at full-scale and what he called Habitus – such an odd way that he speaks! I do not understand his strange Motivations, but I shall play along with his contrivances, as I see Opportunities. Since I have been reminiscing of my time working with *Il Divino*, I was reminded of my snubbing at *La Sagrestia Nuova*, where I contend I should have appeared sculpted in marble in one of the *Nicchie*. I've thought of the first opportunity – that

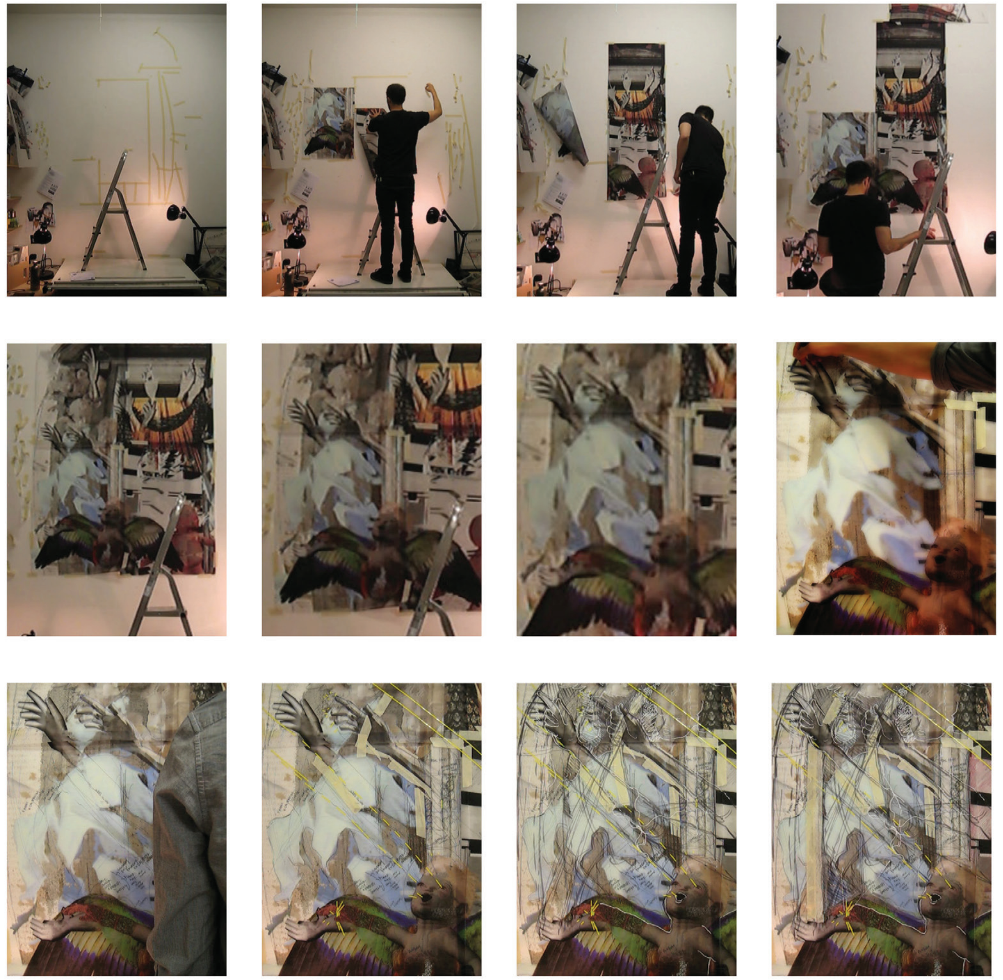
5.6 Alessandro Ayuso, animation stills, 2012. Frames from an animation sequence showing P_1435 exploring the area around Wates House. Georeferenced map shows portion of route.

5.6



5.7 Alessandro Ayuso, 1:25 model of P_1435's dream of playing games on a cloud, SLS Nylon, 2012.

5.7



5.8

5.8 Alessandro Ayuso, film stills showing the start of the process of constructing the full-scale Kneeling Window drawing, 2011. In the first film clip, the camera zooms in as panels that provide the base layer of the drawing are attached to the wall over the desk. The camera settles on a detail of the Kneeling Window drawing.

now I will appear in a version of the *Nicchia*. The second Opportunity came to my mind on my journeys outside of Wates House, where I have found an urban street corner, and if this Niche were positioned there, near the level of the pavement – well, then I would be able to address a shortcoming of the Penthouse, which was that it did not facilitate the exhibition of myself (Figure 5.6). I recall that *Il Divino* designed a *Finestra Inginocchiata* for the facade of the edifice then known as *Palazzo di via Larga*. *Il Divino*'s design was part of an effort to close a previously open *Loggia*, in effect keeping passers-by away from it completely, but mine will certainly attract onlookers to the Corner! In this way, I shall rectify History and essentially appear in two updated versions of *Il Divino*'s *progetti*.

Looking forward to this new project and hope to dream of it tonight.

Buonanotte.

5.9

5.9 Alessandro Ayuso, film still showing the construction of the full-scale Kneeling Window drawing, 2011. Mixed media combining collages of rendered stills from digitally produced animations and three-dimensional models, and drawing using paint pen, paint, marker and tape. Work continued for several months, building up a thick layered surface.

24 Settembre Anno Domini MMXI, 06:03

The unusually late (or, rather, early) timestamp of this entry arises from the fact that I've awaken from another Dream (Figure 5.7). In it, I was a part of *un modello* with my cloned Companions. We were playing *Balocchi* on a cloud of lumpy Fabric and structural Lattices. The stuff that the *modello* was made from was unknown to me – white and even. It was a kind of Plaster perhaps. Not a necessarily nightmarish Dream – in fact, quite pleasant but most Unusual. As all things are these days. Back to sleep.

Buonanotte.

18 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXI 03:47

Reader, I was upset when we ceased our work on the *Attico*, but I am content (nay, even excited) with this new *progetto* that Signor Alessandro helps me with now. In it, I have brought along favourite details from Centuries ago, assembled in the manner of *spolia* – there is a fragment of *La Sagrestia Nuova*, a fragment of *Estasi di Santa Teresa* which I had helped Signor Bernini with – but working with Signor Alessandro, I am able to touch every Detail, and the design is altered to accommodate me.

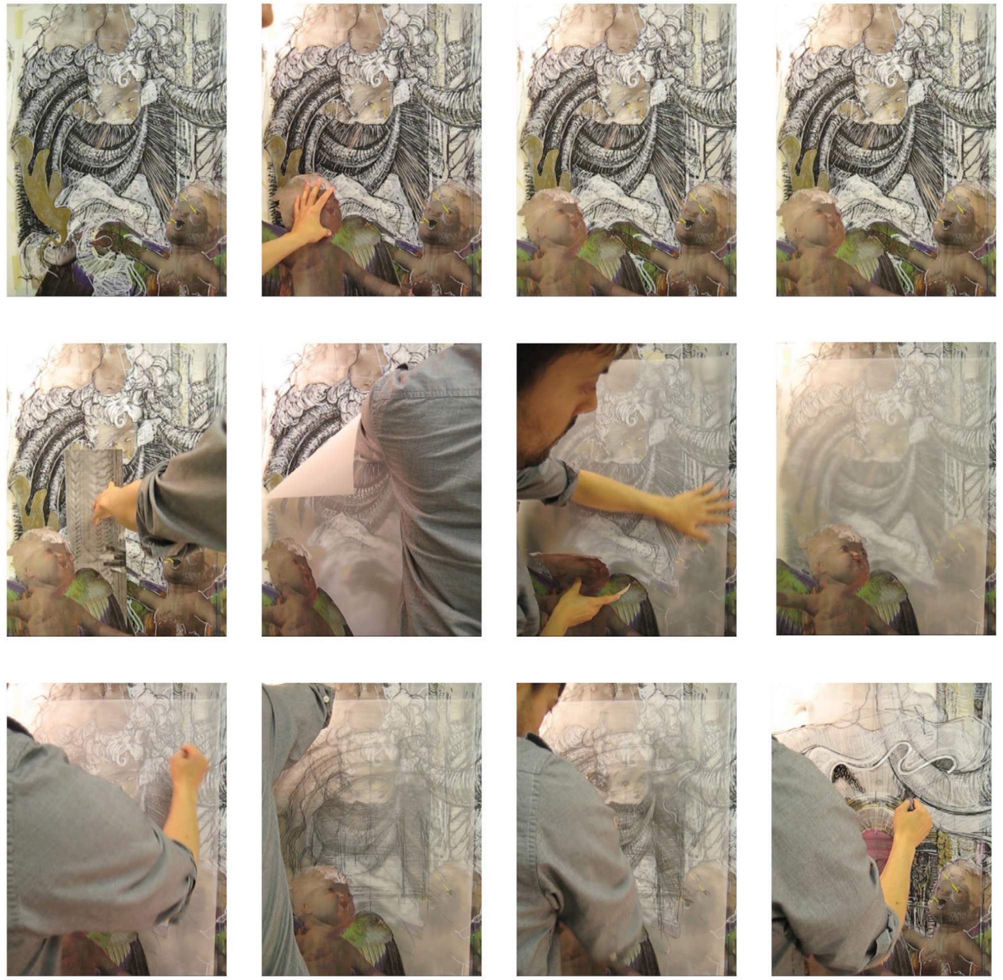
Buonanotte.

17 Novembre Anno Domini MMXI 03:39

I have become *un Attore nei Film*. Signor Alessandro mentioned the term 'cinematic' when he added notes on my recounting of my work with *Il Divino*. I did not know then to what he referred, but now I understand. In the 'cinematic', rather than appearing in *una pittura* as a ghostly series of contours, I *actually* move, in *una pittura* endowed with motion! I cannot help but be taken by this medium, although the particular brand of 'cinematic' that I appear in under Signor Alessandro's direction is quite ugly, with garish colours, angular lines and unnaturally blank or repetitive textures. Still, I am fascinated by the opportunity to *actually move* in an Image. While I see Signor Alessandro as *un attore non protagonista*[17] and *assistente alla regia*,[18] I am revelling in this opportunity to finally be the central Focus. I have been on the margins, *un attore non protagonista* for so long! At the same time, I am uncomfortable with something in this work: it does not seem to have anything to do with *il nostro Santo Padre* or with any *Pagana* beliefs either. Without the presence of *il nostro Santo Padre* or *le divinità dell'antichità*, I feel unmoored. While all of this Freedom is very exciting, it also afflicts me with what I can only call a lack of purpose. I never thought too much about how, whenever I appeared, it was not only to do my part in conveying the details of the *situazione* around me, but also to support a larger story and meaning. Even in Herr Pichler's work, there were both *Pagana* and *Cattolica* themes that, although enshrouded in Herr Pichler's ideas of *Modernismo* and his own personal ideas, I could still understand this.[19] But Signor Alessandro does not worry about such matters. Instead, Signor Alessandro speaks of things that frankly I do not understand but may amount to some sort of Belief system . . . I am unsure. It may be my best insurance to say my Prayers tonight. *(Pater mi: parce mihi, si quid in me implicari blasphemantes. Amen.)*

Buonanotte

5.10 Alessandro Ayuso, film stills showing the process of constructing the full-scale Kneeling Window drawing, 2011. In the film sequences, following the opening zoom sequence, the frame was fixed for a prolonged time period as a particular zone of the drawing was elaborated. This detail is an ancillary niche of a size more commensurate to P_1435's size than the central niche of the Kneeling Window. In the film clips, digital animations were captured as stills and grafted as collaged pieces onto the drawing. Animations of P_1435 were also overlaid on stop-motion footage of the manual drawing process. In this sequence, a two-dimensional print of P_1435 collaged onto the drawing suddenly moves of its own volition.



5.10

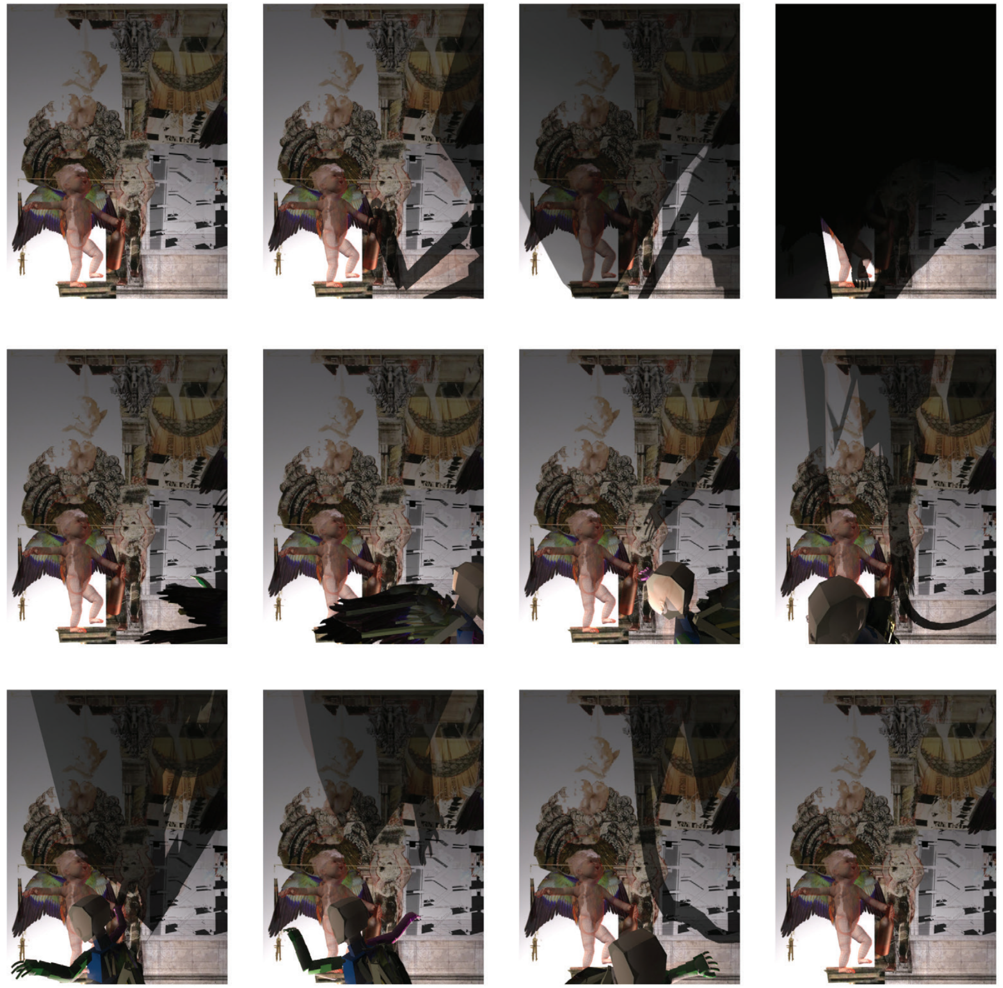
13 Dicembre Anno Domini MMXI 03:19

We have created an image of my *Finestra Inginocchiata* in its position on the street! Very much looking forward to constructing this. And the anticipation warms my Bones as the weather in this dreary location becomes chilly in this Season. Too excited to sleep. So, I will listen on my headphones to a performance of Signor Vivaldi's *Sum in medio tempestatum*[20] which I have found on Spotify. Hopefully, this will serve as a Lullaby.

Just one more note, though, Reader: can you believe that this nearly marks a year that I have kept this Journal? What an eventful time. For all my despondence at the start of the year, I must say there are hopeful prospects on the horizon.

Buonanotte.

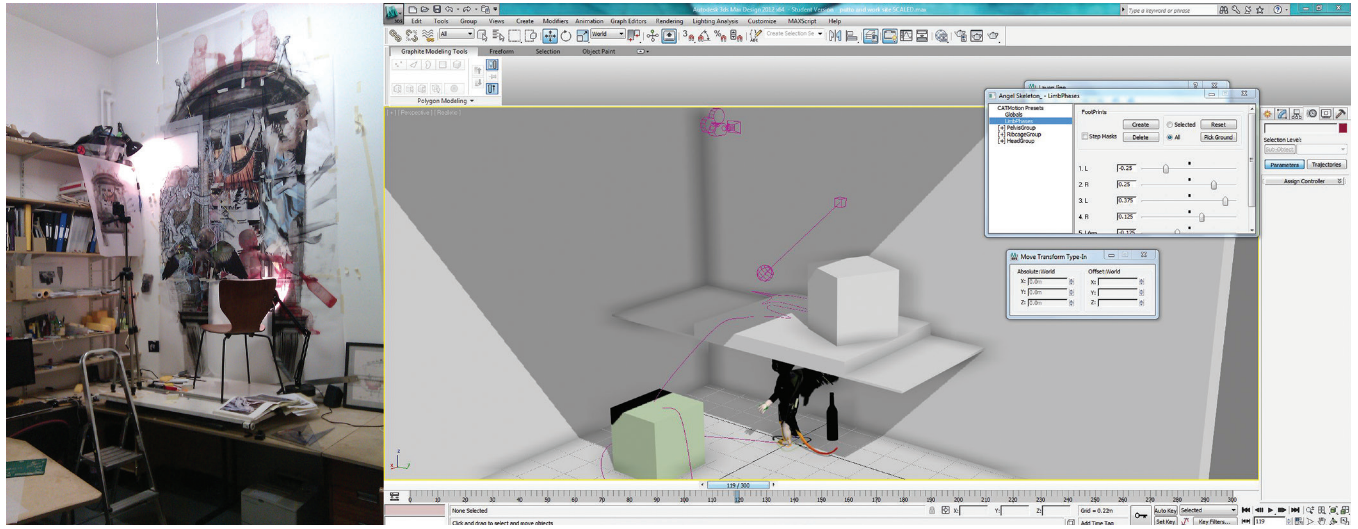
5.11 Alessandro Ayuso, film stills from the short film sequence A Nocturnal Critique, showing P_1435 examining the full-scale drawing of the Kneeling Window, 2011.



5.11

12 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXII 03:22

Signor Alessandro is getting distracted, just as we were making some real progress on my *Finestra Inginocchiata*. Signor Alessandro has been working on joining me now in *Il Regno*. He has Rigged himself after apparently undergoing a process known as 3D scanning, which has made a virtual facsimile of himself in three Dimensions (Figure 5.18), although this version of Signor Alessandro differs from how he appears normally. His Skin is not complete, so that only his hands and head are present, and his head is that of a Janus! What is the meaning or purpose of this? I would prefer to maintain the spotlight and move on to constructing the *Finestra Inginocchiata*. Personally, I think Signor Alessandro should



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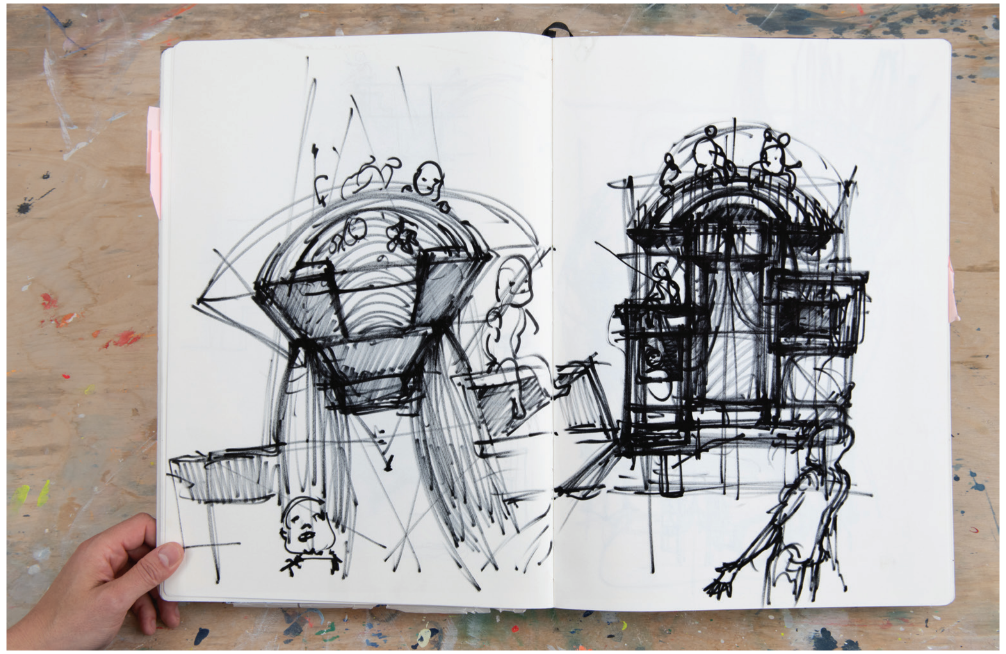
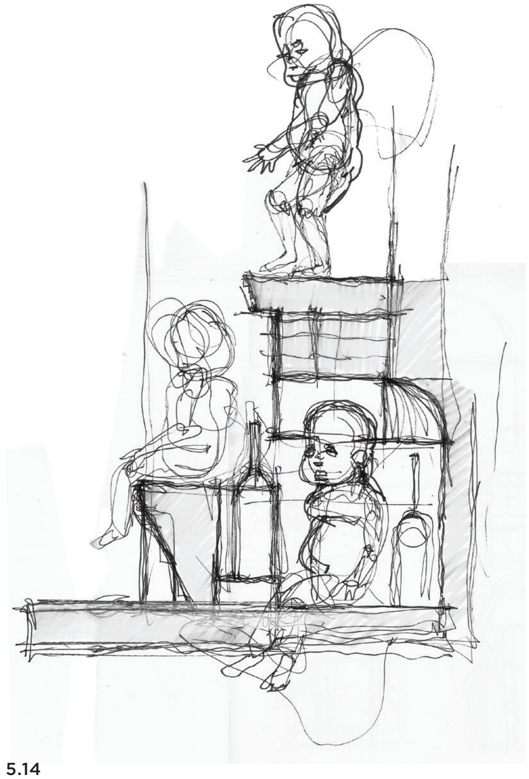


5.13

5.12 Alessandro Ayuso, view on the left of the Kneeling Window drawing in progress in its surrounding context and screenshot, on the right showing a virtual version of the surrounding context, 2011. In order to construct the film of P_1435's night-time critique, a parallel schematic digital version of the desk arrangement had to be constructed. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

5.13 Alessandro Ayuso, design process sketch showing the Kneeling Window, 2011. This sketch portrays potential views of one iteration of the Kneeling Window in its site. Photograph by Can Sangunes.



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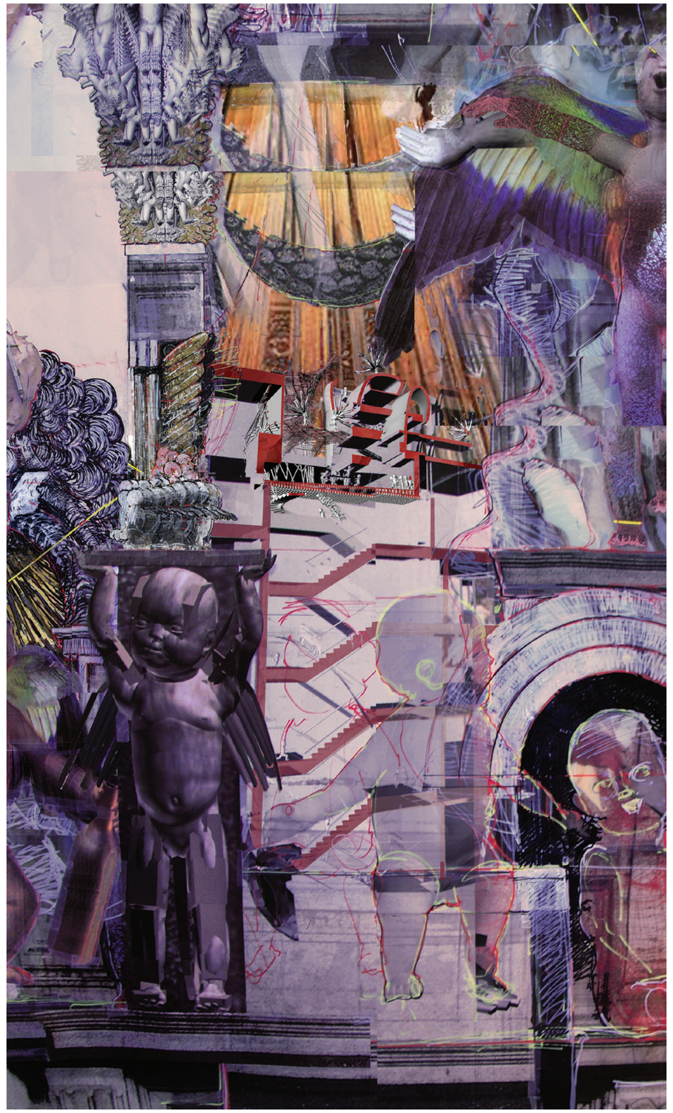
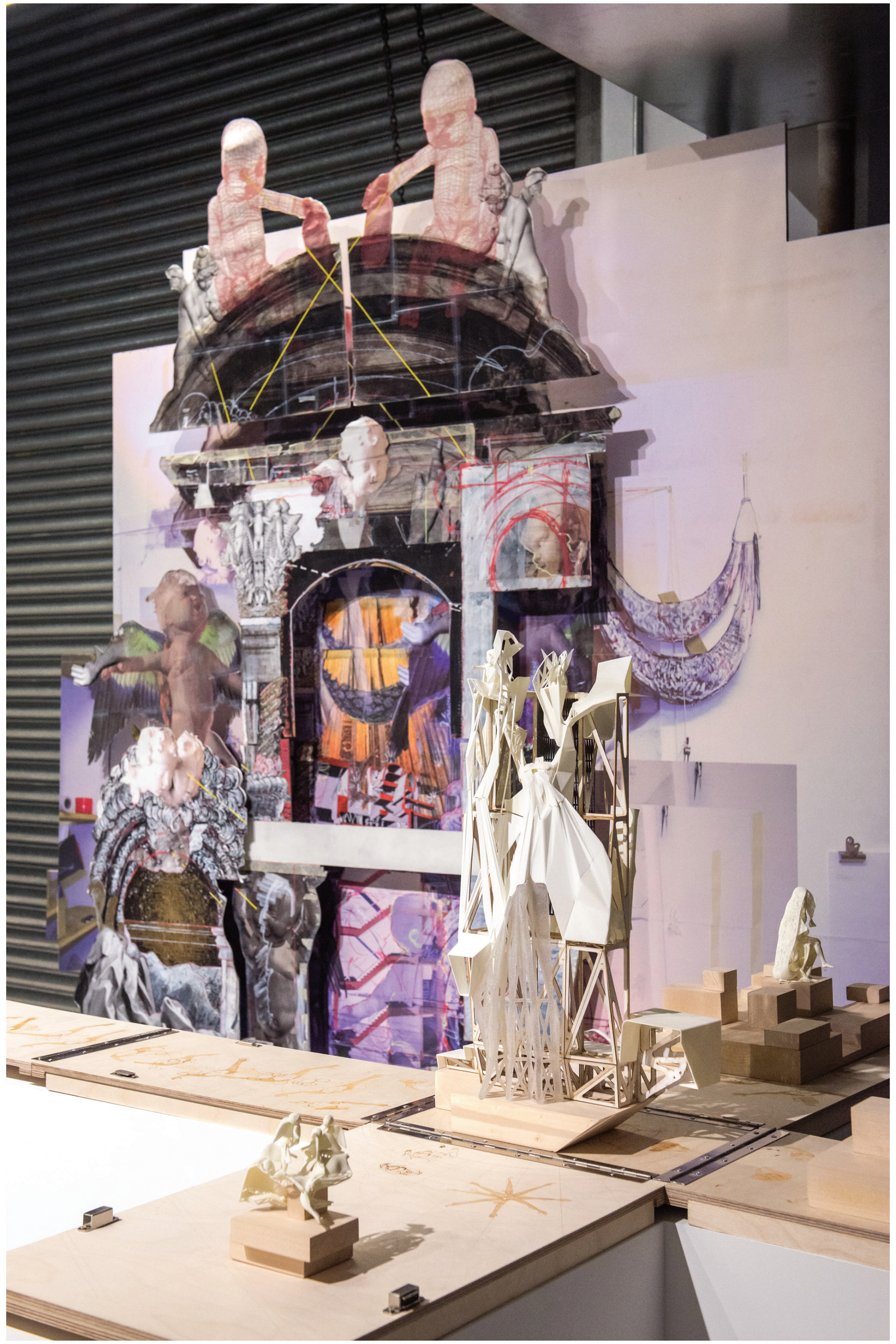


5.15

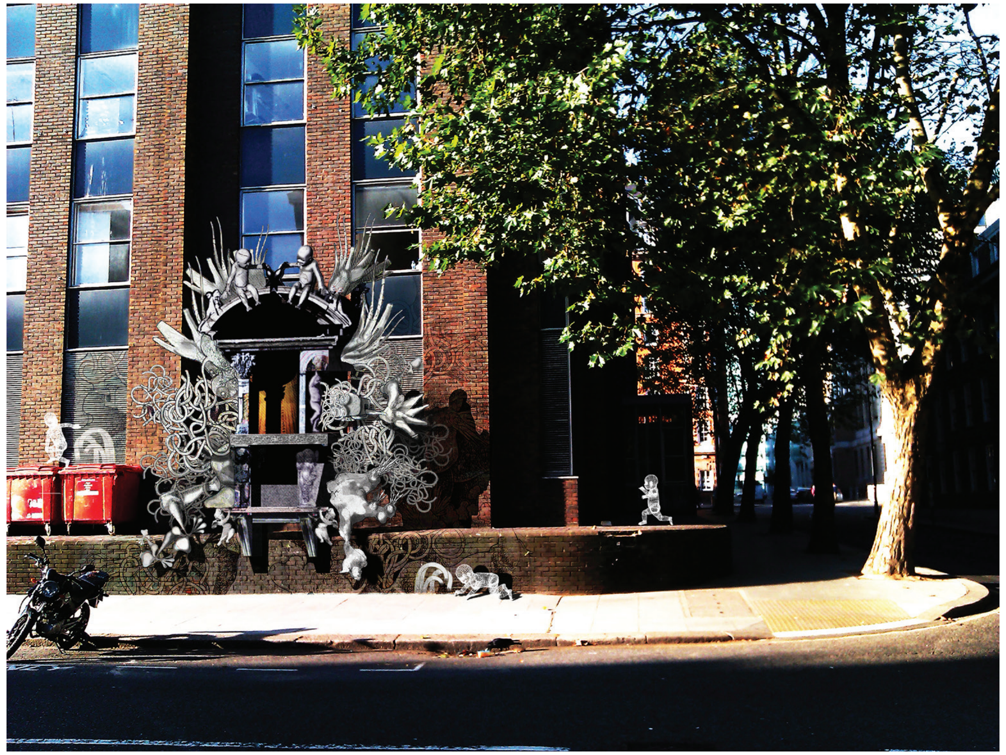
5.14 Alessandro Ayuso, design process sketch showing cross-section of the Kneeling Window, 2011. This sketch explores how P_1435 might occupy and interact with various niches, plinths and cornices of the Kneeling Window.

5.15 Alessandro Ayuso, detail of the Kneeling Window full-scale drawing with digital augmentation showing a view to the Penthouse for Moonlit Bacchanalia cut in section, 2011.

5.16



5.16 Kneeling Window, D_I figures, and the Body Agent Tempietto sectional model at the Research Projects PhD Alumni 2016 Exhibition. Photography by Richard Stonehouse. © The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 2016.



5.17

5.17 Alessandro Ayuso, view of Kneeling Window in situ, 2011, updated 2020. With thanks to Sylwia Poltorak.

remain un *attore non protagonista* and remain in the Background.

Trying to settle into slumber but remain troubled by these developments. They make for an unusual beginning to another year here.

Buonanotte.

Notes

1. See endnotes 27 and 28 of Chapter 4.
2. Haraway, 'A cyborg manifesto', 152.
3. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 6.
4. Payne, *From Ornament to Object*, 147.
5. Italian translation = 'the texture of my skin'.
6. Italian translation = 'baroque era'.
7. Italian translation = 'around noon'.
8. The *larva* masks which were part of the Bacchanalia celebrations are discussed in Chapter 4. P_1435's reference to the goat relates to the role of *putti* in bacchic imagery. Drawing from Virgil's advice that infants protect new shoots from grapevines from the attack of goats, 'a mythic enmity between goat and the grape vine' developed in which *putti* were traditionally shown attacking goats (and frightening them with the *larva* masks) as part of the celebration. Lingo, *François Duquesnoy and the Greek Ideal*, 51, 52.
9. Dempsey describes the use of masks by sprites in bacchanalian imagery to frighten goats. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 69.
10. Italian translation = 'parties'.
11. Italian translation = 'epidermis'.
12. Italian translation = 'a boy'.
13. P_1435 refers to what he claims is his appearance in the painting Mars and Venus by Piero di Cosimo. *Putti* in the painting are cited by Dempsey as *spiritelli d'amore*. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 138.
14. P_1435 refers to a lithograph print of bird wings by Albrecht Durer's watercolour and gouache study entitled Wing of a Blue Roller of 1512.

5.18

5.18 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still from animation sequence 'A Meeting in Digital Space' showing animated P_1435 and 'Janus faced figure' composed of a 3D scan of Alessandro Ayuso bound to animated skeleton in situ.

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15. Italian translation = 'the stairwell'.
16. Palumbo, *New Wombs*, 22.
17. Italian translation = 'a supporting actor'.
18. Italian translation = 'assistant director'.
19. Here, P_1435 refers to Austrian artist-architect Walter Pichler, discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.
20. Latin translation = 'I'm in the weather'.

Chapter 6 | Memories of Life after Michelangelo

Manneristic Transgressions and Starring Roles

A collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 in which P_1435 reminisces about a change in Michelangelo's work, his participation in a range of works during the mannerist era following Michelangelo's death, and his 'help' in the early work of Bernini, and in which P_1435 describes his new abode and his growing comfort with being depicted as a digital figure.

21 Febbriao Anno Domini MMXI 05:05

My last bit of Narration describing my past, which I have described in some detail, left off during my involvement in *La Sagrestia Nuova*.

Now, to continue with my description of my time with *Il Divino*, whose work I am sure you are familiar with. Let me ask, did you notice that everything in his *Biblioteca Laurenziana* project – *tutti progetti* – shows a change in architectural Works attributed to him? Something began to happen here that was quite surprising to me: amidst this turning tide, my Role in aiding him changed. *Il Divino*'s method, where myself and other Figures were meant to be sculpted and integrated into *Quadro*, began to disappear as he (and notice, Reader, I do not say 'We') worked on *La Biblioteca Laurenziana*. I, and the other Figures, were effectively replaced by elements of *il Quadro*: columns, architraves and pediments. The very objects that were meant to be our backdrop became embodiments of our Presence, and then, *Il Divino* simply worked with them instead of us.[1]

And with the drawings of *La Biblioteca Laurenziana*, you can see that this new and the rather startling thing for us, the Figures, is that we suddenly noticed the presence of quotidian Bodies amongst us on the page.[2] This first plebeian form was the Reader who sat astutely at a carousel, testing out the arrangement and composition of the bench and the desk in the Reading Room.

I must confess I was alarmed by this development. For the first time since my awakening by Signor Donato, I realised that I, as a Figure that adorned edifices, could at some point become obsolete. However, there were many more Roles for me in the Centuries to come. A more serious brush with obsolescence came later.

Just thinking of this makes me so angry – *la Modernità*! Bah.

Trying to relax now. On my headphones, I will listen to a recording from iMusic of *Miserere mei, Deus* by Signor Allegri. This should calm my nerves and remind me of better times at *La Capella Sistina* and during *L'era Barocca*.[3]

Buonanotte.

12 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 11:33

The new place that Signor Alessandro works from, and by default where I dwell, is quite a bit better than that dreadful Wates House.[4] Don't get me wrong, dear Reader, it does not have the grandeur of some of my past abodes. It is not Santa Croce or Palazzo Farnese, but there are aspects of it that are acceptable. First of all, there are *Intagli*. Not too many, but a few on the front facade, and that's more than I can say about our previous domicile. And here also, there are parts of the building that no one else goes to, such as the roof, where there is a small vacant hut (not exactly the *Attico* for Moonlit Bacchanalia but it is on the roof nonetheless, and always unoccupied), and an entire floor that is simply vacant (this I run in circles around when I feel a surfeit of energy). There is also an empty lift shaft which I like to perch atop. When the rest of the building is filled with the din of working students, I often relax in one of these places.

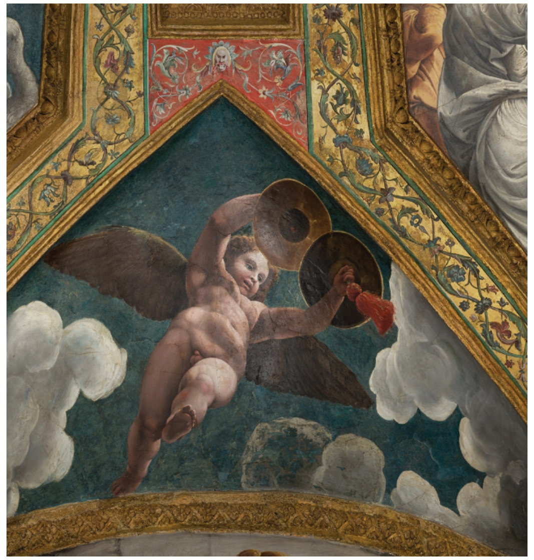
Signor Alessandro continues to evoke me often in his Digital Animations, which at first seemed awkward to me, but now I am more accustomed to them. Signor Alessandro has also made the Animations a part of *disegni*, and a hybrid existence – between the ceaselessly moving digital and the more static and physical – helped me to get comfortable with appearing as a Digital Mesh.[5] In the Animations, there are Games and opportunities to perform, just as there are in any *disegno*, and these cause me to forget my troubles regarding my bewildering physical State. In the Animations, part of the challenge is achieving grace or dramatic impact in movement, and I cannot pass up a challenge. And movement is key to this new *parvenza*.[6] While so much of my performance in *disegno* had to do with my prowess at expressive gesturing, now in the Animations, I am always moving or have the potential to move.

In my past appearances, paintings and sculpture were the primary modes of conveying such movement. Of course, the Artists who sketched me understood and captured the motion on the page, as the drawing changed and evolved, but in their *configurazione finale*,[7] the work took a static Form. This is why, and especially in the tales of *L'era Barocca* that I will convey to you soon, I became so adept at expressing through my posture the dramatic movement that I was in the midst of. *Raccontare il movimento* was the primary part of my Role as *esecutore*,[8] and conveying motion, even while appearing static to onlookers, allowed me to communicate.

Allora, back to my story! After my time with *Il Divino*, dear Reader, you would think that nothing would compare. And I assure you, although I worked with many grand Artists and *Architettori* over my many years, none were collaborators with the *passione* or pathos of *Il Divino*. I was decimated by *Il Divino*'s death – the intensity of my predilection for *bevuta* surged for months following news of his passing, I must admit – but there were so many calls *per la mia prestazione*[9] in the years that followed, and so many *giochi, spettacoli*[10] and *situazioni*, in which my services were called for by the fervent sketches and *disegno* of numerous *Artisti*, that I was simply too busy to allow *bere e ribere*[11] to get *fuori controllo*.[12] The years that followed *Il Divino*'s death amounted to an incredibly fruitful time where Figures flourished. During *La Maniera Moderna*, I adorned many more altars, facades and ceiling frescos, and made so much mischief, just in the years following the passing of *Il Divino*. And in what I view as the most immense favour to Figures, *Il Divino*'s huge influence on all the other *Artisti* made us indispensably fashionable and gave us licence to perform more and more expressive acts in our many appearances.

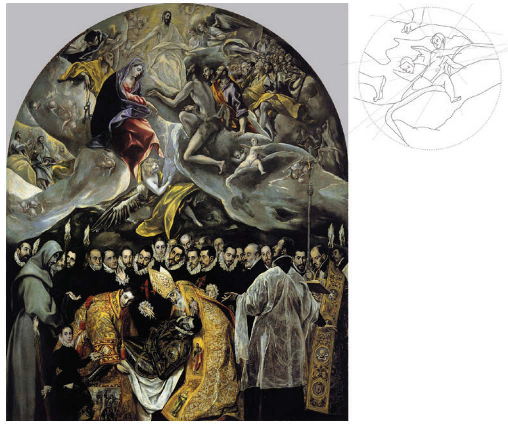
Even though *Il Divino* himself, after *la Sagrestia Nuova*, neglected to include us Figures in his designs, others saw this work and were motivated to do just that. I was employed as part of *Architettura* attributed to Signor Vasari, in *scultura* attributed to Signor Cellini and in paintings attributed to Signor Pontormo, Signor Lotto and many others.[13]

During *La Maniera Moderna*, I began to stray more from *Firenze*, and began spending more time in *Roma*. At times, I found myself visiting the far corners of the continent to aid in the most magnificent and eccentric scenes that would have astounded Signor Donato (as *Artisti* took such liberties, although I am not sure that they would have entirely displeased him, as Signor Donato took liberties in his work as well). One evocation that took me north from *Firenze* was the work of Signor Romano in Palazzo Te in Mantova. Oh yes, there I was able to bang on *sui miei cembali*[14] as I flew above *il banchetto di Amore e Psiche* (Figure 6.1)![15] As I soared overhead, I worked with Signor Romano to create the impression of height, as my Body became contorted to give depth, and I stepped over the *vela*[16] to give viewers below the sight of the underside of my foot, to better give them the impression they were looking into the heavens. Below me was a fantastically profligate scene, with many curiosities abounding. Several of my *spiritelli* Companions were occupied with the task of burning a salamander, while others had become *centauri*![17]



6.1

6.1 Giuliano Romano, detail of fresco spandrel above Banchetto di nozze di Amore e Psiche, Palazzo Te, Mantua, Italy, 1524–34. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of Palazzo Te, Putto con cembali-2velaovest.png.



6.2

6.2 El Greco, The Burial of the Count of Orgaz, 1586–8. Oil on canvas, 4,800 mm×3,600 mm. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of Iglesia de Santo Tomé, El Greco, The Burial of the Count of Orgaz.jpg. The detail diagram to the right shows the spiritello who P_1435 claims to be in the narrative.

Oh it was a festive time, and I adored crashing my cymbals together, listening to the sound echo and compel the revellers below me in their passionate indulgences. Yet, overall, I did not care too much for *il Quadro* of Signor Romano, if I compare it to that which I helped *Il Divino* design. There were not enough shadows to hide in, not enough of an opportunity to push and pull that malleable substance of *il Quadro* before it solidified into *marmo*.

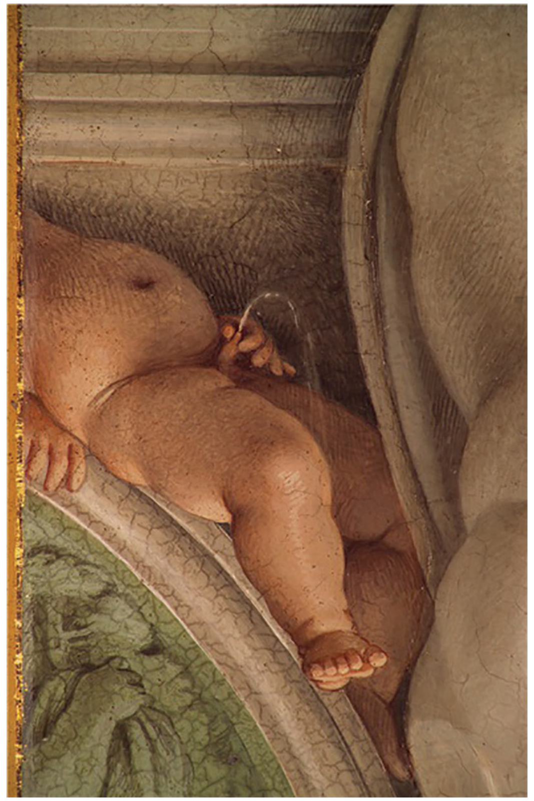
This has been a particularly long entry, dear Reader. I have emptied two bottles of *sangiovese* which I absconded with during the aftermath of a recent *festa* here in the Building. I cannot believe that in my last entry I skipped describing this period of my life and nearly did not return to the Story. I will explain more in my next entry.

Buonanotte.

14 Aprile Anno Domini MMXII 01:15

Now, where was I? I think I wanted to describe more about my work with *Artisti* during *L'era Manierista*. I appeared in many paintings at this time.

I particularly remember my sojourn to *España* where I was called upon to aid in the work of Signor El Greco (Figure 6.2). I remember the sound that echoed and reverberated off the obdurate, angled surfaces of the heavy clouds that surrounded me and buoyed me in the painting I worked with him on (Figure 6.3). During my appearance in it, I felt a



6.3

6.3 Annibale Carracci, The Loves of the Gods, Palazzo Farnase, 1600. Fresco detail. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy of Galleria Farnese, Putto mingens.jpg.

newfound ability to stretch and contort my Body in ways that I had thought were impossible. My Body took on a highly geometricised and distorted Manner, the extent to which I have not experienced again until now, with my incarnation as *una Figura Digitale*. Another astounding moment in the creation of this work was that several of my *putti* Companions merged into the cloud. This was a premonition of a capability that I would be able to exercise myself in the work of Cavaliere Bernini.

After appearing in the painting, I was called back to *Roma*, in order to assist Signor Annibale Carracci. There were moments where the atmosphere We created was one of gentle playfulness, as one might see when my Companions and I performed in the Sleeping Venus scene – ah, there we were, frolicking, as we always did in *Bacchanalia*, but in a tempered way, with not as much lustiness as we were sometimes prone to. In fact, I recall one scene with Venus I participated in first under the guidance of *Il Divino* and then again working with Signor Pontormo. Oh Reader, I do think, as much as I play the Role of innocent *Spiritello* so often, that I lost my innocence in the midst of those licentious passions, realised amidst an atmosphere of dark dreams.[18]

Sometimes Signor Carracci guided us *Spiritelli* to not awaken Venus, but rather to usher her into her untroubled slumber. (In fact, you can see me, drawing the curtain gently to a close to shelter her from the gentle din around her.)[19] But there were other moments with Signor Carracci of an entirely different character. For instance, there was a devious sketch in which Signor Carracci and I had *giochi maliziosi*[20]: we made a drawing in which I defecated on an Altar rather than beautifully adorning it as I normally would be called upon to do![21] Also, there was the time at Palazzo Farnese when, as part of my Role in the fresco I helped Signor Carracci paint there, I micturated atop an arch spandrel after imbibing a surfeit of *vino* (Figure 6.3)! Dear Reader, I must admit, I am of two minds: one is reverent and Pious, but one is given to wonton passions, and it does not take too much convincing to incite me to make mischief. Signor Carracci was able to coax that part of me out with ease. (*Padre nostro, perdona la mia colpa, ma è stato il Signor Carracci ad indurmi in tentazione. Devo, ad ogni modo riconoscere che è stato divertente, per questo, accetta le mie sincere lacrime di pentimento. Amen.*)

I began to realise in my aiding Signori Carracci e El Greco with their work that I was doing things that I would never have been able to do when working with Signor Donato. *Allora*, the liberties and Freedom involved in the aforementioned desecration of the Altar is an example. But I also felt that the Artists themselves were aiding me to twist and turn, jump and fly, with more agility than ever. More and more during this time which gave way to the era known as *Il Barocco*, I found myself capable of such physical feats such as flying, shapeshifting and stretching.

My performances, along with environments and the elaborate choreography of *Intaglio, Quadro e Figure* grew more and more complicated. You will understand what I mean when I tell you about my work with Cavaliere Bernini.

Buonanotte.

01 Giugno Anno Domini MMXII 03:47

Finally, dear Reader, I will tell you about my time with Cavaliere Bernini.

Just as I took part in some of *Il Divino*'s earliest works, I also did so with Cavaliere Bernini. You can see me as Jupiter in his sculpture of myself, Amalthea the Goat and a faun *Bambino*. I aided Cavaliere Bernini with this work when he was only a *Bambino* himself![22]

A few years later, I was the subject of a sculpture attributed to him known as *Putto* Teasing a Faun.[23] In this sculpture, my Companion and I raced about attempting to torment Faun with maximum effect by taking all the grapes, and one of my poor Companions was knocked from the writhing tree trunk and left to wrestle with *il Cane* below. I was able to make my way up the trunk. It bent and bowed with the weight and force that Faun exerted on it as he twisted about and around it. The best thing about where I wound up in the sculpture – pushing back Faun's head and stealing his grapes – is that not only was I able to torment Faun gleefully, but I am also in the most prominent position, able to be seen by viewers, who when they see me and what I am doing, often laugh delightedly! I am the focus. And I like to think I attract even more attention than I would if I had appeared in a similar sculpture attributed to any one of Cavaliere Bernini's peers. And this is because Cavaliere Bernini was attentive to how the onlooker would encounter us Figures, considering how the onlooker could and would move around us, peering at us and observing the various details from many vantage points. And details there were, Reader: any object, be it mundane as a tree trunk or a bunch of grapes, was to become filigreed and diaphanous, part of a twisting and convoluted arrangement.

In this Bacchanalia scene, I felt tremendously agile, as I was growing accustomed to in the works I described previously. Yet, I noticed a few differences. While when I worked with Signor El Greco, I became stretched in a manner that distorted my Body, which felt exhilarating yet strange and unnatural, when I worked with Cavaliere Bernini, while retaining my agility, I also retained an appearance more similar to what Signor Donato would have found agreeable. My proportions and my chubbiness made me more recognisable as a fleshy Child.[24]

Later, when Cavaliere Bernini and his assistants began to evoke my presence in *progetti Architettonici*, forces such as those that pushed and pulled me in paintings of Signor El Greco began to show themselves with more intensity there too. The distortion of the Forces and motions enveloped our Bodies and took hold of our limbs. The Forces were like strings on a violin. As they formed geometric Shapes, they were tuned (indeed, we Figures helped in tuning them), until they produced lush and perfect sounds.[25]

Ah, but I will continue the telling of this tale later, as I now hear the less harmonious intonations caused by the custodian's Hoover. It is already *lauds*,[26] and the Sun's early rays are casting themselves through the windows of this grim atelier. I have made yet another night of storytelling and must now allow myself at least a few hours of sweet slumber before I will undoubtedly be summoned into *Il Regno* by Signor Alessandro.

Buonanotte.

Notes

1. In the Laurentian Library project, 'The frame (i.e. architecture itself) becomes the figure, taking over the position and significance conventionally occupied by figurative sculpture'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 153.
2. The 'quotidian' bodies that P_1435 refers to are the same that Brothers describes in the first known instance of the depiction of a 'user' in a design sketch by Michelangelo for the reading lecterns and pews of the Laurentian Library reading room. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 190. With reference to a red-chalk-and-pen drawing by Michelangelo, 16 cm×20.1 cm, Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 94ar (Corpus 558r).
3. Here, P_1435 refers to a setting of Psalm 51 by the Italian composer Gregorio Allegri composed in the 1630s, to be sung exclusively by choir ensembles in the Sistine Chapel. The title translates from Latin to 'Have mercy on me, O God'.
4. Here, P_1435 refers to the Royal Ear Hospital at the corner of Huntley and Capper Streets, which was acquired by the Bartlett School of Architecture at that time and has since been demolished.
5. P_1435 refers to design drawings done for the Penthouse for Moonlit Bacchanalia in which still frames of animations were overlayed onto orthographic drawings.
6. Italian translation = 'semblance'.
7. Italian translation = 'final configuration'.
8. Italian translation = 'a performer'.
9. Italian translation = 'for my performance'.
10. Italian translation = 'spectacles'.
11. Italian translation = 'drinking'.
12. Italian translation = 'out of control'.
13. The painting that P_1435 refers to is *Venus and Cupid* by Jacopo Pontormo of 1533.
14. Italian translation = 'my cymbals'.
15. P_1435 refers to the mural of the Wedding of Cupid and Psyche by Giuliano Romano in Palazzo Te.
16. Italian translation = 'spandrel' (literally 'sail').
17. P_1435 refers to moments in the frescoes in Palazzo Te. In it, *putti* are depicted attempting to burn a salamander, which signified the absence of love, and others are depicted as centaurs.
18. P_1435 refers to Venus and Cupid by Jacopo Pontormo of 1532, after a sketch by Michelangelo.
19. Here, P_1435 refers to the Sleeping Venus by Annibale Carracci of 1602.
20. Italian translation = 'mischievous games'.
21. P_1435 refers to a sketch of a *putto* defecating on an altar by Annibale Carracci, 1575–1609.
22. P_1435 slightly exaggerates Bernini's age here, although the sculpture he refers to, The Goat Amalthea with the Infant Jupiter and a Faun, was carved between 1610 and 1615, and Bernini would have been perhaps as young as 11 years old.
23. P_1435's claim that he is the most prominent element in Bernini's sculpture of 1616–1617, Bacchanal: A Faun Teased by Children, is certainly debatable, as the composition is highly spatial and complex and arguably has multiple focal points.
24. P_1435 mentions an aspect of Bernini's sculpture that has been cited by critics as a significant contribution. For instance, in his analysis of Apollo and Daphne (1622–1627), J. Joris Gastel notes that the figures twist and tilt off their base, engaging the vestibular response of the viewer. The sculpted figures invite the movement of their viewers: time is presented to the kinaesthetic viewer who, as they move around the sculpture, may observe a series of details that show that time is elapsing. Daphne's flesh is transforming into bark. Apollo's expression appears to be changing as he compresses Daphne's flesh. van Gastel, 'Bernini's metamorphosis', 196.
25. Baroque 'geometry that can be read musically, and indeed . . . actually embodies the unheard melodies that Keats wrote about'. Hersey, *Architecture and Geometry in the Age of the Baroque*, 5.
26. Here, P_1435 refers to the canonical hours of the Middle Ages; Lauds is roughly equivalent to 5.00 a.m.

Chapter 7 | Virtuosic *Putti* in Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Work at St Peter's Basilica

A dialogue in which P_1435 describes his observations on and experience in Bernini's work, particularly in the design of figurative ornament of St Peter's Basilica, with interspersed notes and introductory remarks by Alessandro Ayuso.

Introduction

The vast interior space of St Peter's Basilica focused on here is punctuated by a multitude of figural ornaments. The numerous ornamental *putti* throughout the 'thick 2D' of the interior surface, from the fonts of holy water at the lowest register of the sanctuary to the uppermost reaches of the dome over the crossing, make for a non-Cartesian spatial constellation.[1] In many ways, the *putti* incorporated into elements of St Peter's designed by Bernini, discussed here, extend the themes and practices described in Chapter 4. Like Michelangelo, Bernini's figures are part of a similar process of *disegno* where, in the design process, they are set in a reciprocal interaction with architecture, at times even seeming to become a part of it. While the *putti* at St Peter's discussed in this chapter appear to assert themselves theatrically, they do not appear to aggressively confront or fastidiously ignore the visitor as do Michelangelo's sculptural figures in the New Sacristy. While individual in their detailed nuances and lifelike expressions, the iconography of Bernini's figures discussed here is not overtly idiosyncratic or esoteric as Michelangelo's New Sacristy sculptural figures arguably were. While the physiques of Michelangelo's figures were tweaked, exaggerated and subtly hybridised, the fluidity of the body demonstrated by Bernini's *putti* take on more overt liberties of deformation. Such differences are certainly due in part to the distinct dispositions, backgrounds and methodologies of the two authors, but they also occur because of the different epistemes and circumstances of their creation. On the one hand, figures appear in a tomb commemorating the premature deaths of two politically contentious figures; on the other, they appear on a papal basilica designed after the decrees of the Council of Trent which stifled what was deemed esoteric mannerism and deemed that architecture and art should bolster the church doctrine as overtly as possible, including through emotional appeals to worshippers. Rather than comparing the two, the study of *putti* here is meant to expand the repertoire of the possibilities of figures in architecture, in this case focusing less on the figures in the drawing process and more as ornamental presences – spatial mediators elucidating a transcendent narrative.

Atop the Baldacchino

Now that you have set the Scene, please Signor Alessandro, allow me to tell you the Story of my involvement with Cavaliere Bernini. To do so in full would be to give you a History of his artistic Life. I have already told you of some of my earliest Appearances in his work, but there is much more that I could reveal, for I appeared in virtually every one of the architectural Works attributed to him![2] However, I will attempt to restrain myself to the telling of my most dramatic Appearances at *Basilica di San Pietro*.

Allora, during my time working with *Il Divino*, I was never quite sure if I would be included in a final Work. He might sketch me in the Margins, or in his *disegno* for a Fresco, but then leave the Fresco unrealised. Or, in the case of his *disegno per l'Architettura*, he would increasingly leave the Architecture mostly unadorned, without *Figure*, as in *La Biblioteca Laurenziana*. But there was no shortage of Roles for me in the work of Cavaliere Bernini. And, amazingly, I first appeared in Cavaliere Bernini's *Architettura* in *Basilica di San Pietro*, where *Il Divino* neglected to include me![3] When *Il Divino* was in *Roma* designing the *Cupolone* for this edifice, I was participating in the designs of Signor Il Tribolo and others in *Firenze*.[4] But in Anno Domini MDCXXIV, I appeared first in an architectural work of Cavaliere Bernini's – *Il Baldacchino* – directly under the magnificent *Cupolone* attributed to *Il Divino*. Although a mere piece of Furniture when compared with the towering *Cupola*, I personally found the scale of this *Ciborium* titanic. To me, it was in itself a small Building!

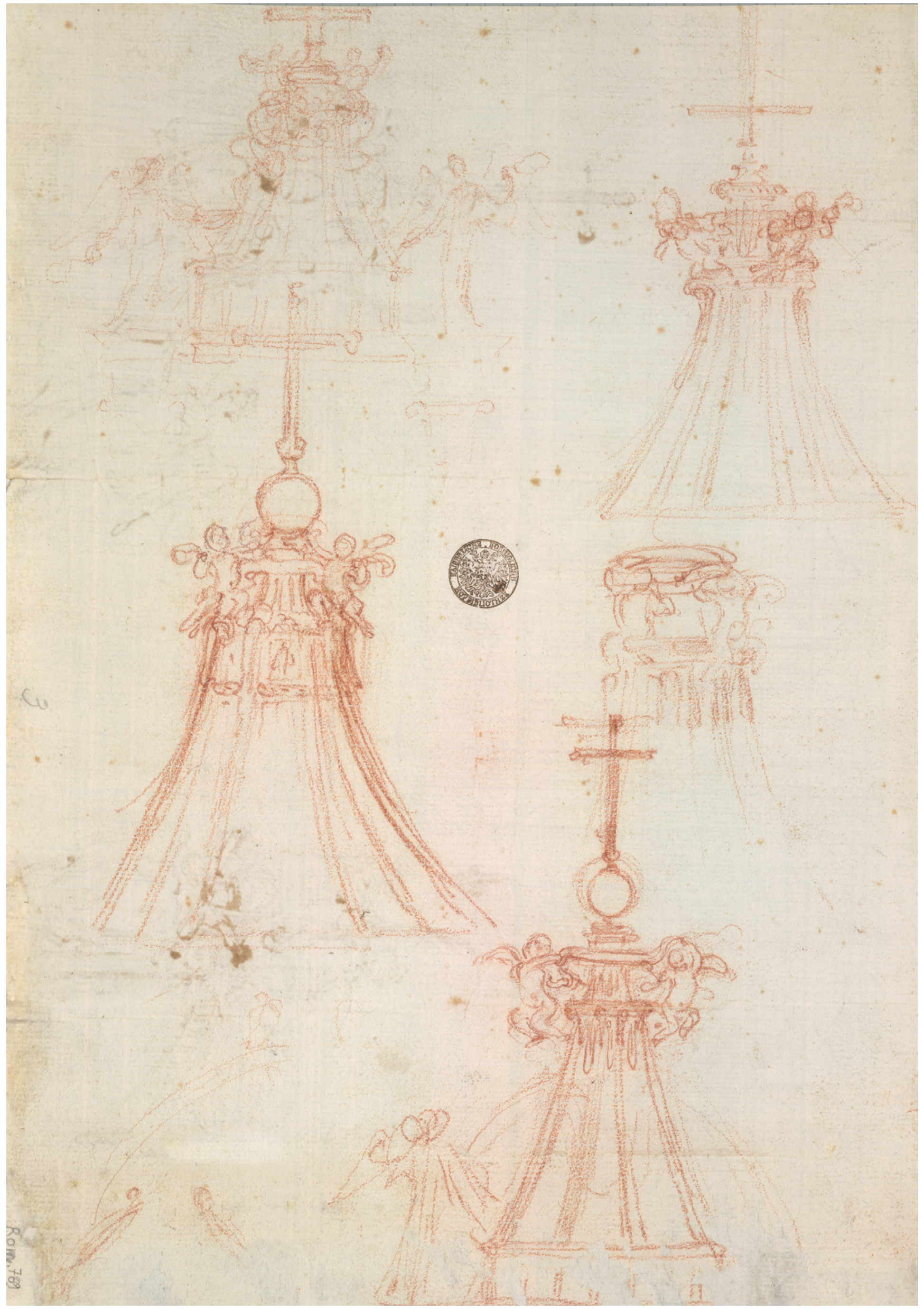
This *progetto* should not only be attributed to Cavaliere Bernini. The design took place over many years, and there were many hands involved. Signor Maderno first sketched my Companions dancing in the vines that grew up the twisted Columns.[5] You may miss seeing them there if you visit because they are merely the tiniest of Reliefs, almost hidden amidst a rich pattern of decorative foliage.[6] Unlike their insignificant Roles, my Appearance in the project is one of my finest and most glorious, and you will most certainly not miss seeing me there if you walk into that splendid Basilica!

I will tell you how this Role evolved. As my Companions aided Cavaliere Bernini in sketching the design, I tested different Poses and carried out various Tasks. We perched on the pinnacle of *la Corona*, and when we did, it extended upwards to give us a better View. In a few of the sketches, we helped to stretch it further upward by lifting the finial Orb at its top (Figure 7.1). Then, we were feeling quite tired from all the running about and hoisting. So, Cavaliere Bernini drew us as we were laying on the volute supports, and they bowed gently under our weight, much in the manner that *Il Divino* had drawn the old men and women and their *timpani spezzatti* in the *La Sagrestia Nuova*.[7]

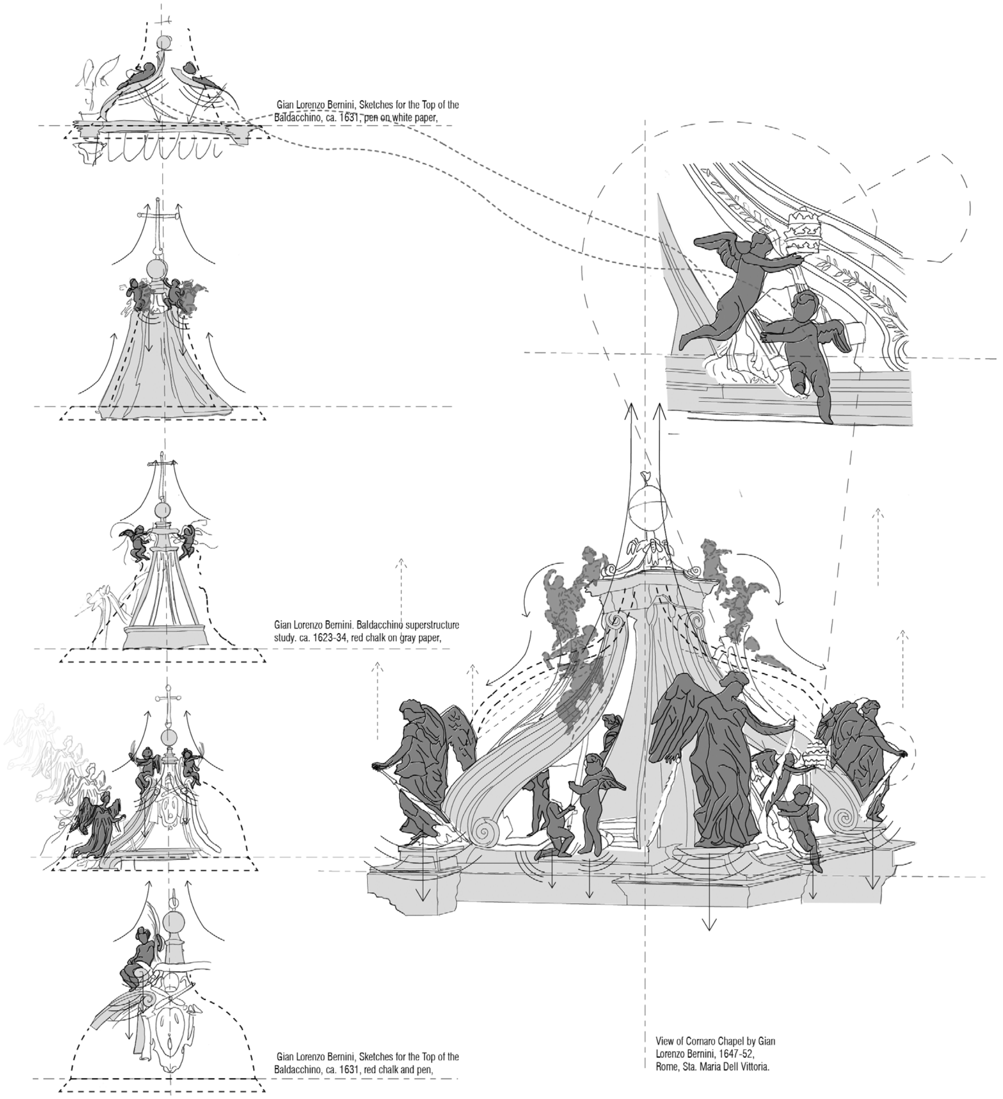
All this construction work reminded me of *La Cappella Cornaro*. In that work, I was employed at the entrance arch to complete *il Altorilievo*.[8] You can see me holding the swag that lines the arch soffit. In that case, there was some last Work to take care of. Often, I help in the Construction of the works that I am a part of, but in this case, Cavaliere Bernini gave us too much to do! I was caught in the act of hastily attempting to complete my Task. Oh, that was quite a difficult one. The Garlands I was meant to arrange were very heavy, and a great wind was blowing me away![9]

In his sketches for the design of the Baldacchino (constructed from 1625 to 1633), Bernini explored the structure and ornamentation of the roof canopy (Figure 7.2).[10] Angels and angelic *putti* are

7.1 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino superstructure study, ca. 1623–33. Red chalk on grey paper, 264 mm × 362 mm. Albertina, Vienna.



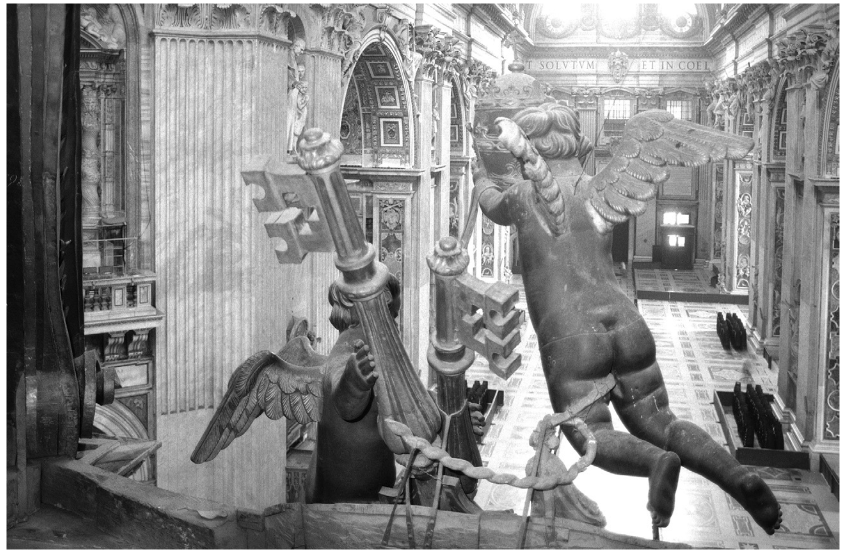
7.1


Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Sketches for the Top of the Baldacchino, ca. 1631, pen on white paper,
Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Baldacchino superstructure study. ca. 1623-34, red chalk on gray paper,
Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Sketches for the Top of the Baldacchino, ca. 1631, red chalk and pen,
View of Cornaro Chapel by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1647-52, Rome, Sta. Maria Dell Vittoria.

7.2

7.2 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram illustrating the interaction of *putti* with the structure of the Baldacchino as depicted in Bernini's sequence of design drawings. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

depicted, alternately 'carrying' and embellishing the connection of the serpentine superstructure of the canopy and the Solomonic columns.[11] As in Michelangelo's elevations and sketches of sculptural ornaments and voluted pediments for tombs for the New Sacristy, changes in the figures' actions, postures and positions correlate with the form and geometry of the scroll-like forms, suggesting that the figure is a vehicle encountering the design at a pliable stage, aiding the designer to sense



7.3

7.3 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino, St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, 1624–33. *Putti* of the east side of the roof seen from behind, with nave of St Peter's Basilica visible in the background. Photograph by Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft. © Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft, courtesy of Saskia Ltd.

its material qualities in absentia. The figures touch the surfaces of the imagined design, likely initiating a sensation of the temperature and texture of the material as Bernini drew. The *putti* lay and pull on the structure's volutes and garlands. The structural volutes compress when the *putti* are shown laying down on their centre points, and change to a more vertical, tall configuration when the *putti* are drawn at their pinnacles in upright positions.

In P_1435's description of the Cornaro Chapel (constructed from 1647 to 1652), he refers to *putti* sculpted on the underside of an arch framing the entry to which the scene of St Theresa in Ecstasy lies beyond. Here, *putti* are modelled in stucco, shown arranging festoons on that arch's *intrados*. Irving Lavin 'thinks of these small angels as *putti* as coming from an outside realm to appear as Bernini's "workmen" in the decoration'.[12] In this case, the *putti* occupy a liminal position on the threshold of the sacred space (which reaches its dramatic zenith inside the *aedicula* where St Theresa is shown receiving the angel's arrow), playfully and dutifully negotiating between the space of sinners and saints, the imperfect and incomplete, the physically constructed and the divinely materialised. The *putti* are part of intertwining theatre and real life, making for a *mise en abyme*.[13]

> Signor Alessandro, in the Baldacchino, as it was built, my Role is much more fabulous than at *La Cappella Cornaro*, partly because I do not have such a rushed and arduous Task to perform. In fact, my appearance there may simply be the best of all the Figures that took part in the design. *Qua*, I stand triumphantly with my Companions on the canopy of the Baldacchino, 20 *braccia* in the air, five times larger than my Companions on the columns below, right in the centre of everything, displaying the papal Crown (Figure 7.3)![14]

Allora, *caro Lettore*, I can admit to you that I was filled with apprehension, holding that *Corona preziosa* just over the lip of that lofty Baldacchino (which, in fact was much taller than the Cavalcanti Altar which had given me such a fright Centuries earlier), but I resisted the temptation to show my fear, for I knew that over me – in fact, high above me in the *pennacchi*, swinging on swag from the lower part of the Drum – and in the lantern of the *Cupola* itself were other *putti*, and they all appeared gracefully at ease. So, I proudly thrust that splendid artefact forward!

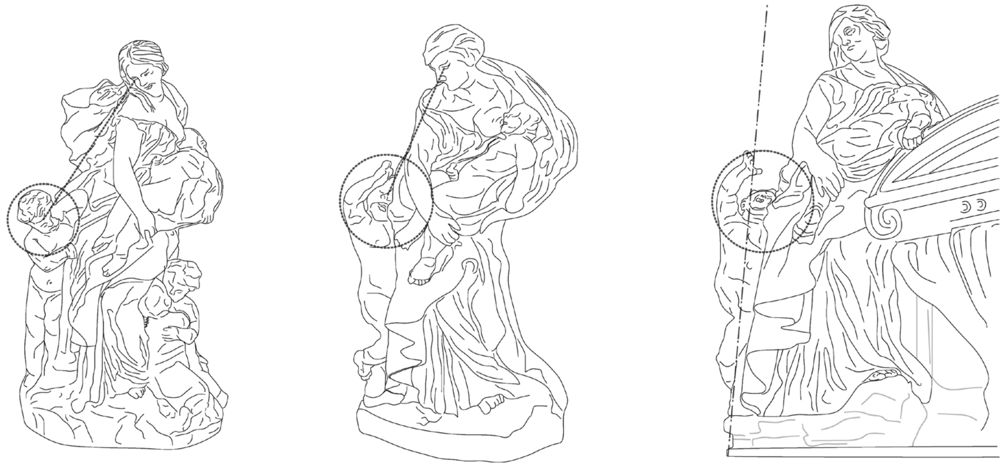
The view from here across the grand Nave towards the entrance and towards *Roma* to the west is one of the best that I have ever been privileged to witness. I am bathed in the Light that streams down on me from the windows in the Drum of the Cupola above. I float in this heavenly Light day in and day out as pilgrims and worshippers stream in through the entry of the Basilica. I smile confidently down on them as they crane their necks with awe and wonder.

In the elaborate situations in which I appeared when aiding Cavaliere Bernini, I alternately felt the woeful depths and the ecstatic highs of my Emotions as never before, and Cavaliere Bernini encouraged me to express these feelings quite theatrically. In this situation, I most certainly felt ecstatic highs.

Even though in some sketches, it appears that the *putti* may be aiding the support of the canopy structure, Bernini relieved his *putti* of 'heavy lifting' tasks in the Baldacchino. It is the angels standing atop the columns that 'lift' the roof. They appear to grasp vines that spring forth from the brackets effortlessly with only their thumbs and index fingers, and with their pinkies daintily arched upward.

The two *putti* positioned above the centre of the Baldacchino's cornice make for a prominent focal point within the spatial volume of St Peters. In this instance, they are cast from bronze, but unlike the 'tiny' *putti* in the columns below, they are not in relief. Instead, they are released from their mooring to the larger form. One of them, P_1435, even appears to 'float above' the canopy's wooden cornice, discretely attached to the structure with iron tie rods from the back.[15] This *putto*'s prominently displayed levitation aids in defining an illusion of an anti-gravity zone and the possibility, particularly from the viewpoint of a worshipper approaching the crossing, of a canopy supported by angels. The *putti* and angels work together to allow a supersession of the apparent physical connection between roof and column by an 'unreality principle'; they invite perceptive visitors to take an imaginative leap.[16]

The *putti* in the Cornaro Chapel are also centrally located. Yet, they are not the focal point. While they are outside of the main aspect of the scene, their materiality draws attention. The Baldacchino *putti* are cast from bronze, a material that reoccurs in details throughout the darkly hued structure, while the Cornaro *putti*'s white outer surface contrasts highly with the darkly hued arch above it, drawing attention to the *putti*'s differentiation with it. By drawing attention to the *putti* and distinguishing them from that which they construct, the *putti* are made to emphasise their performance; by drawing attention to themselves, they reveal the illusion of a highly constructed architectural space. These *putti* function much as the flanking *spiritelli* in medieval manuscripts, where the function was to redirect viewers' fleeting attention to the content of the manuscript's text.[17]



7.4

7.4 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram of a sequence of two *bozzetti* of Charity and Children (left and centre) and the Tomb of Pope Urban VIII, St Peter's Basilica, by Gian Lorenzo Bernini 1627–34 (far right). With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

The position of the *putti* in space, always indicating a hierarchical order, here associates them with the celestial.

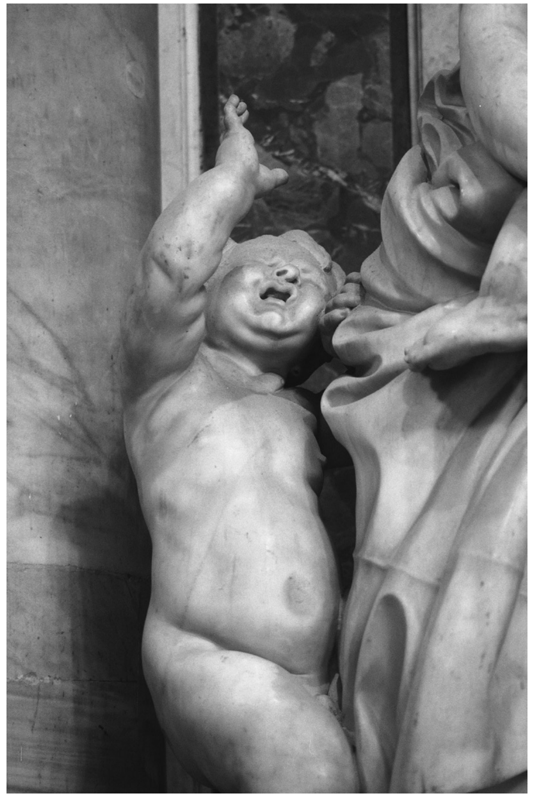
Everyday Emotional *Putti*

I will now tell you of another appearance of mine at St Peters. In his sketches of the *Tomba di Urbano VIII di Roma*, Cavaliere Bernini depicted me standing next to the effigy of *Carità*. I realised that the Tomb design was very similar to those in the final work of *La Sagrestia Nuova*, in which I ultimately never appeared. It looked like I would have the chance once again to frolic and tumble from a *timpano spezatto*, and I hoped that maybe this time I could appear sculpted in marble atop it!

In the first pen-and-ink wash drawing which I aided Cavaliere Bernini with, I nestled in the folds of *Carità*'s drapery, and my Companion suckled on her breast.[18] All seemed well. But then, Cavaliere Bernini made the first clay *bozzetto* (Figure 7.4).

Carità, distracted by my two other Companions, stopped paying attention to me. *Carità* nudged me much harder, and then she even scolded me! Such a seemingly gentle Maiden with a breast tantalisingly exposed – why would she do such a coarse thing and with such asperity and disproportionate strength?[19] To add to my bewilderment, in the second *bozzetto*, *Carità* simply looked on with amusement as I reeled.[20] It wasn't just *Carità*'s actions that made me lurch with such vehemence. While Cavaliere Bernini made the *bozzetto*, he would insert it into a wooden model of the Architecture, and I was squeezed by this, to the point that it left its indentation on my Flesh.[21] At this point, I went from put off to extremely agitated, I must admit, and I had a bit of a temper tantrum.

In the case of the tomb, constructed from 1627 to 1647, the architectural surround was already complete, and the broad strokes of the composition, an elaboration on a standard tomb form persisting since the Renaissance, was already established early on in the pen-and-ink sketch. The interplay between the figures evolved further via the sequence of malleable *bozzetti*, or clay sketch models, which were likely periodically placed in a wooden model of the architectural surround.[22] The design media, observed in sequence, show a progressing intensification of P_1435's



7.5

7.5 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, detail of the Tomb of Pope Urban VIII (*putto* aside Charity), St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, ca. 1628–47, marble. Photograph by Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft. © Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft, courtesy of Saskia Ltd.

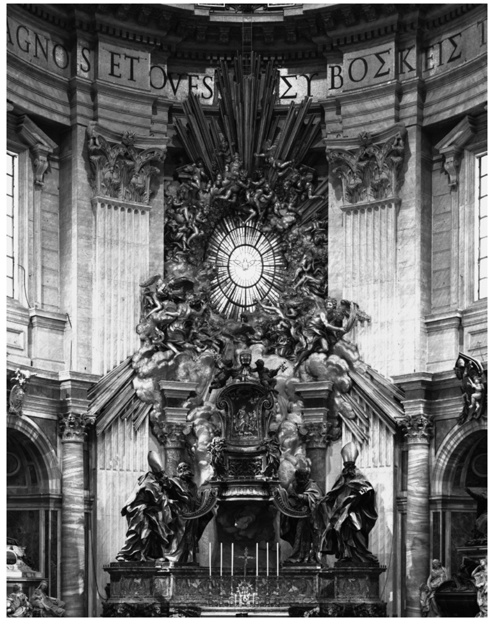
expression. P_1435 is in between the lower vertex of a pyramidal composition of the tomb and the relative mass of the column which expresses the structural load of the semi-hemispherical apse above and is at the optimal location to express the implicit squeeze between massive architectural surround and sculptural elements.

When *Il Divino* had sketched us in the heap below the *timpano spezzato*, it was delightful, but in this case, I was not able to play any *Giochi*. *Qui*, deprived of my ability to fly, I am wedged in between *Carità* and the column behind me. My Companion, with whom I had hovered atop the Baldacchino, was on the opposite side of the Tomb, relaxing in the shadows of a perfectly shaped hollow created by *Giustizia*'s draped tunic. When I tried to do the same, *Carità* shooed me away! I should have known that there was a chance that I would be subjected to Abuse, when I was first drawn without Wings. This lack is often inauspicious, as it signals to me that I may be stuck in the scene without recourse.

Furthermore, atop this nearby *timpano spezzato* – even if I could get to it – there were buzzing Bees![23] I know my Companions who appeared in the twisted Columns of *Il Baldacchino* with me were not daunted by these loathsome (and, to my envy, winged) Arthropods, but this member of the animal kingdom was new to me, and Insects in general are not to my liking, and certainly not those that produce such ominous susurrations and can inflict harm! Dear Reader, the buzzing of these foul and dangerous Creatures echoed throughout the niches as they clung and flitted about the Tomb. But there was an even more dreadful *Folletto*[24] that I noticed Cavaliere Bernini sketching, and who I unfortunately was to see more of later: a menacing Skeleton, flapping his scraggly Wings and dedicating himself, back turned to the spectators, to scrawling in his devilish Book.[25] This shook me to the core. I longed to fly far from such Ghouls! Additionally, in my peripheral vision, huge Figures loomed. Papa Urbino and the Doctors of the Church towered above us all, gesturing grandly.[26]

Reader I tell you, I felt scared, trapped, angry, rejected and, not least, squeezed (Figure 7.5). I did not like this position one bit, in between imposing, malicious or indifferent Figures, the remains of the Deceased and huge Columns.

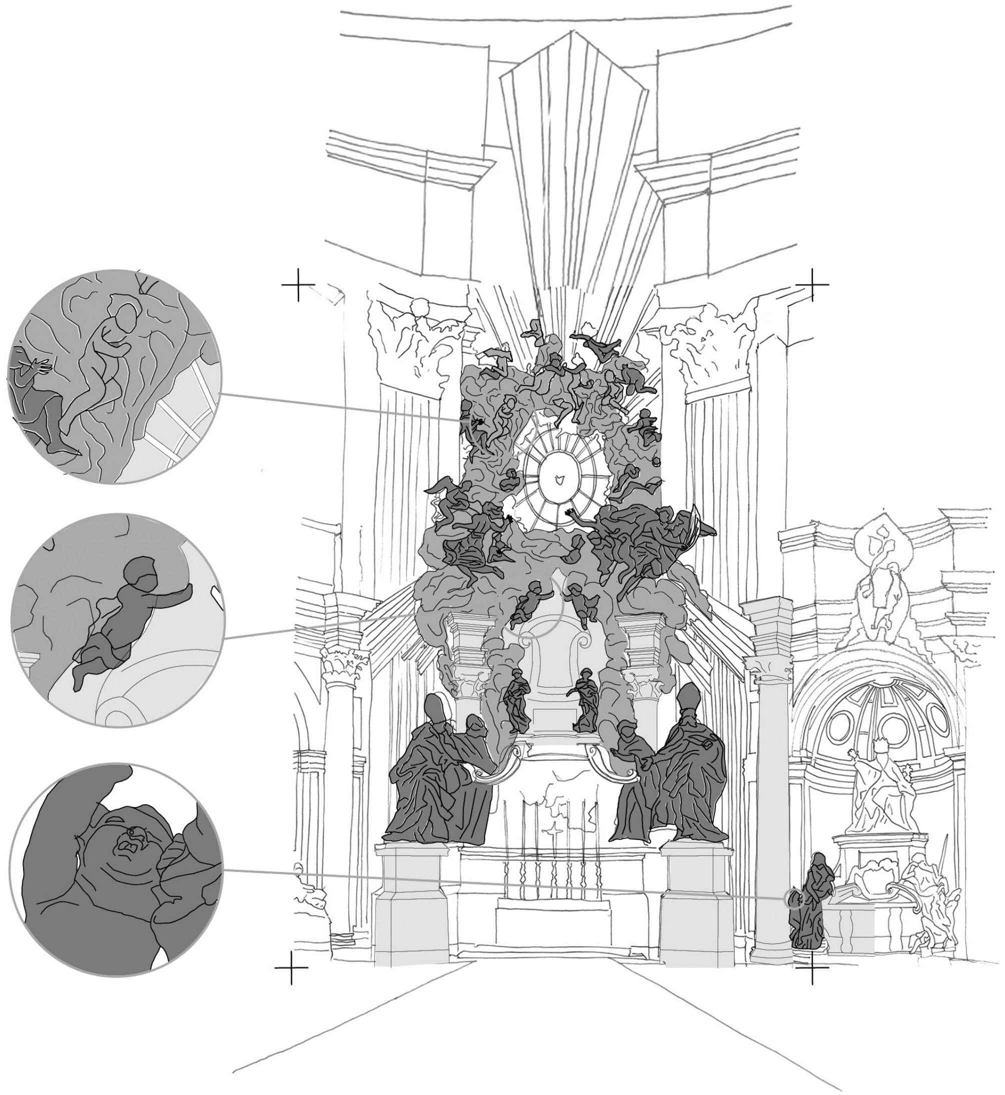
As the tomb was built, in a flanking niche in the apse at St Peter's, P_1435 is an empathetic access point, preparing the congregant to engage emotionally with the architecture and ornament above (Figure 7.6). This is achieved in several ways. One factor is that P_1435 appears less like an angel and more like a mortal: he is wingless, and wears an unbridled expression of grief. In this case, as the figure included in the Tomb, P_1435's 'babyish qualities' were likely intentionally intensified to increase the worshippers' empathy with them.[27] Another factor is P_1435's materiality: he is carved from stone identical to that comprising the accompanying *putti* and Charity, and nearly identical to the Corinthian column that appears to squeeze against him. This stereotomic mass differs starkly from the dark bronze and gilt gold effigies of the Pope and the personification of death which are hollow inside, shells left by the lost-wax casting method from which they were made. He is also at the lowest spatial strata of the Basilica's apse, nearly at eye level with seated congregants (Figure 7.7).



7.6

7.6 Gian Lorenzo Bernini et al., St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome, 1628–66. View of the apse showing Cathedra Petri and the Gloria window and the Tomb of Urban VIII, visible in the lower right-hand corner. Photograph by Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft. © Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft, courtesy of Saskia Ltd.

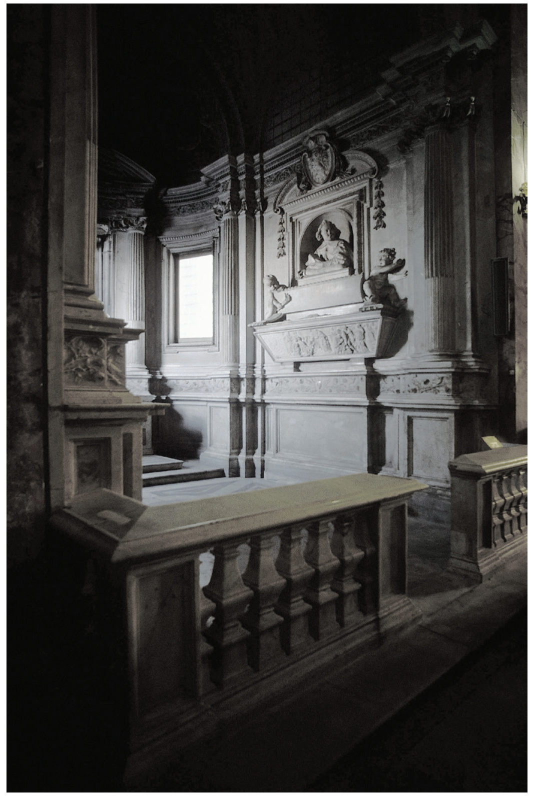
This traumatising experience reminds me of my appearance at *Cappella Raimondi* (Figure 7.8). There, I was one of four sculpted *putti* who sat atop Tombs on opposite sides of the space, peering down and peering at each other. Cavaliere Bernini only made preliminary sketches and left assistants to sculpt us. I enjoyed this project at first, for while I was on site, I was able to acquaint myself with the *Tempietto*, the chapel in the courtyard that seemed made for someone my size. But as the project progressed, and I began to understand my Role, a feeling of anxiety overcame me, much as at Papa Urbino's Tomb. For my Role here was to look down at the mortal remains of Monsignor Girolamo – and *mio Dio*! Reader, it was ghastly, ugly, frightening! Even though I have often been called upon to aid in funerary Monuments, as I am an angelic Being drawn and sculpted in stone, the ugly side of Death is something I easily forget about relatively soon after I encounter it. Perhaps this is because I will never die; I will simply change Form. And even though I have a long History of (splendid, if I do say so myself) performances in Tomb ornamentation, when I am brought face to face with mortality, it always horrifies and surprises me so. And to tell you the truth, I was not usually brought face to face with Death like I was here. In other Tombs, I may find a position near the deceased and feel the heavy Melancholy of the circumstance, as in the case of Papa Urbino's Tomb, and even that circumstance was more upsetting than most others, given the cackling Skeleton and the like. But here, I was positioned exactly over the coffin and encouraged to open it, and my Companion shone the light from his torch into it, and when I looked down, I shrieked! As I scrambled to escape, my Body merged with the architecture. In *Cappella Raimondi*, my hand actually flattened and became part of the wall. I thought perhaps to escape



7.7

7.7 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram of the Gloria window elevation highlighting the transformation of the bodily state of P_1435 from fleshy and earthbound in the Charity Statue in Tomb niche to dematerialised *putti* on the window surround. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

> the view of the corpse below, I could hide in the wall itself (Figure 7.9).
>
> Such a merging of my own Body with *il Quadro* was in and of itself nothing new to me; I was comfortable with it. In *La Chiesa di San Francesco* in Rimini, my legs bloated like an elephant's and, with these substantial proportions sculpted in marble, merged with the very stone of the heavy balustrade below it; the stone of *il Quadro* became the substance of my leg.[28]



7.8

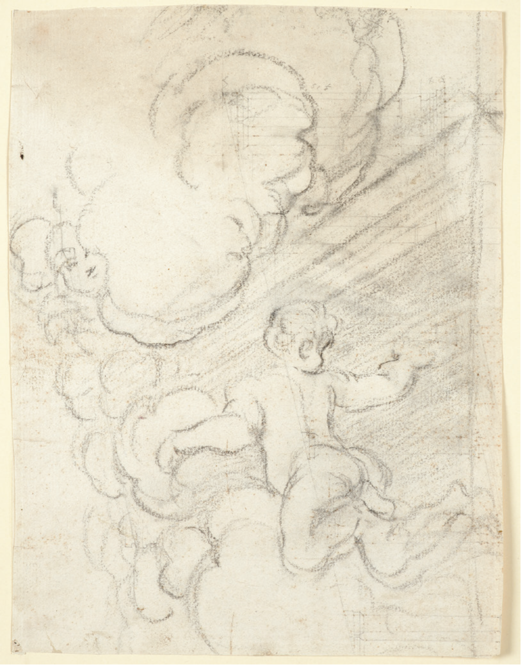
7.8 Gian Lorenzo Bernini et al., tomb of M. Girolamo, Raimondi Chapel, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome, 1638–48. Photograph by Scott Gilchrist, courtesy of Scott Gilchrist/archivision.com.

7.9

7.9 Gian Lorenzo Bernini et al., tomb of M. Girolamo, Raimondi Chapel, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome, 1638–48. View looking up at detail of *putto* arms in relief. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso, courtesy of Church San Pietro in Montorio.

In the Raimondi Chapel, designed and constructed from 1638 to 1648, in the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, wingless *putti* appear in several locations, but most notably, they are sculpted to appear perching atop the tombs of the deceased which are in relief on the two flanking walls of the chapel. P_1435's description shows that he is the closest *putto* to the entry threshold of the chapel. The rim of the open casket is just above the likely eye level of the visitor. The visitor would likely be looking up obliquely at P_1435, who projects out from the edge. Much like the scene in Werner Herzog's 2005 docu-drama 'Grizzly Man', where Herzog's reaction to an audio recording of the protagonist's gruesome death is shown while the actual audio is not conveyed, the *putti* at Raimondi, through their histrionic reactions, convey the grim spectacle of a death that the visitor cannot see with his own eyes.[29] In his display of human emotion (in lieu of the celestial knowing conveyed by angelic *putti* elsewhere in Bernini's works, such as in the Baldacchino), he appeals directly to the worshippers' own empathy.

P_1435, according to his description, is the most prominently visible *putto* from the entrance to the church. This figure, surprised and shocked by his view of the deceased Girolamo, seems to be retreating into the wall. This morphing is prominently displayed to the entering worshipper. The limbs of the right side ofP_1435's recoiling body are sculpted in the round, but those on the left side appear flattened, in relief, with angular edges. In this case, P_1435 is a hybrid body: he appears as part building, part figure. His angular and flattened limb seems as if it is an extension of the wall, and coupled with the material continuity between wall and figure, P_1435 seems to be an extension of the architecture. The aim of the sculptor was likely to accomplish an illusory effect of depth, pushing relief sculpture to the point of appearing nearly freestanding.[30] At the juncture where P_1435 and the wall conjoin, the body is geometricised, and the boundary between figure and building are nearly indistinguishable.



7.10

7.10 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, sketch for the Gloria window surround, ca. 1660. Black chalk on paper, 300 mm × 230 mm. Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig.

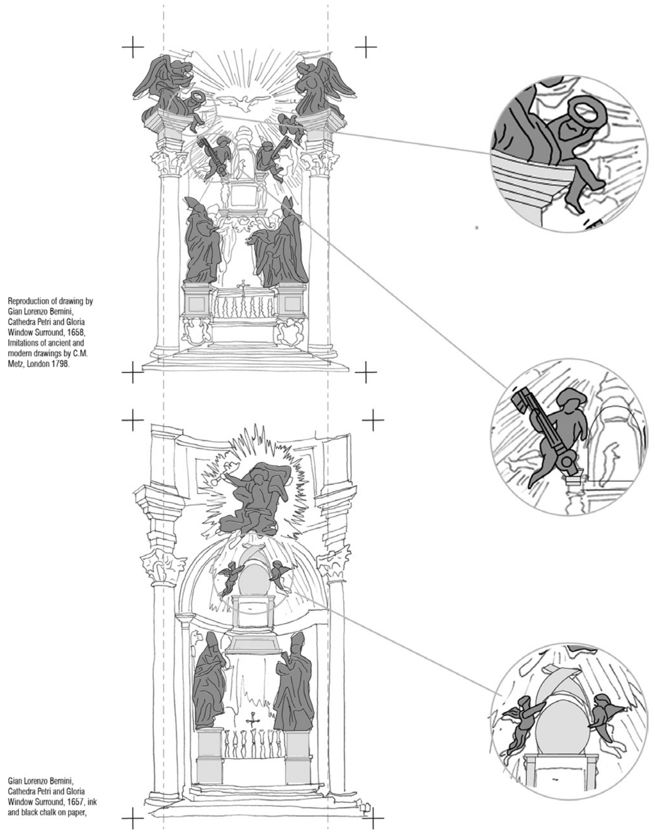
Considered this way, P_1435 mediates not only between the emotional reaction of death from corpse to visitor through his expression and position but, through this blurred architectural boundary, between building and body. His potentially incongruous physicality encourages the viewer to consider the building itself as a body, one with soft elasticity of angelically pudgy flesh.[31] This morphing is an invitation to accept the immersive and thaumaturgic world held within the chapel with the worshippers' own physicality.

In both cases, P_1435 is incorporated into an architectural tableau as a 'quotidian' *putto*, without wings, and obeying the laws of gravity. In both cases, the *putto* is at the likely eye height of the worshipper, and in both cases, he displays extreme emotion. In these ways, he is an empathetic entry point for the worshipper to identify with: human in corporeality and in emotional vulnerability. The difference in the two *putti* is their physical incorporation into the architecture. In the case of the Tomb of Urban VIII, the architectural surround squeezes yet remains distinct from P_1435's body. Vectors of force seem to influence distortions of P_1435's body, as his physiognomy contorts and his body writhes. In the case of the Raimondi Chapel, there are similar distortions. Yet, the morphing becomes a physically continuous blurring with the architecture itself.

Comingling with the Clouds and Evaporating in the Light

For you to understand the extent of my Capabilities at San Pietro and the extent of my contribution there, it is necessary for me to describe one last appearance I made there. It is the most Glorious – and much different from the others – as I became a truly celestial Sprite. As I helped Cavaliere Bernini sketch clouds and rays of light that would surround this luminescent aperture, I moved towards them. I wanted to be far from the ghoulish Figures below, and I wanted to be closer to the comfortable sunlight that I basked in atop *Il Baldacchino*.

I hopped from cloud to cloud. I began to find that when I reached out to touch them, my Body was fusing with them! More *putti* joined me, and as we celebrated, we merged with these atmospheric condensations. It soon became difficult to distinguish who was who, and what was cloud and what was *spiritelli* (Figure 7.10).

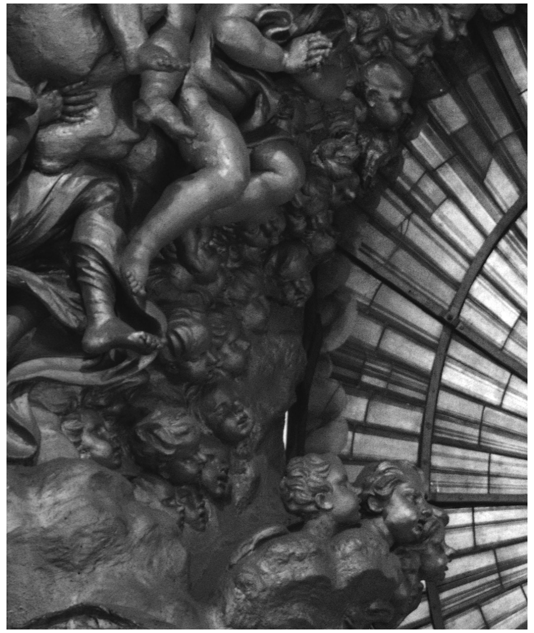

Reproduction of drawing by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Cathedra Petri and Gloria Window Surround, 1658, Imitations of ancient and modern drawings by C.M. Metz, London 1798.
Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Cathedra Petri and Gloria Window Surround, 1657, ink and black chalk on paper,

7.11

7.11 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's sketches for the Gloria window surround. The boundary of the body of the *putto* merging with light rays and clouds through the sequence of Bernini's drawings. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

The morphing of P_1435 at Raimondi Chapel was a premonition of an operative trait: that of taking great liberties with the physical form of the figures' bodies. The Gloria window surround at the apse of St Peter's (1656–66) shows the most extreme example of liberty taken to the expressive materiality and body image of the designed *putti*.[32] A series of Bernini's sketches formed a testing ground where he explored what could be achieved with three variables: light (as rod-like rays), *putti* and clouds. He experimented with the *putti*'s gestures, from triumphantly flying upwards with backs arched to crouched in pious reverence.

The *putti* multiplied, and their bodies became more fluid as the design progressed (Figure 7.11). A *bozzetto* by Bernini where *putti* and clouds are hewn from the uniform clay substrate shows a blurring between body and cloud that persevered and intensified throughout the project. In one sketch, a *putto* is atop a cloud outlined in deliberately reinforced contours. Here, the ethereal substance of the cloud supports a body that appears just as fleshy and substantial as any other. But another drawing shows a *putto* with an even more angelic relationship towards gravity and mass. He does not appear to be supported by the clouds at all, but rather appears just as buoyant and immaterial as the clouds themselves.[33] A cherubic face emerging from the cloud in the same sketch suggests yet further ambiguous corporealities. Here, the *putto* is literally part of the clouds. It is clear that the dynamic mass of roiling *putti*–cloud hybrids and the surrounding 'rays' of light accumulated expansive momentum during the process of sketching. Taking these



7.12

7.12 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Gloria window surround detail, 1657–66, St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, Rome. P_1435 claims to be one of the *putti* similar to those in the lower left corner of the image. Photograph by Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft. © Dr Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft, courtesy of Saskia Ltd. Image cropped from the original.

drawings in chronological sequence, the atmospheric mass appears to expand explosively, enveloping the window and then eclipsing the boundaries of the niche.[34] The divinely unstable microclimate transgresses the architectural boundaries that could confine it.

This also reminded me of another *progetto* by Cavaliere Bernini's – *Sant'Andrea al Quirinale* – where I was in the lantern of the *presbiterio* in a writhing mass of my Companions. It also reminded me of *La Cappella Fonseca*. For that *progetto*, I was drawn along with other *putti* and two other *angeli* . . .

P_1435's extensive narration of his experience in the Fonseca Chapel (built from 1660 to 1664) and a digression describing his experience appearing in the Albertoni Chapel are too lengthy to include here. However, there are a few important points to note regarding *putti* in these projects. Giovanni Careri has asserted that as part of the compositional dynamism of the *bel composto*, or harmonious integration of media across Bernini's works, the *putti* in the chapel are in dynamic clusters. Careri notes that their poses and geometric arrangements echo and mirror one another, forming gestural rhythm and guiding the worshipper's eye upwards.[35] In the Fonseca Chapel, the *putti* demonstrate traits that recur in Bernini's work after 1650. They are phototaxic, seeming to gravitate towards the light as if an instinctive hunger pulls them towards it.[36] They also exhibit a range of corporeal wholeness that corresponds to their proximity to the light source. *Putti* lower in the composition are whole, while those at the oculus of the dome are sculpted as heads with wings. The *putti*'s missing bodies show their divine nature. Their contingent bodies are not a necessity for their existence. Bodies are the 'engines' by which to communicate with mortals.[37]

When I first became nothing more than a head with wings, I was astounded! But then I realised that with Cavaliere Bernini, I could take full advantage of my angelic nature, where my Body was capable of dematerialising and rematerialising according to what we wished to convey. (It now occurs to me that this is very similar to my current fluctuating state in *Il Regno Digitale*, although with Cavaliere Bernini, we meant to show the presence of the Heavenly Padre, and now part of what troubles me is that I simply do not know why my Body turns from solid to Mesh to *Lineamente*, it is seemingly without reason.) *Allora*, at the Gloria surround, there were not floating *putto* heads in the same manner. If you visit, you will not see my arms, legs, torso and fingers. Reader, they have *become* the cloud, shimmering in the light from the window (Figure 7.12)!

This position is such a vast improvement from my previous circumstances. I am present three times, at the same time, in *La Basilica*. From my position above *La Finestra di Gloria*, I can see myself under the *Cupolone* atop the Baldacchino, and I can hear my own cries from the quotidian version of myself below in the *Tomba* below. It is quite a strange sensation. But from my position in the Gloria surround, peeking out from behind a bundle of crepuscular rays, I truly have the best view of all. I see across the entire expanse of the interior. The evening light below me warms my feet. I look down, and I see it streaming through the window, reflecting from the *putti* clouds around it.

The copious images of blurred clouds and *putti* were sculpted from plaster; all the exposed surfaces were gilt a reflective gold. The bodies of many of the *putti* in the Gloria surround appear physically fluid and contingent, signifying the proximity of divine forces. Similar to Bernini's partially disembodied *putti* in the Albertoni Chapel, also sculpted from plaster, their surface reflects the light from the nearby window, and combined with the guidance provided by the direction of their rapt gazes, they direct the visitor's attention to the primary focus: the window itself and the iconic dove at the centre of the stained glass window's graphic. While P_1435's appearance in the Tomb of Urban VIII seems to blend with the stone structure, the gilt plaster of the Gloria surround blends with the light of the window. Through the expression of the materiality of the body, a distinction is made between the earthly and divine realms.

These diverse modes of performance of Bernini's ornamental figures in St Peters, far from being 'function'-less or merely decorative afterthoughts, were integral to the architectural design process. In some of Bernini's works, *putti* appear as agents of construction itself. This is expressed in the built works but is also evident in the sequence of design drawings and *bozzetti*, particularly in the Baldacchino drawings, where the depicted actions of the figures are deeply imbued with a material and tectonic dimension that was part of an unfolding choreography of architectural and figural orchestration.

In the built work, this same constructive quality that aided the architect during design, overtly expressed through the *putti*'s ornamental presence, can momentarily threaten to unravel the effect of the whole in the viewer's perception. This weaving and unravelling is part of the baroque modus operandi, where the viewer finds themselves in an interrelated series of conditions, some of which seem viscerally and empirically verifiable and others that indicate astounding inversions and impossibilities that contribute to an 'unreality principle'.[38] In Bernini's work, through their placement, expression, apparent deformation and emotional reaction to celestial forces, along with their apparent corporeal fluidity (which manifests as appearing to dematerialise, or appearing to merge with clouds or architecture), the *putti* become vehicles to enact such paradoxical realities and unrealities. The *putti* are both otherworldly and accessibly empathetic. At times, they are familiar and seem mortal and even quotidian; at other times, they are clearly in the realm of the divine, and often they seem to be both simultaneously. As ornament, they are mediators between the worshipper and architecture, providing an emotional entry point into doctrinal narrative and transcendent experience.

Notes

1. Although the term 'thick 2D' was originally used by Stan Allen with regard to landscape urbanism and mat buildings, the 'compact and highly differentiated section' which is 'not the product of stacking (discrete layers as in a conventional building section) but of weaving, warping, folding, oozing, interlacing, or knotting together' is an apt description of the walls of St Peters where, in a given wall section, one is likely to find a complex interweaving of ornament, sculpture, load-bearing material and inhabitable space within the wall's *poché*. Allen, 'Mat urbanism', 125.
2. See Chapter 6 for narration from P_1435's point of view describing 'participation' in Bernini's early works.
3. P_1435 refers to the exclusion of representations of himself in Michelangelo's designs for St Peter's Basilica.
4. P_1435 refers here to the last phases of the construction of the New Sacristy and the Boboli Gardens by Niccolo Tribolo in the mid-sixteenth century.
5. Carlo Maderno was a Swiss-Italian architect who was responsible for several designs at St Peter's Basilica, including the facade and the initial schemes for the Baldacchino, before Bernini's involvement with the design.
6. P_1435 refers to other *putti* and ornamental figures that he appears within works with as his 'companions'.
7. In Bernini's sketch featuring recumbent *putti*, the *putti* are in poses similar to the effigies known as Night, Day, Dawn and Dusk in the New Sacristy, discussed in Chapter 4.
8. Italian translation = 'high relief decoration'.
9. The description of winds and gravity effecting the *putti* on the underside of the arch is indebted to Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, 'The apparition of faith', 198.
10. Since Bernini was charged with designing a *baldachin*, a temporary structure with a fabric roof detached from staves, rather than a more permanent *ciborium*, he struggled to achieve the expression of the *baldachin*, when in fact the columns did support the heavy roof. The ornamental figures were part of the articulation of the *baldachin* type. Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 27–46.
11. Also see Baldacchino Study by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Red chalk and pen over black chalk, 14 1/2 in. × 10 1/4 in. (36 cm × 26.3 cm). Gaphische Sammlung, Albertina, Vienna. Baldicchino Canopy Study by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, ca. 1631. Pen on paper. Biblioteca Apostolica Vatican, Barb. Lat 9900, fol. 2
12. Rossholm Lagerlöf, 'The apparition of faith,' 198.
13. *Mise en abyme*, an image which contains a smaller copy of itself, is described by Snickare in the context of the baroque and Bernini's work. Snickare, 'Paradoxes, folds and transgressions', 31.
14. In Renaissance Italy, 1 braccio = roughly 0.7 metres.
15. Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 42.
16. Bachelard writes: 'the real stands before us in all its terrestrial materiality . . . we are easily persuaded that the reality principle must usurp the unreality principle, forgetting the unconscious impulses, the oneiric forces which flow unceasingly through our conscious life'. Bachelard, *Earth and the Reveries of Will*, 3.
17. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 90. See also Chapter 4 describing a similar phenomenon in the Sistine Chapel composition with reference to Hall.
18. Pen-and-ink sketch now at Windsor Royal Library attributed to Bernini's workshop and described by Lavin as 'the earliest extant drawing for Urban's tomb'. Lavin, *Drawings by GianLorenzo Bernini*, 62.
19. The narrative voice of P_1435 noting Charity's 'disproportionate strength' in contrast to his assumptions regarding the 'seemingly gentle Maiden' once again reveals the underlying 'patrilineal' world view of the character at this point in the narrative.
20. P_1435 refers to the clay model known as Study for Charity with Four Children (for the Tomb of Pope Urban VIII, St Peters), ca. 1627–34. Terracotta. Musei Vaticani, Vatican City, Italy.
21. P_1435 refers to the clay model known as Charity with Two Children by Bernini, ca. 1634. Terracotta, 41 cm. Museo Sacro Musei Vaticani, Vatican City, Italy.
22. Trim marks in the clay indicate the possibility that the figures were sculpted in conjunction with an architectural surround. P_1435 refers to deformations and indentations that were caused by this process. The findings supporting the scenario of the making of the model in conjunction with the architectural surround are described in Dickerson and Sigel, 'Charity with Four Children', 112–17.

23. The bronze bees represent the Barberini family, of whom Pope Urban VIII belonged.
24. Italian translation = 'elf', 'gnome'.
25. The skeleton is widely understood to represent death. It was introduced to the design in sketches following the pen-and-ink wash. A similar skeleton appears again in the Tomb of Pope Alexander the VII and also in St Peter's Basilica.
26. The Four Doctors of the Catholic Church and the Effigy of Pope Urbino VIII stand on either side of P_1435.
27. Ingraham uses the term 'babyish quality' to describe Bernini's *putti*. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 42.
28. P_1435 refers here to Leon Battista Alberti, Matteo de' Pasti et al.'s Tempio Malatestiano, Rimini, Italy, ca. 1450. *Putti* such as those on the railing of the Chapel of San Sigismondo in the *Tempio* were described by art historian Adrian Stokes as having a 'swollen vigour, an elephantine lustiness'. Stokes writes that these *putti* have 'a ribald precocity' that 'results from their oneness' with the stone rail that they adorn. Stokes says, 'They are never separated from their mother whom they ride and trample, each upon his block'. Stokes, *Stones of Rimini*, 194.
29. 'Grizzly Man', directed by Werner Herzog, Lions Gate Films, 2005.
30. This dramatic depth was in part achieved through the angled sunlight entering the space from the chapel's carefully located side windows.
31. Snickare makes a forceful case for the intent of another Bernini project, S. Andrea Quirinale, as meant to be experienced as a metaphorical body. Snickare, 'Paradoxes, folds and transgressions', 36.
32. In this case, to call Bernini's design a frame is inadequate. 'Surround' refers to an entity that surrounds or frames.
33. Sketch referred to by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Study of a *Putto* in the Gloria above Cathedra Petri, ca. 1660. Black chalk on white paper, 392 mm × 227 mm. Leipzig 7900r.
34. The three phases of the expansion are recognised by Lavin. Lavin, *Drawings by Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, 176.
35. Giovanni Careri, *Bernini: Flights of Love, the Art of Devotion*, 26–9.
36. Ingraham writes that the putti appear to be 'trying to crawl to the opening at the centre of the dome where the light comes in'. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 42.
37. 'There is no relationship of matter and form between the angel and the body he assumes to communicate with men. The angel is like a motor for the body; his mobile body is only the outward representation of that motor'. Careri, *Bernini*, 21.
38. In the baroque, 'borders are constantly blurred, between the world within . . . and the world outside . . . with the mirroring effects, the obscurities, and the ambiguous pattern of crossing gazes . . . different levels of fiction and reality get folded into, and affect, each other . . . borders between actors and audience are in constant flux'. Snickare, 'Paradoxes, folds and transgressions', 32.

Chapter 8 | The Abstract Flesh of the D_I

A design folio concerning the design of the D_I figures, comprised of a collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435, contemporaneous notes by D_I v1, excerpts of entries from design logbook entries of Alessandro Ayuso, with preliminary notes by Alessandro Ayuso.

Preliminary Notes

My design experiments in Chapter 5 explored digitally based techniques to construct the figure and incorporate it into design images. The narrative that evolved in tandem with the design project allowed for an incorporation of historical precedents. The techniques also helped to bring forth uncanny overlaps between the virtual and the real, as well as between the body agent figure and its author. These initial experiments opened up many possible avenues for further exploration. One question that warranted more investigation was the nature of the materiality that could correspond with images of digitally designed body agents. Based on preliminary research and the subsequently written Rules for Constructing Body Agents, that materiality would be one enmeshed with architecture, and would need to integrate with it physically. The images and animations have had physical and material implications and connotations, but the dynamism and fleetingness for the 3D scanned and animated figures suggested a particular physicality that itself could be studied further. This was explored in a more controlled and focused manner in the work collected in this design folio.

While the work in Chapter 5 explored the design and deployment of P_1435 primarily through 2D media, that is, representations on screens and on paper, the work in this chapter focuses more on questions regarding the physical implications of digitally produced figures through design and fabrication.

The D_I body agents discussed here are based on Michelangelo's *ignudi*, discussed in Chapter 4. Looking for direct analogies from the *ignudi* to figures modelled in a contemporary digital context quickly reaches its limits. Nonetheless, the premise of making analogies provides an opportunity to problematise issues of the figure in digital design processes. Attempting to reinterpret the *ignudi* through digital architectural design processes served as a way to explore further the interjection of a subjective stance into that milieu.

Why were *ignudi* selected as the precedents for this phase of work? First, like *putti*, *ignudi* could be considered marginal actors (given that they are literally on the edges of the scenes depicted in the Sistine Chapel ceiling fresco). As discussed in Chapter 2, the intention at the outset was to mobilise seemingly marginal actors as part of an exploration of subject positions of alterity. Second, although the *ignudi* sit amidst a complex composition, they directly interact with only two or three objects: plinth, fabric and bushels of acorn garlands. This elemental relationship – with only a few variables – between figure and its immediate surroundings make the *ignudi* an optimal case study to reinterpret the physical expression of the relationships between a figure, pericutaneous space and material; a minimal scenario for the testing of the relationships between body and immediate surroundings.[1] Third, twisting and engulfed in their cowls, *ignudi* are highly spatial. Yet, they are borne from non-perspectival studies. Given the default visual regimes of the design software involved in this study (itself reliant on orthographic projection and Cartesian perspectivalism), the *ignudi*'s non-perspectival spatiality presents an opportunity to problematise the spatial regime of the media itself vis-à-vis the figure. Finally, while the *ignudi* can be seen as idealised emblems, they also present aspects that are ambiguous, arguably sitting in between architecture and figure, male and female, one pictorial zone and another. This presented a potential malleability or flux that was viewed as an opportunity for reinterpretation of the physical expression of the figure.

The D_I Figures

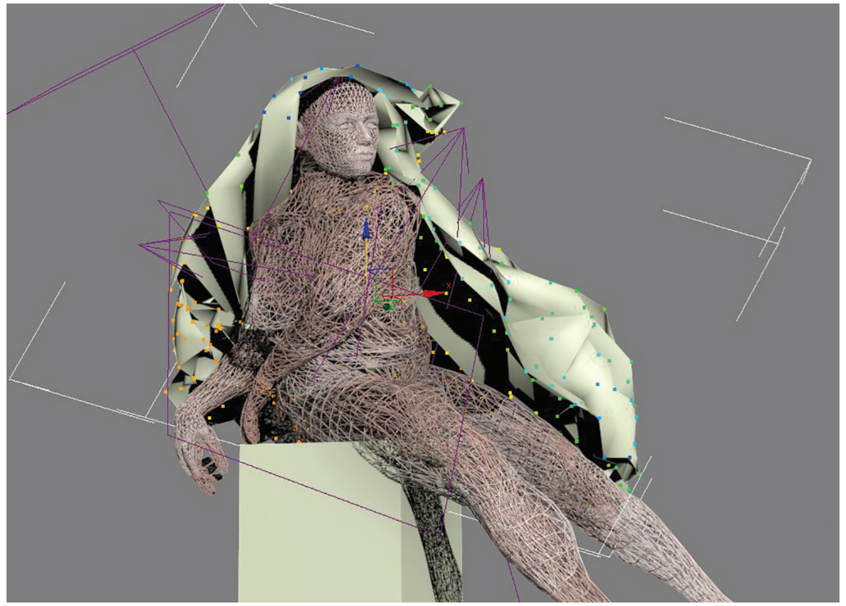
21 Settembre Anno Domini MMXII 02:24

It is indeed regrettable that we moved from Wates House before the Penthouse for Moonlit Bacchanalia or the *Finestra Inginocchiata* could be built. What a joy it would have been to have a *Finestra Inginocchiata* of my own, and this one Signor Alessandro and I were designing was coming along so splendidly. It would have allowed me to achieve two ambitions at once! I finally would have been able to inhabit the *la Nicchia* that I so coveted from *La Sagrestia Nuova* (albeit much changed to my liking), and I would have been able to prove that if *Il Divino* had invited me to work on his *Finestra*, it would have been that much more superb!

It seems that so many *progetti* that I have been involved with are not to be. They are evoked in the drawing *only* and are never actually built. I have never been upset about this, and these recent cases are no different. There were many *Giochi* to be had in the *disegno* of these last two *progetti*, and, in fact, perhaps I became so comfortable that I may have got a bit carried away . . . for instance, when I urinated from the roof of the Penthouse. During *il Rinascimento*, a Sprite micturating augured *buona fortunata*, but *allora*, it seems that times have changed, and this is now seen as something horribly vulgar, or so I gather.[2]

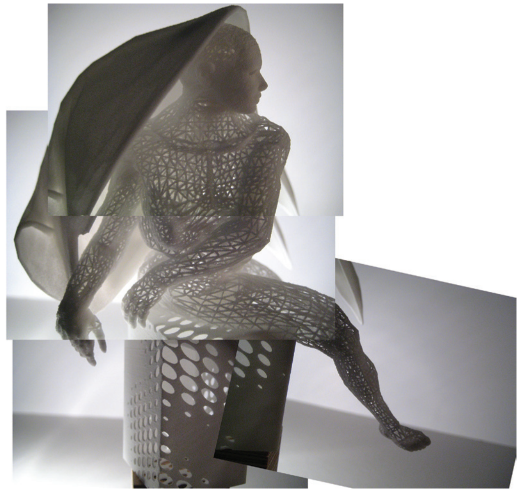
In recent weeks, in Signor Alessandro's most recent endeavours, I watch from the periphery. It is fine – I am used to being on the Margins – but what makes it sting at the moment is that the Figures he is working with now are the *ignudi* (Figure 8.1)! This surprises me. I did not really expect to see those Fellows here. Really, they are not too much fun. They just sit in one place, twisting this way and that, striking various Poses to appear most handsome, I suppose. But, they never speak! It is stupendously annoying.

I tell you, this is just perfect. I was not happy to be summoned as a *Sprite Digitale*, and it has been quite a tumultuous ordeal to accustom myself to it, but at least I was able to work and even recently help to design *progetti* of my Dreams. And now it looks like I am put on the shelf, before the construction of the projects is even underway. It brings back memories of the early XX *Secolo* Anno Domini.



8.1

8.1 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot, D_I v1 design process, 2012. The figure is based on the *ignudo* positioned below Adam in the Sistine ceiling fresco. The cowl was animated with gravity and wind simulations. Male and female figures were animated, and the meshes combined and transformed into overlapping three-dimensional lattices. The intention of overlapping male and female bodies was to explore the ambiguity of Michelangelo's *ignudi*. This ambiguity was seen as a subtle thread that could be pulled to question the orthodox model of male ideal beauty as a model for architecture (a premise reinstated in Western architectural history from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier's Modulor).



8.2

8.2 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I v2 1:10 model, 2012. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso. The intersecting lattice shells give the form structural reinforcement, allowing for single-layer regions to achieve a thickness of 0.4 mm. In regions where the lattice was most dense, the nylon fused together.

And to make matters worse, there are those posing, preening, mute *Prime Donne* hanging around. *Che schifo!*[3]

I will now retreat to the lift shaft, although the lift is broken in our new home, and so there is no gentle whirring of gears to soothe my nerves. I have found a six-hour-long selection of Signor Palestrina's[4] choral music on YouTube. I will put this on loop on my headphones. Should help me sleep. Vino will do the rest.

Buonanotte.

Notepad document. 3rd October 2011.

What does he mean,
we don't speak?

We do.

But in whispers.

Our *putto* friend

is too busy
screaming
and having tantrums
to hear.

(And honestly, he won't shut up!)

We've heard
the conversation so far,

And yes, you are correct:

we are sensual
and beautiful.
We'll allow you to
call us ambiguous.

And yes,

Michelangelo relished painting us,
studying us,
lingering.

And yes,

we are meant
to *only* pose;
Michelangelo would never
ask us to *work*
(imagine, like a lowly *putto*!
Emulating the slaves,
supporting cornices
and the like!)[5]

But Alessandro,

One thing that you've said
Is incorrect.
You called us 'marginal actors'.
For that, you are blind.
We might be sitting in between the scenes, but
We are the main actors.

Aside from the *putti*, and

The others that are
Merely parts of architecture,
Intaglio, ornamenting it,
We sit *atop* the architecture;
Twenty of us!
Why would Michelangelo call on us, and
give us such a prominent position?
(Even for *Il Divino*, this was a risk.
The Pope did not ask for us,
And many were scandalised by us.)
So, why?
Michelangelo called on us because
We represent the most important things:
Beauty, harmony, love, desire;
The Human.

But now Alessandro,

What have you done to us?
Unlike your friend *Putto*,
We are proud of our legacy.

We've never had a problem finding roles, and we enjoy the influence we've had.

We are called upon again and again, evolving
As ideal superheroes, supermodels, superhumans.[6]
And in architecture we are the exemplars.
The model of beauty par excellence
(There are many impersonators, so-called updates,
Although they lack our subtlety,
Our graceful twists and turns,
And are often caricatures.)

We were content, and now

8.3 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I v1 figure, detail, 2012. Particular details where the fabric shroud partially conceals a recognisable figural element such as the hands or the face are more compelling than when the model is viewed as an object. The figure's layered lattices, the thin surfaces of the shroud and the perforations in the plinth transmit light when the light source is close to the figure and give the model a luminescent depth. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

8.3

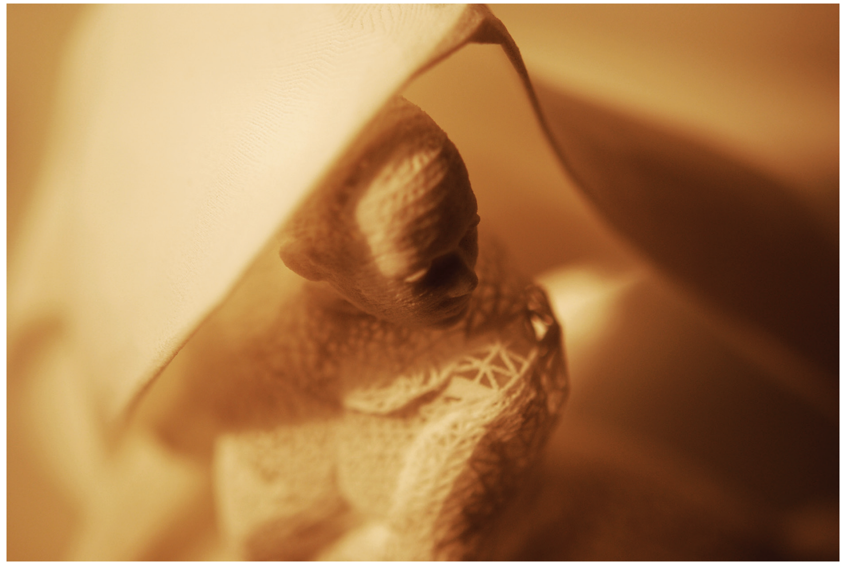
You bring us here
To this place
A desert, a grid, nothingness![7]

Our bodies devoid of grace

Attended by only the sheer
Impossibility to spark desire.

Design Logbook
Date: 03 Dec 2011
Topic: D_I Digital modelling

Having started the exercise with stock mesh figures, I am attempting to overcome their generic caricatured physiques



8.4

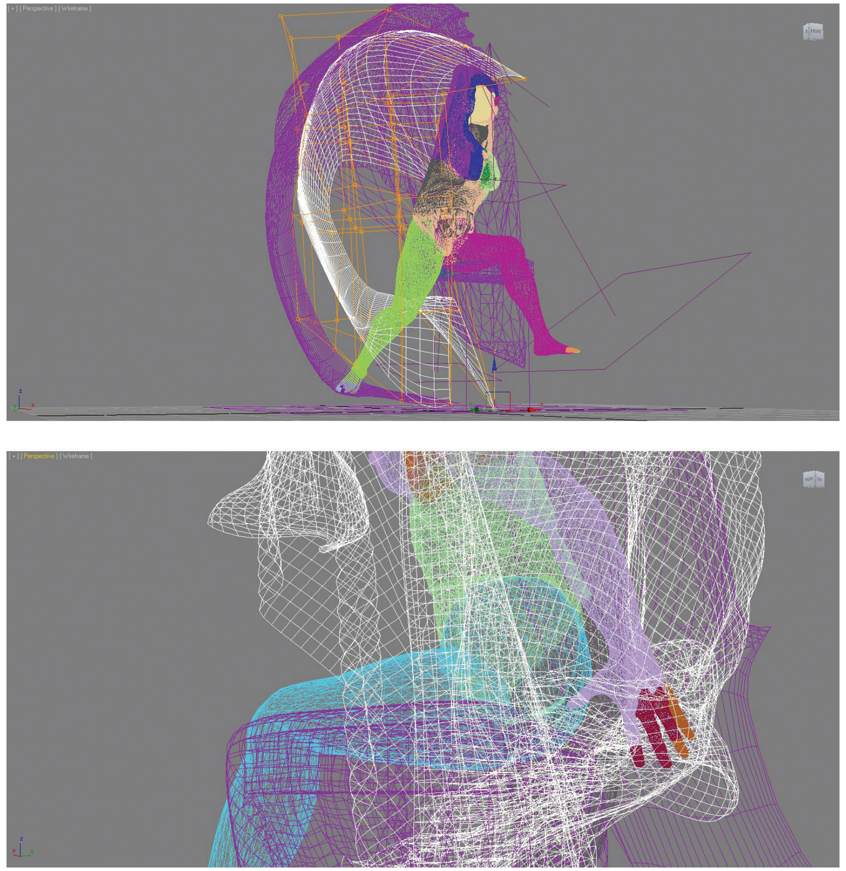
8.4 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I v1 figure, detail, 2012. In regions where the lattice was most dense, the nylon fused together, making a subtly textured, solid surface. This occurred in the face and hands, giving these areas an emphasised surface texture. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

by overlapping and combining multiple figures and altering them through sculpting digital meshes. Part of what I am exploring here is a reaction to the context in which I have situated my body agents thus far: one where a Vitruvian paradigm promulgates an 'ethics of exclusion'.[8] *As much as I hoped I would be able to, this paradigm is difficult to break free from, given the precedents upon which the body agents are founded. By splicing together figures with biologically male and female traits, I aim to create figures which depart from the idealised masculine Vitruvian body (which, as Ingraham points out, elides the biology of the human body) and defy an essentialist reading of the body (which, as Blackman points out, reduces 'the complexity of life to essential components of our biological make-up that are viewed as fixed and pre-given').*[9] *During the design process, I am aiming to achieve a figural quality, where the 'coefficients of bodily deformation', arguably imminent in digital software's commands of slicing, pulling, zooming and animating, produce a figure warranting an affective response.*[10]

Design Logbook
Date: 25 Jan 2012
Topic: D_I Fabrication and Physicality

I set out to use what I saw as the material corollary of digital media's pixels, SLS 3D printing's nylon powder, to carry out the fabrication of the figures. This material's apparent dearth of sensual qualities and the absence of manual craft in its fabrication process immediately presents properties at odds with the sensual tactility suggested by the ignudi *frescos. When I first started working with it, I thought the*

8.5 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot D_I v2 design process, 2012. The posture of D_I (v2) was initially modelled after the *ignudo* located to the upper right of Isaiah in the Sistine ceiling fresco. D_I (v2) is an androgynous female. Figure, plinth and fabric were transformed into a lattice. The fabric shroud was composed of two mesh layers (larger than previous iteration), and influenced by gravity and wind simulations in animations. The drapery surrounding the figure becomes a volumetric presence lurching behind the figure with a weight that seems to pull the D_I (v2) backwards. Closely cropped views and zooming were an integral part of the digital sculpting process, where mesh vertices were pushed, pulled and knitted. The cowl was sculpted so that it held close to the figure. The intention was to intensify the 'blur' between the figure and surrounding objects in an expression of a post-human, technologically inflected body.



8.5

3D printed nylon felt ersatz and appeared as quality-less as one could imagine.

I'm attempting to compensate for these aspects of the material by achieving complexity in the manipulation of the three-dimensional forms. I've discovered some capabilities of the material: for instance, the thinness that can be achieved. I'd like to make overlapping, ultra-thin lattices comprising the figures as thin as possible. Another is the transmission of light through the material that occurs when a mesh surface is printed at 1 mm or thinner. Another is the resilient flexibility of the material.

27 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXII 03:22

It is true, Reader, I swore off this Journal and had sworn not to Journal while inebriated. And I also swore off looking at what Signor Alessandro and the *ignudi* are getting on with, without me. But well, Reader, I confess that I am presently a bit inebriated, and am indeed journaling, and have taken a look at what those tedious *ignudi* are up to. The *ignudi*, or D_I as they now insist on being called, still sit atop their Plinths, as ever. Wind whips around them in a

Tumult as it always has done, billowing their Cowls in a way that frames them oh so flatteringly. I am not surprised by the changes to their Bodies as they enter *Il Regno* with Signor Alessandro's assistance. Many of the same changes occurred to me when I first entered *Il Regno*. Their Flesh has become a Mesh Shell and somewhat indistinguishable from other mesh objects such as their Plinths and their Cowls, and just as happened to me, they don't have any hair. (I have learned that this has something to do with the many strands of hair overloading what is known as the Random Access Memory that powers the machinations of *Il Regno*, cursed as it is with calculating every point of Data so precisely.)

I observed that in their form in their first appearances, their Bodies lacked Genitals (just as I did at first). Since then, they have evolved: now one *ignudo* has become partially Female, and the other *completely* Female!

I do hope that Signor Alessandro realises that *putti* are always male. (*Mio Dio*, if he tries any funny Business with *il mio bischero*! Have I not been through enough in this regard?) *Ma davvero*, how could a *spiritella* perform as *un putto pisciatore*, I ask you![11]

Okay, *allora*, now that I think of it, in my hazy memory of *il Medioevo*, oftentimes my corporeal Form was generalised, and my sex-defining Anatomy was not defined to the point that an onlooker would be able to tell if I was indeed Male or Female in that appearance.

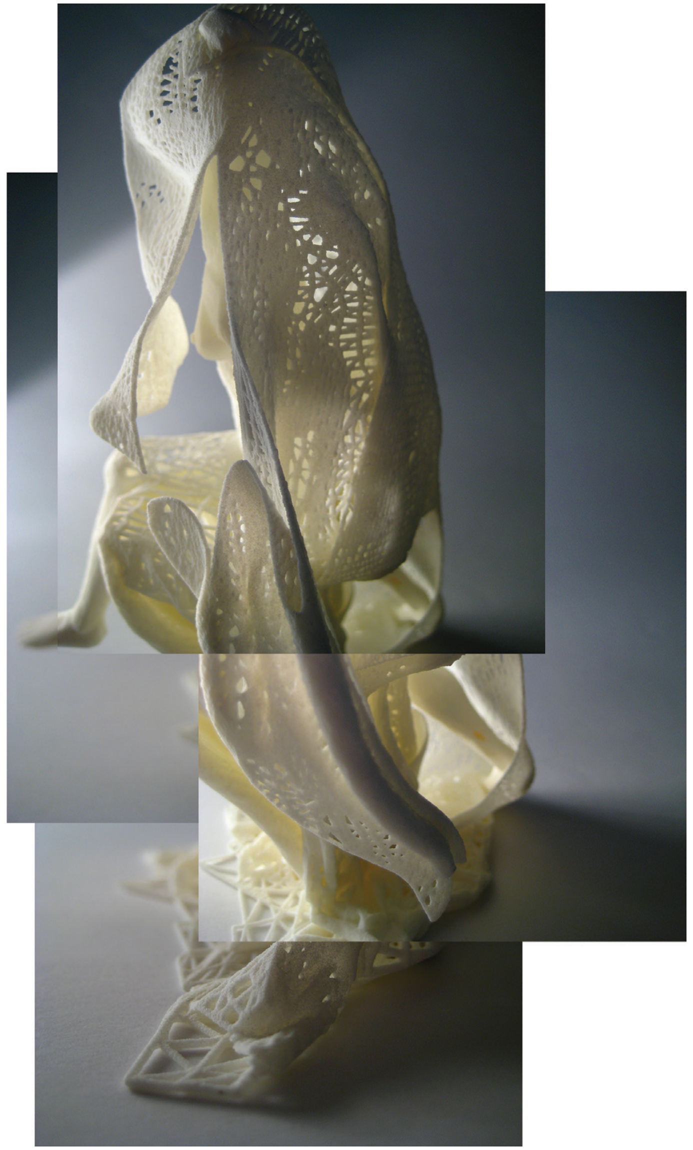
And, yes, there was one time in *Firenze* in Anno Domini MDLVI where I did undoubtedly become a *Spiritella*. This unusual occurrence took place in the adornment of *il Sale di Lorenzo de Medici* inside *il Quartieri Monumentali di Leone X* in *Palazzo Vecchio* (Figure 9.1). At first, I did not even realise that I had been conjured in this altered Form. I was busy attending to my duties in the gestation of the composition. Then, I remember realising that there was a change in my Anatomy, and being perturbed for a moment, as the change in sex was quite anomalous. But actually, my incarnation as a *Spiritella* did not change much beyond my Anatomy. Together with a Companion, I held a Tondo above a portal. We lifted with gusto, each balancing with one foot atop a Cornice and one leg hanging off the edge, and our torsos twisted to face the viewer, pointing to the portrait of Giuliano de Medici and framing it with our symmetrical arrangement. This symmetry in our acrobatic posture was emphasised by our complementary genders. In the next project I appeared, I was once again a male *spiritello*, as I have been since (until my initial manifestation in *Il Regno* brought this into doubt momentarily). I remembered I wondered why I could not be a female *Spiritella* in other projects as well, but it just never did happen again, and I have forgotten about it until now.

Recalling this event makes me reconsider my shock at the *ignudi*'s recent transformation. In fact, they did morph into the somnolent Women and then back into Men during the design of *La Sagrestia Nuova*.

Allora, I feel confused, and my head is spinning a bit. I have not considered that maybe there has been a colossal Error somewhere along the line – that there have not been female *spiritelle* for so many Centuries. Oh, I do not like to think of these things and am not in the mood. It is hurting my head and making me depressed again.

Anyway, now that I am journaling, it is a good time to recount the most recent Chucky film that I recently viewed Online. Interestingly, there was a female Sprite in this Film! Although, of course, she was terrifyingly Ghoulish, just as her *amico* Chucky reliably is. The Film starts with . . .

(Excerpt truncated here, as it goes into extended discussion of the plot of *Bride of Chucky*, dir. Ronny Yu, 1998.)



8.6

8.6 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I v1 figure, 2012. The complex network of mesh trusses that delineated the figures was a direct physical translation of their virtual on-screen representation of the figure as a mesh. The increased proximity of the body and the shrouds, and the transformation of all the elements into a lattice, made for a figure that become indistinguishable from surrounding objects. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

Notepad document. 28th January 2012.

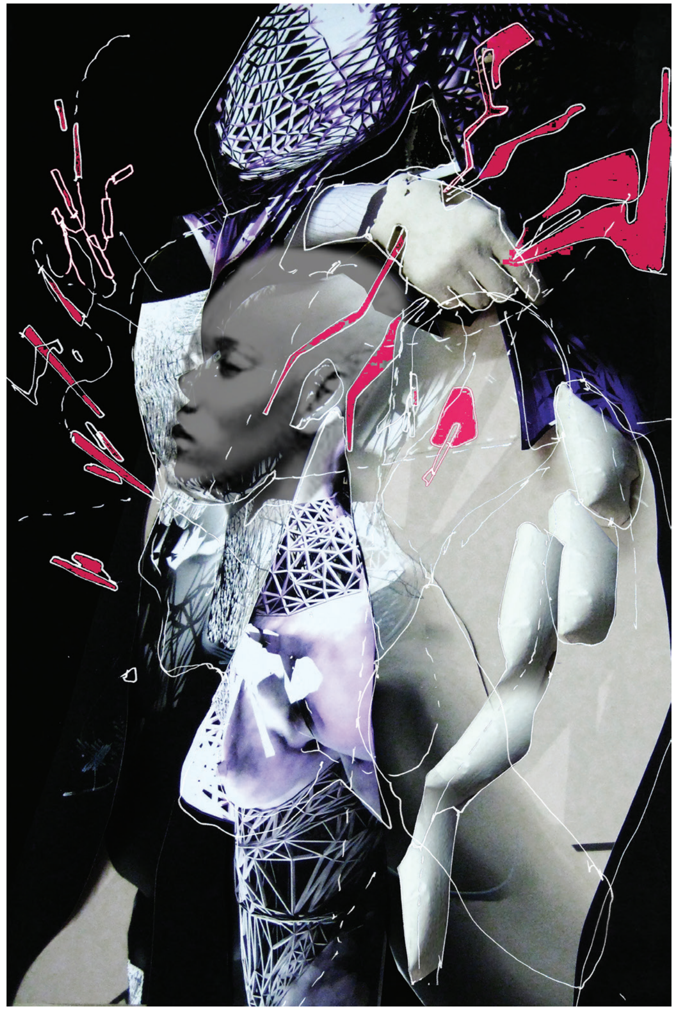
Our *putto* friend,
Is upset by our shifting gender.
We are not upset.

Our adaptations as super men

Pleased us, as it showed our enduring influence,
But we found the caricatures of masculinity
Tasteless.
We are gorgeous (that, anyone can see!)
But part of
Our beauty comes from our indefinability.

We want to captivate, entrance, evoke.

And to do this we must be (at least a bit) – as you say – ambiguous.
And the shifting gender is one way we can do this.
It is true that part of our 'ambiguity' was our relationship to *architettura*.
Some thought us hewn of the same stone as it,[12]
As were our ancient but primitive ancestors, the *talamone* and *cariatidi*,
Who were so tied to material existence and their Sisyphean tasks.
We are liberated from such slavishness,[13]
As we are elevated, pure, beyond earthly desires,[14]
and we have always seen ourselves as apart from *architettura*.



8.7

8.7 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I portrait, mixed media, 2012. Portrait of D_I with plaster casts integrated attempting to envision a body where 'the function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures'.

Now, Alessandro
You've turned us completely into
  architettura,
Our bodies nothing more than a
  scaffolding.
We no longer only sit on our
  plinths
We no longer are only enframed by
  our cowls
But now – We have completely
  merged with them.

Before:

We twisted, challenging the stilted
  postures
of so many of our predecessors.

And we were surely more muscular
  than they;

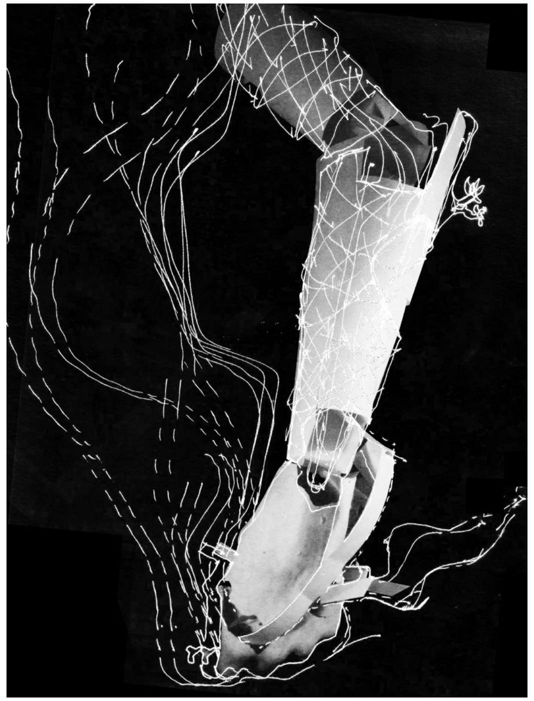
We advanced the canon,
We reminded the world of the
  ancient *figura serpentina*,
Twisting our tendons as much as
  possible,
But now – what constrains the form
  our bodies take?[15]

And:

We are now viewed through
An ever-shifting frame
Of scrutiny,
Measuring us,
Making our bodies into
Discrete bits.
We are accustomed to receiving a
  desirous, loving gaze,
Not observed as items for scrutiny.[16]

And:

The wind around us
is a frigid one.
Calculated to exert force
Through numerical sequences
The cowl falls where it may.[17]
Whereas expression used to be
  paramount,
With you and your computer,
  Alessandro,
it is an afterthought.



8.8

8.8 Alessandro Ayuso, process sketch of D_I arm model, mixed media, 2012. Sketch shows photographed cast of my own hand with mocked-up studies of extensions of the hand. Dashed lines explore movement, with the intention that the D_I arm piece should convey motion, given the animate quality of the digital images that gave rise to the D_I and the dynamic quality of the original *ignudi*.

The D_I Arm
Design Logbook
Date: 19 Feb 2012
Topic: Next D_I Design vignette

In the next design vignette for the D_I body agent, I would like to explore further the physical instantiation of the mesh figure. I have been making images, asking myself how I can use material to evoke an embodiment that is at once certain and fleeting (Figure 8.7). As I sculpt and refine the D_I figures, I find myself often looking at figures in such close proximity on the screen that the outer surface of their mesh skin could appear as if a landscape, or the interior of a rib cage as if an interior of a vast airport terminal, or the interior of an arm as if an interior of a vein viewed through a microscope (Figure 8.8). I'd like to explore this duality of the figure as a representation of a body from the outside and an interior space from within.

The design of the D_I figures is beginning to reveal an 'architecture of the body', a structural and physical composition of the figure. Many of the properties of this figure arise from its basis in digital design. The architectural aspect of the figure brings up questions that warrant further investigation. Based on components I have been prototyping, I have been making sketches that explore this body-architecture conflation. The aim of the next vignette is not to segregate body-as-model and body-as-fact, but rather to explore the possibility of integrating them, in the hope that the tension could help to enact a version of what Mary Douglas called the 'complex structure' of the body, in which 'the function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures'.[18]

22 Febbraio Anno Domini MMXII 06:20

A beguiling Dream rouses me at this inopportune hour. In it, I encountered the spectre of a Colossus. I approached it and reached out to verify its existence. It was cool to the touch; I could tell it was cast from plaster. My own Body was again comprised of the White Powder (Figures 8.9 and 8.10). And then the Colossus began to move about as if communicating incantations via hand signals (Figures 8.11 and 8.12)! Everything these days is always in motion. Even in my Dreams, nothing stands still for long. In this Dream, the jumpy repetitive motions terrified

8.9

8.9 Alessandro Ayuso, view of plaster hand casts and paper arm mock-ups with full-scale print of DI_v2 figure rendering in the background. Iterations of plaster casts for the hand components tested fragmentation by curvilinear voids. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso, 2012.

me, and I awoke. Pigeons stirred by the rising Sun are cooing on the roof. Perhaps this warbling will lull me back to sleep.

01 Marzo Anno Domini MMXII 02:26

Well, Reader, guess who, after all, decided he needed the help of an agile *spiritello* with an excellent sense of Architectural statics? That is correct – Signor Alessandro has summoned me from my comfortable repose in the lift shaft, along with three of my cloned Companions. Our task is to aid in the stabilisation of the structure of *un Modello*, and I must say, I resisted being summoned at first – but when I saw how and where I could be of service, I became interested. And now I know that what I dreamed about months ago, when I was part of *un Modello* and made from a powdery white substance, is actually a reality. This White Powder, light and fine, is deposited layer upon layer by a machine and heated to become solid. (This, I have learned, is a process known as Additive Manufacturing.) From the outside, this *modello* appears as an arm. But the inside is a hidden room, and I am there with my Companions, ensuring that the structure stays in place (Figure 8.14)! This room, and the lattice that encloses it, reminds me of *Architettura* from my past, particularly from *L'era Barocca* where there were so many folds and convolutions in fabric and drapery to lay on and hide behind. Yet, the lattice that encloses the room is not like anything I would have seen then. Rather, it reminds me of . . . me – or at least how my own body now often appears in *Il Regno Digitale*. I am not sure how to feel about this correlation. But the undoubtedly good news? *Gli ignudi* are not here with us! Ha! Who is on the shelf now?

Buonanotte, dear Reader!

Notepad document. 9th March 2012.

Our *putto* friend,
So delighted.

He thinks he is the main actor

When once again he is merely
  servile,
Nothing but an airborne
  telamone,
Supporting *architettura*.
And this time
He is decorating
Our image.

8.10

8.10 Alessandro Ayuso, P_1435's dream of a colossal hand, 1:20, SLS nylon print plaster cast hand, 2012. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

Notes

1. Pericutaneous space is a neuropsychological term which describes the space just outside of the body.
2. In *quattrocento* Italy, urinating *putti* could be understood as 'augury of good fortune' in such examples as the painting Venus and Cupid by Lorenzo Lotto of 1525. Fahy, 'Lorenzo Lotto, Venus and Cupid Entry', 34.
3. Italian translation = 'It sucks!'
4. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Italian composer, 1525–94.
5. The D_I narrator refers here to the drawing Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 608Er (Corpus 56r), by Michelangelo for the tomb of Julius II where, as described by Brothers, 'baby herms on the upper stories mimic the poses of the Slaves below them'. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 105.
6. The physique of Michelangelo's depicted figures has become a standard type for comic book superhero body types, as recognised by Elkins. Elkins *Pictures of the Body*, 105.
7. The D_I narrator refers here to the virtual digital design environment.
8. Christopher Hight refers to the observations of Diane Agrest and Greg Lynn who find common ground in this understanding of ethical implications of the Vitruvian paradigm. Hight, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Cybernetics*, 41.
9. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 45; Blackman, *The Body*, 19.
10. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 7.
11. P_1435's use of the term *putto pisciatore* refers to pissing *putto*, a trope common in Italian Renaissance art. Simons argues that while *putti pisciatori* signified good fortune and were meant to illicit laughter, they also asserted masculine bravado and sexual potency; pissing was thought of as an exclusively male act. Simons, 'Manliness and the visual semiotics', 333 and 359.
12. The D_I narrator's reference to the viewpoint that the *ignudi* seem to be hewn from the same stone as the architectural surround is supported by Brothers' observation noted in Chapter 4. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 100.
13. The 'slavishness' of the caryatids referred to by the D_I narrator is a reference to the origin of the ornamental figural type of caryatids, anthropomorphised columns. Those appearing in the ancient Greek Erectheum were understood by Vitruvius to represent the women of the Caryae, who defeated in battle, were

8.11

8.11 Alessandro Ayuso, animation stills from stop-motion animation showing 'moving' arms, 2012. In GIF animations, study models of the arms appeared to make jittery gestural movements. In the film loops, the arms have an uncanny effect in which they appear lifelike yet puppet-like and robotic. The collection of components were supported with objects in the studio; the choreography of the figural elements and the objects that support it is inseparable.

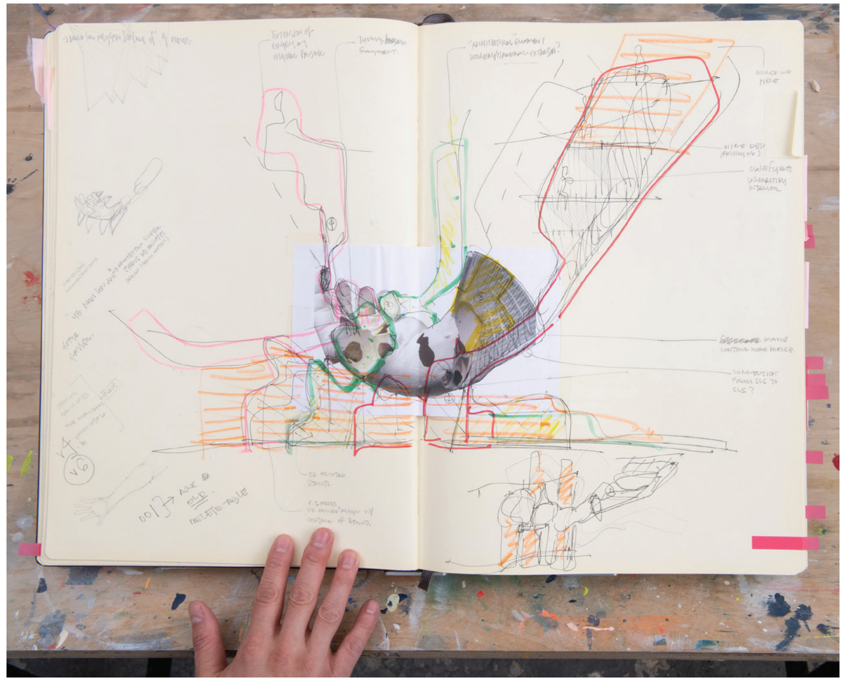
8.12

8.12 Alessandro Ayuso, animation stills from stop-motion animation showing 'moving' plaster hand casts over images of the D_I mesh skin, 2012. The film loops functioned as sketches to explore the gestural movement of the hand.

doomed to perpetual hard labour. Telamons, also known as Atlantes, are an ancient ornamental figural type which often appear akin to anthropomorphised corbels, bearing the weight of a structure above.

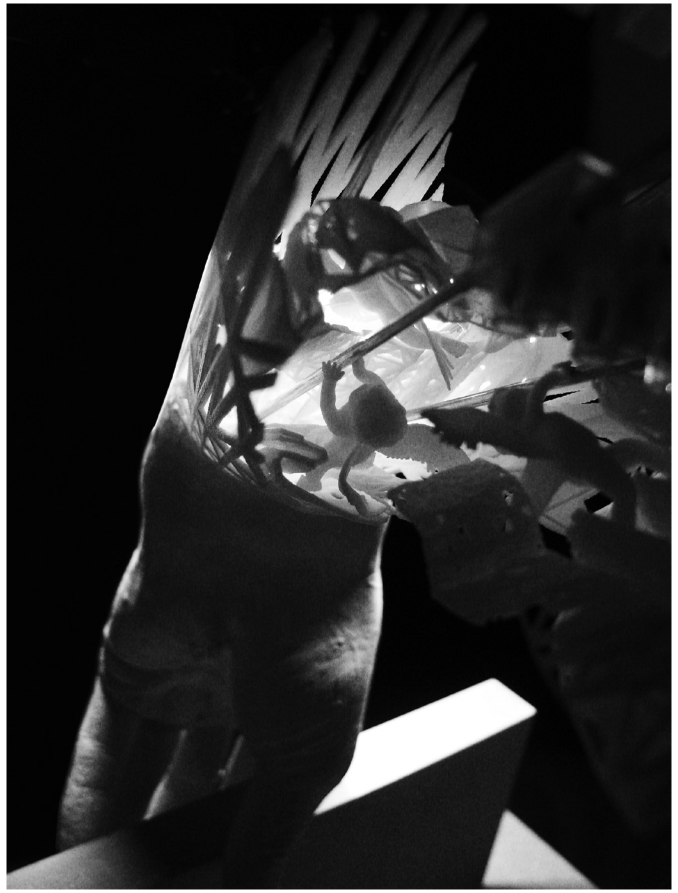
14. Bambach notes that the *ignudi* demonstrate 'a homoerotic sensuality . . . elevated to an unearthly purity'. Bambach, *Michelangelo*, 135.
15. The term *figura serpentina* refers to the torqued configuration of the body that the *ignudi*'s pose takes, reminiscent of the postures of figures in sculptures of antiquity such as the Laocoön figure in the ancient Hellenistic statue Laocoön and His Sons.
16. The D_I narrator refers to the idea that Michelangelo drew the studies of the *ignudi* focused on expressive potential of the surface of the body rather than the anatomical veracity sought be Michelangelo's contemporaries, discussed in Chapter 4.
17. The D_I narrator refers to wind and gravity simulations.
18. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 14.

8.13 Alessandro Ayuso, sketchbook pages exploring further iterations and extensions of D_I hand component, 2012. The sketches explore how the hand of D_I v1 could be fabricated at full scale. After numerous iterations of plaster hand casts, the final cast was 3D scanned and the high-resolution mesh derived from the scan became a layer in a 3D digital drawing. Re-topology tools in software allowed the digitally designed components to fit precisely with the cast. Multiple iterations of prosthetic appendages – fingers, wrists and thumbs – and fabric-like extensions were fabricated in order to test how to integrate the SLS nylon components with the plaster cast as seamlessly as possible. Photograph by Can Sengunes.



8.13

8.14 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I arm model, in progress, showing interior of lower SLS component with *putti* as supports stabilising structural support rods, 2012. The interior of the SLS pieces hold a spatial world. They contain ribbon-like forms and tubes with convoluted curvatures. Four *putti* were included as continuous parts of the components; they are physically connected and contiguous with it, 'aiding' in the support of the SLS component, grasping the brass wires. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.



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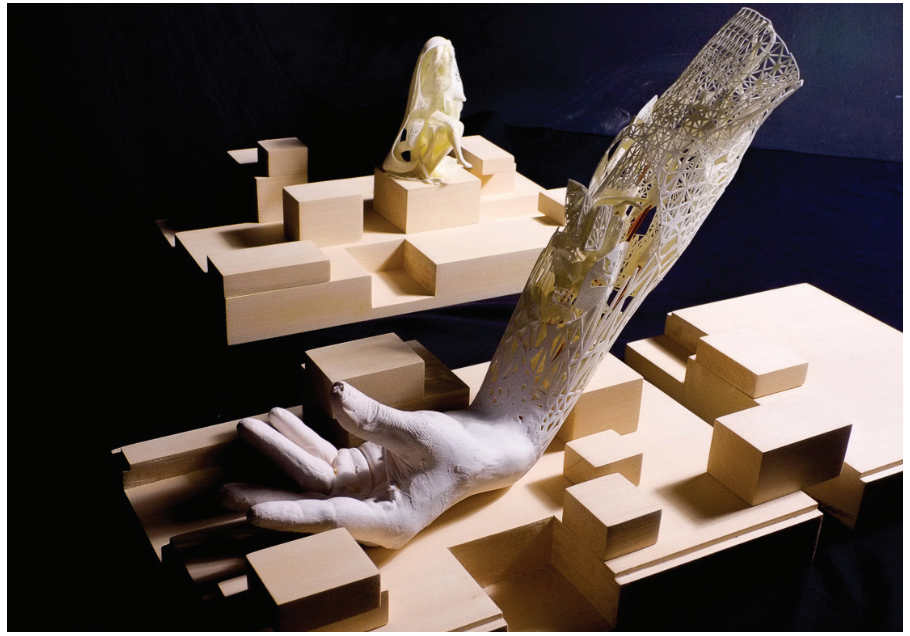
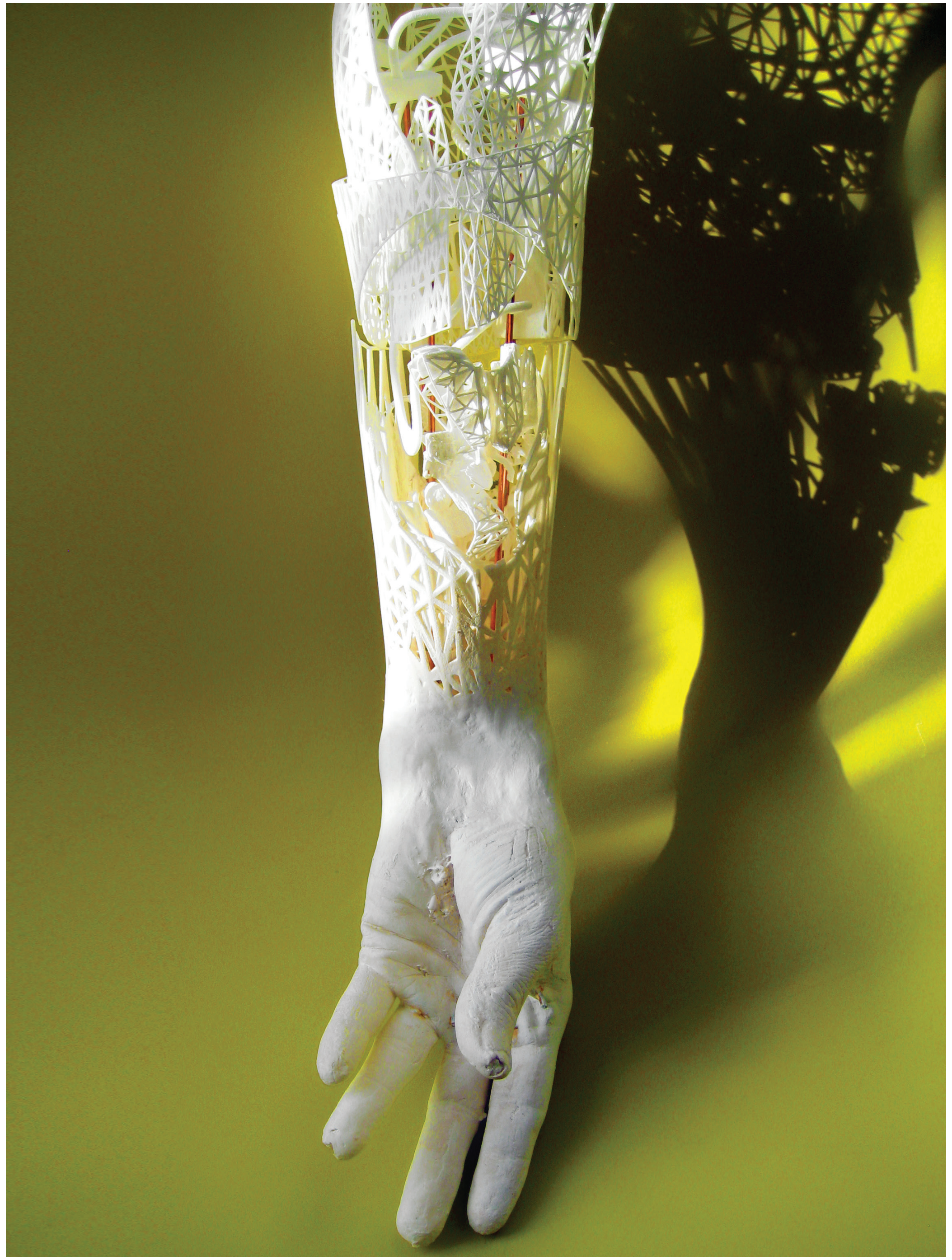


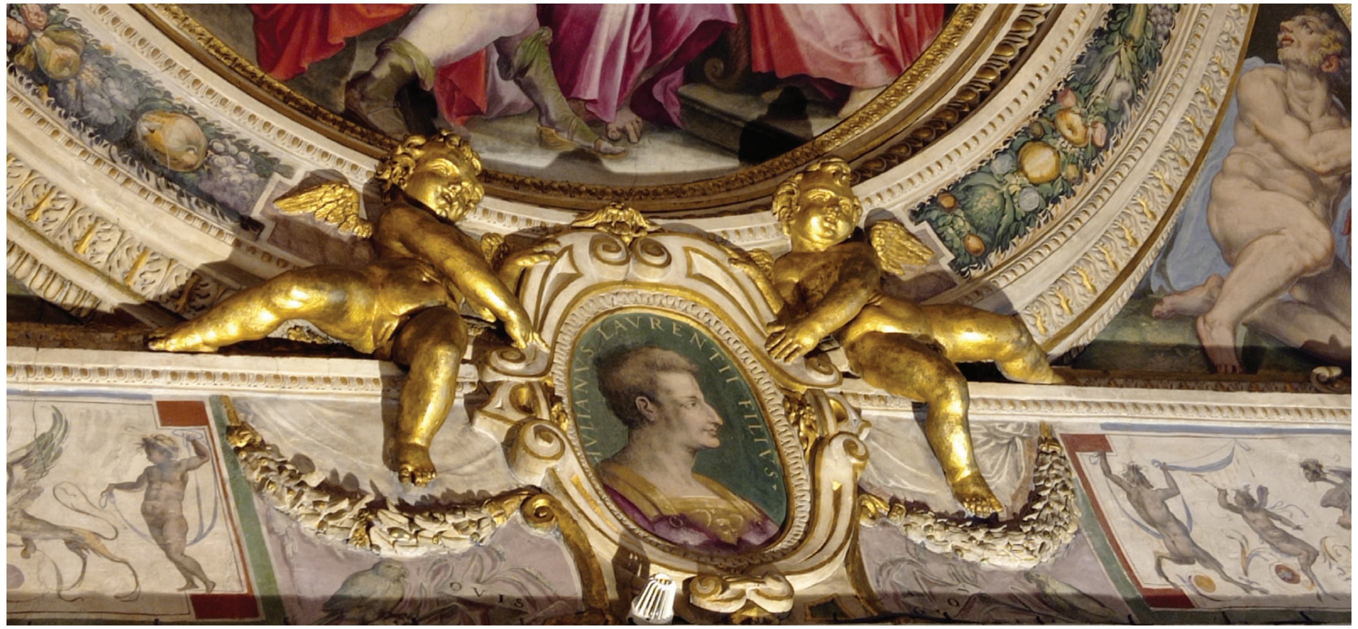
8.15

8.15 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I arm model and D_I v1 in pixelated landscapes, 2012. Models on timber plinths. With thanks to Harpreet Lota. Photograph by Ksenia Zizina.



8.16

8.16 Alessandro Ayuso, D_I arm model, 2012. Models on timber plinths. There are two crucial joints in the piece: that between the plaster cast and the SLS printed wrist component, and that between the SLS printed wrist component and the forearm component. The joint between the cast piece and the SLS print is seamless. The plaster cast piece is solid and heavy, and is imprinted by the imperfections and textures of an actual body, meant to convey a traditional notion of embodiment. The SLS components are abstract, light and porous; they are meant to suggest a dynamic corporeality in which boundaries and fixity are in flux. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.



9.1

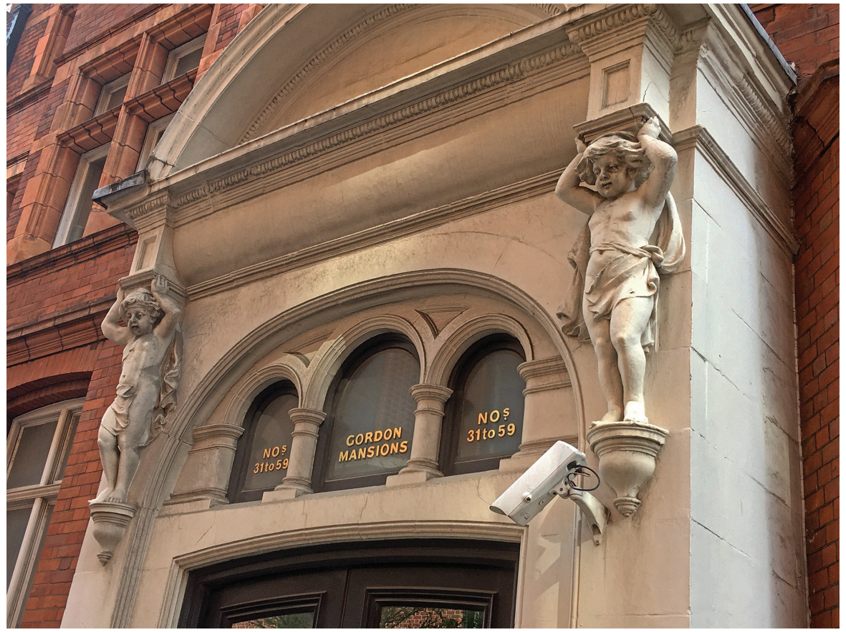
9.1 Artist unknown, stucco *putti* adorning the Lorenzo de Medici room inside the Quartieri Monumentali di Leone X in Palazzo Vecchio, ca 1556–8. Photograph by Franco Pisani.

Chapter 9 | Memories of Events Leading to a Hiatus and Current Revelations on Figures of the Early Twentieth Century

A collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 in which P_1435 recalls his life after Bernini, profligate times, and depression, and reflects on his present-day research and discoveries regarding modernism, with extensive endnotes by Alessandro Ayuso.

09 Aprile Anno Domini MMXII 02:16

I have encountered some old friends in the vicinity of the Royal Ear Hospital! They are four *spiritelli* adorning the entry porticoes of two Edifices known as Gordon Mansions (Figure 9.2). Their Roles as Atlantids is a prominent one, and for this they should be joyous. But Reader, I tell you, *amici miei* are sourly depressed, lacking in spritely Animation. They recounted to me that they considered themselves lucky to have found a Role at all at the turn of the XX *Secolo*, and that they have been stuck in their position for more than a Century now. Over the years, their station has not gained dignity, as they have been joined by a monstrously cyclopic viewing device known as a 'CCTV



9.2

9.2 *Putti* Atlantids at the entrance of Gordon Mansions, Bloomsbury, London, constructed ca. 1901. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

camera'. This gargoyle clutters the harmony of the facade that *amici miei* work to make more beautiful, whirring and staring obsessively all day and night. The portico which they aid in comprising is but the only instance of worthy *elementi Architettura* on said Edifice. The remainder is a sparse brick container, not as horribly bare as Wates House, but nearly. It occurs to me that one can discern the paucity of *Figure* and *Intaglio* that occurred over the course of a century by observing Gordon Mansions and then Wates House. The two Edifices are geographic neighbours and are separated in age by less than a century. One bears Figures as beleaguered token vestiges, and the other not even that.

The plight of these four *amici spiritelli* foreshadows this moment I will arrive at soon in my tale, but we are not there quite yet, dear Reader. *Allora*, where was I in my Narration of my Past? Ah, yes. After my time in *Roma* with Cavaliere Bernini, I became more International. I even travelled outside of Europe, summoned to the *Mundus Novus*.[1] I particularly adored my time working in *Virreinato de Nueva España*.[2]

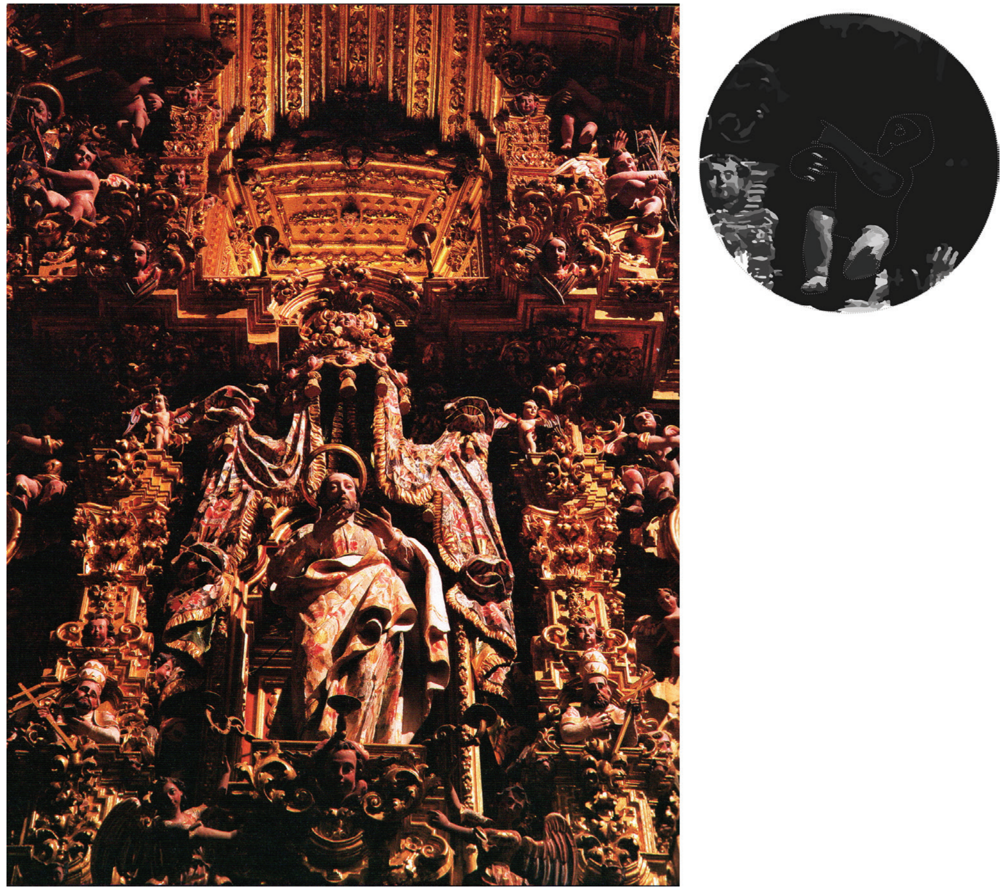
There, I worked with the local *Architetti* who were making *il Barocco* in a style distinct from what I had created before. They summoned me to adorn burgeoning pietas – twisted, inverted columns they referred to as *estípites*, facades and *retablos* – many *retablos*![3]

Within those scenes, there was an Abundance in all things Figurative, Ornamental and Decorative, expressing themselves with maximum quantities and exuberance. I saw many Figures who were familiar, but also met those who were novel to me or had so changed that I nearly failed to recognise them.[4]

My appearance as *un angelito* at the main altar at *Templo de San Francisco Javier en Tepotzotlan* is most illustrative of my Mexican cameos (Figure 9.3). While it did not strike me as notable when it occurred then, considering the extreme malleability of my Carapace in *Il Regno*, it now seems significant that there were changes my Body would undergo in my appearance in *il Mundus Novus*, *Tepotzotlan* being an example. There, my wispy locks became dense and attained a dark amber Hue, and my eyes became *castaños*.[5] The bridge of my nose straightened, and my bulging baby fat slimmed as my Body become smoother.[6]

The *retablo* at *Tepotzotlan* is also an example of the multitudinous quality of this particular style of *il Barocco*. Ornaments encrust every bit of this interior facade, and Figures were almost in equivalent proportion to what in *Toscana* we referred to as *l'Intaglio*. Indeed, what I had come to understand as the appropriate ratio between active and mute Proportions of design was simply not regarded here. *Everything* was active! Figures in this scenario were not relegated to occupying only the places that Old World *Architetti* would have thought required emphasis or Focus. In fact, we Figures were encouraged to occupy every surface. I was delighted to work alongside abundant floating cherubic heads amongst the dizzying texture of gold leaf. You find José and Maria surrounded in teeming organisms, a Jungle of plants, flowers, finials, corbels, arms, heads and legs. It reminded me of regions of the gardens of *Hypnerotomachia Polipholi*, as the Ornament appeared as if it was a proliferation of unusual Vegetal life.

In this situation, with such a multitude of Figures to do the work of lifting cornices and niche sills, many Figures were liberated from any pretence of lifting or carrying. I chose to perform such a task, however. You see, there was so much gold encrusted on nearly everything, I yearned for a bit of Shadow, and looked for a deeper recess to find some respite from the glare. *¡Mis ojos estaban cegados!*[7] I found this more difficult than I expected, for there were many tiny nooks and crannies but very few deep recesses or projections such that there were in *La Sagrestia Nuova*. Finally, I espied a Cornice that projected outward more than the others, and I flew to a corner where it met an encrusted Pilaster above José, and nestled my head under this bit of Shadow while I helped to support the weight above me. Although I am partly enveloped in Shadow, I attempted to do my part to contribute to the Mood, striking a dynamic Pose – something I had done before and can do well, if I may say so.



9.3

9.3 Artist unknown, Retablo, Church of San Francisco Xavier, Tepotzotlan, Mexico, ca. eighteenth century. Photograph by Yu Ogata and Ichiro Ogato Ono. © Yu Ogata and Ichiro Ogata Ono, courtesy of the artists, Taka Ishii Gallery Photography/Film. Detail diagram to the right shows the outline of the 'angelito' figure P_1435 claims to be in the narrative. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

As much as I enjoyed disregarding so many of the canonical Rules, as I celebrated and jostled with the many other Figures, I could not help but recall how when I worked with *Il Divino*, we Figures moved fluidly with the larger Forms of *l'Architettura*. I missed taking part in the harmonious pushing and pulling of Volumes, when one action could have a rippling sculptural effect on the whole.[8]

Another comparison to the work I aided in the Old World: the scene I describe at *Tepotzotlan*, which may strike the Reader as an intensification of the erotic levity which, when I worked with Cavaliere Bernini, we conjured with such acuity. I have told you how the mood of celebratory exaltation was ruptured at times, with the tumult surrounding *Carità* and also from the presence of the *sinistre Figure* in *Basilico San Pietro*, cackling and waving about an hourglass.[9] [Shudder.]

Yet, the ecstatic ambiance I describe at *Tepotzotlan* was tempered by a Dread surpassing any of the *gravità Cattolica* I had yet encountered,[10] and this was in large part due to the moments when Figures were inflicted with pains which were outwardly Gruesome. In many works, Christ's wounds would ooze with copious amounts of blood, dripping from wounds that I had not noticed him having previously. Reader, I tell you, I met other Figures who *wept* blood! And then there were the Ghouls. Not just one, but many Skeletons would visit on *la Día de los Muertos*!

Oh, a mixture of comforting and terrifying thoughts, unsettling me before slumber. The terror conjured by a Ghoul is nothing compared to what occurred in the years to come, which I will recount in my next Journal Entry.

Buonanotte.

23 Aprile Anno Domini MMXII 03:22

While there were excursions Abroad, most of the time during these years of the early XVIII *Secolo* Anno Domini, I spent in *Francia* and in *Austria* amidst the Rococo frenzy. I think I have never had more Work in such a condensed period. I consorted with Kings and Nobility, and I partook so heavily in the debauchery going on then and had so many Cameos that I now remember little. To be honest, it is all a bit of a haze.

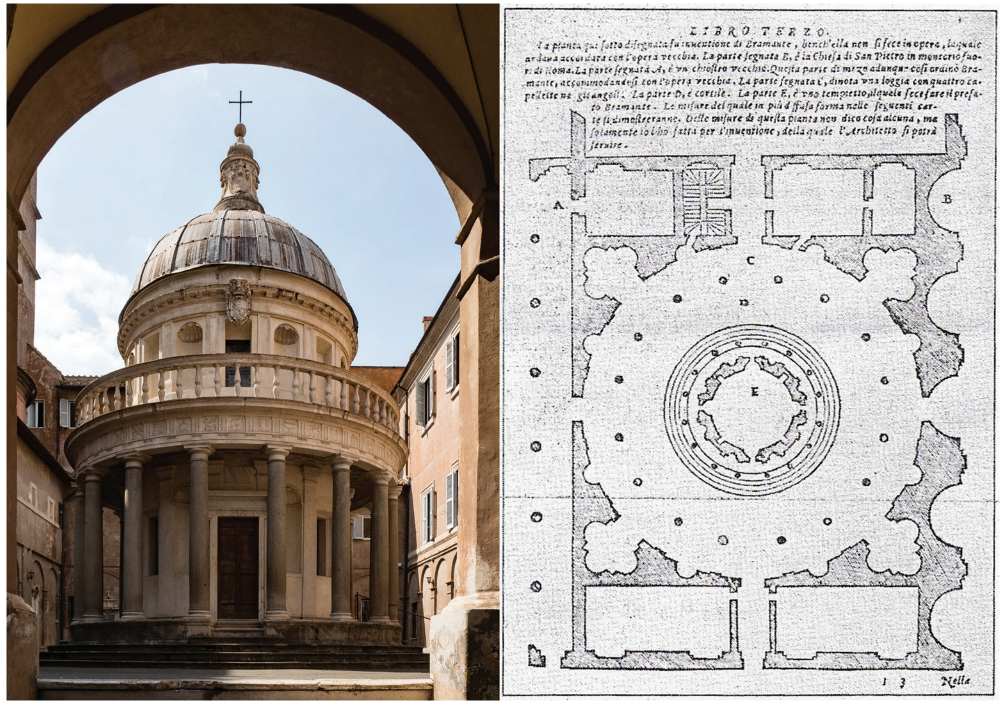
What I do remember is that after a certain point, I was only called upon to play the Role of jovial *Amorino*, over and over again. Every day was Valentine's Day, ugh! If in *il Churrigueresque* perhaps We dwelt too heavily on Gruesome themes, in *il Rocaille*, the solemnity that was present for the Ancients was absent.

At that time, the designs that I was called upon to aid in were filled with an Absurdity and excessive Lightness. I was called upon to lighten the Mood during the times of *il Manierismo* and *il Barocco*, but it was always a more congenial Occasion. Looking back on it now, I think this may have been because there was always something to play off of – some grander purpose or set of rules to support or to undermine. But when capricious excess abounds, there is no longer any significance to bringing yet more levity, or to distract momentarily or to reinforce a larger Theme. It all became noise, and I was caught up in it.

And then things began to change in *Francia*. It seemed to happen so slowly at first, I did not notice what was occurring directly in front of my eyes. There was some grumbling from Monsieur Perrault, and then design work from him that was strangely stiff and sparse at the Louvre.[11] Even though it was not nearly as magnificent as what I had achieved with Signor Bernini, I was satisfied with my appearance there. By the middle of XVII *Secolo*, I was called upon also to appear in Treatises, including one of my most famous Roles on Monsieur Laugier's frontispiece, where, as the Spirit of *Architettura*, a *flameum* erupted from my forehead as a result of my inspiration on witnessing the Primitive Hut.[12]

Shortly after this triumphant appearance, however, the alarming incident with Monsieur Blondel's 'Cours d'Architecture' occurred. I appeared in an admittedly minor Role in an etching in Volume 3 as an Acroteria Figure on the parapet of a hotel facade.[13] Many other Figures appeared, such as the Caryatids bearing entablature, exemplifying the *Ordre Persique*.[14] Later, I realised that the text accompanying their appearance warned *against* the use of Caryatid Figures, even calling them 'unbearable'![15] We Figures had been duped into contributing to our own derogation! Monsieur Blondel's screed also discussed 'natural' plans and undecorated Pediments, insinuating that it was best to abandon much of what he saw as the excessive ornamentation of the Ancients.[16] Quite disturbing and significant in retrospect, but in the moment, I along with many other Figures paid it no mind. We were too busy with our appearances in so many Acroteria, Frieze scenes and Niches and the like, not to mention so many Roles in paintings!

But then there was the most shocking development of all. I remember particularly the drawing for Monsieur Boullée's Cenotaph.[17] What was this Monument, and why were all its surfaces left unadorned?[18] It did not make any sense. I remember thinking whether this could really be happening. What is this Monument for anyway? Why are all of its surfaces left so bare and unadorned? It seemed to be religious but did not seem to be made for reverence of *Il Signore Dio nostro*, nor for the Ancient Deities, nor even to honour a King.



9.4

9.4 View and plan of idealised courtyard of the *Tempietto* by Donato Bramante, *Tempietto*, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome, 1502–3. Photograph: Wikimedia Commons, Tempietto, Haupteingang.jpg. Plan drawing: Sebastian Serlio, illustration in Regole generali di Architettura 1545, showing Donato Bramante's proposed plan of the *Tempietto* courtyard. Wikimedia Commons, Tempietto, Plattegrond Serlio.jpg.

And then, all kinds of unthinkable Events began to occur – or rather not to occur. As Edifices began to be made of iron, I found myself finding fewer and fewer Roles. The taste for the Rococo became scarcer. I found myself in *Austria* aiding Herr Wagner here and there, but even he had little use for me.[19] *Architetti* began to shy away from that which they deemed 'ornamental' or 'decorative' and searched for 'rational' and 'logical' design solutions.[20]

Around that time, I began to drink heavily, partaking in schnapps to calm my nerves and to lift my heavy Spirit, and as I did so, I became even less aware of what was happening around me. At one point in the early XX *Secolo* Anno Domini, awakening from a schnapps-induced *coma etilico*,[21] I realised that I had not an appearance in years, and with that, I fled, back to one of my most beloved locales.

I had no work for a Century, during which time I sat in the Clerestory of the apse of *San Pietro in Montorio* and was overcome by a stultifying melancholia. My *abitudine di gustare di una bevanda*[22] took a sinister hold on my mood, and I remained in a piteous state with *le mie bottiglie di vino santo*. Aside from the oblivion provided by the excess of drink, my only solace at this time was occasional excursions to the *Tempietto* in the adjacent Courtyard (Figure 9.4).

'One of the finest studies of the great architect yet produced' – The New York Times Book Review
LE CORBUSIER
AND THE
TRAGIC VIEW OF
RCHITECTURE
S JENCKS
LE CORBUSIER
belVita
PROSECCO
ROSÉ
Le Concours de Strasbourg

9.5

9.5 Alessandro Ayuso, the studio desk as it was found on 11 October 2012 after one of P_1435's nocturnal research binges, 2021. Photographic tableau, 2021. With thanks to Ro Spankie.

I found this small Structure comforting. I would frighten the *turisti* who would wander in, waiting until a Group settled into hushed attentiveness of whatever droning guide was leading them and then, from the Clerestory, projecting my susurrations against the echoing ceiling of the Cupola's interior surface, I would begin reciting Prayers. (I have learned so many over the years of inhabiting churches.) Although I was not usually murmuring anything excessively frightening, the effect on the *turisti* was to sow terror, and they would often take their leave hastily. My delight in their reaction was a small bit of succour in such a dismally depressing time.

With that bittersweet Memory, I take note of my Fatigue on this evening.

Buonanotte, Reader.

22 Giugno Anno Domini MMXII 11:15

Since I have been unsure as to what exactly he is up to with the new design that we are working on, I have been looking through Signor Alessandro's notes and books. Inadvertently, I have stumbled upon copious information about the period of *Modernismo*, and I am now sifting through it, filling myself in on what I missed before I was summoned again in the later part of the Century. So far, what I have discovered confirms some of my pessimistic assumptions about this desolate Era.

For instance, I have learnt of this Loos fellow. What an odious promulgation he penned![23] I remember hearing of this Edict at the time, and I laughed, as it all sounded utterly foolish, but then, a very short time later, I found myself completely out of Roles and full of self-doubt. To hear it all again makes my blood boil! How did *Architetti* expect to convey meaning to people in these bare Edifices? Where was the delight in barren walls?

Difficult to sleep now. I will polish off this bottle of pinot noir, put in my earbuds and listen to a performance of Signor Donati's *Messa Sesta Pro Defunctis*[24] from YouTube. This calms me down and reminds me of better times.

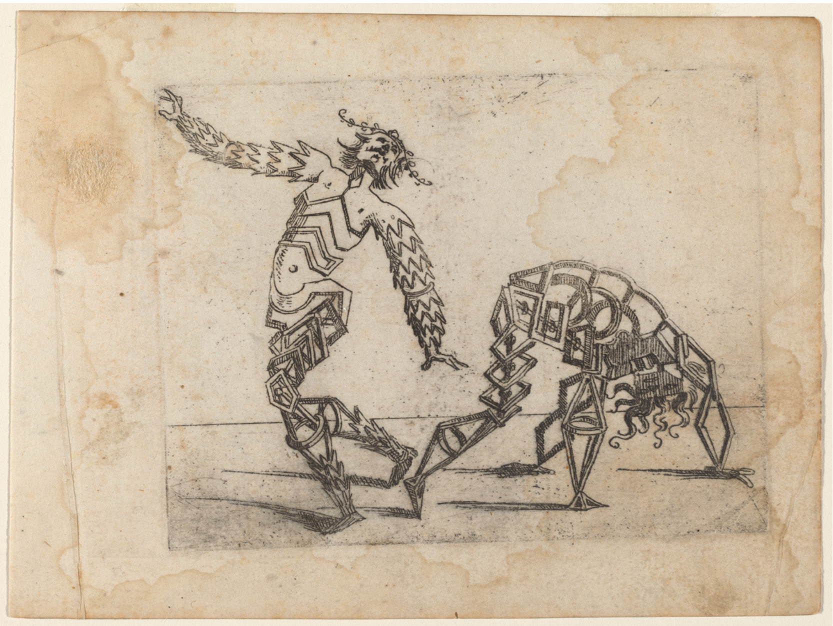
Buonanotte.

09 Luglio Anno Domini MMXII 03:17

Questa notte, I have returned to Signor Alessandro's bookshelf only to make more discoveries. In spite of Herr Loos's and others' efforts, it seems Figures had not disappeared entirely during the early decades of the XX *Secolo*. I have found an instance of Figures I know from the past who appeared then! They are *i Bizarri*, the Figures who worked previously with Signor Braccelli in the XVII *Secolo* Anno Domini in *Firenze* (Figure 9.6).[25] When they worked with Signor Braccelli, these Figures never appeared in *progetti architettonici* directly, but with Bodies as arrangements of parts, they were themselves outrageous instances of *Architettura*. Oh, how I enjoyed their performances: gymnastic manoeuvres and exquisite acrobatic and magic Tricks!

I have now found them in work attributed to an architecturally minded choreographer working with a group of *Artisti* and *Architetti* from *Germania*.[26] The *Bizarri*, when working with this Herr Oskar Schlemmer, danced in repetitive increments to strange Music. Their dancing was not in the manner that I am accustomed to seeing – not the graceful movements of ballet which I recall from *Francia*, but instead a ticking and bobbing, similar to that of Mechanisms (Figure 9.7).

I find their dances and costumes quite comedic. Yet, they do frighten me a bit as well. When I saw *Bizarrie* for the first time in the XVII *Secolo* Anno Domini, I laughed, but I never felt this particular sensation of trepidation and discomfort. When the *Bizarri* worked with Herr Schlemmer, they donned costumes of Festive colours and Forms which give them a jovial appearance, but when I look more closely, they strike me as vacant, their Animation owing to what must be an unseen puppeteer. In these cases, it appears they have no Consciousness whatsoever.[27] In some of their appearances in drawings, I am struck by a movement or a glance when these Figures appear to me as lacking senses, responding automatically as the Mechanisms they emulate in their dancing. Indeed, they are the nightmare visions epitomising the misled notions of that fellow Monsieur Descartes.[28] Oh, *Bizarri*, you should have joined me in the clerestory of *San Pietro in Montorio* instead of emigrating to Germania! It would have been merry, and you would have been spared such a disturbingly Cartesian fate.



9.6

9.6 Giovanni Battista Bracelli, illustration for Bizzarie di Varie Figure, 1624. Etching print. Wikimedia Commons, courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Giovanni Battista Bracelli, from Bizzarie di varie Figure, 1624, NGA 46321.jpg.

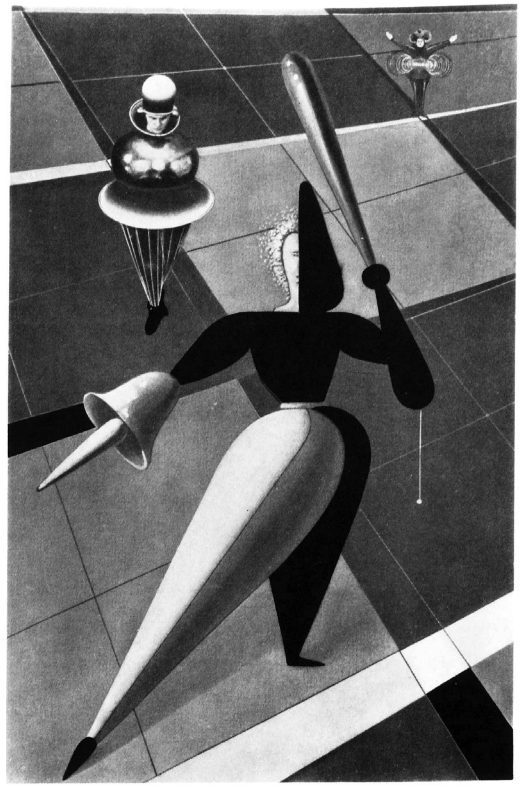
Allora, perhaps I can learn of even more Figures who appeared later in XX *Secolo* in my Research tomorrow. The summertime mugginess has subsided, and the lift shaft has cooled a bit. So, I think I can now sleep deeply in spite of the revelations and questions that litter my Mind.

A Domani, Reader.

22 Luglio Anno Domini MMXII 03:31

Looking through Signor Alessandro's notes, I see that several years later, some Figures, even though they were not reified as part of Edifices, actually aided very directly in the creation of the design – but what horrid Characters these are! I speak of the expressionless *Uomini* who worked with Herr Ernst Neufert (Figure 9.8).[29]

And Reader, once again, the past comes back to haunt me. Indeed, I recognise the most prominent fellow appearing in drawings attributed to Herr Neufert: it is none other than *Uomo Vitruviano* who worked with Signor da Vinci (Figure 2.1)! He may have a new style, but I recognise him. I should not be surprised to find *Uomo Vitruviano* in a central Role, even in this nearly Figure-less era. Indeed, *Uomo Vitruviano* has appeared in such central Roles for longer than even I have existed, and he will tell you about it whenever he



9.7

9.7 Oskar Schlemmer, Study for Triadisches Ballet, 1922. Gouache, ink and cut-and-pasted gelatin silver prints on black paper, 575 mm × 371 mm. Wikimedia Commons, Oskar Schlemmer Triadisches Ballett 200.jpg.

gets the chance. I recall him boasting to me that he appeared in *Grecia* as far back as V *Secolo* Avanti Cristo, where he appeared carved in relief upon a stone pediment with his arms splayed, demonstrating the Greek fathom.[30]

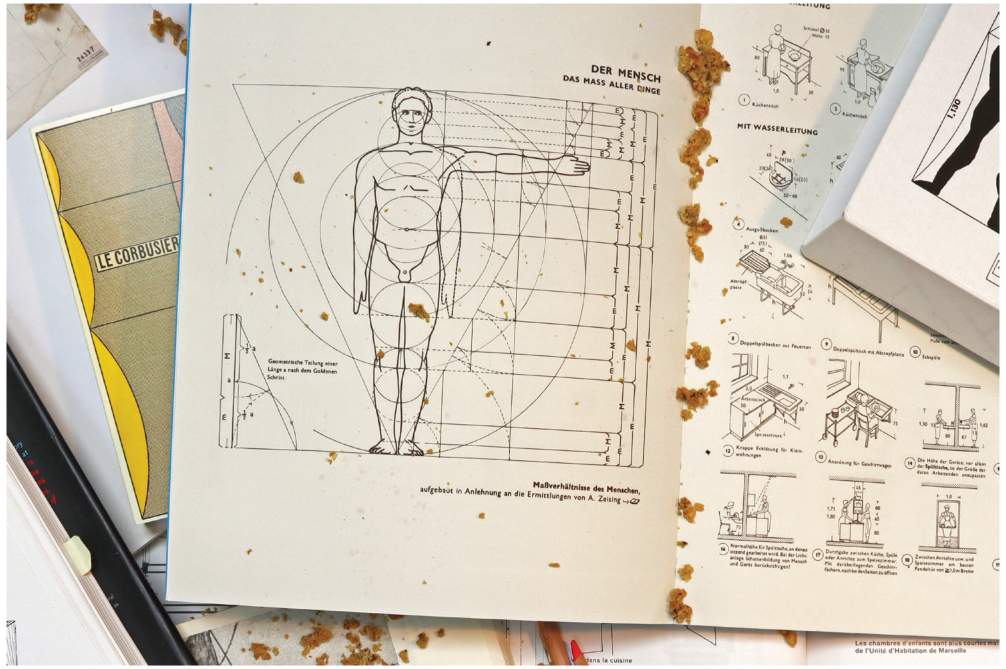
When I came across *Uomo Vitruviano* in Toscana in XV *Secolo* I must admit, at first, I admired him, as did so many, even hoping to grow up some day to be like him. I thought he must have looked much like me as *un bambino*. Yet, as the centuries went by, I realised I would never really 'grow up', and I became annoyed with *Uomo Vitruviano*. I realised we are quite different from one another. After all, *Uomo Vitruviano* is stuck inside his geometric Shapes, while I frolic, explore and roam. *Uomo Vitruviano* never accepted any of my invitations to Bacchanalia. He must have known that if he were to attend, we *spiritelli* would only play pranks on him, and he certainly was not such a jocund sort. I also thought him a bore for his one dimensionality. And I suppose I must admit that I was a bit resentful of his Fame, which I felt was disproportionate. I watched as *Architetti* called on him much too often. There were other Figures that could have aided their Creations in much more exciting ways. Yet, *Uomo Vitruviano* was trotted out again and again as a metaphor and as a Guide for proportion. Whether he was drawn or not, he was on the minds of *Architetti*. They thought of him when they conceived the plan of an Edifice, and *Uomo Vitruviano*'s Proportions and Geometries made their way into their plans.

This updated version of *Uomo Vitruviano* does not just induce eye rolls from me, however. He frightens me, even more than the updated *Bizarrie* who worked with Herr Schlemmer do! This new *Uomo Vitruviano* is impassive and expressionless. His Body is reduced to contours that do not evoke the luscious irregularities of flesh, while the *geometria* that flanks him has become more elaborate with many more numbers and quantities littering it. His simple movements are prescribed with notations. In short, *Uomo Vitruviano* has become *un automa*.[31] It makes sense that he would have become a mechanised mannequin. I can see that the *Architetti* at this time were preoccupied with Machines and what they were calling Mass Production, and even sought to make Edifices that were Machines. I think *Robot Vitruviano* – if I may use this name to refer to this Figure who appears most in work attributed to Herr Neufert – allowed himself to be remade as a Machine in order to aid in the design of Machine buildings!

I also see that there are Figures who form an entourage for *Robot Vitruviano* including *figlia* and *bambini*. And, again, in spite of the updated veneer of style, I recognise them too! They are the measured Figures who appear in the drawings attributed to Herr Dürer, whom I recall *Il Divino* despising for their rigidity and servility to the measurements that accompanied them. They also do not reveal any particular emotion, without expression, joy, sorrow or annoyance, all bearing the same neutral, anonymous expression. They carry out their mundane tasks without question, without any deviations whatsoever, insisting on the quantitative measures that accompany them all the while.[32]

Oh, Dio mio, it is already al primo canto dei galli.[33] I will sleep now, and I pray *Uomo Vitruviano* does not also attempt to take a starring Role in my dreams. I have had enough of him for today, nay for several Centuries.

Buonanotte.



9.8

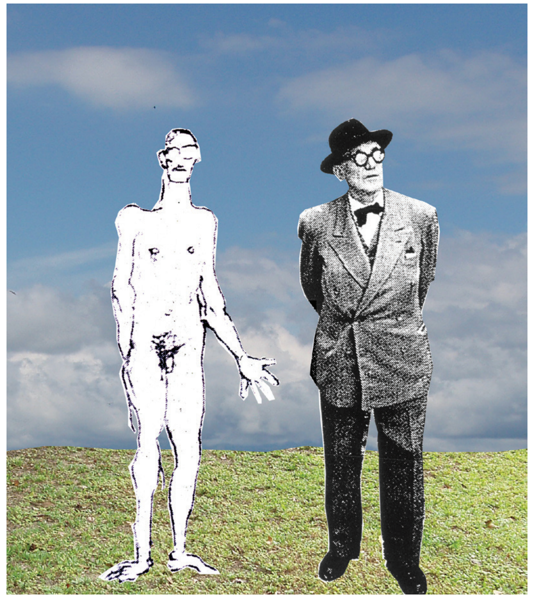
9.8 Alessandro Ayuso, the studio desk as it was found on 11 October 2012 after one of P_1435's nocturnal research binges. Photographic tableau, 2021. Detail showing Ernst Neufert's design of Der Mesch, from Bauentwersfslehre (Architect's Data) of 1938 as it appears in *Beautiful Users: Designing for People* by Ellen Lupton.

05 Settembre Anno Domini MMXII 02:28

:-0

More discoveries. Since I assumed that during this time there were simply no Roles available for Figures, I continue to be amazed by what I am now learning.

My most recent epiphanies stem from my discovery of a book on Signor Alessandro's shelf, describing the design of an *aedicula* by one Monsieur Le Corbusier.[34] At first, I impatiently rifled through the Volume containing the documentation of the small Edifice, but then I noticed that in the drawings that gave rise to it, many Ghostly Figures appear, testing out the various furnishings, and moving about the interior. These Figures piqued my interest. They reminded me of how we Figures would sometimes appear as Ghosts when we aided *Il Divino* in his drawings. And these particular Ghosts remind me of that



9.9

9.9 Alessandro Ayuso, Le Corbusier, Meet Le Corbusier, 2011. Collage incorporating self-portrait sketch by Le Corbusier and photograph of Le Corbusier.

Commoner that worked with *Il Divino* in the section drawing for *La Biblioteca Laurenziana*.[35] I wondered, is this Ghost also merely a Commoner? Or are the ghostly Figures specific *personaggi*,[36] as I know they sometimes are, in spite of the vagueness in their depiction? So, I kept looking, to see if I could determine who they are. There are several other books on the work of Monsieur Le Corbusier on Signor Alessandro's shelf, and from flipping through these, I can see that in many ways, this fellow Monsieur Le Corbusier followed in the footsteps of the *Architetti* that I most enjoyed working with in the past, in that he sculpted, painted and fervently drew in nearly equal measure. And in these pursuits, he took great joy in drawing a multitude of Figures!

I am very much looking forward to delving into more of the books pertaining to this *Architetto*'s work, and to figuring out who these Ghosts are. But in spite of my anticipation, my eyelids grow heavy.

Buonanotte.

09 Settembre Anno Domini MMXII 02:46

Just a short note this evening after encountering a Book featuring many of Monsieur Le Corbusier's sketches. I see that he drew himself. When I saw his naked self-portrait, I laughed and snorted with such gusto that the *vino* I was sipping came out of my nose (Figure 9.9)! Thank goodness for this Fellow. This Century needed a bit of humour to remedy the stultifying effect of the impassive *Robot Vitruviano*.

An answer to my query of who the Ghosts in the drawings are. Clearly, they could be Monsieur Le Corbusier's Doppelgangers, as he was prone to draw himself and meant the Aedicula for himself. Yet, these Ghosts differ from his self-portrait, even in what is discernible from the hurriedly sketched contours, which outline a Figure that is angular, stout and without many identifying features, and certainly not possessing the mirthful and awkward details of Monsieur Le Corbusier's self-portrait. I will continue to look at the Books tomorrow, content for now in allowing the image of the jocund self-portrait to cheer me.

Buonanotte.

15 Settembre Anno Domini MMXII 03:11

I have discovered the so-called Monsieur 'Modulor'! Yet, as I gaze upon the image of this Figure in the books I have found, a feeling of déjà vu stirs within me. This itch begins when I read that from Monsieur Le Corbusier's telling, Monsieur 'Modulor' was the most publicised of Figures, famous around much of the world.[37]

The dawning recognition gathers momentum as I note Monsieur 'Modulor' appears in drawings frontally (without any *scorcio*),[38] almost without fail, and that his pose is quite stiff and rigid (without any twisting or torquing, or even *contrapposto*), and he seems to have a trademark pose: standing upright with one arm raised. The certainty that I have seen this fellow before solidifies further as I note that he seems only to want to do a few mundane tasks. And Reader, could you predict that mostly he appears obsessed with quantities and *Geometria*, consistently flanked by *le linee di construzione* and numerical quantities wherever he goes. In fact, he seems subservient to *Geometria*, contorting his Form to fit its configuration, obsequiously accompanying the Geometry rather than the other way around. Does this sound familiar? Yes, his pose may have changed slightly – *Dio mio*, he has raised one arm higher and lowered another! *Per favore*, forgive my sarcasm, Reader – and the *Geometria* around him may be more elaborate, but I contend that Monsieur 'Modulor' is simply the return of *Uomo Vitruviano* after becoming *Robot Vitruviano*!

Secondo me, Figures should not be encumbered with such mathematical manacles! His static measures enforce a perfection that has little to do with what Bodies can be. Indeed, they can be lumpy, varied, irregular, erotic or angelic, none of which *Uomo Vitruviano*, for all his many appearances, ever is!

I am reading some of the other texts on Signor Alessandro's shelf, and they are causing me to consider *Uomo Vitruviano* in a new light. It occurs to me now that the measurement and numbers are part of a larger goal. Indeed, when he appeared as *Robot Vitruviano* he did impart these quantities into *Architettura*, imprinting his so-called perfect Body into it. Yet, his appearance as Monsier 'Modulor', where the *Geometria* does not appear to have been imprinted with such fastidiousness, makes me realise that the numbers are primarily ornamental.[39] These *intagli* confer *Uomo Vitruviano* (or, to go along with this ruse, Monsieur 'Modulor') with the necessary authority to propagate an idea of perfection or, as one book on Signor Alessandro's shelf reads, 'a way of life'.[40]

In any case, I can now surmise more precisely who the Ghosts in the Aedicula drawings are. I think that Monsieur 'Modulor' broke free of the rigidity of the *Geometria* for a moment and attempted to take on some of the traits of Monsieur Le Corbusier, making himself squatter and a bit softer.

Although I have solved that question, flipping through the books, I know there is more to see. I am quite agitated from my previous tirade. I will listen to a choral arrangement by Signor Giovanni Maria Nanino now on my headphones. This will comfort me and calm my nerves. I will resume my Research again tomorrow.

Buonanotte.

27 Settembre Anno Domini MMXII 01:53

I have discovered that there existed a Madame Modulor (Figure 9.10)! However, I see that her appearance was a brief one, not to be repeated. While Monsieur Le Corbusier did not encourage her to flourish in the vein of her male counterpart, I have noticed that there were other female Figures who were conjured by Monsieur Le Corbusier in his paintings.[41] They appear as if flat blocks of colour and *lineamenta* may have happened to pass by one another randomly to align to make the image of a Figure (Figure 9.11).[42]

As far as I can surmise, most of the females he preferred to sketch appear as if the Figures themselves are cast from the *opus caementicium*[43] that the Romans used for structural purposes in their Constructions (but I see now is used by *alcuni Architetti*[44] in abundance, including in my home at the Royal Ear Hospital and my past home of Wates House) (Figure 9.11).[45]

I can see Monsieur Le Corbusier pursued that which he found beautiful and sensual in these Figures. *Il Divino* preferred to conjure different types of Figures. Yet, he lusted after them in a similar manner. I have noticed from working with many *Architetti* that this sensual preoccupation with particular Bodies finds its way back to *Architettura*, as

9.10

9.10 Alessandro Ayuso, the studio desk. Photographic tableau, 2021. Detail showing the sketch of a female Modulor drawn by André Serralta and Justino Maisonnier of Atelier Le Corbusier, which Le Corbusier dismissed, as it appears in *Modulor 2* by Le Corbusier, published 1955.

the forms surface again in *disegno*, since we Figures are so intimately connected with *Architettura* that we have a tendency to merge with it. Elements of the Bodies can become a proportion of a facade, a curve in *un piano*, the bulge of a torus.[46]

I detest the rigidity of measure and the overbearing mathematics which fetter Monsieur 'Modulor's' Body. Yet, I see that when a Figure is adorned with such numerical and geometrical appendages, they gain much more direct influence and prominence in *disegno*. And it makes me wonder, why wasn't *Madame* Modulor encouraged?[47] Always, *Uomo Vitruviano* returns to instil such Measure, while there are many other Figures who could take up this Role. It is not fair, I tell you!

I admit I am quite worked up now and will need to return to the mellifluous harmonies of Signor Giovanni Maria Nanino's choir to soothe me.

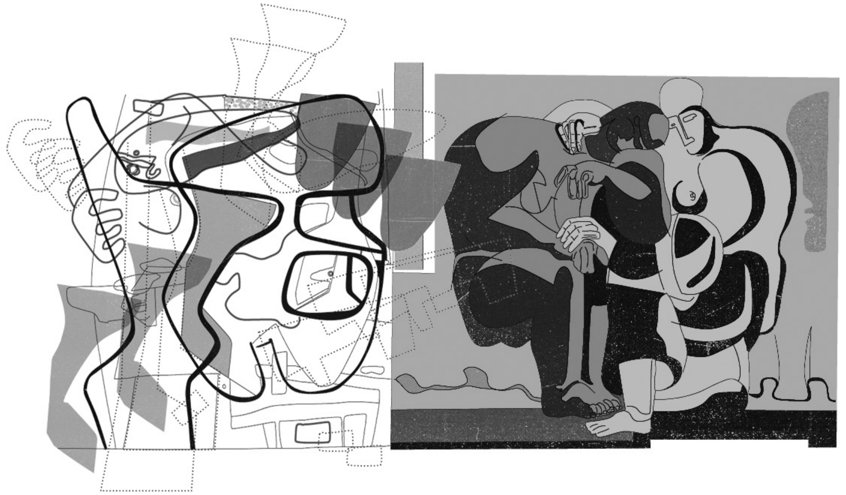
Buonanotte.

02 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 04:03

Examining the Books on Signor Alessandro's shelf, I can see that Monsieur Le Corbusier drew other Figures that I would have very much wanted to meet at that lonely time. For instance, I can see he conjured my old Friends such as Minotauro and Chimera to illustrate his *Poéme de L'Angle Droit* (Figure 9.12)! (Well, to be honest, these *Mostri* were more like acquaintances. I was always petrified of many of those *Mostri* and hadn't seen some of them since my ancient Roman days, which as I've mentioned I can barely recall at this point.) Still, how it would have illuminated my spritely Spirit with a glimmer of light in a time of utmost darkness to have been drawn amidst the *Minotauri* and other Creatures in this work![48]

I hope such fantastical *Mostri* visit me in my Dreams this evening.

Buonanotte.



9.11

9.11 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram of painted figures by Le Corbusier, 2021. The figures on the left are derived from Le Corbusier's mural at 35 rue de Sèvres in Paris, 1948, showing P_1435's perception of lines and planes moving past one another. The figures on the right are derived from Le Corbusier's painting Deux Femmes Assises, 1929. The monochrome rendering of the painting shows P_1435's perception of the figures being cast from concrete. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.

06 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 01:24

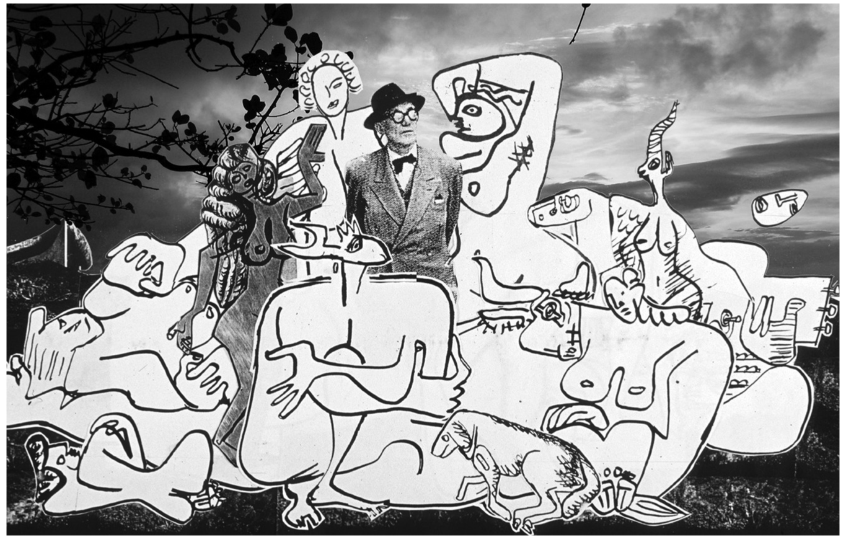
Allora, this whole time, I thought there were no Figures working during *la Modernità*, and even yesterday, as I discovered that some appeared in *disegno*, *dipinti* and *sculture*, I continued to think it is regrettable that so many of those *Architetti* did not actually include Figures as Ornament for buildings! I looked up Monsieur Le Corbusier's religious edifices, searching for such instances, but I did not see any Figures of Santos, Madonnas or other *Figure* one may expect to witness there. But now, I see even Monsieur Modulor appeared in several of the actual buildings of which he aided in the design (Figure 9.13)! I am astounded. Certainly, his appearances are not as exquisite as so many of my own in the past – he is not sculpted in Marble or cast in Bronze (but rather cast in some crude exposed version of the *opus caementicium* – appalling!), and he is not *a tutto tondo*,[49] projecting outward as I have been in the past (but rather he is quite flat and thin as a negative relief in the wall), and he is not especially prominent as so many of my own appearances have been where I looked down from above on passers-by. Rather, he seems to get tucked in the corner near ground level with the visitors, and I see that he has been relegated as an afterthought to adorning the lift shaft (I know the feeling, such is the fate of Figures since *Modernismo*; one should even feel lucky to be relegated to the lift shaft). But, *allora*, at least a Figure was built as part of an Edifice at some point in this awful century![50]

Buonanotte.

11 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 02:19

I continue to follow the trail left by Monsieur Modulor through the pages of the Tomes on Signor Alessandro's shelf. It has led me back to the Unite d'Habitation. This edifice is similar to an enormous set of Drawers to house vast Quantities of inhabitants. In the drawings *per disegni* for this project, I see other types of Figures appearing in a section drawing (Figure 9.14).

If only Signor Le Corbusier could have employed me as one of these *enfants* that I see in a section drawing of Unite d'Habitation. I could have shown these *enfants* how to really play (first, you need a *larva* to frighten others; second, a Goat on a leash; third, *vino* . . . , etc.).[51] Like everyone else in the



9.12

9.12 Alessandro Ayuso, A Group Portrait of Le Corbusier and the Cast of Le Poéme de l'Angle Droit, analytical collage incorporating mythological figures from *Le Poéme de l'Angle Droit* by Le Corbusier and a photograph of Le Corbusier, 2011.

section, these *enfants* are much too polite and much too predictable and innocuous.[52] Perhaps they are descendants of *Il Divino*'s Commoner but, more directly, the Children of *Robot Vitruviano*.

For the most part, it seems that all of the exciting Figures are left out of *disegni di architettura*! *I Mostri*, Madame Modulor, the naked Doppelganger of Monsieur Le Corbusier: they do not have much of a Role to play when it comes to the *actual* business of *disegno*. Perhaps Monsieur Le Corbusier was concentrating on his pursuit of painting and left his Assistants to the drafting of *disegni di architettura*.[53]

But I have come across one unique instance in the section drawings for a Tower Block where there is an intriguing Figure inhabiting *l'edificio*. I feel a kinship with this small person.[54] He is *un bambino* emerging from what seems to be a dark Room. Walking through the Threshold of the door, he is half illuminated and half in Shadow. The Boy is waving; maybe he is imitating Monsieur Modulor. But he reminds me of me when I was at Tepotzotlán, and I found a corner, half in shadow, to strike my Pose . . .

I dream of meeting this kindred Soul. I wonder if he is a *spiritello* I knew at some point, managing to survive through a desolate Century by taking a slightly interesting Role and interjecting a portion of the playful, mythical World outside these box-like edifices.

Buonanotte.

17 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 02:49

Looking through Signor Alessandro's notes, I have come across yet more Figures appearing as part of Edifices decades after those who worked with Monsieur Le Corbusier, during what was a brief moment *Architetti* call 'postmodernism'! And I am shocked to see that I know these Figures!

Both instances I have found are in a far-away region of *Mundus Novus*, the region of California. In one, crowning the *acroteria* atop a tall, gridded box of an Edifice (as all buildings seem to have become over the course of this *Secolo*) sit 12 *Pleurants*, *medievale* Figures I had met during my visits to *Francia* many centuries ago (Figure 9.15).[55] The *pleurants* are

9.13 Le Corbusier, relief of the Modulor man, cast into the béton brut surface of the Unité d'Habitation, 1952, Marseille, France. Photograph by Ro Spankie.

9.13

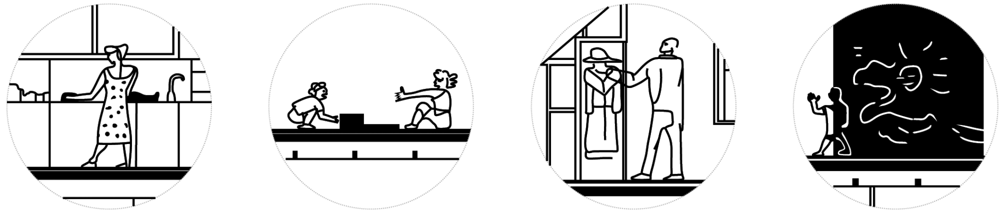
sombre types, always in mourning. Normally, this is due to the death of a royal or holy personage. Yet, in this instance, I know not what they mourn. Perhaps it is the death of *Architettura*, as the gridded box below them most certainly signifies. Ah Reader, spite is getting the best of me. So, let me try again. Perhaps that which they mourn is the loss of their Bodies, as these are entirely absent from the enshrouding robes which should enclose them! Perhaps when the Pleurants realised the desiccated nature of the *Architettura* they were meant to accompany, they departed and left only their robes behind as decoys.

In the second instance I have found of Figuri appearing as part of a Building *di Postmodernismo*, in Burbank, California, I see, supporting *il frontone*[56] (and Reader, I tell you I am delighted to see that at least this particular box has *un frontone*) other old friends I am astounded to find: *i Nani* (Figure 9.16)![57] The last I heard they were in the garden of *Villa Valmarana* in Vicenza; I cannot believe that they were summoned to the *Mundus Novus* so recently![58] And, the predictable hideousness of the Building notwithstanding, what Roles they have achieved! They are colossal, as tall as the clerestory which lies behind them, at a scale which makes them seem as if they are a band of Roman Emperors (Figure 9.17). What an achievement: diminutive Figures becoming larger than life, front and centre on a building facade. I approve of this wholeheartedly!

Yet, it appears as if *i Nani* simply arrived after this Edifice was designed, as if their places were reserved ahead of time, but not shaped with their help.[59] They are not intertwined in the scene. *I Nani* often inhabit gardens, or merely sit atop garden walls. So, they are probably simply aware of how Figures can and should be so entwined with the stuff of *Architettura*.

I do not know the disposition of Californians, nor am I certain of the meaning *i Nani* are supposed to convey here, but I cannot imagine this manifestation as an invitation to gaze, daydream or become

9.14 Alessandro Ayuso, diagrams showing a selection of scale figures in the 1:20 section drawings for Strasbourg Housing Building, 1951, by Atelier Le Corbusier. The 'enfants' P_1435 refers to in the narrative are second from left; the child who fascinates P_1435 is on the far right. With thanks to Laura Kershaw.



9.14

9.15

9.15 Muriel Castanis, Corporate Goddesses, 1982. Fibreglass, 12 figures approx. 3,600 mm tall. On the parapet of the 23rd floor of the 580 California Street building, San Francisco, by Philip Johnson, 1982. Photograph by Markus Spiering. Accessed via flickr. Attribution, NonCommercial, NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

fascinated. *Architetti* often charged us Figures with communicating a message. Yet, even when We worked with such an *Architetti* – for instance, Cavaliere Bernini – we would also be charged with creating scenes that would mesmerise those who encountered Us, with the knowledge that they would gaze upon Us, peer at Us, move around Us, possibly touch Us, and to consider they may return again and again to do the same in their habits of daily life. This way, they would discover not only more about us, but also more about the stories we helped to convey. *I Nani* in this instance are without any such intrigue, set against the spare surroundings, adjacent to an architectural setting that promises no further revelations upon further encounters.

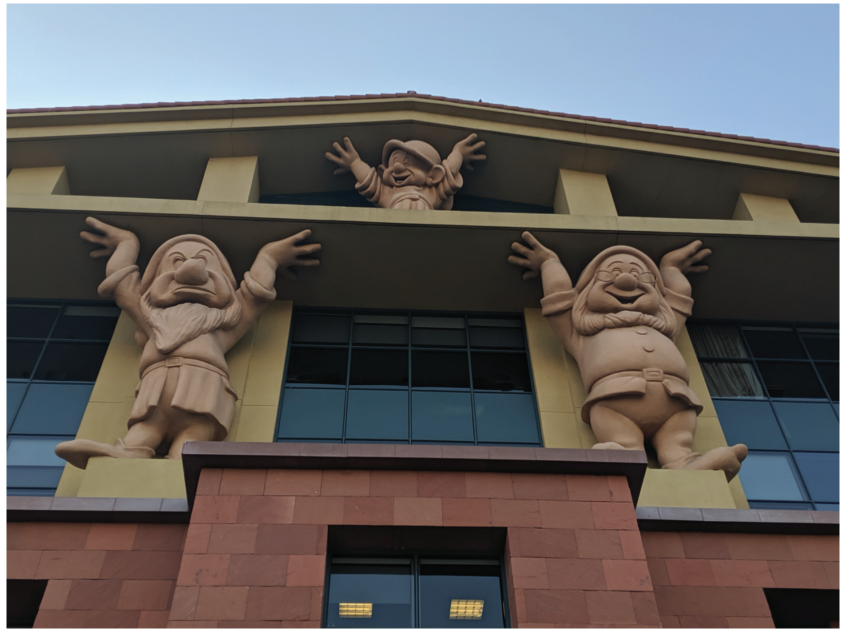
I see with *Postmodernismo* Figures made a return to Architettura. Yet, perhaps it is fortunate that this style's hold on *Architetti*'s attention was a brief one, as it appears to have reduced both *Architettura* and Figures into a semblance of their former selves.

And yet, in *i Nani*'s grotesque caricatures I see here, I also find inspiration. As much as I would contend *i Nani* lack nuance in their manifestation, I find myself drawn by their animate appearance, their theatrical expressiveness, their noses and bellies like balloons about to burst. Reader, they are truly

9.16 Fracesco Ulico, decorative sculpture at Villa Valmarana, 1765. Stone, approx. 1,200 mm high. The figures were said to have been placed throughout the villa's garden and then later moved atop the garden wall. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

9.16

9.17 Michael Graves Architects, Team Disney Building, Burbank, California, 1990–1. Photograph by Cory Doctorow. Wikimedia Commons, user, Tillman, Dwarves caryatids, Eisner Building Disney Studios.jpg.



9.17

hilarious and strange, and this encourages me as my own Body inflates, contorts and stretches, and as I find myself in my own absurd predicaments due to the whims of Signor Alessandro and the extreme capacities of *Il Regno*. Perhaps I should not be so quick to judge my old friends.

I fall to sleep, expecting Dreams of old friends and caricatured animation.

Buonanotte.

19 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXII 03:13

I abstain from my Study of the books tonight, dear Reader. I am quite exhausted from spending so many nights poring over them. So, I will conclude my Research for now. It has been quite dramatic to realise how much I missed over the past Century, and to see Figures that both terrify me and that, given my new form, I also relate to. The geometricised, Machine-Humans are now my predecessors, and as much as I would like to think of myself as different and better, I am much like them in my incarnation in *il Regno*.

I have learned from the Books that Figures' geometricisation during *la Modernità*, which is so pervasive and Form altering to transform these unfortunate Figures sometimes nearly beyond recognition, is called Abstraction. I gather that these Figures were evoked at a time dominated by truly Mechanical machines, and Abstraction is linked to this condition. (Learning the word 'Abstraction' finally gives me a word that is not an oath to describe the characteristics of the work attributed to that engineer Signor Brunelleschi, as repetitive, unadorned surfaces comprise the majority of this work. I did appear in quite a prominent Role on the facade of *il Spedale degli Innocenti*, posed in relief on a terracotta Roundel as *un poveretti*, overlooking the piazza and with a view of the Duomo, but this was thanks to Signor della Robbia . . . Ah, I digress, Reader, *mi dispiace*.)[60]

In my present incarnation, I am Abstracted, but in *il Regno*, the mechanism that facilitates my Abstraction is a product of Digital, rather than primarily Mechanical machines, and I suspect that this makes a significant difference in the degree and type of Abstraction I am subjected to by Signor Alessandro. Perhaps the granular accumulation of tiny gradations of Bits and Bytes, rather than the increments of gaping analogue teeth of mechanical Gears, will help to prevent me from being reduced to a vacuous Puppet or an unconscious Commoner or flattened altogether, although I do sense that Signor Alessandro does not wish that Fate upon me.

I anticipate from my weariness at this hour that I will sleep much past dawn. However, in the last few days, Signor Alessandro's quill scribbles and his Mouse clicks with more frequency than during the lull of the summer season. So, I will likely be summoned for my Labours earlier than I would prefer.

Buonanotte.

Notes

1. Latin translation = 'New World', i.e. the Americas.
2. Spanish translation = 'New Spain', i.e. Mexico.
3. The *retablos* P_1435 refers to are elaborate decorative altarpieces found in Mexican baroque churches, combining sculptural and architectural elements, and which take on the characteristic of interior facades.
4. Here, P_1435 refers to the introduction of figures taken from indigenous traditions and myth, as well as the alteration of European ornamental typologies to reflect local customs and narratives. A phenomenon not limited to Mexican architecture, this intentional co-option had political implications. Ángel Guido notes an example of indigenous physiognomy in caryatids (*indiátide*) designed by José Kondori at the Church of San Lorenzo in Potosí Boliva (1728–44) as 'symbols of – and rebellion against – colonial oppression'. Editor's note in Guido, 'America's relation to Europe in the arts', 187.
5. Spanish translation = 'chestnut'.
6. Maxine Compeon cites numerous instances where the physiognomy of the ornamental cherubs in *Tequitqui* church architecture reflect an 'indigenous physiognomy', reflecting not only pre-Hispanic features but also regional traits. Compean, 'Exploring Mexican hybrid baroque', 39, 55.

7. Spanish translation = 'My eyes were blinded!'
8. P_1435's observation in the narrative follows architectural photographer Ichiro Ono: 'While Europe's baroque style pursues dramatic spatial structure in three-dimensional depth, Mexican ultra-baroque pursues the supremacy of two-dimensional ornamentation to completely fill the overall surface'. Ono, 'From baroque to ultra-baroque', 84.
9. P_1435 refers to the Tomb of Pope Alexander VII in the Basilica of St Peters in Rome discussed in Chapter 7.
10. Italian translation = 'Catholic gravity'.
11. P_1435 refers here to early Enlightenment architect Claude Perrault. Perrault had exposed the inconsistency of the orders, initiating questions regarding the legitimacy of the classical basis for ornament and a strong anthropomorphic presence in architecture along with it. Levit credits Perrault's observations as a key contributor to the growing aversion to ornament in architecture of the time. Levit, 'Contemporary ornament', 71.
12. P_1435 claims to be the *spiritelli* in the foreground of Charles-Dominque-Joseph Eisen's frontispiece for Marc-Antoine Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture* of 1755.
13. P_1435 refers here to eighteenth-century French architect Jacques-François Blondel's 'Cours d'architecture', Volume 3, 1772, discussed by Kaufmann. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 439.
14. P_1435 refers here to Blondel's 'Cours d'architecture', Volume 1, 1771, discussed by Emil Kaufmann. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 439.
15. P_1435 refers here to Blondel's 'Cours d'architecture', Volume 4, 1773, discussed by Kaufmann. In this later volume, Blondel argued that there should be a kinship between architecture and body, going so far as including Di Giorgio-esque diagrams of human profiles overlaid atop cornice designs to regulate their proportions in his treatise, but also as P_1435's narrative points out, condemned the use of caryatids. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 439.
16. P_1435's narrative here is based on Kaufmann's description of the polemic shift in subsequent volumes of Blondel's 'Cours d'architecture'. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 439. P_1435 arguably overlooks other pivotal influence in the form of treatises in the emergence of French rationalism, particularly the writing and teaching of J.N.L. Durand, who, in his pursuit of scientific architecture, 'ridiculed the traditional concept of the column as the body of man, pointing out that it was nothing more than a cylinder of matter'. Pérez-Gómez. 'Architecture as drawing', 7.
17. P_1435 refers here to Etienne-Luis Boullée's 1784 drawings for the speculative project Cenotaph for Newton.
18. As Kaufmann has described, the gathering scepticism regarding ornament influenced Étienne-Louis Boullée, who, instead of integrating figures as ornament, sought to impart individual character into buildings through the invention of an 'elemental language' that presciently prefigured modern twentieth century designs in 'monumentality' and 'plainness'. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 437.
19. P_1435 refers to Austrian architect Otto Wagner 1841–1918, known as a leader of the Viennese Secession movement.
20. Kaufmann, 'Three revolutionary architects', 439, 440.
21. Italian translation = 'alcohol coma'.
22. Italian translation = 'habit of enjoying drink'.
23. In this excerpt, P_1435 refers to Austrian architect Adolf Loos's essay 'Ornament and crime', published in 1908.
24. Latin translation = 'mass for the dead'. Ignatio Donati was an Italian composer of the early baroque era.
25. P_1435 refers to the depicted figures in Giovanni Battista Braccelli's 1642 collection of plates.
26. P_1435 refers to the Bauhaus. P_1435's recognition of historical precedents unwittingly refutes the novelty of the collective project of what Bauhaus director and architect Walter Gropius referred to as envisioning a 'new human' at the pre–World War I Bauhaus, a project to which Schlemmer's costume designs contributed. Kostof, Forward to *Architect's People*, xiv.
27. P_1435's ambivalence towards these figures – where he at once finds them familiar and repellently strange – is a response to images of uncanny machinic bodies, at once playful and haunting. Juliet Koss considers Schlemmer's figures as post-humanist, in part due to their apparent mechanisation, their abstract forms

and what she sees as their lack of individuality. 'Simultaneously spontaneous and mechanized, playful and unsettling, their forms increasingly abstract, Bauhaus dolls of this period likewise pass for posthumanist'. Koss, 'Bauhaus theater of human dolls', 730. Through conceiving of people as machines and architecture itself as a series of abstract machine-produced forms, this early post-human condition signalled a decisive departure from the notion passed along from Renaissance humanism where, as K. Michael Hays puts it, 'the role of the subject vis-a-vis the object has been that of an originating agent of meaning, unique, centralized, and authoritative'. Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject*, 5.

28. P_1435 refers to philosopher Renee Descartes who likened the body to a machine. Even before architects began to search for a figure-less rationalism in the eighteenth century, the Cartesian notion of a mind–body split, where the mind had primacy and the body was secondary, laid the groundwork for a radical reconsideration of the body previously enshrined in a humanist world view. This premise disrupted assumed notions of the body as a stable source of existential knowledge, and also discredited the senses' role in situating the subject. As Dalia Judovitz writes, 'the advent of Cartesian subjectivity [led] to the exclusion of the body from the purview of metaphysics, and to its reduction to a notion of materiality, whose logic is governed by the regime of the machine'. Judovitz, *The Culture of the Body*, 4.
29. P_1435 refers here to *Bauentwurfslehre* by Ernst Neufert, the influential architectural handbook first published in 1936, which extended industrial standardisation into the realm of the body image and architecture by demonstrating a design method incorporating standardised users in prescriptive poses. As Cupers points out, Neufert's drawings had a significant impact on mainstream practice and on the conception of the user. Cupers, *Use Matters*, 5.
30. Here, P_1435 refers to ancient Greek metrological reliefs. His contention that the reliefs depict the same figure as the Vitruvian Man follows Toby Lester's careful tracing of a lineage of depictions of idealised figures starting from the metrological reliefs and culminating in Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. Lester, *Da Vinci's Ghost*. An example of a metrological relief from the fifth century BCE can be seen at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
31. Italian translation = 'an automaton'.
32. P_1435's observation on the figures apparent dedication to carrying out tasks without deviation follows from Paul Emmons and Andree Mihalache study of figures in architectural handbooks of the era. Anonymous depictions of users were key contributors to architecture's role in ultimately constructing 'standardized modes of experience'. Emmons and Mihalache, 'Architectural handbooks and the user experience', 35.
33. Italian translation = 'the first crowing of the rooster'.
34. The building P_1435 describes as *aedicula*, or a diminutive ancient Roman temple, is in fact Le Corbusier's Cabanon completed in 1951. The book that P_1435 refers to is Filippo, *Le Corbusier*. The detail drawings with the ghostly sketched figures are on pages 90 and 91, catalogue numbers 24337 and 24340. Page 90 on Filippo's book is visible on the upper left-hand side of figure 9.5.
35. The 'commoner' P_1435 refers to is first mentioned in his narrative in Chapter 6. The figure is what Brothers describes as the first known instance of the depiction of a 'user' in a design sketch by Michelangelo for the reading lecterns and pews of the Laurentian Library reading room. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, 190. With reference to a red-chalk-and-pen drawing by Michelangelo, 16 cm × 20.1 cm. Casa Buonarroti, Florence, inv. 94ar (Corpus 558r).
36. Italian translation = 'characters'.
37. In the narrative, P_1435 has discovered *The Modulor* and *The Modulor 2* by Le Corbusier, first published in 1948 and 1955, respectively.
38. Italian translation = 'foreshortening'.
39. P_1435 insinuates here that the Modulor figure was not used rigorously to enable the system of measure Le Corbusier had in mind. The Modulor was intended to operate in two modes: procedurally, through the application of measurements as in Le Corbusier's design of the Unite buildings, and as an emblematic idea, an intention evident in the propagation of Le Corbusier's telling of the story of the figure's justification, genesis and cultural impact through the publications *The Modulor* and *The Modulor 2*. The two modes, the propagation of the Modulor as an idea of 'a way of life' and the Modulor as an applicable measurement system, were interconnected. Christopher Hight notes that the Modulor also goes one step further as a projective device: the measure is designed to extend outward from the body, further instrumentalising the technology of the figure as what Hight calls a 'mediated anthropogenic machine'. Hight, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Cybernetics*, 180.
40. P_1435 refers to a passage by Catherine Ingraham, who writes that the Vitruvian Man 'appears first not as a body per se but as a "way of life", an in-scribed life-motion of the human figure itself that is present in certain architectural narratives'. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human*, 47.
41. As the text in *The Modulor 2* by Le Corbusier relates, when a female Modulor was drawn by an assistant in the atelier, Le Corbusier dismissed it outright. Le Corbusier, *The Modulor 2*, 52.
42. P_1435 refers to figures depicted in the Purist style.
43. Latin colloquial translation = 'Roman concrete', i.e., the mixture of rubble and quick lime and water in the interior of a typical ancient Roman wall.
44. Italian translation = 'some Architects'.
45. P_1435 finds a monumental quality in these figures, likening their flesh to the concrete he observes in modernist buildings.
46. The 'surfacing' of anthropomorphic forms referred to here, which occurs during the design process, is akin to the metaphoric operativity of the figures discussed with reference to Frascari in Chapter 2. Charles Jencks has argued that the 'rounded V-forms and broken ellipses' of Le Corbusier's sketched female figures appear in Le Corbusier's designs, particularly his city plans but also at Ronchamp and the Carpenter Center. Jencks, *Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture*, 103. Cohen and Ahrenberg recognise formal similarities between Le Corbusier's sketched nudes and his Plan Obus for Algiers. Cohen and Ahrenberg, *Le Corbusier's Secret Laboratory*, 195.
47. Portrayals of female bodies are numerous in Le Corbusier's work in the form of painted and sketched nudes. Yet, the case of the female Modulor shows that for Le Corbusier, the female form could be an object of beauty, a source of carnal desire, but not the measure of architecture. In the instrumentalisation of the figure, the subjectivity of the supposed universal figure (with the Modulor again joining Neufert's emblematic figure and the Vitruvian Man) is based on that of an idealised white, European, able-bodied, adult male. 'Have you ever noticed that in English detective novels, the good-looking men, such as the policemen, are always six feet tall? We tried to apply this standard'. Le Corbusier, *The Modulor*, 56.
48. Le Corbusier's mythical figures which P_1435 refers to here in some ways are indicative of a larger trend in Europe post–World War II – namely, the 'humanization of architecture' (as Alvar Aalto had already put it in 1940). Aalto, 'The humanizing of architecture', 14–16. In this respect, the mythical figures are an attempt to situate architecture and humans in a far-reaching, poetic cosmogony.
49. Italian translations = 'in the round'.
50. P_1435 refers to instances where the Modulor's silhouette is cast in relief into the béton brut style concrete used in the *Unité* buildings.
51. The drawing which P_1435 refers to is the Section for Strasbourg Housing Building drawing by Atelier Le Corbusier from 1951.
52. P_1435 refers here to Michelangelo's sketch for the Laurentian Library which includes a drawing of a user; see endnote 35 above, and description in Chapter 6.
53. Some of the architectural drawings that P_1435 refers to are attributed to Le Corbusier's assistants.
54. The figure which captivates P_1435 in the section drawing, cleft by a shadow, is reminiscent of a bifurcated sun in Le Corbusier's sketch Self-Portrait as Apollo and Dionysus. The child may just be emerging from the room after a nap, but a contour image beyond the boy suggests a view to the landscape, suggesting that he is arriving from one of the mythical landscapes such as those shown in the *Poéme*. Read this way, the image of the boy is a rare instance where a mythical figure inhabits a design drawing (rather than a drawing that informs overarching design ideas such as the illustrations accompanying the *Poéme*).
55. Here, P_1435 refers to 580 Commercial Street, San Francisco, designed by Philip Johnson ca. 1983. Pleurants are representations of mourners appearing in some tomb designs of the late Middle Ages primarily in Western Europe.
56. Italian translation = 'the pediment'.
57. Here, P_1435 refers to the Michael D. Eisner building in Burbank, California, designed by Michael Graves ca. 1990.
58. Here, P_1435 refers to the Villa Valmaran ai Nani, a seventeenth-century villa near the Villa Rotunda in Vicenza. The Italian translation of *i*

Nani is 'the Dwarves'. The villa is known for its statues of the dwarves which, as P_1435 notes, were arranged in the garden as part of a coherent iconographical programme but have been subsequently moved to the parapet of the wall of the garden with their backs to it. Jagiello-Kolaczyk, 'Dwarfs and other curiosities in the European gardens', 30.

59. P_1435's observation on the 'arrival' of the figures in the design process holds some merit. Earlier sketch elevations by Graves of the front facade did not at first show the dwarves, but later versions show that the clerestory was heightened at the same time they appear. Dunlop, *Building a Dream*, 85.

60. P_1435 refers to the *Ospedale degli Innocenti* (or Hospital of the Innocents) in Florence designed by Filippo Brunelleschi ca. 1419. Brunelleschi originally planned for the roundels on the facade to remain blank, but later in the fifteenth century, the brief for decorative *poveretti* (literally 'poor things' or orphaned infants) to augment the roundels was given to the Sculptor Andrea della Robbia.

Chapter 10

Memories of Awakening in St Martin and a Fortuitous Meeting

A collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435, in which Torso_2.0 writes in the journal to explain his encounter with P_1435, and describes his original body and home, his prosthetic limbs and the beginning of his transformation into Torso_2.0.

24 Ottobre Anno Domini MMXIII 20:11

After the time that I went into my self-imposed exile, after many years of sitting by myself, where I was inebriated, unconscious, in a stupor or some vile combination of the three, in the dark Attic stories of San Pietro, I fell into a hibernation of sorts. It is odd that I awoke again after so many years in Austria. My repose was broken by stirrings generated by frenetic scrawling on paper, followed by a patient clarification through further laborious markings.[1]

When I came to in *San Martino*, I found myself utterly confused. My classical roots had outwardly changed. I looked down at my frame – and make no mistake, I mean frame. My carapace was made from a wicker lattice rather than the solid stone or stucco I was so accustomed to! Gradually, this was filled with an earthen clay, and my awareness of my surroundings came into focus as my Body gained a reassuring solidity.

It seemed that there was no Bacchanalia to be had in the new place to which I was summoned. Looking around me to take my bearings, I saw only modest dwellings in a bucolic landscape. As my senses awakened and I garnered information from my surroundings, I began to fear I was in a setting much too stoic for my tastes. This is when I met Torso_2.0. Well, then I knew him simply as Torso. Ah, well I will hand the iPhone over to him and let him explain.

[Torso_2.0 typing]

I am Torso_2.0. I was originally constructed from the branches in the grove; the branches are at my core. They are my support, physically, and at the centre of where I came from, the starting point of my very identity and my belonging.

The vascular tissues of the tree – its moisture, its arrested circadian growth – are deeply a part of me.

The branches are one reason why, I would say, my connection to Sankt Martin an der Raab is visceral.

How can I explain this feeling to you? The branches which are my bones account for the inexplicable connection and desire, the feeling of belonging intensely to something that existed outside of me. This is how I feel about the grove. I loved my house – after all, it was made just for me, and it was where I belonged. But I lived in my home with an awareness that the deep structure inside of me came from outside of this raum, *and it too is both a part of me and an extension of my home.*

Let me explain a bit more about my origins and why the branches are so important to who I am. As his drawings recount, Herr Pichler began the process of constructing me after noticing a felled tree in the grove; the trunk, toppled and splayed across a small valley, had a branch springing forth from it. Whilst the branch had previously made a path parallel with the earth, the trauma inflicted on the tree resulted in the branch being oriented perpendicularly to the ground, making the vertical member of an upside down 'T'. Some have said that such uprightedness is a signal of the presence of man, who stands upright and proud on the horizon.[2] I cannot pretend to know everything that my creator thinks. I know that he was aware of such an idea, and that in fact some purport this idea to be a universal archetype. To tell you the truth, this strikes me as an overly heroic concept for Herr Pichler to subscribe to. But nevertheless, he noticed this fragment of nature, accidentally disrupted to form man's image, as nothing less than my zygote.

So, you see, my physical composition is very much a part of who I am; it is who I am. The branches are my bones, but that is not all that connected me innately to Sankt Martin. A veil of sculpted matsch,[3] also collected from the grove, covered my deciduous core, reinforcing my material connection to the location. Although it is an outer layer between my 'bones' and the atmosphere, I don't think describing it as skin would suffice; you could say that the mud is more like fleisch[4] – fleisch because it is organic (both in the physical sense – fashioned from natural materials – and in the expressive sense – in its gentle curvatures). My structure is laid bare because I am an amputee, so to speak. Cross-sections at my shoulders and knees display my inner vascular structure and the successive layers of clay applied to it.

As of yet, I have only described the parts of me that come from the terrestrial environment of Sankt Martin an der Raab, but I am very proud of my breastplate and my crown, which do not. These are fashioned from cast bronze, designed of course by Herr Pichler at Sankt Martin but fabricated elsewhere. Herr Pichler was interested in what he saw as the inevitable merging of man and machine. From what I understand in his early days in Wien, he and his colleagues were busy experimenting with new materials and technologies, imagining the human figure as embedded and extended in inflatable plastic bubbles, plastic helmets and technological appendages of all sorts. My bronze components – my crown, my breastplate and my groin – are elegant versions of these ersatz appendages.

When I was at Sankt Martin an der Raab, I used to rest on a stucco plinth. Inscribed (or, properly speaking, cast) onto this bench was an indentation – a slot of sorts, running from midway in the bench's width, bisecting its length and revealing its 20 cm × 10 cm indentation profile from the front. This was part of my support system – a fin attached to my underside fits into the slot and keeps me upright. The 'slice' in my plinth bisects my own body and terminates at my gilt bronze penis.

My plinth and its trough are part of my home. This structure was the first of Herr Pichler's building designs, made for myself and the Schädeldecken[5] by the local craftspeople who worked with him regularly throughout the years. If you were to visit me there, you would make your way towards this humble structure, ascending the gentle slope behind the workshop. The day would likely be sunny and bright, and the gentle Bergenland breeze would rustle the leaves on the tree behind the small structure. When you would swing open the door, the late afternoon sunlight would cast directly onto me. Yes, you would be immediately face to face with me, as I sit on the east wall facing the workshop. Looking at me, you would immediately see the exposed cross-section of my legs facing you: the vascular structure, with one large branch at the centre and then lots of smaller branches encircling the branch, all sanded down to a smooth sheen. Entering the space, you would step down ever so slightly. The narrow apertures in the corners would capture views of the rustling leaves and let in their gentle sounds. Overhead, the exposed wood joist with mortise and tenon joinery support clay roof tiles. We figures do not need insulation; we need only a roof to keep us dry. If Herr Pichler was giving a tour, as he sometimes did, he would show you the Schädeldecken, who sit to my left. On their bronze convex surfaces, they reflect the entire interior of the room; they would reflect your image too, curved in a fish-eye view, a figure standing amidst other figures.

And you may have seen my other roommate, although he left home every so often.[6] The Watcher would be in the corner, and when he is not home, one can see his 'footprints' where he was typically mounted to the concrete floor. Herr Pichler would likely have explained, as I have heard many times, that the Watcher normally keeps an eye on us. If you asked about the diminutive door on the northern wall, which seems strange, since it breaks the symmetry of the careful and deliberately composed structure, he would gesture to us and say 'it's for them'. More accurately, he should say 'it's for him', and by that he should mean my roommate. The Watcher's hyperactivity ensures that he only stands idly by on rare occasions. The Watcher was a new addition to our domicile. I've been here since 1981, and the Watcher came to live here in 2000. The Movable Figure and I were intrigued as we saw Herr Pichler create the Watcher. His story of origins is not dissimilar to mine, founded on serendipitous appropriation of naturally occurring verdant structure. Herr Pichler's earliest drawings depict branches sprouting from the ground. These branches intertwine and coalesce as bundles of vascular skeletal structure, making their way up the legs, all the way up to the head.

The Watcher and I are, of course, quite similar in that branches make for our inner structure. But I remember watching as Herr Pichler went about constructing the Watcher, and I immediately noticed that we had even more in common. Herr Pichler's expertise in the construction method that he first used when constructing me was developed further in the Watcher. The structure became more distributed, the branches altered to form a more precise weaving through the entire body of the Watcher. Clay sculpted on the outside forms the Watcher's fleisch, just like me. We even have similar rib-like breastplates that support our chests. There are a few differences though, and these differences are quite profound. The first massive difference between the Watcher and me is that he has legs! As I tell you about what occurred between us over our years at Sankt Martin, you will understand why this gift of mobility was certainly of paramount importance. Indeed, there are other figures at Sankt Martin who are endowed with this precious gift of mobility, not least my good friend the Movable Figure. But there is something else about the Watcher that makes his mobility something significant, and that is his high energy level. Unlike my friend the Movable Figure, who enjoys his attributes of flexible joints and exercises them often but moves very slowly, curling and uncurling his fingers and walking robotically forward and backward, the Watcher bounces off of the walls. He was tirelessly peripatetic, often taking advantage of the door that Herr Pichler designed in the house for him, flinging it open and leaving it that way as the trailing echo of his excited footsteps quickly fade into the rustling branches of the night, leaving the skullcaps and me sitting here – often thankfully in peace, but also wondering what adventures our small friend might be up to that evening, and when our imaginations begin to fill in the plot to the story that may very well be taking place, yes, we are left jealous and left wishing for feet and legs.

Certainly, such a habit of up and leaving seemed strange, or at least I certainly thought so when I first saw him do it. The first night he was in the house, we sat silently for a bit, but then the Watcher began to fidget and play with the skullcaps, trying them on and generally causing disorder in our previously serene domicile. In an effort to stop him from his antics, I attempted to divert him with conversation. This is when he first told me of his memories of the Renaissance. This was a very odd thing for me to hear of at the time – the Renaissance? We – the Movable Figure and the others – knew a bit about this time, as we inhabited an environment infused with arts and *culture (in fact, we were literally part of a cultured environment!), but we thought it a time of naïve idealism, literalism, tacky ornamentation and the like.*

But the Watcher thought differently, and on this, he recounted to me his memories occurring before our time in Sankt Martin. All I could remember of my origins was my time in the forest and emergence from it, and while the Watcher did not dispute those origins for myself or himself, he claimed to have emerged as different figures at a different times. He said things that at the time seemed preposterous to me. He claimed to have flown through the upper reaches of the domes of grand churches in Italy with cherubs, and to have been a sort of angel himself in a past life. He said he wished Herr Pichler had fashioned him with wings so that he could fly about our domicile, thinking himself more at home in the rafters of the roof than bound to the floor! The Watcher climbed about in the rafters, finally finding a suitable perch and staring up at the terracotta ceiling, and unleashing a deluge of impressionistic memories, as if in a fugue state.

He spoke of Michelangelo and Bernini, and many others. He spoke of his previous companions, whom he would enjoy Bacchanalia with; he spoke of the Tuscan town churches he had adorned – pulpits, friezes, pediments, mouldings. And then, he began to speak of a particular project that was clearly an obsession: Michelangelo's Kapelle *in* Florenz. *He spoke very excitedly then, and I also began to find my soul stirred. He spoke of the figures there and his previous experience with Michelangelo in which he had been near to the* Ignudi. *When I heard him describe the* Ignudi, *something in me was kindled – a feeling much like what I described to you in the profound tug in my gut that I experience if I consider the forest from which I emerged. It was and has become an even more intense pull of belonging, but strangely not for a place but for a way of being a figure, endowed with motion!*

But suddenly, the Watcher leapt down and insisted he find vino santo, *and with that, he sprung out of his door and off into the night.*

Ha, I can see that my friend who has a new guise has now fallen asleep, as I have typed for so long. I will now go to sleep as well.

Gute Nacht, Leser.

Notes

1. P_1435 is describing being 'conjured' in Walter Pichler's studio in St Martin, Austria.
2. Torso_2.0 refers to Le Corbusier's idea of archetypal, upright man described in section A.3 *Milieu* of Le Corbusier's *Le Poéme de l'Angle Droit*.
3. German translation = 'mud'.
4. German translation = 'flesh'.
5. German translation = 'skullcaps'.
6. Torso_2.0 refers here to the fact that occasionally the Watcher would be removed in order to be installed in exhibitions elsewhere.

Chapter 11

Landscapes, Doubles and Cyborgs

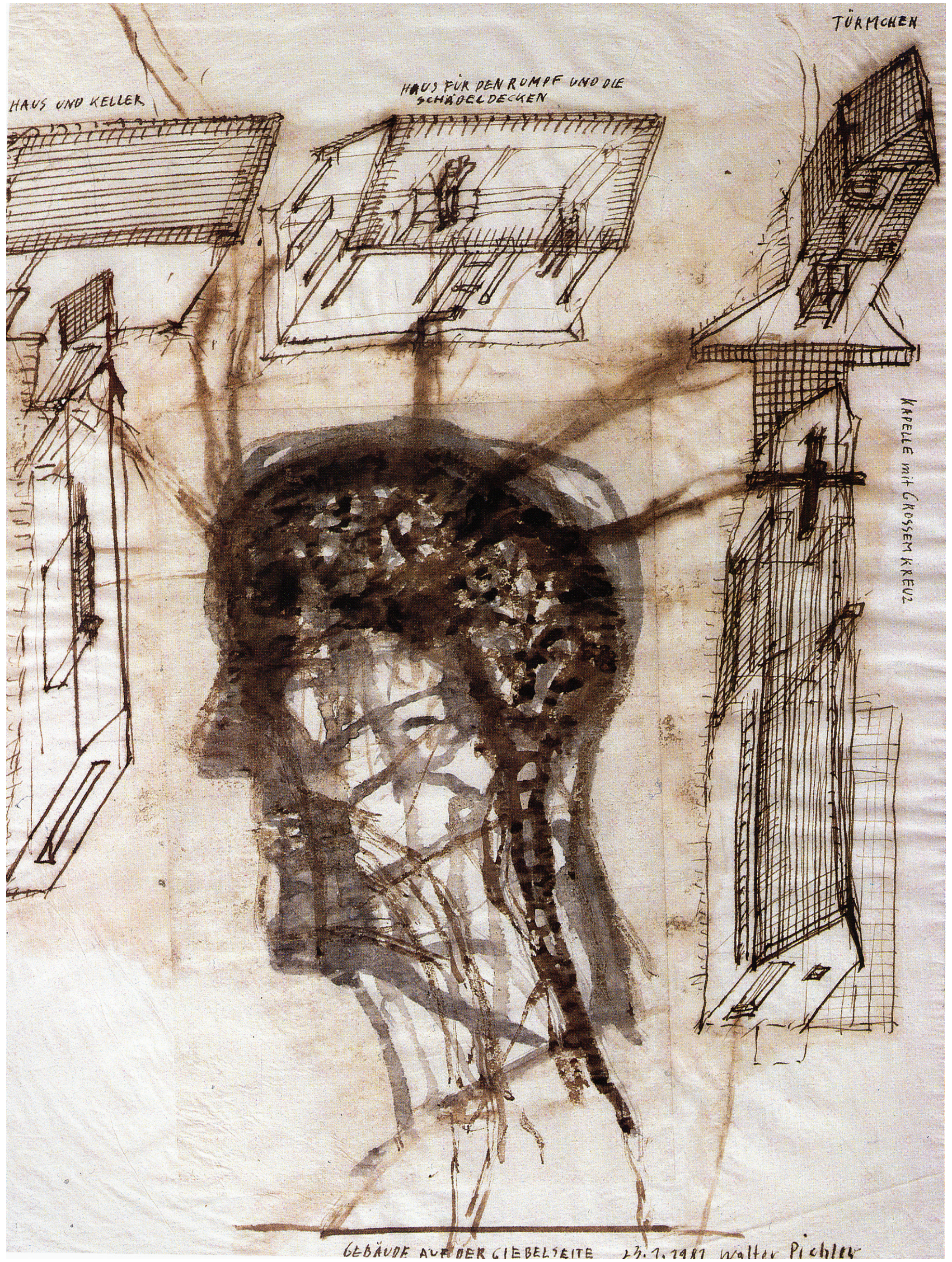
Walter Pichler's Figures at St Martin

A dialogue in which Alessandro Ayuso describes and analyses figures in the work of Walter Pichler through an exposition of drawings and a focus on several of Pichler's built works, with remarks from Torso_2.0.

Introduction

Austrian artist Walter Pichler's early work in the 1960s and early 1970s – sculptures, drawings, collaborations and exhibitions as part of a young avant-garde movement in Vienna in the 1960s, with a cohort including architect Hans Hollein, members of Coop Himmel(b)lau and Haus-Rucker-Co – was prescient and unflinching in its exploration of the effects of the coming virtual-reality era. He presented visions where the bodies of spiritually alienated subjects interacted with the world through equipment and rituals that were antagonistically applied to the body. Looking to spur an alternative approach from his work of this period, Pichler acquired a former farmstead in St Martin an der Raab in Burgland, Austria, in 1972, as the location for a house and workshop, and this is where he spent much of the rest of his life. While his later work at St Martin is stylistically distinct and is often seen as a separate case (even by Pichler himself, who views the early work in retrospect as cynical), many of his early themes remained present.[1] St Martin was a place where Pichler 'owned (his) own time' to patiently construct alternative visions of the themes he developed earlier in his career in Vienna.[2] The complex was an ever-evolving *gesamtkunstwerk*, an incubator for fantastic figures which inhabit the shrine-like structures that he built there, a place removed from everyday existence while at the same time inexorably rooted to daily life and vernacular.[3]

Pichler's figures in his work at St Martin have an 'archaic' quality, but while they may appear apart from the contemporary themes he presciently tapped into during the 1960s, they offer commentary on modernism and techno-totalitarianism, and enact alternatives through his visions of finely grafted and spliced hybrid bodies.[4] The figures suggest a fragile but richly interconnected existence where prosthetics and technology permeate the body. This notion could be especially significant to contemporary design and ornament that seeks to relate to an evolving post-human subjectivity. Pichler connected this conception of the technologised body with landscape, place, psyche, myth, body and culture. His figures – X-rayed, blurred, doubled and laden with prosthetics – enact ontological themes where the technologically


TÜRMCHEN
HAUS UND KELLER
HAUS FÜR DEN RUMPF UND DIE SCHÄDELDECKEN
KAPELLE mit GROSSEM KREUZ
GEBÄUDE AUF DER GIEBELSEITE 23.1.1981 walter Pichler

11.1

11.1 Walter Pichler, Gebäude auf der Giebelseite. Ink on paper, 1981. © Estate Walter Pichler.

permeated subject is situated through the mediation of architecture and place.

House for the Torso, Part 1

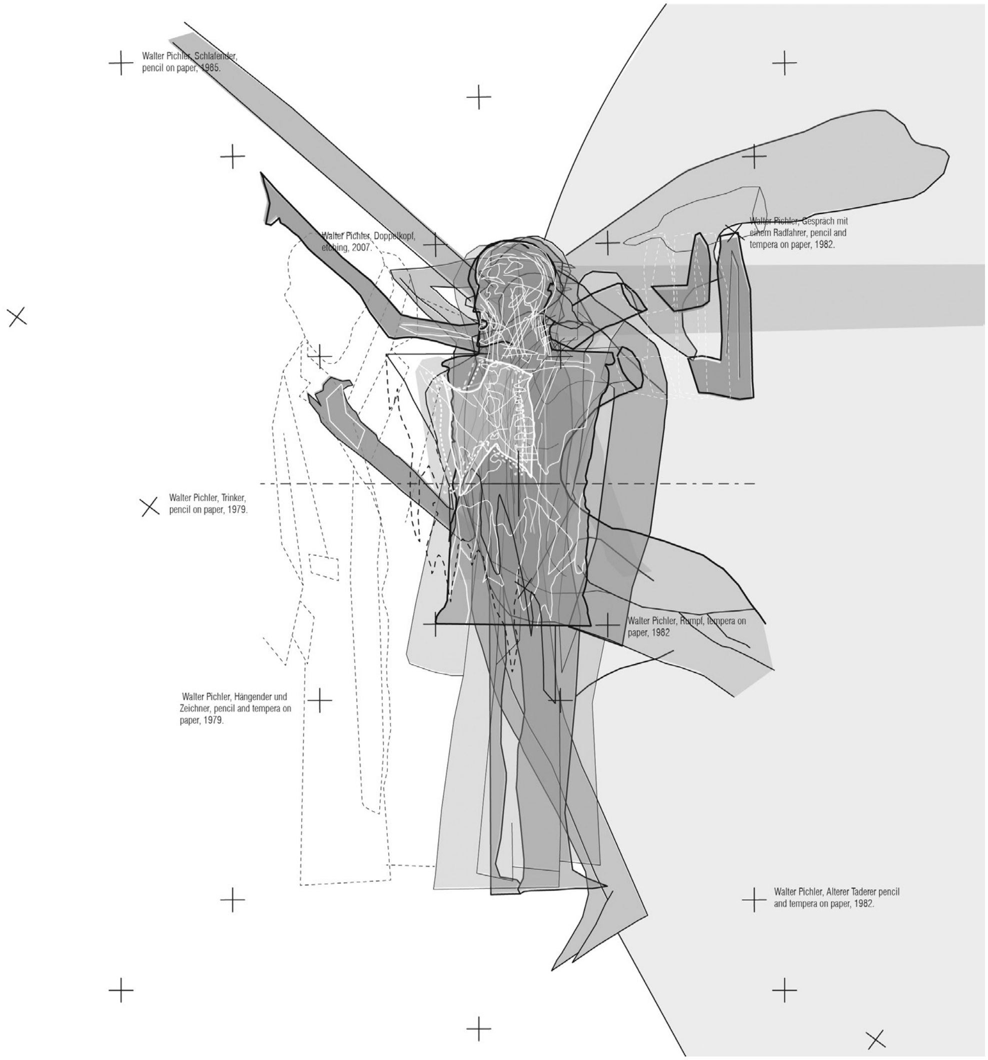
The House for the Torso was the first ancillary structure that Pichler constructed on the grounds of St Martin in 1981. As described in the narration of Torso_2.0 in the preceding excerpt, the House for the Torso was constructed using vernacular building methods, supported by a modest budget and a local team of craftspeople. Situated 30 metres behind the main workshop, atop a plateau on a gentle, verdant slope, the building, with stucco walls arranged in a rectangular plan supporting a clay-tiled roof, is so seemingly ordinary that it blends in with the modest houses and barns dotting the pastures surrounding the village. The inhabitants housed by the building are three sculpted ensembles that work inseparably with their architectural setting.

Herr Alessandro, you have already omitted much crucial information of Herr Pichler's background. Perhaps you can describe it more later. But you cannot describe my house without first describing how Herr Pichler drew – and thus thought of – our small citadel in the valley. This ritual was the generator of the ideas: thinking, dreaming and planning what to build the next day.[5] *And Herr Alessandro, as I gather you wish to discuss figures in drawings, this will certainly give you the opportunity to do so.*

Figure and Landscape in the St Martin Drawings

Pichler's design process at St Martin had a steady seasonal and diurnal rhythm. In the warm months of the year, as Torso_2.0 describes, Pichler would spend most evenings drawing, and most days constructing models, mock-ups, sculptures and buildings. Pichler engaged the physicality of the drawing media with zeal. In many of his design drawings, the ink, watercolour and gouache saturate and wrinkle the pages. Many of these images are hard-lined plans and sections in which details and measurements for constructions are precisely delineated. Yet, as Nicole Hackert notes, 'Already from the early 1970s, drawing liberated Pichler from his architectural and sculptural works, thus for 40 years his drawings have been more than just a by-product'.[6] Other drawings, with looser, more gestural strokes depict dream-like visions without the necessity of translation into sculpture or building. In many sketches, a proposed design and the oneiric vision overlap, depicting a realm where the numinous and the everyday coincide. For Pichler, drawing was a fundamental act of creating art. The continuity of drawing in his working process, as types of figures, landscapes and buildings were drawn again and again over many years, allowed not only for the generation of deeply subjective themes to emerge, but also for their crystallisation through an iterative process.[7]

The figures that Pichler included centrally in his drawings were described by architect Diane Lewis as 'post-war, post-Giacometti beings, a bit Neolithic, sometimes comic, always heroic'; the playful qualities offset their aggressively visceral and fleetingly fragile traits.[8] The qualities of the figures allow them to perform in particular ways across individual drawings. The drawings were not only expressive but also generative tools, helping Pichler to invent and cultivate ideas, and


Walter Pichler, Schlafender, pencil on paper, 1985.
Walter Pichler, Doppelkopf, etching, 2007.
Walter Pichler, Gespräch mit einem Radfahrer, pencil and tempera on paper, 1982.
Walter Pichler, Trinker, pencil on paper, 1979.
Walter Pichler, Rumpf, tempera on paper, 1982
Walter Pichler, Hängender und Zeichner, pencil and tempera on paper, 1979.
Walter Pichler, Alterer Taderer pencil and tempera on paper, 1982.

11.2

11.2 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram overlaying the drawings of Walter Pichler's figures discussed in this chapter. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

the recurring traits of the figures found in them aid in interjecting ontological themes across Pichler's entire body of work.

In Pichler's site drawings for St Martin, the body functions as a fluid agent addressing multiple scales, linking corporeality to landscape, psyche and praxis. The figures aid in defining a mythology of place that operates at three scales: the landscape, the city and the inhabitant.

Autobiographical figures

Many of Pichler's figures are arguably self-portraits or autobiographical. In the

plan drawing entitled Gebäude auf der Giebelseite (*Buildings on the Side of the Gable*) of 1981, a head with a profile similar to Pichler's own occupies the entire terrain of the secondary courtyard east of the main U-shaped living and workshop building (Figure 11.1). Tentacle-like paths emanate from the brain to the doorways of the shrines. The brain is emphasised in laboured, dark brush strokes. Its stem and medulla oblongata are painted in a similar manner, stretching further west and out of the frame, down a slope and towards the workshop and living quarters. One clear connotation of the drawing is that Pichler's own ideas are inexorably linked to the landscape and the shrines.

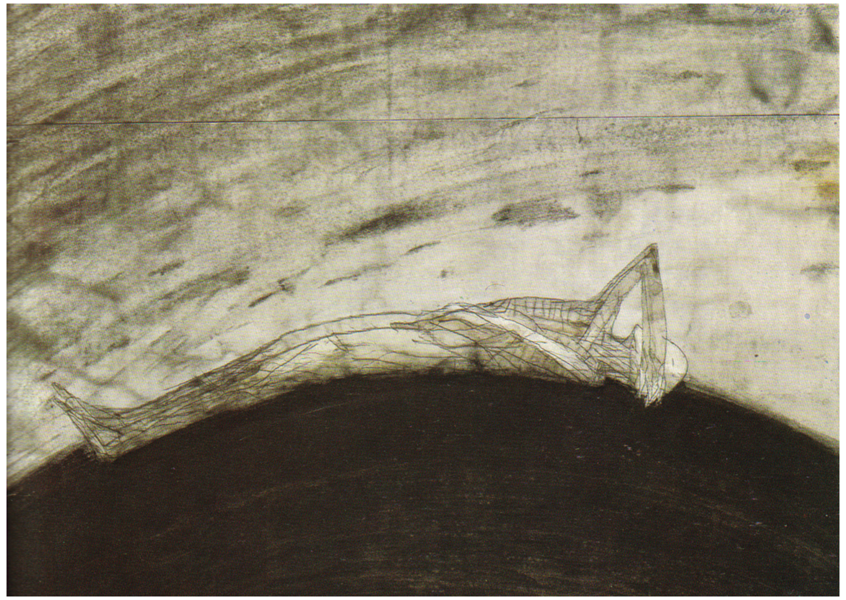
The drawings with colossal figures overlaid onto the grouping of structures in the landscape bring to mind Renaissance era diagrams, such as di Giorgio Martini's plan for an Ideal City. While di Giorgio Martini's diagram is explicit and ideal, and shows a city as a bound, complete entity, Pichler's diagram is suggestive and fluid. The body-city shown in Pichler's drawing is imperfect and asymmetrical, and blends with the landscape. Like appendages, the shrines extend from the head and torso of the metaphorical body, reaching out into the landscape, extending thoughts of the cerebral head and the life-sustaining activities in the U-shaped building.

Traces

Figures in Pichler's drawings often leave traces. In this case, they take the form of similar paths as those that link the brain and the shrines in the 1981 site plan. In the Buildings in St Martin site plan of 1978, and again in a more resolved version from a decade later, the same types of paths are present but in an even more elaborated form. There is a varied tonality and width to each one as they become darker and wider at certain points. At their edges and ends, the paths dissipate and merge with the ground, itself rendered in a wash of gouache, but at their most opaque, they are just as dark and defined as the very walls of the buildings on the grounds. It appears that Pichler's brush lingered where an inhabitant slept, worked or ate. Many of the paths represent traces of accumulated activities, movements and habits of daily life on the site. The site plan drawings commingle with the currents in the landscape and the traces of human life. The traces of figures appear as a concentrated density of the tracings and ebbs of the landscape, shaping the terrain in conjunction with the flows of water. This mythology of landscape is one where ground and the buildings coexist amongst a watery landscape where rivulets are left by occupation and dwelling.

Flows

There is a continuity of viscous flows emanating from the figures and through the landscape. The drawing Schlafender (Figure 11.3) of 1985 where the flesh of the figure and the ground appear to blur osmotically epitomises the commingling of fluid body and landscape that occurs. In a site plan made in 1983, a large head is shown in profile again, although this time even larger relative to the buildings, and at the bottom of the page, in this instance, south of the entire complex (Figure 11.4). Viscous



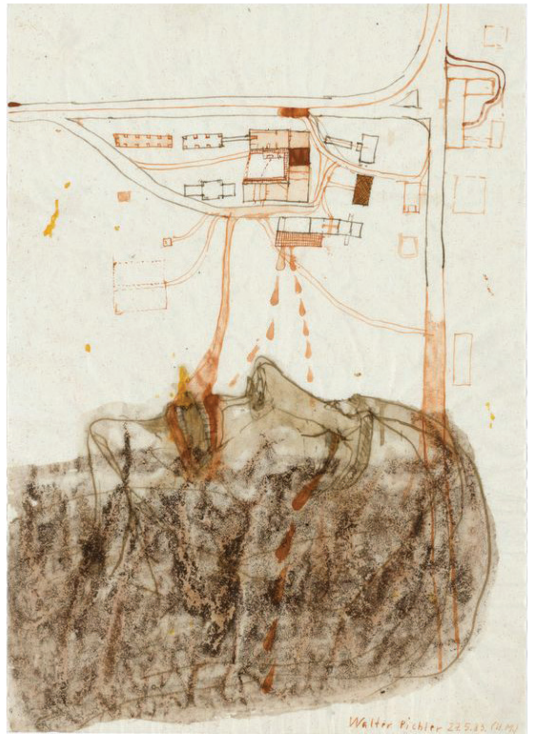
11.3

11.3 Walter Pichler, Schlafender. Pencil on paper, 1985. © Estate Walter Pichler.

red drops originating from the buildings on the site flow downwards into the figure's eyes and onto its lips; the fluids dripping from the buildings and roads meld with the red tears flowing from the figure's eyes. The direction of the droplets correlates with the topography and flow of naturally occurring water through the gentle valley in which the complex is situated. One of Pichler's first sculpture ornaments added to the existing farmhouse in 1975, Gutter, consisting of a bronze pan which gathers rainwater and is connected to a trough that bisects the workshop allowing a rivulet of water to drain through the interior, gave expression to the water flow in the valley.[9] A later work, House for the Two Troughs, was designed to collect rainwater and channel it sequentially into monolithic carved granite troughs before joining the terrain of the valley.

Auras

Directional auras are depicted emanating from the drawn figures. In many of Pichler's projects, the auras clearly form a connection between the body and the designed object in space. For instance, in the axonometric drawings Viewer of 1988 and Small Tower with Five Women of 1989, the visitor's sight is painted as a swath connecting the craning figure's eyes with the sculptures above. The drawing Houses for the Steles of 1987 shows a figure pointing towards the top of one of the bird sculptures, the same type of directional stream emanating this time from the index finger of the figure. The drawing Drie Vlakken of 1996 expands such an approach of depicting sensory input beyond only sight, and shows a reciprocity between the figure and the architecturally embedded sculpture.



11.4

11.4 Walter Pichler, untitled. Pencil, ink and tempera on paper, 1983. © Estate Walter Pichler.

The sheen of the planes is mirror like, and between the figure and the planes is thick ether made of horizontal strokes. At the level of the eyes, it is most opaque, but it connects the reflection and the body across the entire height of the figure.

The drawing Lageplan Eggental (Vall d'Ega site plan) of 2008 (Figure 11.5) describes a different geographical location but supports the mythology of the landscape that Pichler insinuates in his St Martin drawings. In the drawing Sie steigt Hinunter, as the maternal figure walks along the surface of the river that courses through Vall d'Ega, water appears channelled up through her body and projected from her forehead as a directional aura, achieving a blurring between path and body, a representation of cosmic mental concentration.

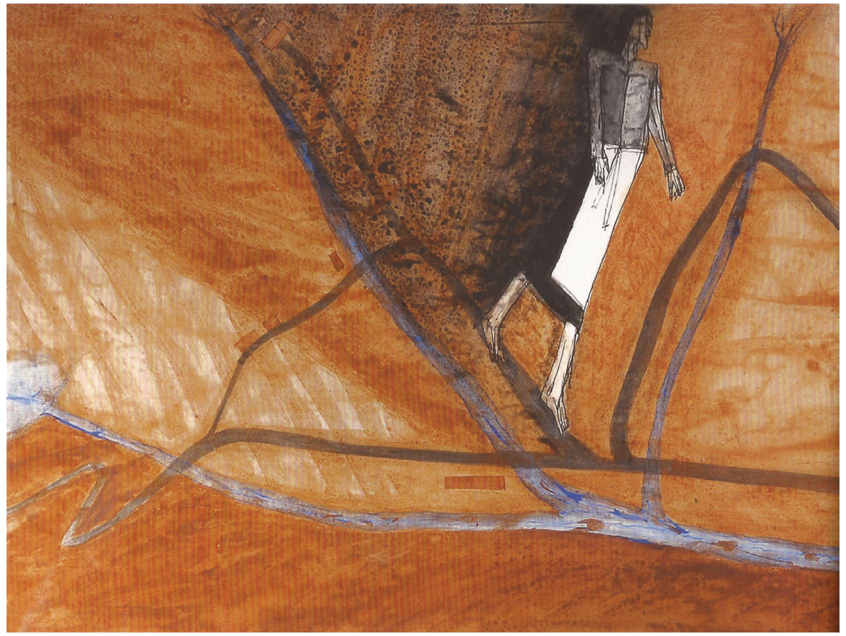
Returning to the 1983 site plan, another thematic connection can be made. Among Pichler's earlier series of Prototypes – designs for space-age prosthetics and architectural body equipment – was a piece called TV Helmet. It demonstrated his critique of technology most succinctly. Instead of apertures to view outside, the streamlined fiberglass helmet covering the user's entire head was equipped with a view to a TV screen mounted inside the helmet in the forced sight line of the wearer. The configuration of Pichler's helmet, with two large streamlined protrusions at the front and back, made for an oddly immobilising weight and counterweight. Pichler's prognosis for a paradigm for a coming era that would incorporate virtual reality was sardonic and grim yet uncannily prescient: the casing and the tethering of the body to a screen evokes today's ubiquitous mobile devices.

Adding this last thematic piece of the puzzle, the conceptualisation of the St Martin site is one where architecture is a grafted prosthetic on the body of the landscape. It is a landscape shaped by the indelible, commingling flows of water, traces of human life, and the projected psychic energy of inhabitants (Figure 11.6).

Yes, Herr Alessandro, fine. You may now proceed with your description of my home.

House for the Torso, Part 2 (Encountering the Building)

Making one's way up the slope from the workshop, a visitor would apprehend the

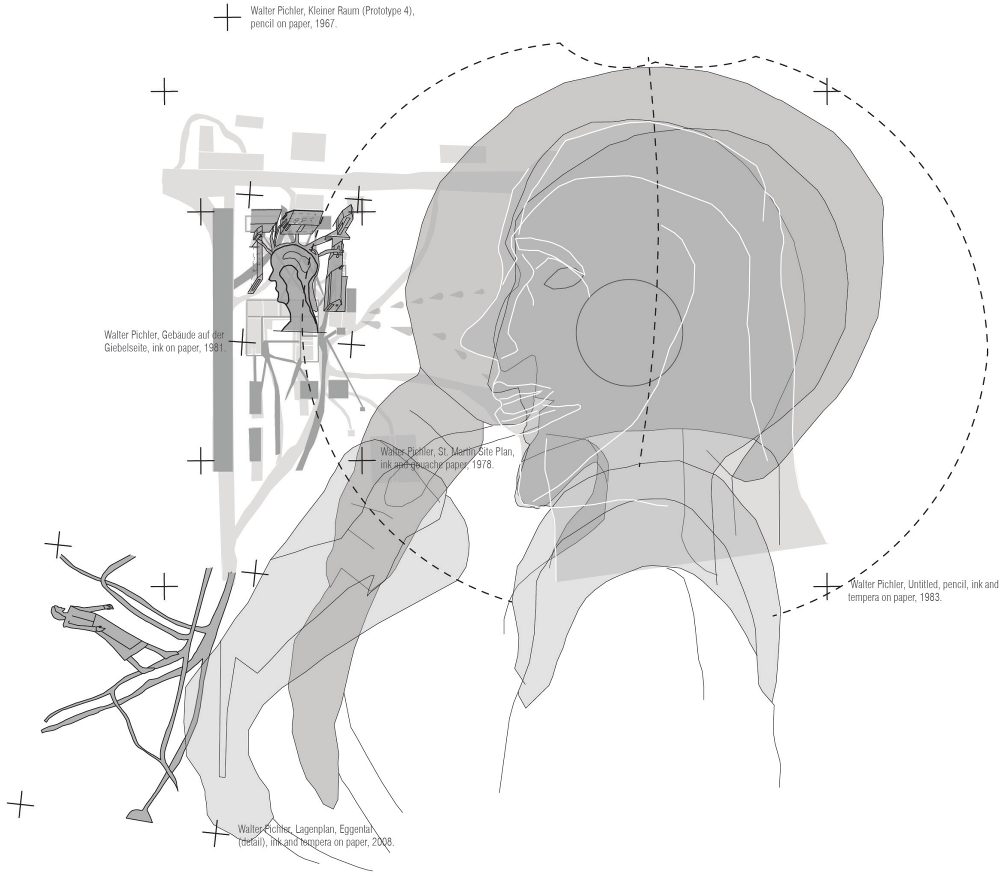


11.5

11.5 Walter Pichler, Lagenplan, Eggental (detail). Ink and tempera on paper, 2008. © Estate Walter Pichler.

building from the west, which displays a symmetrical facade punctuated by a central wooden door. Four identically shaped windows – one at each corner and two flanking the door – are the only apertures visible on this facade. Their proportions are tall and slender; they are clearly not for viewing into or for having a general view to the exterior. The windows' purposeful proportions are the first sign of intent beyond the everyday, a subtle announcement to the extraordinary world held within.

Entering through the central door, one passes into an interior that is removed yet *of* the landscape. The perception of the surrounding landscape is mostly separated entirely, but when it can be perceived, it is edited. The presence of the exterior context is selectively reduced, and the interior is emphasised primarily by the house's thick wall. From the interior, the slender windows selectively frame slivers of the surroundings. The windows on the east wall which one faces upon entering, identical to those on the west side, expose trees that are surprisingly close to the house – so close that only their outermost leaves and branches are visible, forming an abstract pattern. The windows allow the sound of the rustling foliage to echo gently through the space. The wall's subtle stepping, which makes for a ledge around the entire interior and extends to form a massive plinth, along with its revealed thickness that can be seen from the edges of the windows which are not glazed, creates a visual impression of having been carved out from the inside.

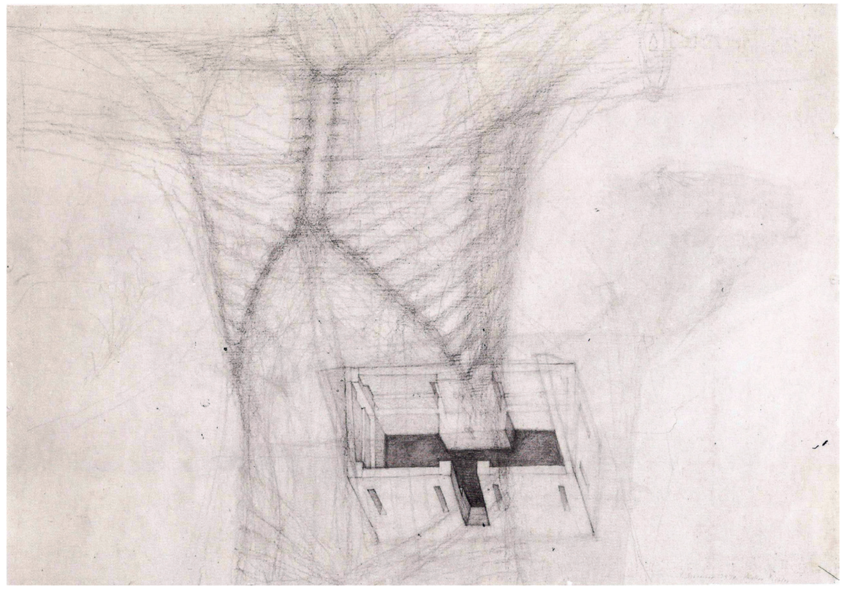

Walter Pichler, Kleiner Raum (Prototype 4), pencil on paper, 1967.
Walter Pichler, Gebäude auf der Giebelseite, ink on paper, 1981.
Walter Pichler, St. Martin Site Plan, ink and gouache paper, 1978.
Walter Pichler, Untitled, pencil, ink and tempera on paper, 1983.
Walter Pichler, Lagenplan, Eggental (detail), ink and tempera on paper, 2008.

11.6

11.6 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram overlaying the various figures that Pichler showed as colossal presences in the landscape. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

The thickness of this mass also creates a hermetic auditory and climactic separation from the outside, as it muffles the exterior sound and, on a warm summer day, creates a slightly cooler temperature inside. The coolness is increased by the shade given by the clay tiles of the pitched roof. Through this 'editing', the outside becomes an abstraction; it ensures that the representational logic of the interior space can be established. The hermetic sealing off of interior from exterior is reminiscent of Pichler's pre–St Martin pieces such as Intensivbox, Telefonikapel, Pneumatischer Raum and Prototyp V, all variations on 'isolation cells' where the futuristic inhabitant's encounter with the surroundings was highly controlled, minimised and artificially mediated.[10]

The undersides of the clay tiles are exposed above nine rib-like timber rafters that support them. A preparatory drawing for the House for the Torso entitled Brustkorb, or thorax (or rib cage), drawn in



11.7

11.7 Walter Pichler, Brustkorb, 1977. © Estate Walter Pichler.

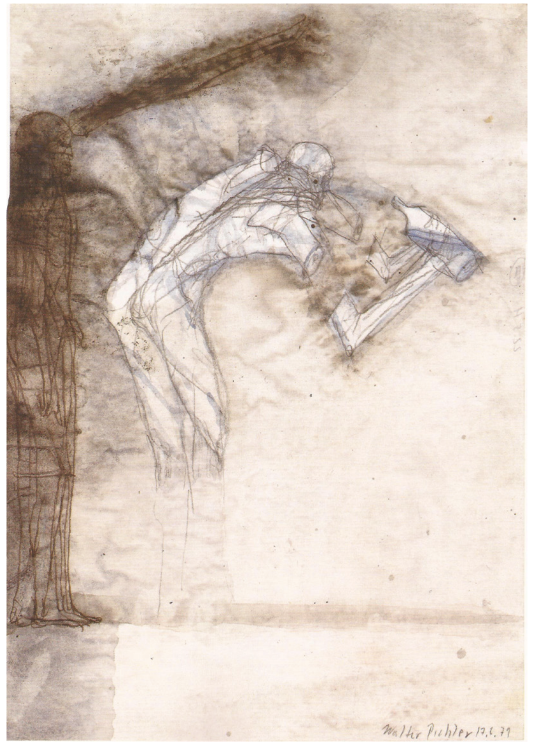
1977 (Figure 11.7), indicates that the corporeal reference is intentional. Fragmented figure studies and statuary intermingle with hard line architectural design sketches. Brustkorb shows the house, occupying a small portion of the bottom of the page, drawn in oblique projection. The viewpoint of the house is from above, and since the roof is omitted, the dark tone of the floor and the monolithic walls are exposed. A large figure, more faintly drawn, covers nearly half the page. The ghostly figure's face, legs and arms are not visible, but the rib cage itself, positioned directly above the house, is emphasised through an elaboration of lines and tonal values describing it. Stephanie Weber recognises that the drawing 'reveals Pichler's conceptual association four years before the completion' of the House for the Torso.[11]

Herr Alessandro, the importance of our ribs is perhaps most succinctly illustrated in the gate design of the Museum of Applied Arts. Perhaps you should describe this before you proceed. It would allow you the opportunity to address other aspects of figures in the drawings you have not yet discussed.

Figure and Object in the Design for the MAK Door

X rays

Through the gauze of their X-ray flesh, certain parts of the anatomy are often prominently visible in Pichler's drawn figures; sometimes the brain, sometimes the eyeballs, but more often, elements of the bone structure are most evident (Figure 11.8). The skull is most prominent, and, often, the rib structure is emphasised, taking on the appearance of a halter binding the figure together.



11.8

11.8 Walter Pichler, Trinker. Pencil on paper, 1979. © Estate Walter Pichler.

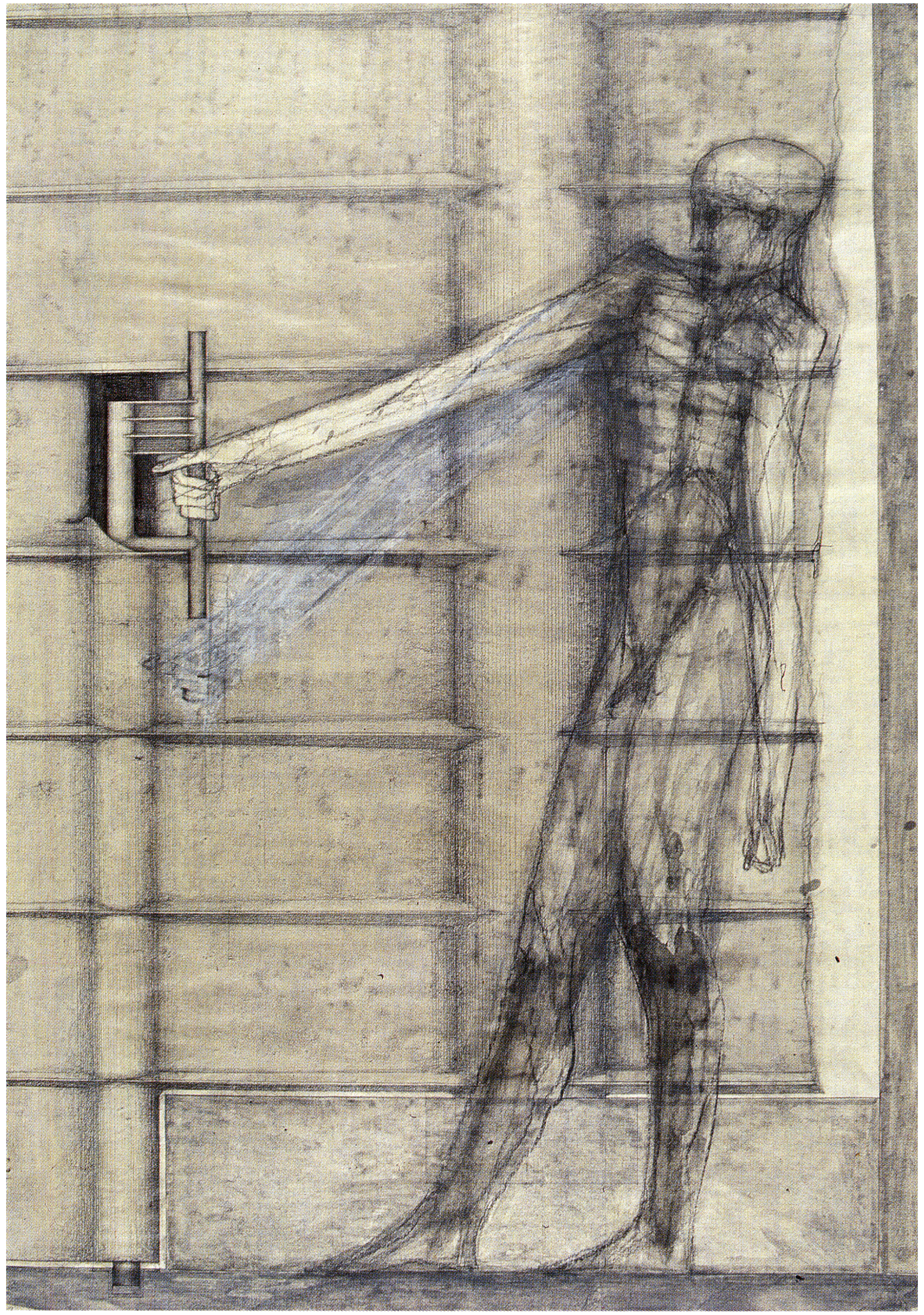
Pichler's design drawings for the Garden Door of the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna (the MAK), one of his few site-specific designs outside of St Martin, shows that the anatomically expressive figures and their body doubles helped catalyse the design. In Picher's solution to a brief that asked him to 'reconsider a link between the exhibition rooms and the "secret garden"' of the museum, a concrete bulkhead supports two doors: a smaller inner door on the interior side and, on the exterior, a large steel gate with a concrete and granite stairway leading up to it from the lower outdoor surface of the courtyard.[12]

Body doubles

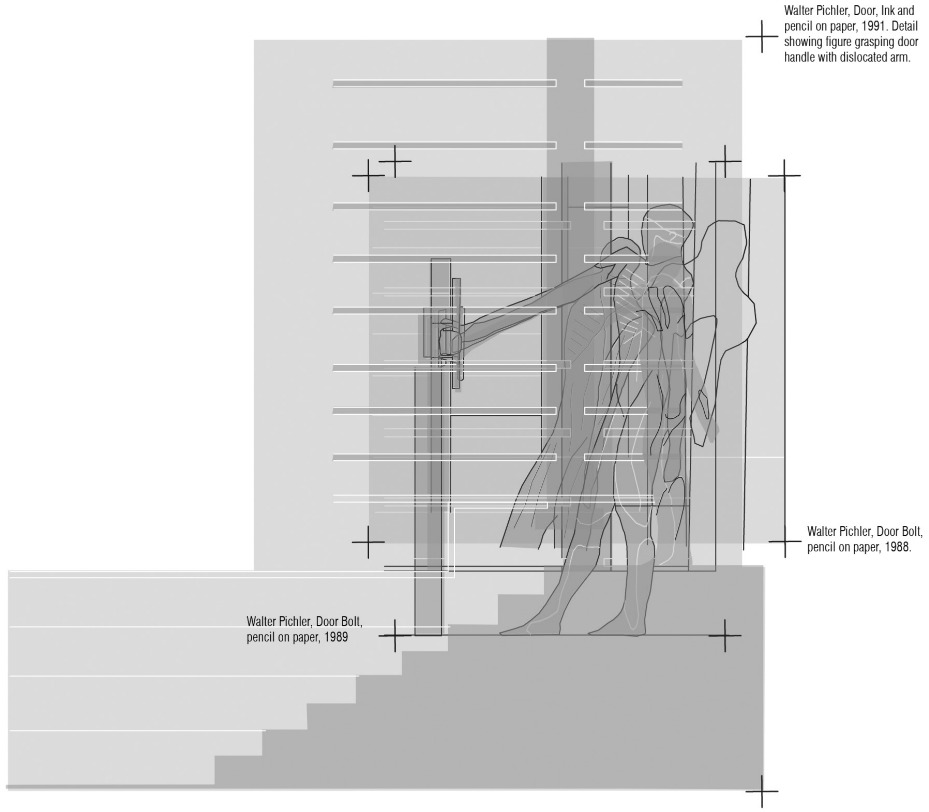
In Door Bolt of 1988, a detail elevation of the gate, a figure is drawn facing the garden, presumably approaching from the interior of the MAK. The figure grasps the handle of the gate. In this drawing, the figure has been drawn twice; a version further inside was painted over but is still visible as a ghostly trace. The 'doppelkopf' and the doppelganger are common themes for Pichler. This theme was already evident in such drawings as Doppelkopf (St Martin) of 1978, but continued to be a concentration as evidenced by Es ist doch der Kopf III 2007, Doppelter of 2007 and other drawings. Lewis writes that the drawing of the double covering the other's eyes is an 'attempt to make manifest the internal, unknown or secret imagination, to elicit readings from the interior within philosophically established limits'.[13] The doppelganger also implies an alter ego, or a schizophrenic parallel self, which Pichler also acknowledged.[14]

An identically titled drawing from a year later shows the figure grasping the gate's handle again. During the creation of this drawing, Pichler evidently reconfigured the gate handle's position. It was relocated from where it sat in the 1988 drawing, above the third structural rib, to just above the fourth. Here, the *pintimento* trace corresponds with the changed position of the handle, and the figure's right arm, still grasping another handle, is visible as a ghostly residue, lending the appearance of a Muybridge-esque photographic study with elapsed motion collated on a single image.

11.9 Walter Pichler, Door Bolt. Pencil on paper, 1989. © Estate Walter Pichler.



11.9


Walter Pichler, Door, Ink and pencil on paper, 1991. Detail showing figure grasping door handle with dislocated arm.
Walter Pichler, Door Bolt, pencil on paper, 1988.
Walter Pichler, Door Bolt, pencil on paper, 1989

11.10

11.10 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram compiled from Walter Pichler's drawings for the MAK courtyard door, showing sequence of figure/door interaction. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

Anatomical dislocations

In the 1988 drawing, the result is that the image describes the approach towards the handle, and the 1989 drawing (Figure 11.9) describes the action of pulling up on the handle and its cane bolt to unlock it from its fixed position. The figure's arm is dislocated even further from the rest of its body in the pen-and-ink sectional elevation drawing, Door, of 1991. Another trait of Pichler's drawn figures is evident: amputations, violations and dislocations of the body. Consistent with the attitude towards the body in Pichler's early work, this occurs in works such as the drawing Trinker of 1979 (Figure 11.8) and the anatomical specimen shown in the drawing Geöffneter Körper (St Martin) of 1980. The violation of the body is never shown as a purely clinical or purely gruesome act; its fascinating evocation lies between the factual, the comical and the hideous.

Door of 1991 shows the steps and more of the gate itself. The breadth of the drawing's frame and the figure's position on the far right-hand side of the page, perched at the threshold of the gate, allows one to imagine the figure moving from inside to outside. The figure does not strike a dynamic position as in the drawings from 1988 and 1989. Instead, he appears to stand stiffly at the top of the steps, while his arm appears to have dematerialised and rematerialised, allowing his hand to grasp the door handle conceivably beyond his reach. At the same level that the figure stands, the gate's structural ribs are at varied increments as if rippling upward and through the gate. In this drawing, the gate seems to have absorbed the latent dynamism through the figure's act of reaching and grasping.

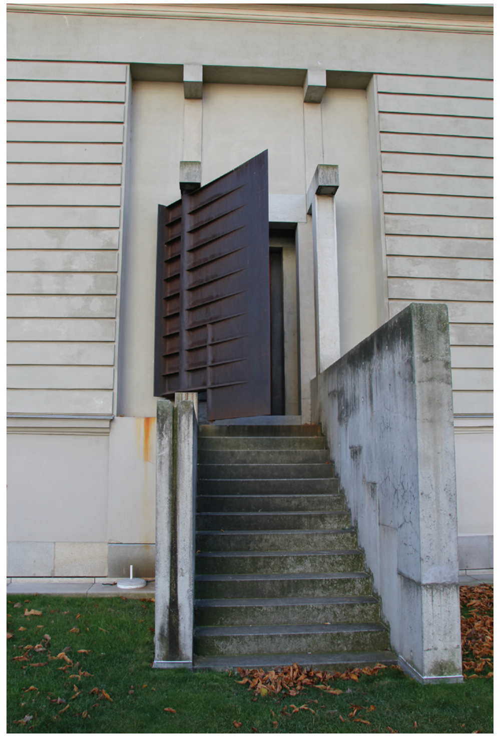
The recurring traits of the figures that Pichler draws – X-rays, body doubles, severed limbs, exposed body structure, loosely defined osmotic flesh – allowed for latitude in the imagination of the physicality and movement and an intense reciprocity between figure and design. The duplication of the figure was undoubtedly a revision, part of a 'thinking through' of the design through the drawing, allowing for adjustments of the gate operator's imagined movement sequence and the gate's attributes. The blatant presences of the traces of the duplicated figures indicate that Pichler wilfully intended them to remain visible, reinforcing his interest in making the movement and the notion of the double present in the design.

The X-ray flesh of the figure in both drawings, consistent with Pichler's a priori construction of the figure, reveals their prominent ribs and their spines, and indicates another resonant quality the figure has with the gate. Particularly in the 1989 drawing, the gate's horizontal reinforcements are visible through the figure. The X-ray flesh, coupled with blurred boundary of the figure's osmotic flesh, encouraged a 'contamination' of ribbed structure from the figure to the gate.

The gate as a metaphoric body

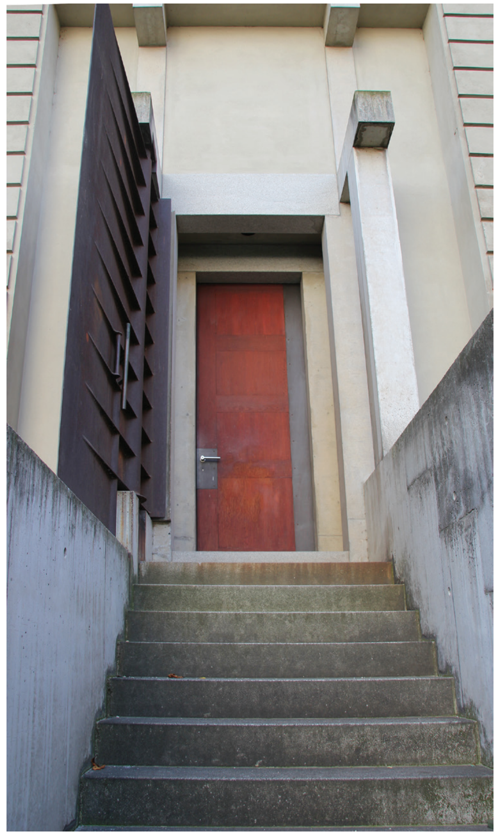
As built, the gate's 11 ribs are arranged in evenly spaced increments. From the outside, the three-metre-high gate is imposing, approached via steps that give an oblique view upwards to its heavily oxidised steel surface, its lateral structural ribs and the tubular extrusions containing the pivot rod and the door's bolt (Figure 11.11). The gate can only be opened from the inside, and to access it, one must first open the inner door. The inner door conveys a different effect; its smaller size and its surface which is timber clad warmly invites touch (Figure 11.12).

Each door has a large granite threshold, and to open or close a door, the operator must step over its threshold as they do so. When the inner door is opened from the inside, the gate is revealed, and its handle is visible. Its smooth, chrome finish contrasts with the roughness of the carcass of the gate that holds it, inviting physical contact (Figure 11.13). When the massive gate opens and swings on its pivot hinge, the operator steps over the gate's threshold, and then, to steady the gate into its open position, the operator must fit the cane bolt connected to the handle into the receiving oxidised steel collar set into the cast concrete surface of the ledge. The operator of the threshold's inner door and gate inevitably mimics Pichler's figure and its double, unwittingly paying homage to the two, and is drawn into a choreography of a duplicated motion (open-step, open-step), tacitly acknowledging the design itself as a double.



11.11

11.11 Walter Pichler, MAK garden entrance, view showing gate, by Walter Pichler, Museum of Applied Arts (MAK), Vienna, 1991. Photograph by Shaden Meer.

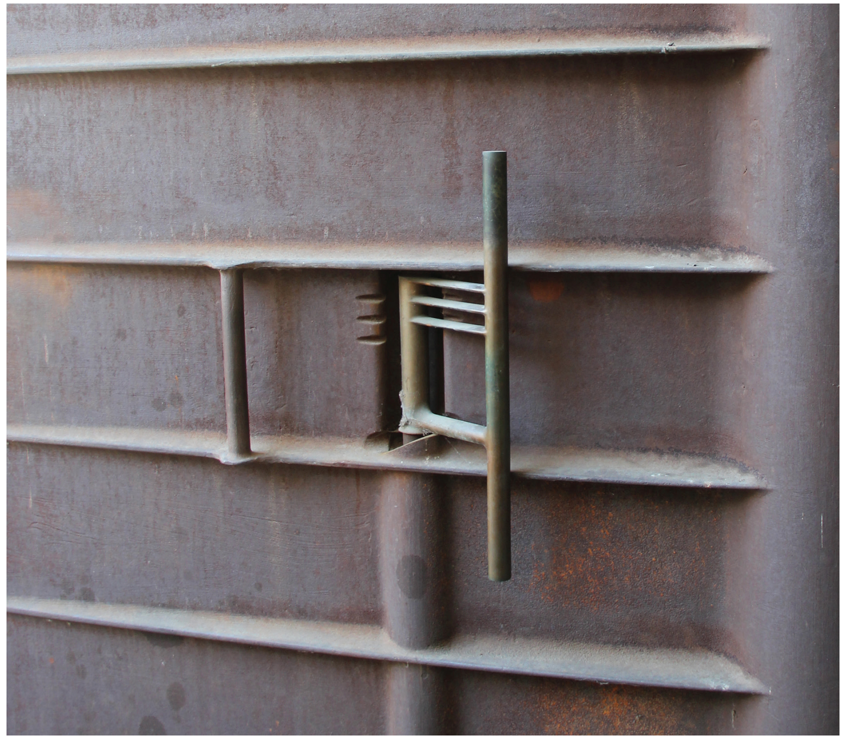


11.12

11.12 Walter Pichler, MAK garden entrance, view with gate open showing inner door, Museum of Applied Arts (MAK), Vienna, 1991. Photograph by Shaden Meer.

Like many of Pichler's drawn figures, the gate is an entity that is in dialogue with precipitation through traces and inscriptions; it leaks fluid in a contaminated exchange with its environment. This channelling is guided by a trough that is cast into the concrete wall of the stair, aligned with the longitudinal axis of the open gate in plan, and with the cane bolt and the pivot cylinder. It is a downspout that steadily deposits rainwater runoff onto the wall's front face, shedding an oxidised stream from the gate's surface and leaving a patina that runs from the door to the grassy lawn of the garden below (Figure 11.11).

The design recalls the rivulets, channels and downspouts that traverse architecture and landscape in many of Pichler's other works. It also recalls the figure in the St Martin site plans, whose visceral boundaries seemed to dissolve through osmosis and channelling. The gate, acting similarly to the figure in the plan, ejects viscous fluids. In this case, the gate

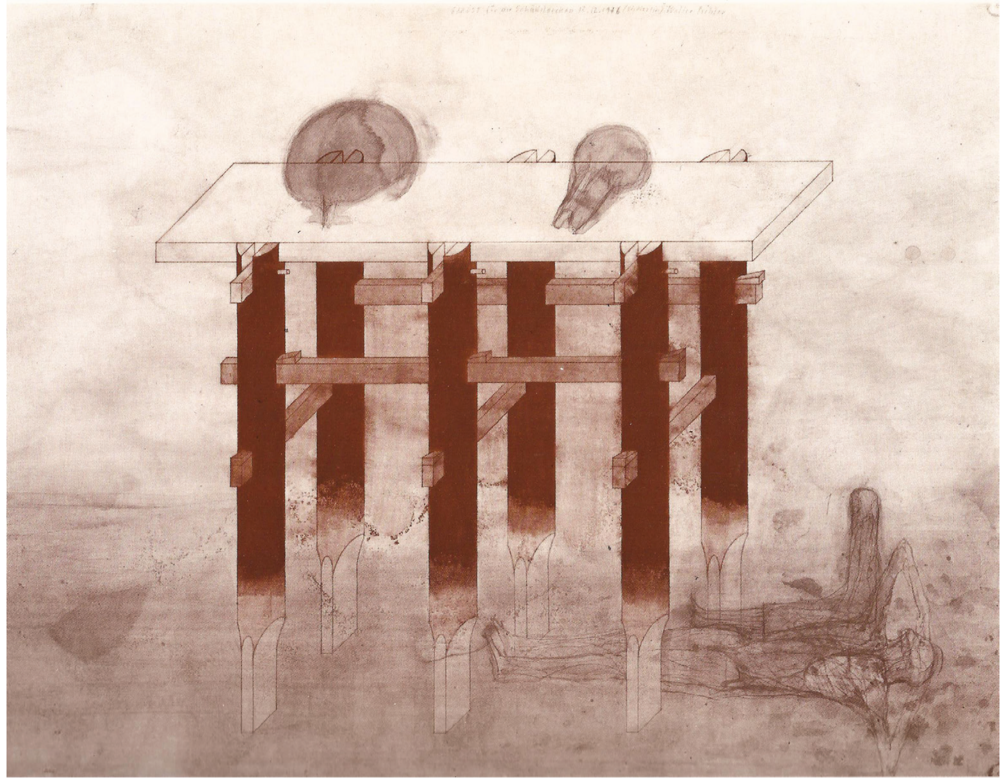


11.13

11.13 Walter Pichler, MAK garden entrance, gate door handle, by Walter Pichler, Museum of Applied Arts (MAK), Vienna, 1991. Photograph by Shaden Meer.

connects sky and landscape through the exposed traces. In the works at St Martin, the collection and dispersal of rainwater connects physically and thematically to the gentle landscape of streams, valleys and lakes of the Burgenland region.[15] In the case of the gate, the channelling of the rainwater does make for a visibly evident connection between the sky and Earth, but the gate itself could be considered a figure, which via its own directional aura creates a stream, viscerally connecting with the territory upon which it rests. The figures in the design drawings aided in the creation of a design that, with its insistence on displaying the excretion of the metaphorical body, is antithetical to the 'modern space of hygiene', which concealed and denied the abject.[16]

The design is truly a dialogue of doubles: the gate has its double – the inner door – just as the figure has its double – the ghostly traces of its own body. The situation is even more complex, however, since the drawn figure and the gate are also doubles of one another; they reflect each other's inner structures and abject physicality – a physicality where lateral ribs bind the body together and where the boundary of subject and context is blurred in a watery exchange. The visitor, through the movement sequences over thresholds and through the two doors, is led to acknowledge through a haptic and tactile sequence the presence of these pairs. The doubles' presence allows for a fluid design imagination, but it also functions as an embedded concept of dualistic human nature. It is part of the enactment of a complex subjectivity discussed in the next section.



11.14

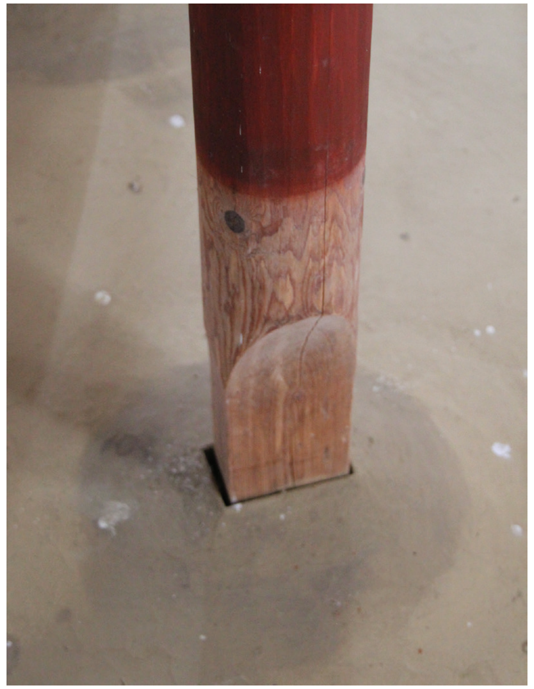
11.14 Walter Pichler, Gerüst für die Schädeldecken. Tempera ink and pencil on paper, 1976. © Estate Walter Pichler.

Hmm, yes. My companion at Sankt Martin, Doppelkopf, would appreciate your explanation. Some would even say that I have my double as well. But perhaps you will get to that. Please proceed with your description of my former house and who inhabits it.

The House for Torso Part 3 (The House and Its Inhabitants)

Gerüst

The thoracic quality of the house's rafters is echoed in the hewn-cedar, altar-like table that rests on the right-hand side of the entry door. This table's origins also stem from a bodily metaphor. The title of a preparatory drawing from 1976, Gerüst für die Schädeldecken (Figure 11.14), reinforces this reading, as *Gerüst* literally translates to 'scaffolding' or 'skeleton'.[17] The drawing shows two of Pichler's trademark figures underneath the legs of the *Gerüst*. Like



11.15

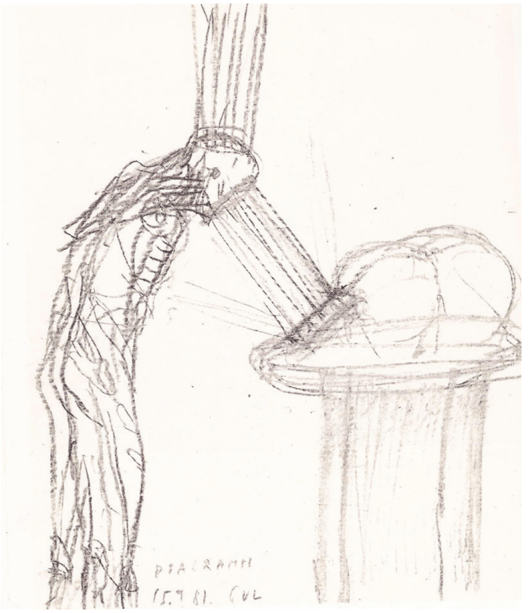
11.15 Walter Pichler, Table for the Skullcaps, detail of connection with concrete floor, 1975–81. Photograph by Shaden Meer. © Estate Walter Pichler.

many of Pichler's figures, they are rendered with flesh that mingles with the loose strokes that describe the ethereal ground of the scene. Also similar to many of Pichler's drawn figures, their ribs are prominent. In fact, the larger of the figures, lying down, raises his hand and elbows towards his head, exposing his rib cage further, in a similar posture to that of the figure in the Brustkorb drawing. The supports of the *Gerüst* seem to emerge out of the ribs themselves. This theme, of structure springing forth from a body merging with the ground, can also be found in Pichler's drawing House for the Big Wagon and the Small Wagon of 1973, where the concrete piers that support the elevated barn appear as extensions of a chthonic figure's ribs.

The *Gerüst*'s intriguing details, its scale and its continuity in architectural language with the house, allow it to offer intimate scales of engagement which act as an introduction and a cipher to the larger architectural scale and the meanings and narratives it holds. In the built version, as in the drawing, the cylindrical bases of its supports, where they make contact with the ground, are carved away so that they make contact via slimmer, rectangular footprints. The poured concrete surface of the floor, poured without flourishes, exhibits a strange permutation here. At the points where the cedar 'skeleton' touches the floor, a subtle meniscus has been cast into its dark surface: the contours of the 'feet' and the high points of the menisci join exactly (Figure 11.15). There are two other details in the spartan design of the floor: the shallow rise up to the curb at the entry door, and the inset reveal between the floor and the corner of the wall. In contrast to the rectilinear, monolithic wall that, with the help of the reveal, seems to float above it, the floor could be read as a viscous ground condition, just as the landscape appears in the preparatory drawing. The *Gerüst*, like the osmotic bodies that inhabit Pichler's design drawings, is a thoracic skeleton, a piece of *kleinarchitektur* that blends with the architecturally modified ground condition. This union is signified by the subtle upturn of the floor of the building at these six points.

Skullcaps

The clear purpose of the *Gerüst* is to display the skullcaps, experimental pieces by Pichler. The skullcaps are arranged in a line along the *Gerüst*'s top surface, displayed as relics. Two skullcaps made from zinc lay on the right side, and the others are made from forged bronze. The shiny bronze surfaces reflect a fish-eye's view of the interior of the room. If one were to look into the surface of the centrally placed and largest skullcap, one would see the reflection of the interior. Weber notes the intention of this view to also be interpreted as the interior structure of the skull.[18] She also notes the relevance of the drawing Diagramm of 1981, which shows directional auras that appear to ricochet from the figure's ribs to the reflective surface of the piece to the figure's own temple and upwards, which Weber notes could be considered as connecting either the roof or to heaven (Figure 11.16).[19] The reflection of the visitor in the large skullcap brings the visitor into a spatial relationship with the figures in the room, heightening the connection between living and inanimate figures. Looking into the central skullcap, one would see the rib-like vaulting of the roof, the floor, the monolithic walls, one's self and the other two denizens of the room.

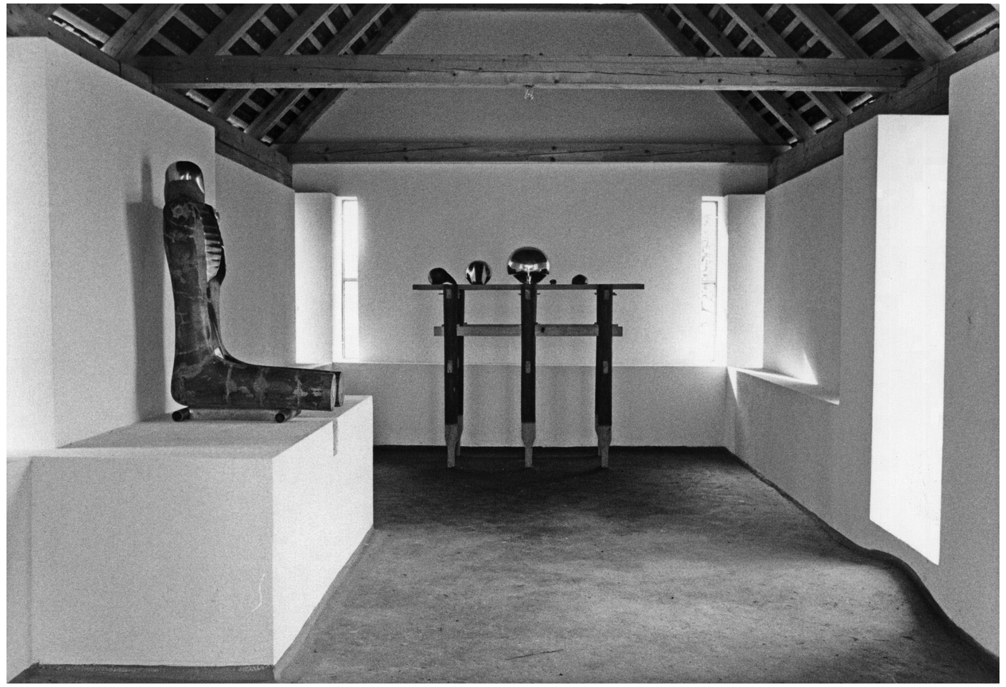


11.16

11.16 Walter Pichler, Diagramm. Pencil on paper, 1981. © Estate Walter Pichler.

Torso

The Torso (the basis for the Torso_2.0 body agent, manifesting as the narrative voice interjecting throughout this chapter) is one of the denizens. Much like the effigy of Duke Giuliano in the New Sacristy, he is the first figure that the visitor would encounter, and undoubtedly the visitor would first have to acknowledge the presence of the Torso. Unlike the duke figure, however, which is realistically sculpted with uncanny, pupil-less eyes, the Torso's face is highly abstracted and compact; it has no eyes whatsoever. Also unlike the duke, the Torso is frontally situated on axis with the main door (rather than perpendicularly to it; Figure 11.17). The duke figure was positioned to confront the visitor with his eerie gaze. The resulting effect in the House for the Torso is no less challenging: entering through the door, one is face to face with this visage-less figure. Seated on a plinth that appears as another monolithic extrusion of the stucco wall that makes its backdrop, the figure is positioned to receive a wash of evening sunlight when the door is opened at that time. The 'carved-out' shelf of the stucco wall has extra depth here to provide a monolithic support for the seated Torso. The tall slender windows that flank the Torso and frame an abstracted view of the trees are a reminder of the verdant



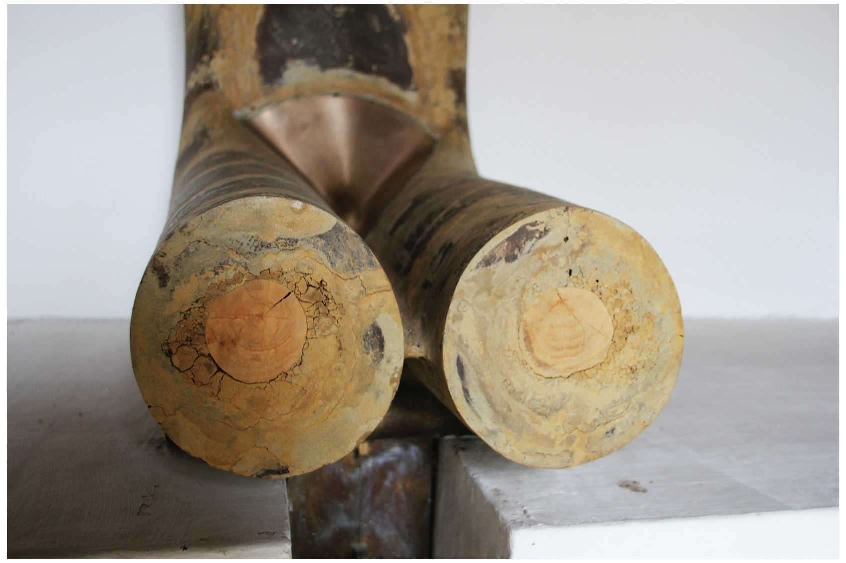
11.17

11.17 View of interior of House for the Torso and Skullcaps by Walter Pichler, 1981. Photograph by Elfi Tripamer. © Elfi Tripamer.

landscape outside and the physical origin of the Torso.[20]

Torso_2.0's narrative in the preceding excerpt, describing his sylvan origins, is based on Pichler's own account. The conception of the Torso's revealed inner structure and its literal connection to the site were shown in drawings done by Pichler prior to the construction of the figure. The drawing entitled Konstruktionsprinzip describes a mythical origin for the Torso that comes from the chance and natural events of the surrounding forest.

Even without the drawings as a guide, the Torso's origins and their connection to the physical artefacts of the landscape are revealed upon a 'second seeing', encouraged because of the Torso's seated posture and position facing the entry door. Due to this position, the termination points of the Torso's legs, just above where the knees would be, are displayed prominently (Figure 11.18). The 'amputated' legs face the visitor, offering a view of the Torso's interior structure. Where the legs and arms are 'amputated', the concentric cross section of the figure's laminar core is exposed; the branches and twigs that comprise its interior are perfectly flush with the clay surface that surrounds them. The sheen-like surface quality of the aligned materials displayed in cross-section reveal tell-tale signs of the anatomy visible in Pichler's X-ray drawings of the Torso (Figure 11.19). This plane, the termination point of the leg, aligns with the edge of the plinth seat below. The overt display of the construction of the figure, also visible at the shoulders where the arms have been similarly 'amputated', very clearly strikes an analogy between the branch structure of the figure and the bones of a human. However, as one makes a 'third' or 'fourth' 'seeing' of the detail of the exposed cross-section, amputation momentarily loses its suggestion of the macabre or grotesque. Rather, its elegant, model-like properties cause the figure to convey sensation in the Deleuzian sense, with 'one face turned to the subject . . . and one face turned toward the object'.[21]

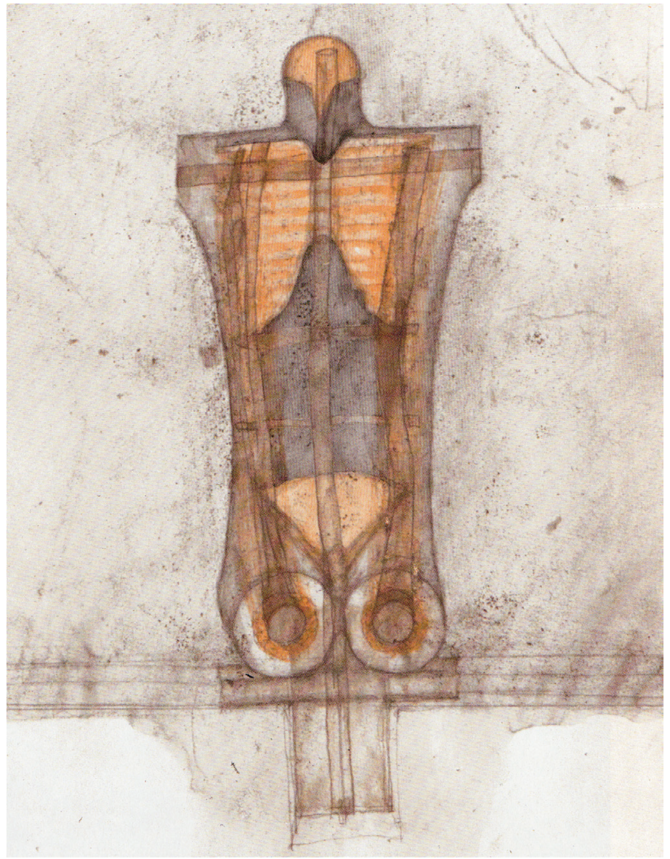


11.18

11.18 Walter Pichler, Torso, detail of exposed cross-section at legs, 1981. Photograph by Shaden Meer. © Estate Walter Pichler.

After the harvest of the fallen trunk, the inner structure of the Torso was reinforced using an additive process of binding twigs to the trunk, followed by the accretion and smoothing of successive layers of mud and, finally, the integration of bronze components. A visitor is likely to notice that the skullcaps bear a relationship to the Torso's own bronze skullcap, along with a similarly forged chest piece and a groin piece. The bronze components fit precisely flush with the clay contours that comprise the Torso's 'flesh'. The reflectivity and polished tone of the bronze surfaces contrasts subtly with the mottled earthen tones and skin-like softness of the smoothed clay.

At the figure's chest, the sculpted clay evokes an uncanny viscosity. A cavity has been hollowed out, and the clay rib cage and its sternum bridge over the gentle hollow. The forged chest piece, with lateral ripples emphasising its connotation of ribs, is fit over this fragile 'flesh' bridge. The bronze components' embedded quality (being set in the 'flesh'), their material difference (bronze vs. clay) along with their supporting nature (reinforcing the



11.19

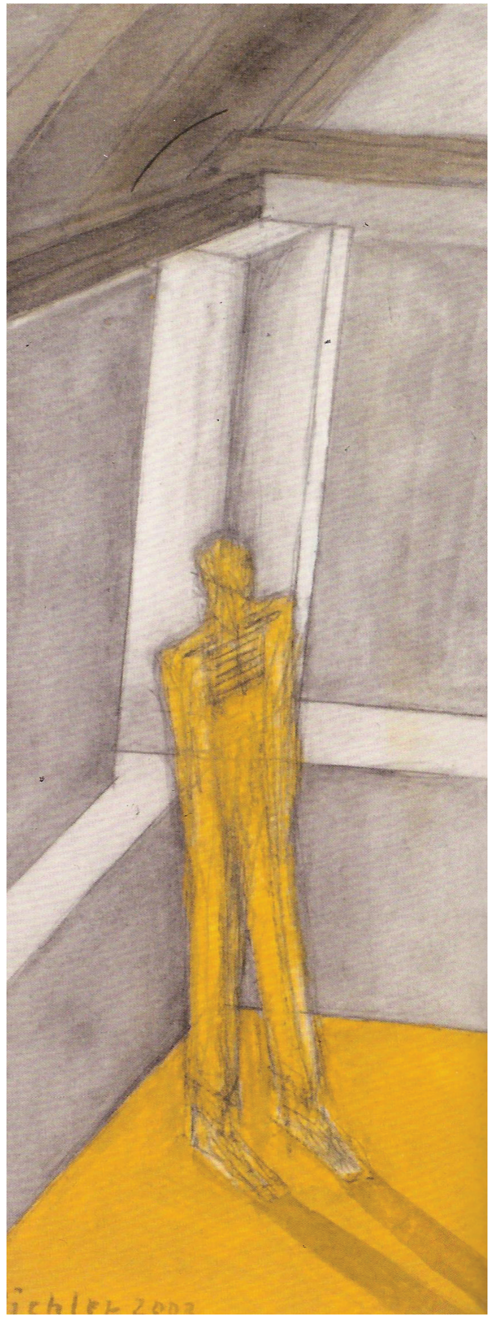
11.19 Walter Pichler, Construction Scheme of the Torso (Rumpf). Ink and pencil on paper, 1982. © Estate Walter Pichler.

'fluid' clay 'bridge' of the sternum) most strongly support the notion that they are elegant prosthetics supporting a fragile, fluid body. The chest piece's prosthetic supports the delicate sternum. The clay 'flesh' establishes a metaphoric resonance with the subtly liquescent floor of the room. The interiority expressed by the smooth void in the sternum has an analogy in the massive wall that forms the Torso's plinth. While the wall's expression is minimal and rectilinear, it echoes the clay body as a 'carved-out' mass, with an interiority enabled by rib-like support structures. The skullcaps, most of which appear as crowns arranged on an altar-like table, but one of which is another 'grafted' addition to the clay body of the Torso, add a further twist to the presence of the inset bronze pieces: it gives them a ceremonial and ornamental connotation.

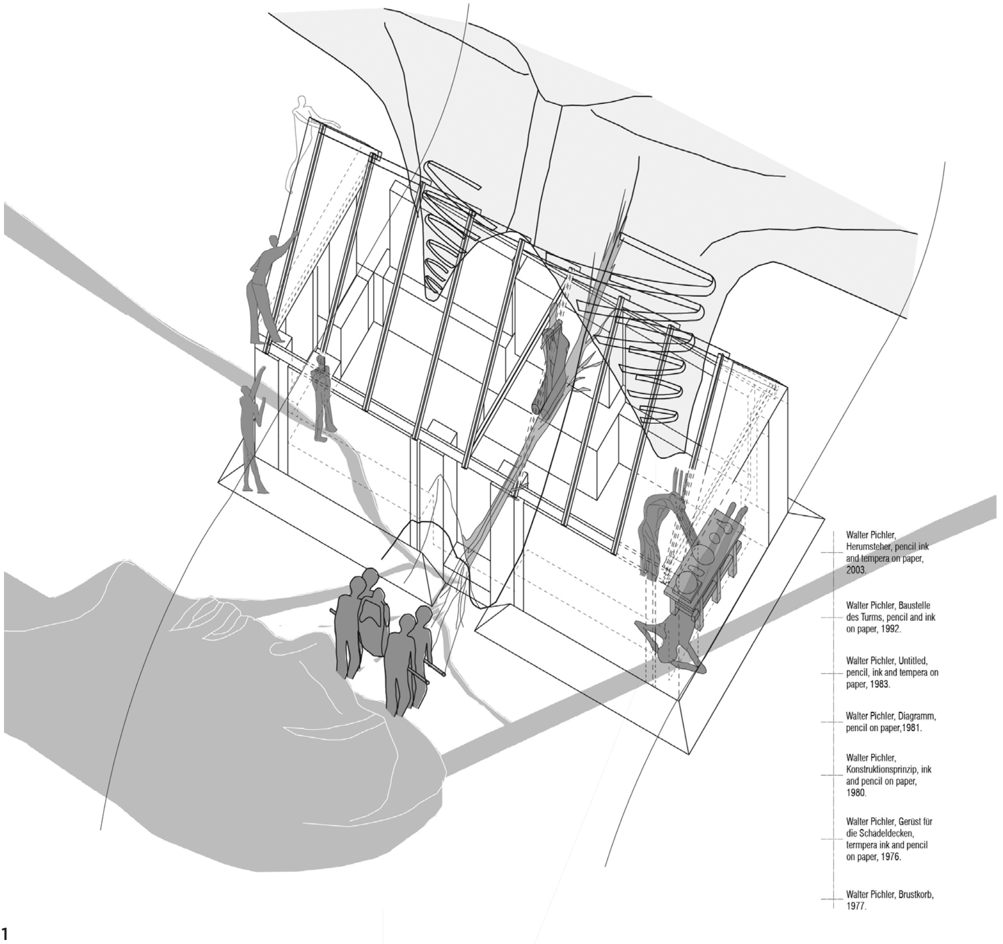
Two pipes running perpendicular to the Torso's legs are attached below its thighs. Dowels threaded through these pipes became the handles with which the figure was carried from the workshop to its 'house'. Below the pipes, parallel with the Torso's legs and cast into the stucco bench, is an indentation running from midway in the bench's width, bisecting its length and revealing its 20 cm × 10 cm wide indentation profile from the front. A wooden fin attached to the underside of the Torso fits into this slot and keeps the figure stable and upright. Together with the pipes, the fin is part of an architectonic warp and weft, exposing a narrative connection between the living figures, inanimate figures and architecture. While traditional figural ornament was affixed to its host building with great care given to the concealment of the supporting structure, here the interweaving of figure and artifice is outwardly displayed.[22] The blurring between figure and architectural context brings to mind the blurring of the digital-age subject, which 'appears as spatial, mediated and distributed – all characteristics that make it difficult to distinguish radically from its context'.[23] Considered in conjunction with the sternum support piece, the exposed tectonic of the interwoven support is another element bringing to mind the idea of the architecture itself as yet another prosthetic extension.

An aspect of this exposed connection speaks to another narrative contributing to the Torso's conception. The Stuhl für einen Selbstmörder in den Bergen, described in drawings by Pichler in 1970, the same year that Pichler also constructed the sculpture entitled Altar, offers clues to the interpretation of the slot. The *Stuhl* appears carved out of the solid earth of the mountain slope. The body of the drawn user is shown supported by a stark rectilinear seat. The drawings show that the *Stuhl* was designed as a sacrificial altar. Three troughs were to be inscribed in its surface: two on the right and left side of the figure where the wrists would lay, and one at the centre, its origin point aligned with the genitals. These were macabrely designed to lead the blood and urine of the *selbstmörder* downward and into symmetrical pools at his feet. In the House for the Torso, even in a 'first seeing', the altar-like character of the plinth is apparent. The indentation in the plinth bench that bisects the Torso's corpus and terminates at his gilt bronze penis is a tectonic reinforcement of the notion of a sacrificial body. The exposed and severed thighs, the abstraction and architectural incorporation of the corporeal features replete with the connotation of sacrifice and draining of bodily fluids shed some of the disturbing connotations that such a drawing might have if translated too literally. In this way, the detail shares an affinity with classical glyphs and guttae, which adorned Greek temples and signified the severed thighs of sacrificial offerings and the fat that dripped from them.[24]

11.20 Walter Pichler, Herumsteher. Pencil ink and tempera on paper, 2003. © Estate Walter Pichler.



11.20


Walter Pichler, Herumsteher, pencil ink and tempera on paper, 2003.
Walter Pichler, Baustelle des Turms, pencil and ink on paper, 1992.
Walter Pichler, Untitled, pencil, ink and tempera on paper, 1983.
Walter Pichler, Diagramm, pencil on paper,1981.
Walter Pichler, Konstruktionsprinzip, ink and pencil on paper, 1980.
Walter Pichler, Gerüst für die Schädeldecken, termpera ink and pencil on paper, 1976.
Walter Pichler, Brustkorb, 1977.

11.21

11.21 Alessandro Ayuso, diagram showing the interaction of elements inside Walter Pichler's House for the Torso incorporating information from both drawings and documented events. With thanks to Georgia Roberts.

Watcher

The Torso and skullcaps do not offer dynamism in the vein of the twisting *contrapposto* figures of Michelangelo's late Renaissance. They appear comparatively inert, frontally positioned and on axis with the interior facade that forms their backdrops. However, in the north-west corner, near to a homuncular door aligned with the central axis of the north facade, the Bystander or Watcher, constructed by Pichler in 2000, is mounted in a standing position on the concrete floor, facing south east[25] (Figure 11.20). The Watcher's orientation, close to the door and facing towards the other 'inhabitants', was a significant decision by Pichler, who did not hesitate to personify the figures. In fact, the Watcher's name is indicative of his designed purpose: to keep an eye on the other ornament.[26] The Watcher shares many common traits with the Torso. Both figures are built from a dense network of twigs which make a substructure and then coated with a sculpted clay layer. While the Watcher does not have any bronze prostheses, he does have a prominently emphasised rib cage, which bridges across a gentle hollow that begins lower in the midriff and ends at the collarbone.

The Watcher, added nearly two decades after the installation of the Torso, is a tug at an otherwise static tableau. With his *contrapposto* pose, the Watcher suggests a shift from foot to foot as if he were indeed an impatient loiterer, weighing the decision between watching or perhaps opening the small door for a foray into the forest beyond. The relative scale of the figures and their positions in the space lead to other inferences about their implied relationships. The Watcher is the smaller of the two figures, about the size of a child, reinforcing his ancillary position as an attendant. The centrality of the Torso and the plinth on which he is seated makes him a nearly monumental presence in this intimately scaled interior. The flanking by the other two sculptural ensembles again supports the Torso's 'command' of the space. The very interior-ness of the space is reinforced by the windows' lack of view to a scene of the surrounding landscape, and the strict and total interior view provided by the reflection of the central skullcap. This makes the interior seem apart from its surroundings. Yet, the interior is a model for conceptualising the cosmological implications of the exterior: a technology-laden, fragile and fascinating subject at its centre with its companion and accoutrements flanking it, enshrouded in a metaphorical body of exposed structure and viscous flesh.

Notes

1. 'The prototypes and these things, they were cynical, but now they [are seen as] the future. But they were very cynical. I couldn't go further [with them]'. Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.
2. Quote from Walter Pichler. Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.
3. Other critics have alluded to the site as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, including Christian Reder. Reder, 'Über Walter Pichler', 218.
4. Hackert notes Pichler's drawings 'are always committed to a general archaic of the human'. Hackert, *Walter Pichler*, 4.
5. Pichler described this routine. Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.
6. Hackert, *Walter Pichler*, 4.
7. 'For Walter Pichler (1936–2012) *The Drawing*, as he himself often declared, is the essential foundation for his artistic exploration'. Reder, Text for *Walter Pichler*, 81. Pichler also asserted this in Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.
8. Lewis, 'After history, mythology recommences', 7.
9. Lewis writes, 'The transverse cut, forming a trough through which rainwater is channelled from outside through the interior of the studio, recalls a natural stream coursing through the natural landscape'. Lewis, 'After history, mythology recommences', 10.
10. Pichler, 'A conversation with Walter Pichler', 28.
11. Weber, Text for *Walter Pichler*, 29.
12. Morteo, 'Walter Pichler', 62.
13. Lewis, 'After history, mythology recommences', 7.
14. 'There are many sculptures of mine who share this topic. I myself was surprised when I realised how much this very topic – for 45 years – has preoccupied me. These heads indicate a slight schizophrenia, but that's certainly normal'. Pichler, 'Interview with Ute Woltron'.
15. The recognition of streams and the valley as both attributes of the Burgenland landscape and Pichler's St Martin–based work has been recognised by numerous critics, including Diane Lewis. Lewis, 'After history, mythology recommences', 10.

16. 'The abject is that which is commonly associated with bodily fluids...' Blackman, *The Body*, 93. Elements of modernism participated in 'obstinate repression of the abject, the unclean, and the horizontal'. Lahiji and Friedman, 'Introduction', 8.
17. Weber also acknowledges the significance of this drawing, likening the structure to a grave for the figures. Weber, Text for *Walter Pichler*, 29.
18. Weber, Text for *Walter Pichler*, 29.
19. Pichler and his wife Elfi, ever-conscious of the crucial role photography played in the reception of the work, very purposefully documented the House for the Torso with this particular view in mind and, as Weber notes, coordinated a photograph of the central skullcap to reflect the roof's rib-like structure. Weber, Text for *Walter Pichler*, 29.
20. The drawing shows a small valley in a forest glade, presumably in the forest adjacent to the Burgenland workshop. Describing the idea of the sketch and the structure of the sculpture, Pichler said, 'If a tree is knocked down by the wind, and its roots stay in the ground, the branches will grow at right angles to the trunk'. Stiener, 'Walter Pichler', 23.
21. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 25.
22. For an example of ornament in which the connection points were concealed in such a manner, see the description of the *putti* atop the Baldacchino in Chapter 6.
23. Picon, *Digital Culture in Architecture*, 106.
24. Glyphs and guttae are described this way in Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*, 31.
25. Although in most monographs the Bystander is a more common title of the figure, Walter Pichler used the name the Watcher. Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.
26. Walter Pichler explained this in Walter Pichler, interview by Alessandro Ayuso, workshop in St Martin an der Raab, Austria, 26 August 2011.

Chapter 12

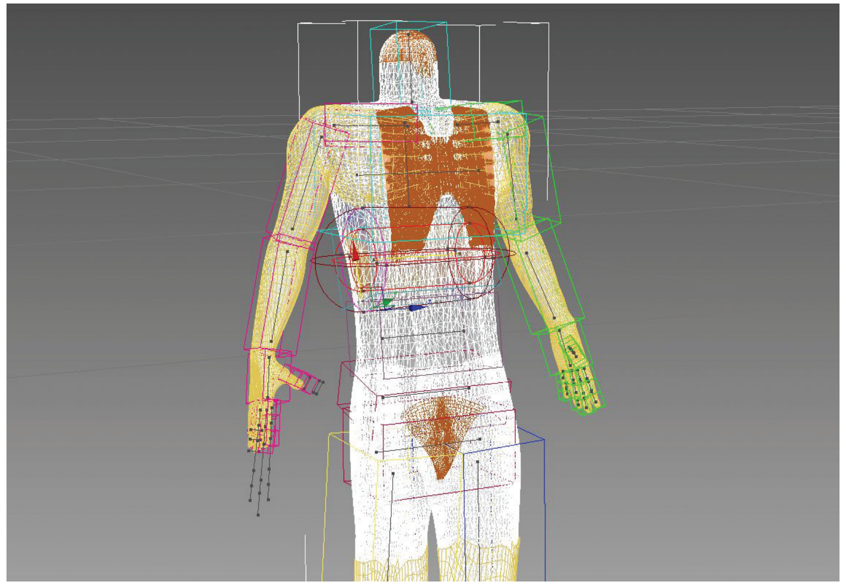
Torso_2.0 and the Emergence of the Body Agent Tempietto and Its Site

A design folio concerning the design of the Body Agent Tempietto and its site, composed of a collection of excerpts of entries from the journal of P_1435 (with dialogues between P_1435 and Torso_2.0), excerpts of entries from the design logbook of Alessandro Ayuso, with introductory remarks by Alessandro Ayuso.

Preliminary Notes

The aim for this phase of design research into body agents was to synthesise the techniques developed in Chapters 5 and 8, including drawing, digitally modelling, animating, writing and fabricating as part of a body agent–based design methodology. Whereas the experiments in Chapter 5 explored figures in architecture (e.g. P_1435 as an inhabitant of his Kneeling Window) and those in Chapter 8 explored figures as architecture (e.g. the D_I Arm as an inhabitable space), the experiments in this chapter look at architecture as extensions of the figure, asking whether body agents could be an embedded presence, directly giving rise to and ornamenting a building. The design of Torso_2.0, a figure based on Walter Pichler's Torso discussed in the previous chapter, was the starting point. Pichler's Torso's possession of what Chapter 11 argues are prosthetics, Pichler's Torso's close tectonic relationship with the House for the Torso and its limblessness made Pichler's Torso ideal as a catalytic figure to investigate a design process where the body as an original prosthesis could be extended to become architecture. As Chapter 11 argues, Pichler's Torso appears (and, in some senses, is profoundly) atavistic but is also informed by radical ideas about a future cynically saturated by technology. Introduced to a design context where contemporary representational technologies are combined with historical reference points, Pichler's Torso was a provocative starting point to catalyse a re-examination of the figure.

Torso_2.0's narrative, where P_1435 in the guise of the Watcher has convinced the limbless figure he must move, led to a design vignette for the design prosthetics for Pichler's Torso. The Body Agent Tempietto project arose directly out of the exploration of prosthetics, considering architecture as a direct extension of the body. The Body Agent Tempietto was conceptualised as a laminar extension of figures. The final portion of this phase of work, a design for a site for the Body Agent Tempietto, viewed the site as an outer layer of a series of strata emanating outwards from figures.



12.1

12.1 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot of design process, showing rigging of Torso_2.0, 2013. The design of Torso_2.0 began with meticulous digital modelling of Pichler's original Torso and House for the Torso. During the design of the prosthetic limbs for Torso_2.0, the digital model was modified and rigged for animation. In order to optimise the geometry for animation, the shape of the original Torso's existing body became more angular and geometrically simplified. The blank face of the Torso became more planar, and the chest piece merged with the facets of the skin.

12.2 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot of design process showing design of an armature for Torso_2.0's left leg, 2013. In the initial sketches, Pichler's Torso's internal truncated structure of branches was extended to make the structure for Torso_2.0's new arms. Instead of fusing them directly with the existing branch structure, in this iteration a support armature with an ornamental branching form connects with the hollow pipes at the base of the figure.

Torso_2.0 and Becoming the Body Agent Tempietto

08 Settembre Anno Domini MMXIII 01:32

T, please record your impressions of the occurrences of the past few months.

[Torso_2.0 typing]

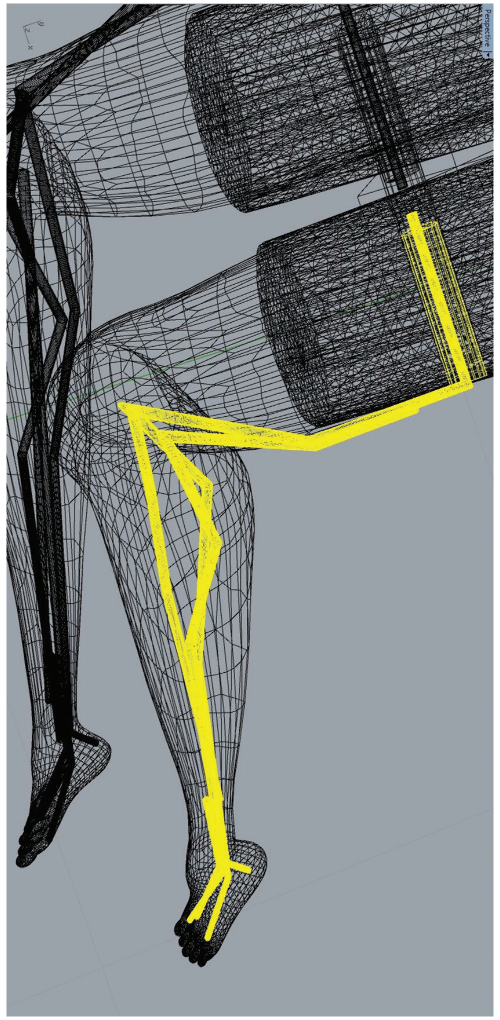
Torso_2.0 here, typing into P's iPhone.

So very much has occurred lately. The procedure whereby I gained my limbs took place in what the Watcher – or P_1435 as he now insists on being called – refers to as Il Regno Digitale (Figures 12.1 and 12.2)*. In this 'Digital Realm', I found myself in a virtual facsimile of my previous home.*

From my station in Sankt Martin, I was quite content to sit and look straight ahead. But now, I feel exuberant. With my new limbs, I began to shed my stoicism. I felt an urge to move. I wanted to test the capabilities of my new body: what can it (I!) do, I wondered (Figure 12.3)*?*

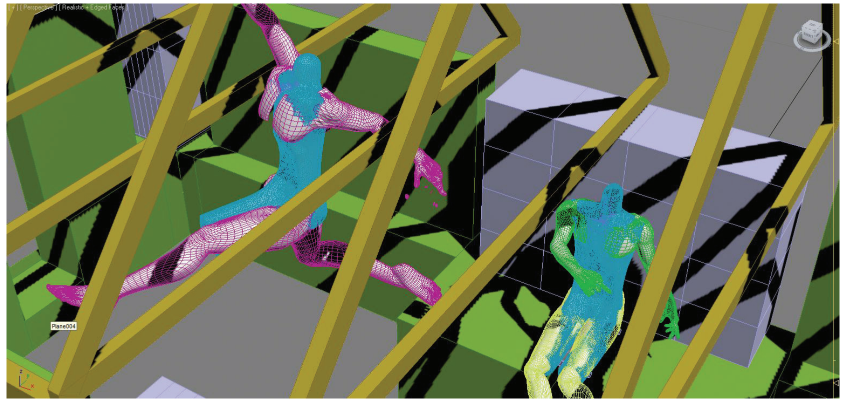
I started by emulating the ignudi, whom I heard so much about and whom I was so taken by, and from my sitting position engulfed myself in a cowl, but then I rose, let go of the fabric and leapt from my plinth.

Herr Alessandro taught me to dance in the space of the Digital Realm. We worked out the precise steps of the dance. I appreciate solemn ritual and am normally not one for ostentatious celebration, but I made an exception. So, I danced with theatrical vigour (Figure 12.4)*. My cowl had become geometrical components that responded to my movements* (Figure 12.5).



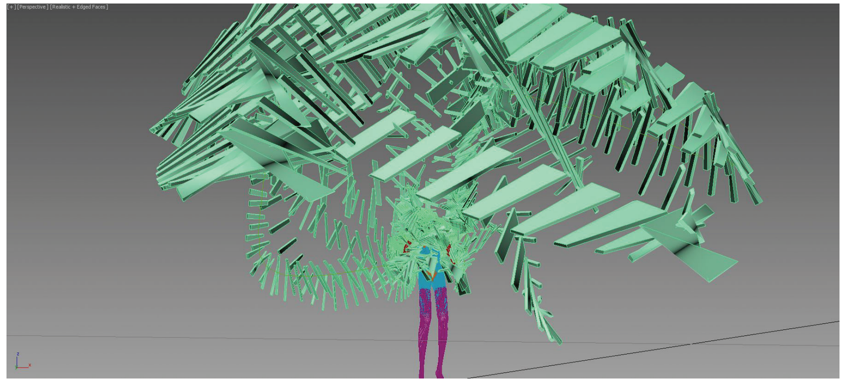
12.2

12.3 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot of design process, showing Torso_2.0 leaping from plinth in digital reconstruction of Walter Pichler's House for the Torso, 2013.



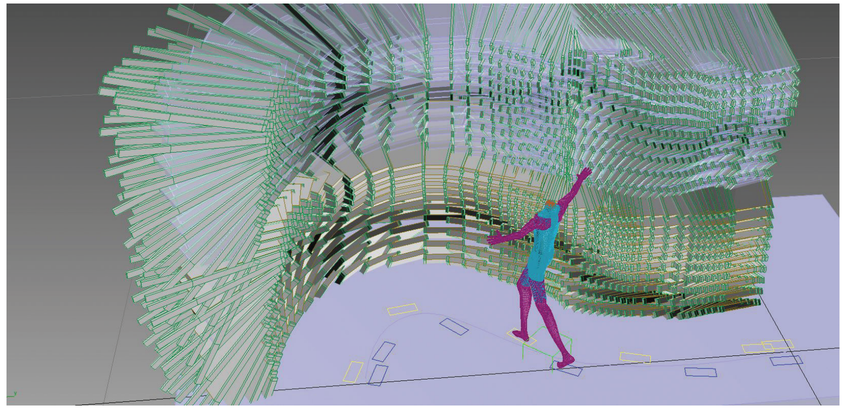
12.3

12.4 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, Torso_2.0 movement study v4, 2013. Investigating how to extend further from the body, components were constructed that were linked to Torso_2.0's body. Torso_2.0's animated choreographed movements caused components linked to parts of his body with position constraints to move correspondingly. Evenly incremental snapshots of the components' movements were made over time. In this case, the snapshots accumulated to form billowing arches around the figure, making for a close relationship between the body and spatial artefact.

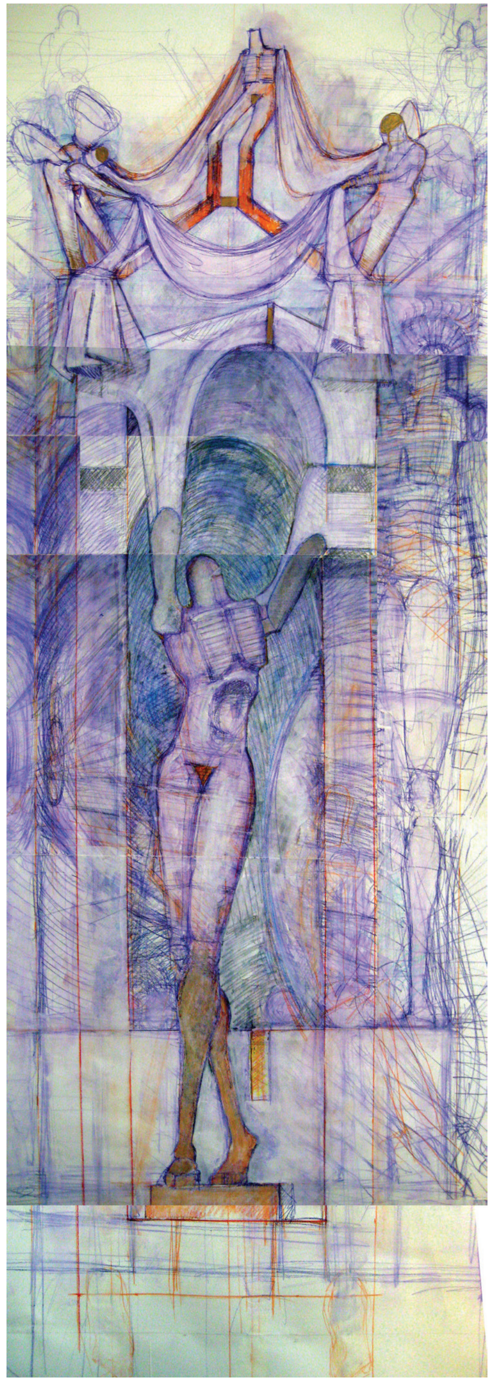


12.4

12.5 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, Torso_2.0 movement study v3, 2013. A highly textured, curving wall resulting from Torso_2.0's animated movement and gestures.



12.5



12.6

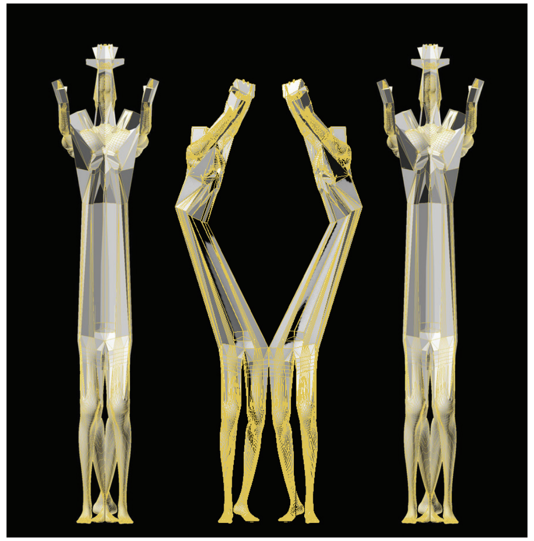
12.6 Alessandro Ayuso, Sketch for Torso_2.0 Niche, 1:2, 2013. The aedicula niches on the facade of the fourteenth-century Florentine building Orsanmichele informed the design. Each offers a concise scenario to investigate the potentiality of the relationship of figure and architectural frame. The design of Torso_2.0 niche functioned as a cipher to determine the traits and performance of Torso_2.0. The exploratory nature of the drawing process brought up further ideas of architecture as an extension of the body, where the gap between figure and frame was bridged by architectural extensions of the body.

I then appeared in one of Herr Alessandro's drawings (Figure 12.6). I found myself in a niche. I raised my arm – and what was a prosthesis became a buttress for a yet unknown architectural fragment above me. The Watcher – P_1435, excuse me – added to my sanguine mood as he fluttered above me, kinetically supporting (or perhaps attempting to support) an unwieldy swag that bellowed in the breeze. I should mention that the Watcher had also undergone some changes: he had taken on different physical traits. He had a similar skullcap and chest piece to me, wings and now he had arms too (he lacked them as the Watcher at our previous home in St Martin). Most incredibly, he had also cloned himself.

[P_1435 typing]:

Ecco! You spent a good deal of time with Signor Alessandro in *Il Regno*, testing out your new limbs, and then we began working together in the drawing when you appeared in the Niche. At first, you were sitting on a Plinth in the Niche. Then, you stood upright and began dancing with your cowl, making triumphant Gestures that you had coordinated previously with Signor Alessandro. This was a sight, dear Friend, after your long sedentary spell! The arc of your hand's path left Traces, becoming an Arch over your head. That is when two of my cloned Companions materialised above you. And yes, their Features were very similar to yours: they had heads that resembled *piccole cupole*,[1] featureless Visages and armour over their chests and their genitals. Between them, they held a swath of fabric Swag, draping below them. Then, you raised your arm again, and rather than touching the arch that was forming above you, your arm Merged with it (Figure 12.6).

The cowl, your arms and the arch were indistinguishable, merging to define a carved-out Niche. Finally, at that point, I joined you all. I straddled two Trusses at the uppermost point, joining them at a void and carefully aligning it with your plinth's slot below. My legs merged with the Truss, and my arms became fabric Extensions connecting to the shoulders of my Companions below me on my right and left. There were Clones flanking you too – your doppelgangers, I suppose – embedded in the pilasters, helping to support the semi-Dome above your Head. But these *Termini*[2] gradually disappeared. Floating Eyeballs appeared, which reminded me of the Winged Eye that was often evoked by Signor Alberti.[3] But I understood, as did you, that the eyes were eyes of Onlookers. The floating Eyeballs emanated *lineamenta* which carved Perforations in the sides of the Niche, and you moved to get in the way of them.



12.7

12.7 Alessandro Ayuso, GIF animation still, Torso_2.0 Terms v1, 2013. Animated vignettes that functioned as generative sketches to reinterpret the figure as an architectural element. In the film loops, the figures made mesmerising movements.

[Torso_2.0 typing]

The Termini (of whom I was one) did not just disappear; we moved from the drawing to the Digital Realm. I continued to dance, but whereas in the niche I was hemmed in by the limits of the page, now my abdomen elongated without constraint. My arms gave way to facets. I reached upwards and planar extensions of my body moved in response. I danced synchronously with my companion (Figure 12.7).

My upper body, having been geometricised, began to become more sculpted again. The planes extending from my arms reached further out into the surrounding space and over me, taking a configuration similar to the semi-dome that was suspended above me in the niche drawing (Figure 12.8). Working with my termini companion, we effected the planes that projected from us so that they began to form faceted enclosures. My legs became further geometricised and indistinguishable from the planes which also reached down to the grid upon which I stood.

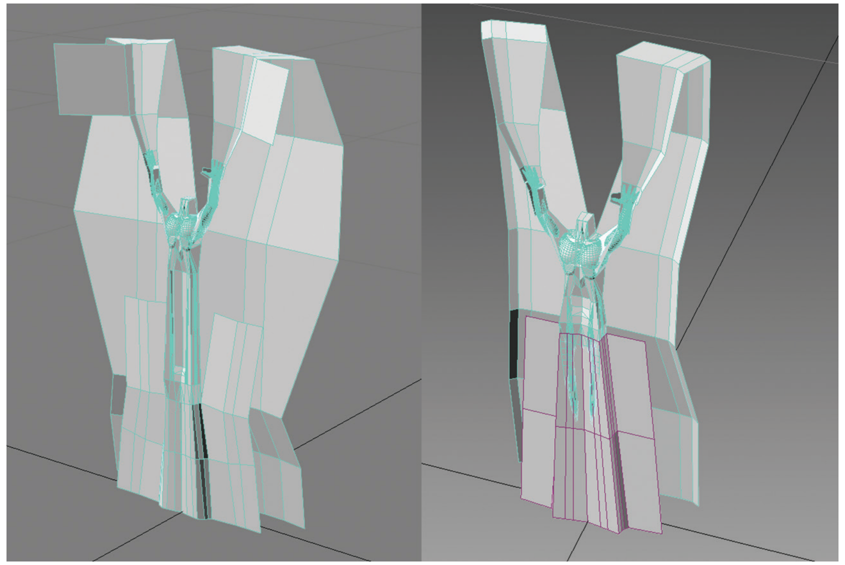
[P_1435 typing]

I noticed that around this time, *Gente Noiosa*,[4] who did not have anything distinctive about them, arrived at the scene, at first just observing your movement. One anonymous Figure looked down from a perch above (Figures 12.9 and 12.10). Another simply stood in between you two Torso termini, but then began to walk around you, followed by floating Cameras. One anonymous Figure moved through the interior formed by you two. They were curious, and touched your faceted Surfaces, and craned their necks to see you above as they moved in between the two of you.

Finally, I arrived with my Companions. We were very eager to take part! We looked for the Folds and Niches that we prefer to inhabit. We played *Scherzi*[5] on the anonymous Figures, hiding behind corners and surprising them as they innocently walked through what was becoming an enclosure (Figure 12.11).[6] It was a delight to watch their startled reactions! There were times that I became entangled in the folded Surface, and I found I could leave my impression in it.[7] This reminded me of the material Substance of *Il Divino*'s and Signor Bernini's drawings, where *Architettura* was malleable and gave way to Figures when we pushed or laid down on it.

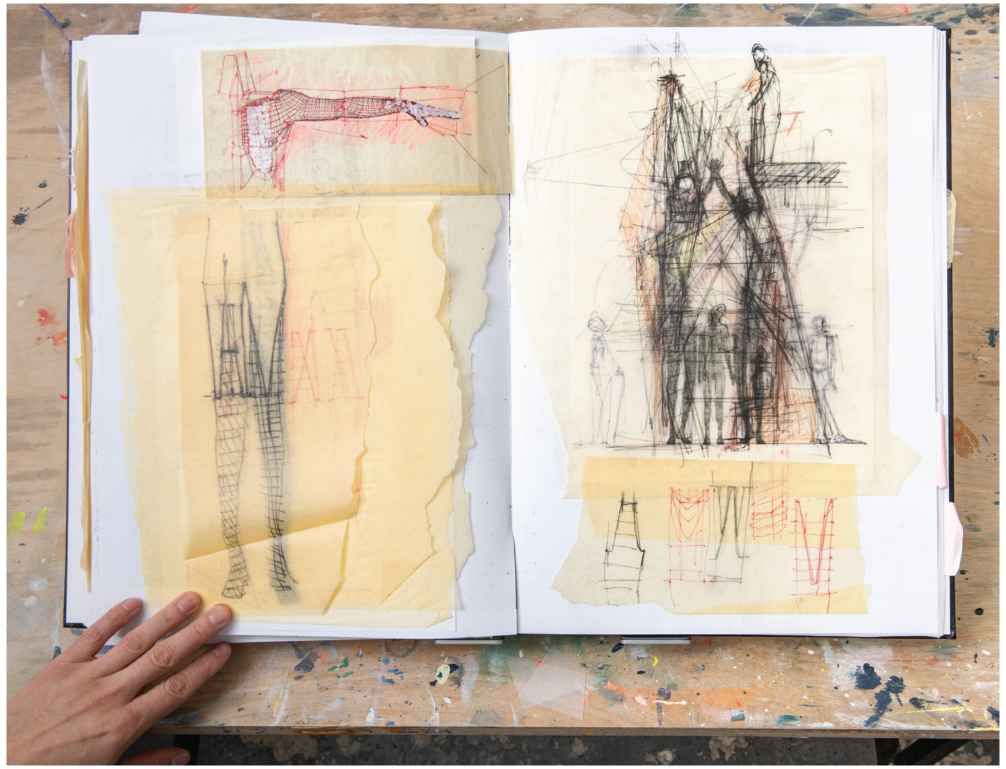
Then, I noticed that where the anonymous Figures traversed, in between the Torso_2.0 Termini, a stylobate[8] had taken shape. The gap in between

12.8 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, Torso_2.0 Term v3, 2013. Planes were linked to the geometry that defined Torso_2.0's body, and as he moved, the planes responded.



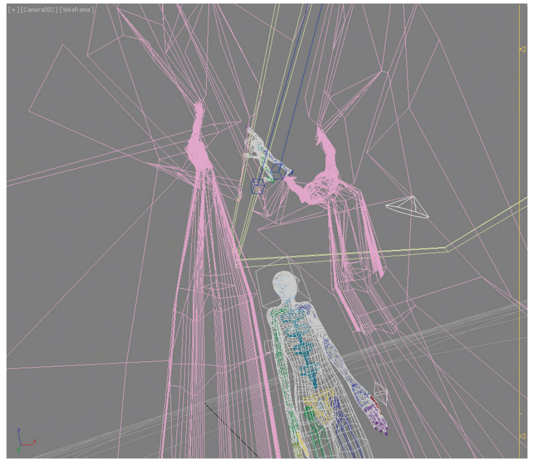
12.8

12.9 Alessandro Ayuso, sketchbook pages with studies for the Body Agent Tempietto, 2013. Photograph by Can Sangunes.



12.9

12.10 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, showing figures walking through emerging space, 2013. As the Torso_2.0 Terms transformed to become a spatial enclosure, additional animate figures (referred to in the P_1435 journal excerpt as the 'boring people') representing potential visitors to the space were animated walking through and around it. In the software, cameras capturing tracking shots were inserted to follow their paths to show their movement through the structure and were linked to their eyes to show their point of view. The spatial enclosure was tested in various schematic site conditions; in this instance, with a balcony looking down onto it where what P_1435 describes in the narrative as a 'boring figure' looked down on it from above.



12.10

Termini was becoming a room, but it had no roof. I flew – and yes, my wings worked! I began flying around the top of what I could see was becoming a *Tempietto*. I spiralled overhead, emphatically suggesting to Signor Alessandro that there should be a Drum with an Oculus to crown this *Tempietto* (Figure 12.11)! As Signor Alessandro and I designed this together, I flew down and landed on the rim of the Oculus.

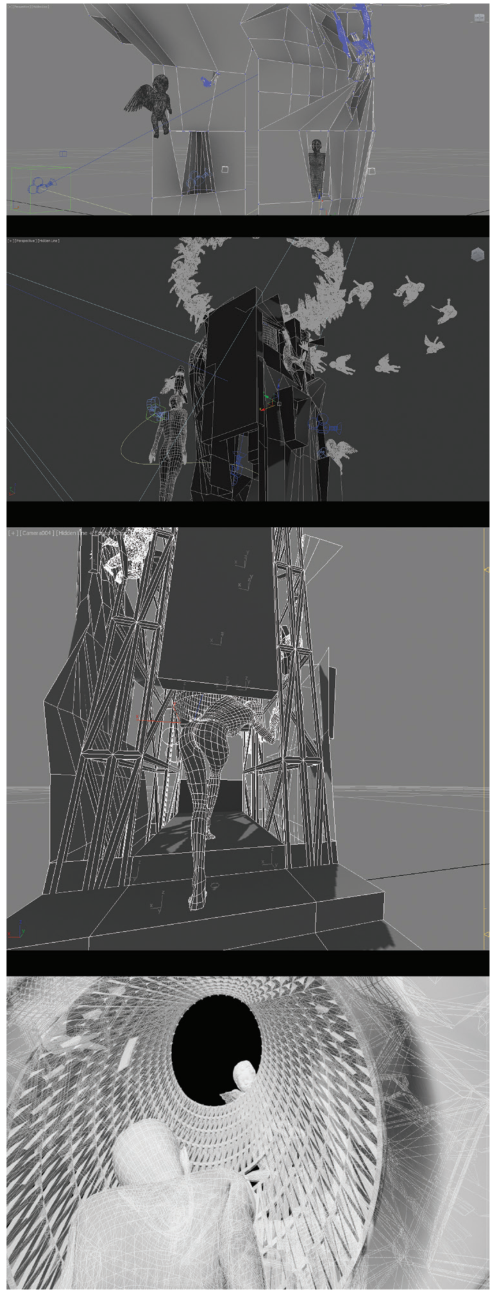
[Torso_2.0 typing]

Why does it not surprise me that you flew to the top?

[P_1435 typing]

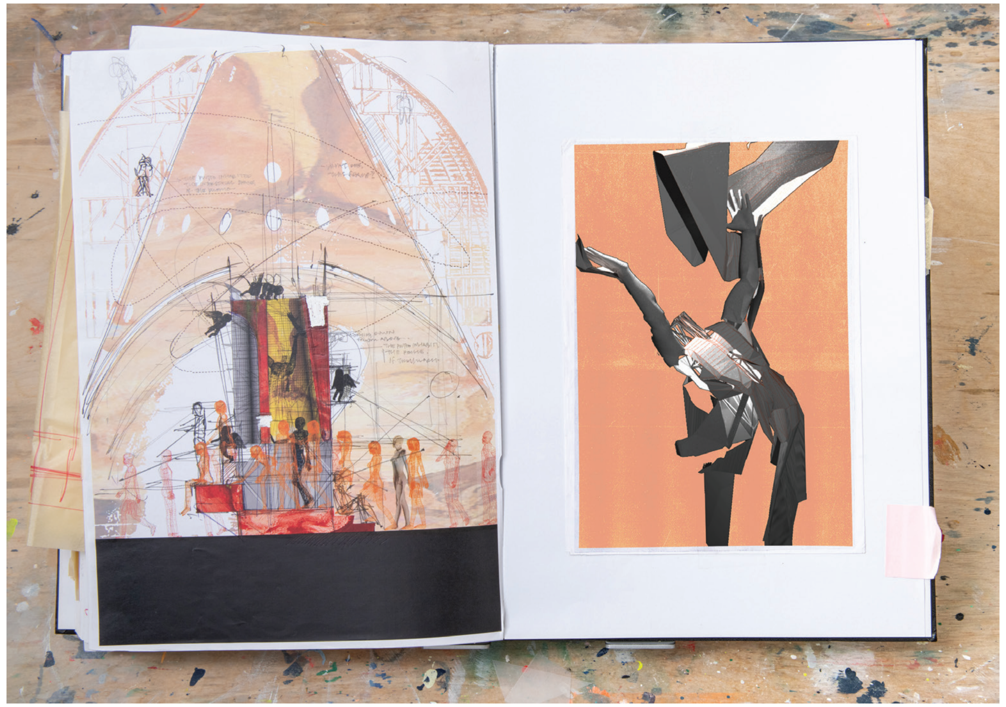
One of the anonymous Figures continued to explore the Folds, steps and Niches we created. While we were making our movements, her hand slid along a curve, guiding her into the darker space in the interior. Looking forward from the crouched position, she could see through the entire Structure. Then, she proceeded to move towards what was becoming a Stage. The bottom of the Drum and the large step up to the top of the Stage requires the most gymnastic Movements. She helped us design this part by moving through it, touching surfaces and manoeuvring through them. With one hand planted

12.11 Alessandro Ayuso, animation still, showing figures walking through emerging space and cameras placed in scene, 2013. In digitally animated vignettes, figures moved through and became embedded in the architectural construction, affecting attractor points and meshes that were attached to their bodies. The aim was for the design to encourage a bodily engaged mode of encountering the structure. In the animation sequence the visitor figure steps further into the interior; looking up, she sees P_1435 looking back down at her, perched at the edge of an oculus, an opening at the top of a large shell in the shape of a truncated cone.



12.11

12.12 Alessandro Ayuso, section collage of Tempietto under a dome, 2014. Digitally augmented photograph of sketchbook. The design sketch collage on the left shows the imagined movement sequence of a visitor and the first iterations of the dome of the Body Agent Tempietto site. The overall design began to reflect a diagram consisting of four zones: a thick poché of structure and ornamental skin, an entry porch, an interior drum and a cantilevering apse with a stage. The tracking camera that approximated the visitor figure's movement and revealed her viewpoint the most closely became important in considering the sequence of views and experiences in the interior. The rendering on the right shows a cladding detail incorporating the Torso_2.0 figure as ornament. Original photograph by Can Sangunes.



12.12

on the curved soffit at the bottom of the suspended Drum, the visitor-Figure crouched down, pivoted on the ball of her foot and put one foot on the top of the Stage (Figure 12.11). Then, hoisting her weight forward, she placed her other hand sideways to regain her Balance. One of my Companions was perched on a Niche exactly at this point. She realised this with surprise after stabilising herself atop the Stage!

Ah, well, I will explain more later. I am exhausted from all this activity. And, Torso_2.0, you must be as well, as the hour has exceeded your usual bedtime! Oh, he is already asleep.

Buonanotte.

11 Novembre Anno Domini MMXIII 02:15

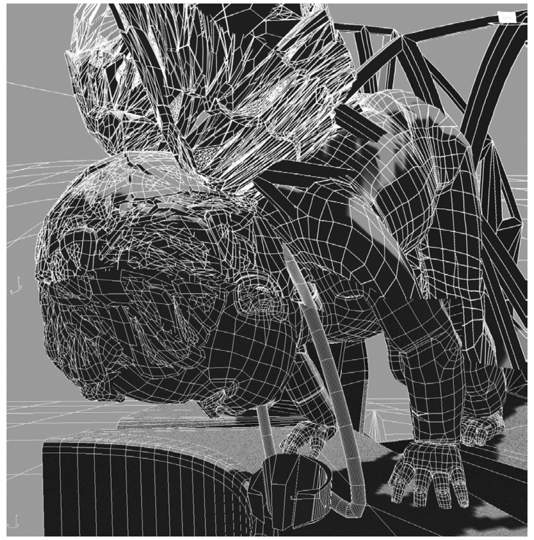
Reader, I can tell you that – and even while they look much different – what we have designed reminds me somewhat of the Baldacchino: it is *un piccolo edificio*,[9] and seems that it could be dedicated to the worship of *Il Padre*, although it has become abundantly clear to me that this is not Signor Alessandro's Intent.

As in Signor Bernini's Baldacchino, I can be found at the apex. One thing that I enjoyed most about working with Signor Bernini was that he often encouraged me to fly upwards.[10] I did not hesitate to transport myself to the pinnacle of what I saw as a combination between a *piccola cupola*[11] and an *oculo alto*.[12] When Visitors enter this portion of this *Nuovo Tempietto*,[13] they will surely look up towards the light drifting down to them at the top. And I will be there too, looking down at them (Figure 12.13)!

Very pleased. But sleepy.

Buonanotte.

12.13 Alessandro Ayuso, screenshot showing P_1435 at the lip of the oculus of the central drum in Body Agent Tempietto, 2013. In the animation, P_1435's performance was both operative and evocative. The operative function arose from the deflection of attractor points embedded in the mesh planes. Because of these, when the body agents moved, the meshes would distort correspondingly. These planes gradually transformed to define a spatial volume. The evocative aspects of P_1435's actions stemmed from the cinematic quality of the animations, which incorporated his point of view and his dynamic image. The visualisations were intensified by the simultaneous composition of P_1435's narrative. His biography compiles a vivid set of practices forming an intensely hybrid habitus. It situates the imagination of his contact with the neutral, malleable planes from the reference point of a specific corporeality.



12.13

23 Gennaio Anno Domini MMXIV 01:37

Many wonderful developments lately.

As I balanced at the rim of the Oculus, I kneaded my hands into it, and I found that they merged with it. This reminded me of when I merged so seamlessly with the clouds of the Gloria window.[14] As my hands fused with *Il Nostro Tempietto*, I nearly lost my balance again, and additional Supports emerged from my back. In some ways, this reminds me of *Il Baldacchino*, when reinforcements supported me on that Canopy, but unlike *Il Baldacchino*, these new ones are not hidden. Rather, they are exposed where I hover in bronze over a wood Cornice attached with concealed iron rods. To me, they are splendid ornaments, a new set of accoutrements.

In this *Modello*, I appear twice, united with the *architettura* around me, my hands and feet blending with it. My nylon Flesh and the faceted Cladding of the *Nuovo Tempietto* are nearly indistinguishable (Figure 12.15). I have the voids of my structural Lattice running through my hollow carapace: at the points where my Epidermis is interrupted by a triangulated Void, you would be able to see right through me.

While Torso_2.0 is fabricated completely from the Nylon material, in my appearance at the rim of the Oculus, I am three-dimensionally printed in two parts of my Body with another wonderful Material, and for this I am very happy. *Infatti*, I am overjoyed, because it is one of the features that I initially lost during my Digital Reincarnation. These parts of my Anatomy are my Wings, which were made from a very special Material – they are translucent with speckles of dust running through them![15] When light is shown on them, they glow opulently! *Che bellezza*! Yes, I am content so far with the design of this *Nuovo Tempietto*, my wings and my favourite position, peering down at the Visitors.

I will sleep contentedly tonight, I am certain.

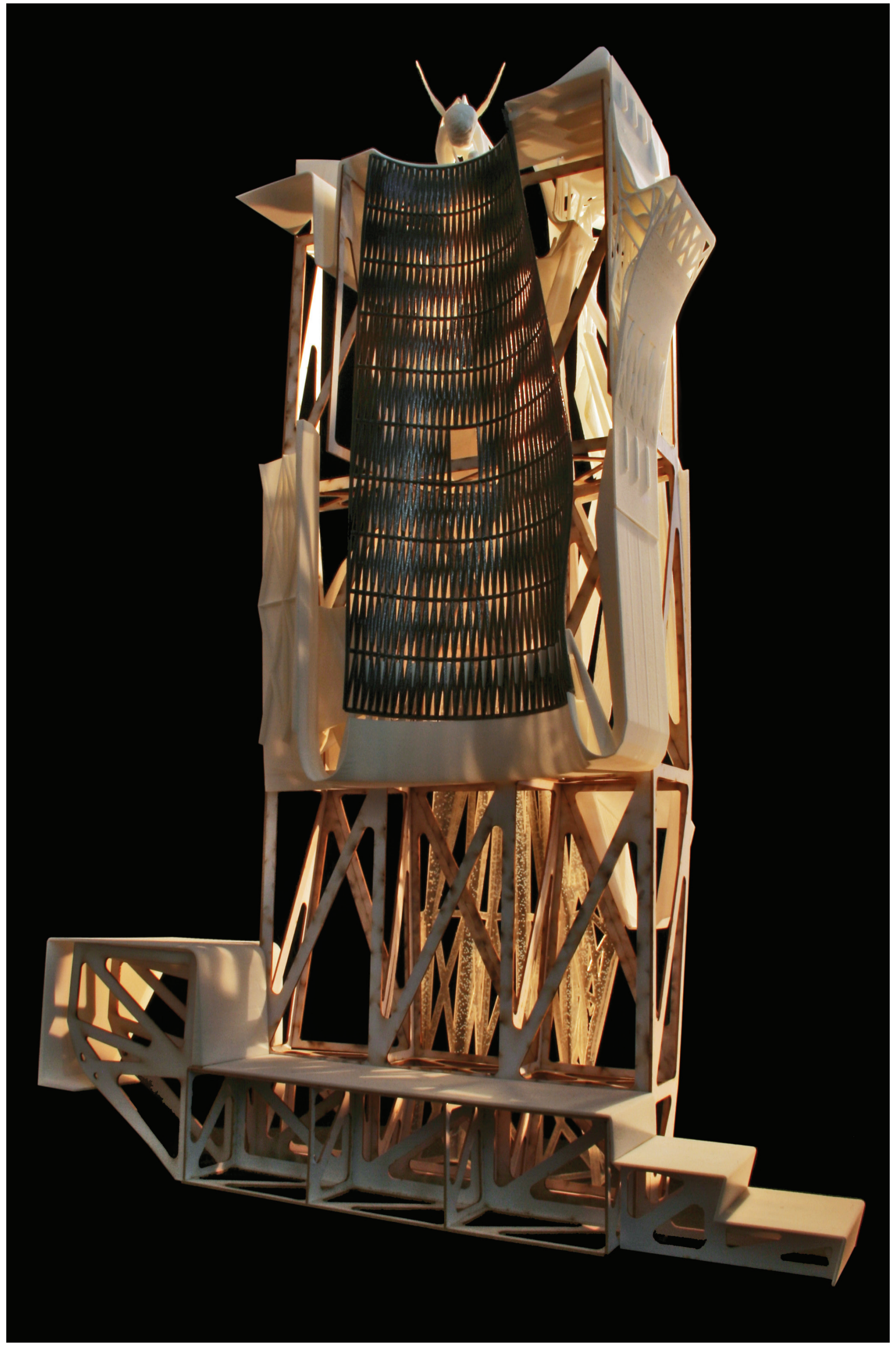
Buonanotte.

The Idea of the Body Agent Tempietto Site

23 Febbraio Anno Domini MMXIV 02:19

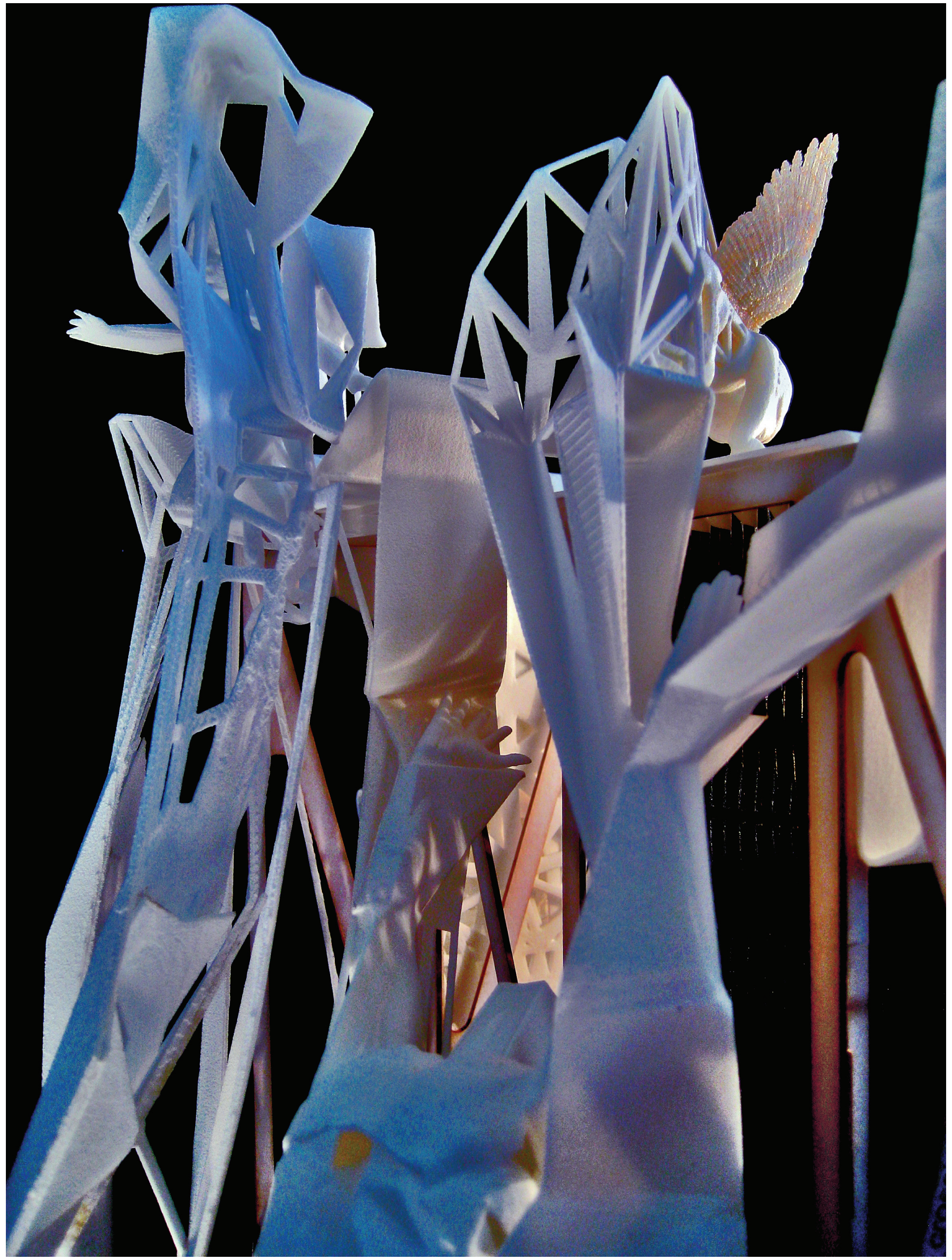
I have been attempting to hint at something to Signor Alessandro. We have made a fine *Tempietto – Il Nostro Tempietto*![16] I personally prefer smaller edifices – they suit me – but in this case, I do not think we should rest with only this small *Tempietto* designed. I have lost faith that any of the *progetti* we help Signor Alessandro with will ever be built IRL. So, assuming *Il Nostro Tempietto* remains in *Il Regno* or as *un modello*, either resting in the vacant landscape of *Il Regno* or as *un modello* on a desk, we need to find another way to have grander Fame than building IRL (and Fame, as Signor Alberti has told us, is this not the point of it all? Although sometimes, I think Signor Alessandro is not aware that this is the goal, SMH). I think we can achieve more Fame by convincing others of the Idea of Our *Tempietto*. In this way, they may expand on the Idea, and we may have more Glory in the future when others call on me to participate in designs.

12.14 Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model, 2014. SLS printed nylon and card, scale 1:10. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.



12.14

12.15 Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model, detail, 2014. SLS printed nylon and card, scale 1:10. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.



12.15

You see, Reader, I had my century-long Sojourn at Signor Bramante's original *Tempietto*. So, I am familiar with its particularities, and even though I was not in Roma at the time it was built (as I had many important appearances to make at that time in the region of Toscana), I gathered much lore from Matthew[17] and the other Figures residing in the original *Tempietto*'s Niches, and I pieced together the History of its making from them. I wonder if Signor Alessandro knows that Signor Bramante imagined a courtyard site that would not have been the bric-a-brac perimeter that Signor Alessandro would have seen if he visited it today. Signor Bramante had envisioned a circular perimeter in the style of the *Tempietto* itself. IMO, this is as if the *Tempietto* was imprinting itself upon the World outside itself. An Idea traveling outward! This Idea undoubtedly influenced many *architetti* following in Signor Bramante's footsteps.

I will leave images of Signor Bramante's original Plans open on Signor Alessandro's Web Browser so that when Signor Alessandro arrives to the studio in the morning, he won't miss them.

Buonanotte.

Design Logbook
Date: 24 Feb 2014
Topic: Body Agent Tempietto Site

The Body Agent Tempietto has been designed without explicit reference to an external site condition. Considering Bramante's Tempietto as a precedent, Bramante's approach to site is of interest. Although it does fit within its courtyard, it almost seems to burst from it like a child who has outgrown an outfit. The lantern of its dome reaches above the datum of the roofline, and it creates a compressed interstitial space between it and its surrounding architecture. But the thing that interests me even more about it is that according to a plan engraving in Sebastian Serlio's treatise, Bramante had designed a courtyard setting of his own. In the plan, the courtyard echoes the centralised, colonnaded form of the Bramante's Tempietto, consisting of concentric layers around it and echoing its circular form. The walls of Bramante's courtyard are symmetrically and axially organised and extend the sculptural scalloping of the Tempietto's own walls.

The ideal courtyard design is a conceptualisation; the impact of the Tempietto was its crystallisation of the Renaissance ideal according to Bramante. In this respect, it was an intellectual nucleus, and its messenger RNA affected future architects as a meme. What would a laminar extension of the logic contained in the BAT look like? In contrast to the logic of Bramante's design, the body agents' logic is non-ideal, ever-changing and idiosyncratic.

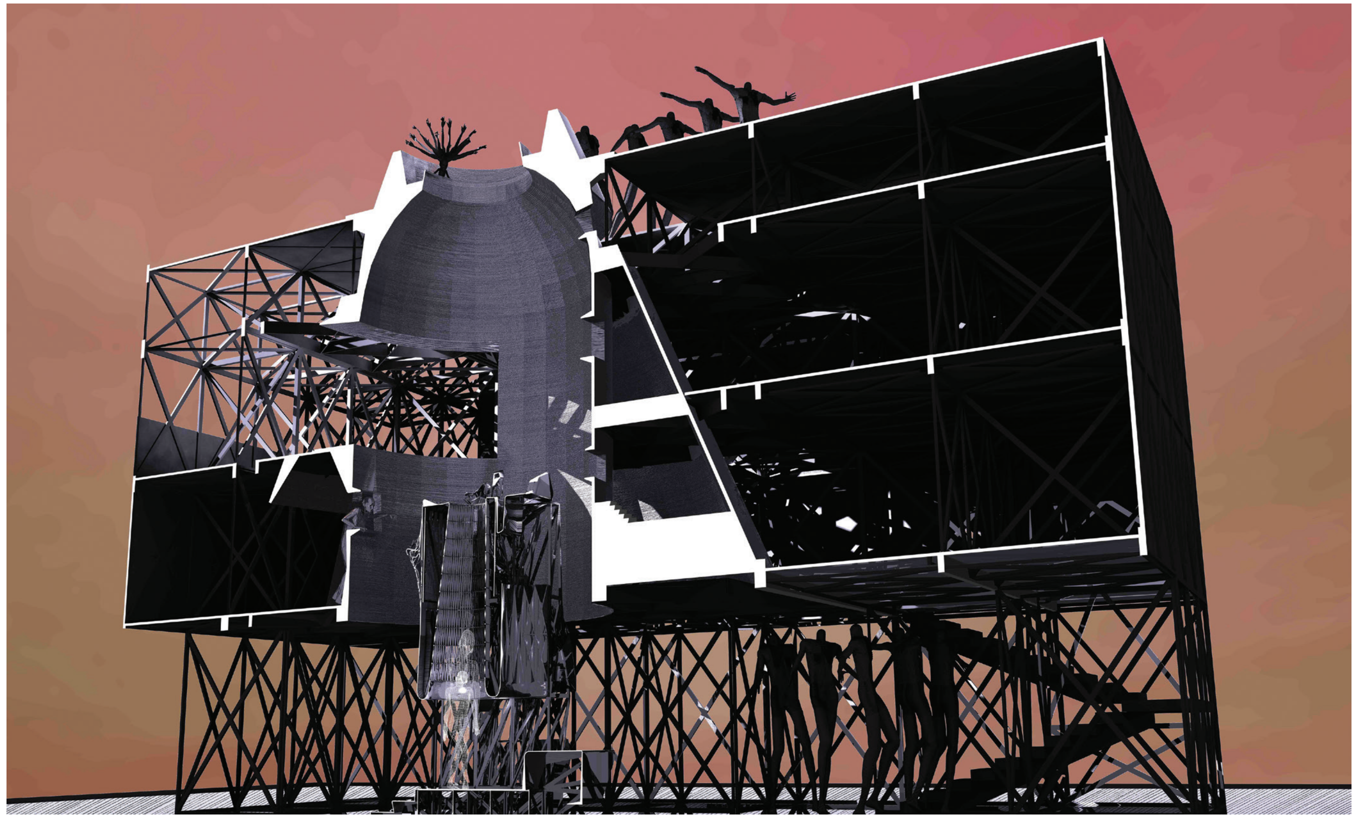
01 März Anno Domini MMXIV 03:32

[Torso_2.0 typing]

Torso v2 here, typing in P's Journal.

We have been working with Herr Alessandro on an expansion of Our Tempietto project. We have been walking through it and shaping it, along with what P_1435 deems the anonymous figures, who have come to resemble the D_I the more we work, and thus in my estimation become more interesting by the day. I will describe to you what the expansion design is like:

Our Tempietto sits under a dome. The circumference of the drum of the dome hovers over the ground midway up the height of Our Tempietto, and its perimeter hugs Our Tempietto close. The dome is the negative space seemingly carved out of a truncated pyramidal volume. The pyramidal volume in turn is held by a three-dimensional grid of structural scaffolding, which at the moment has a length of nine metres and a width of five metres in plan (Figure 12.16). However, I say 'at the moment' because this grid is ever expandable and ever accommodating, as we plan on working with Herr Alessandro to devise many more embedded devices and structures to be held by it.

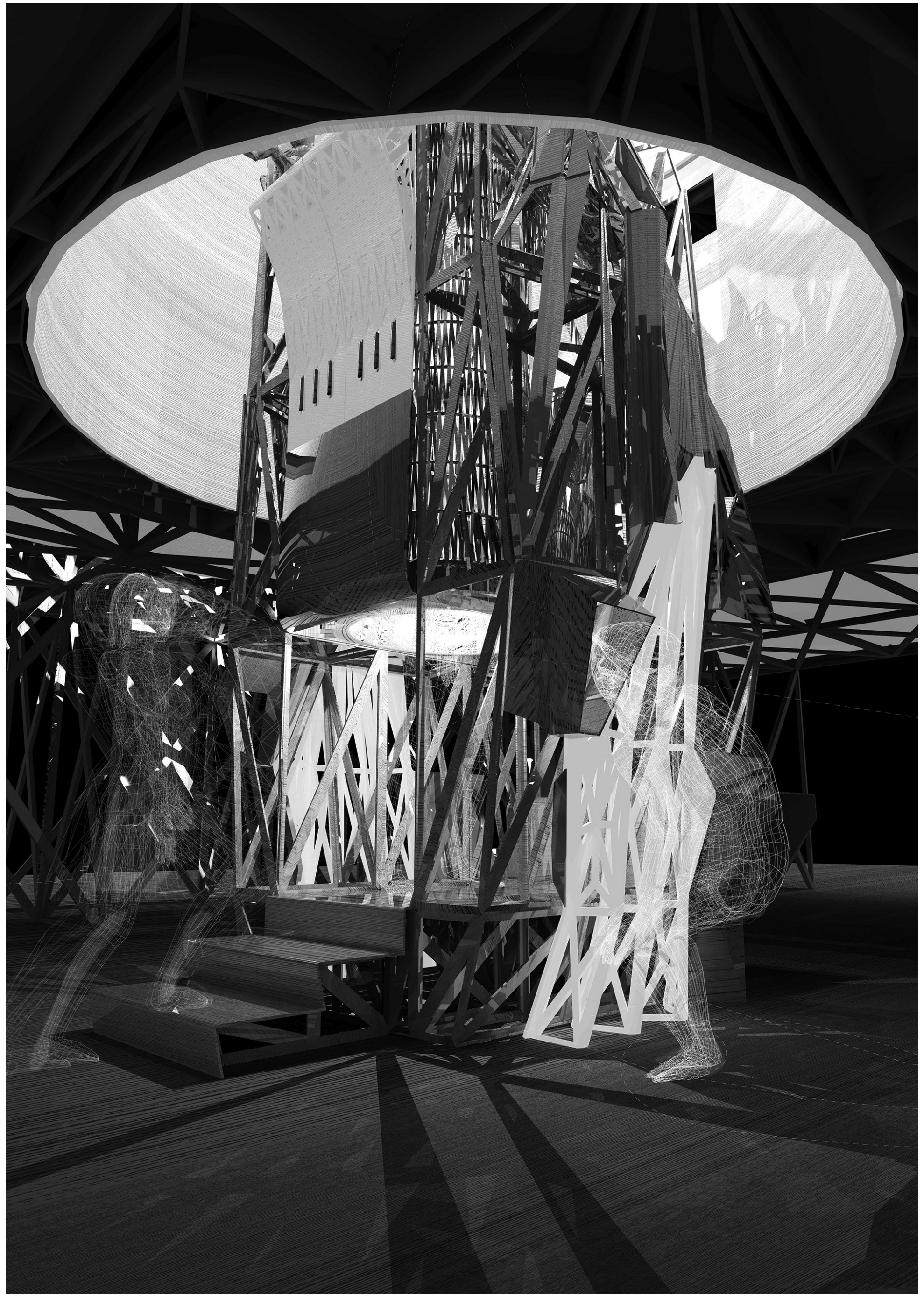


12.16

12.16 Alessandro Ayuso, sectional perspective of Body Agent Tempietto in situ, 2014. Digital rendering. The Body Agent Tempietto site. Enshrouding the Body Agent Tempietto is a concentric extension of the Body Agent Tempietto at its centre. An exoskeleton consisting of scaffolding and balconies and a dome, it was designed to choreograph views and movement into and around the Tempietto by the body agents and visitors, and to form an armature to enable the extension of further structures.

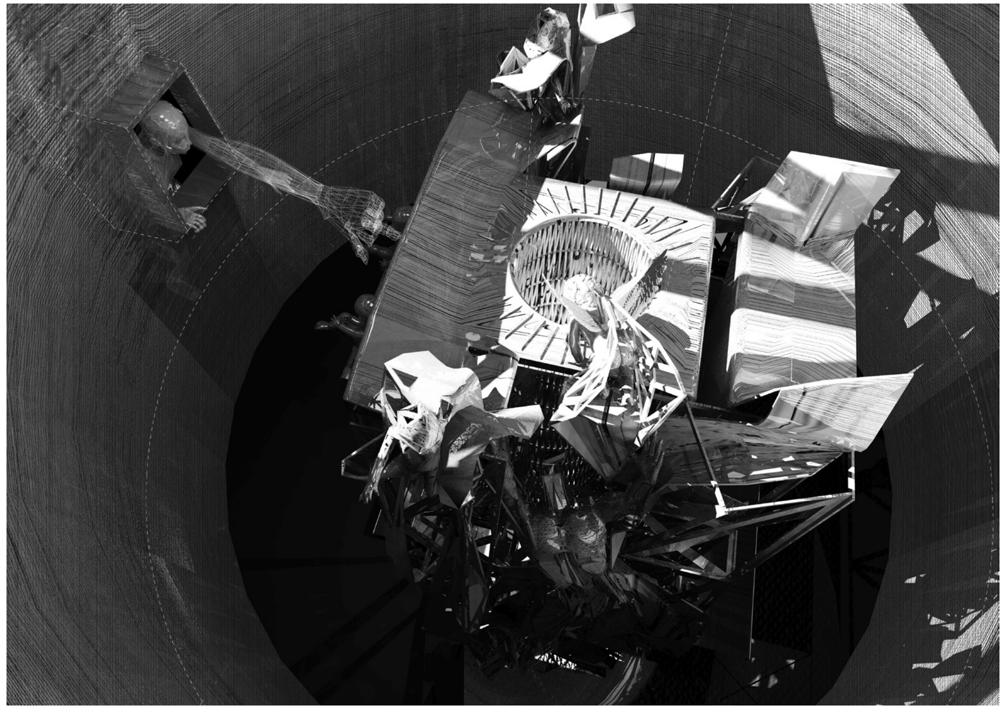
Let us suppose that you approached this block of scaffolding. You could glimpse the lower half of the Tempietto from outside, and you could walk directly to it, but you would never get a clear view of it (Figure 12.18). Nein, we don't want you to be able to see the entire aedicula from afar; we want you to desire to be close to it, to touch it, to walk through it, to inhabit it and see us, its ornament (and co-creators). So, you could walk into it, or you could ascend up a gently sloped ramp or a series of stairs that lead to upper levels of the scaffolding and to voids in the conical volume. If you enter the voids, you can view Our Tempietto below you. Looking from these vantage points, you can see me, and you can see P_1435 (Figure 12.19). From below, you can only glimpse us, but from these points, you are perfectly positioned to admire our bodies and the architecture that emanates from our sculptural forms. From these upper stories, you could almost touch us.

12.17 Alessandro Ayuso, view from the threshold of the Body Agent Tempietto in its site at midnight, 2014. Digital rendering. The Body Agent Tempietto is meant not as a manifesto, but rather as an exploration of embodiment. The body is engaged on a sensorial level from changing spatial scenarios, textures that evoke skin and fabric, structural narrative that shows bones and carapace, front and back, and so on but also the figure as ornament, coming face to face with figural ornament and other visitors.



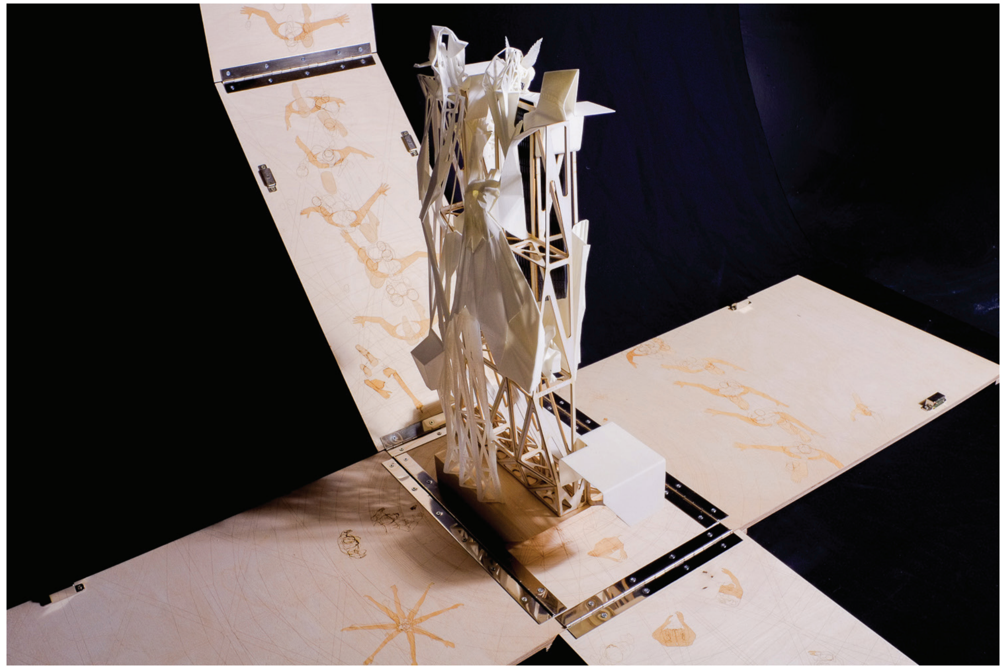
12.17

12.18 Alessandro Ayuso, view of Body Agent Tempietto from a dome window on March 1PM, 2014.



12.18

12.19 Alessandro Ayuso, Body Agent Tempietto sectional model in open container with etched mappings of site, 2014. With thanks to Harpreet Lota. Photograph by Ksenia Zizina.



12.19

You will see two versions of me flanking either side of Our Tempietto. The pose that I strike is one of surging upwards, a frozen frame of my dance. The structure and cladding that is a part of me supports and encloses the drum. You would see a sculptural manifestation of P_1435 in three instances: he joins me flanking the structure as part of its exterior in a geometricised version, resembling the truss structure, and then of course you would see him (and from here, you can appreciate the beauty of the wings he is so proud of), looking down into the drum below.

In the Digital Realm, we inhabit this structure as kinetic figures as well as through drawings and animations. The uppermost story of the Tempietto is mainly occupied by our friend P_1435, and this is the case for the scaffolding structure too. Although I can access the roof, and often do, the ceiling of the uppermost story is very low, and I cannot even fit there (I am quite tall now with my legs). P spends much time there these days though, and he especially enjoys perching on a cornice running along the edge of the large oculus of the dome, ever searching for the highest point to look down upon. There, he peers below, relishing the view of us and Our Tempietto and of our visitors admiring our sculptural forms. And for some reason, from his perch, he periodically laughs maniacally or makes guttural howls that reverberate through the interior of the dome. I was alarmed at first, but I have grown accustomed to these periodic outbursts as I am accustomed to so many unusual things in this new existence.

Gute Nacht.

Notes

1. Italian translation = 'small domes'.
2. Plural for *Term*, or terminal figure, mannerist ornamental figures delineating a boundary, usually integral to a pilaster or column.
3. P_1435 refers to sketches of eyes that Alessandro drew in the margins of the drawing, subsequently concealed by erasures and further layers of drawing. P_1435 likens the eyes to the winged-eye icon which was a symbol used by Renaissance architect and theorist Leon Batista Alberti 1404–72.
4. Italian translation = 'anonymous people'.
5. Italian translation = 'jokes'.
6. Italian translation = 'room'.
7. Imprints of P_1435's body were left in the ornamental surface cladding of the Body Agent Tempietto.
8. In classical architecture, a stepped plinth supporting the columns of a temple.
9. Italian translation = 'small building'.
10. P_1435 refers to the tendency for the presence of *putti* to signify proximity to the divine, as occurred in Bernini's work at St Peter's Basilica, discussed in Chapter 7.
11. Italian translation = 'small dome'.
12. Italian translation = 'tall oculus'.
13. Italian translation = 'new Tempietto'.
14. P_1435 refers to the Gloria window surround at St Peter's Basilica, designed by Bernini, discussed in Chapter 7.
15. P_1435 refers here to the fabrication process in which two colorations of acrylic were produced in a single additive manufacturing build.
16. Italian translation = 'our Tempietto'.
17. P_1435 refers to a Statue of Matthew the Evangelist which sits in one of the interior niches of the Tempietto designed by Bramante.

Chapter 13

Body Agents

Reflections and Further Potentialities

A discourse by Alessandro Ayuso in which discoveries and further avenues of the research are identified, primarily through a discussion of related work done since the initial period of research.

In my own design experiments shown here, body agents aided to mobilise subject positions, catalyse architectural imagination and simulate intersubjective exchange. They aided in the defamilarisation of what, in the context from which this work arose, was a ubiquitous and everyday digital design environment. They aided in interjecting historical milieu into this environment, which often privileges ahistoricity. In the virtual scenario, they were entangled in the 'stuff' of digital design – directly interacting with, emerging from and giving rise to meshes, surfaces, vectors, animate geometry and digitally fabricated components. As opposed to users, the body agents became meta-inhabitants, non-normative unidealised figures that in some instances provided a grounded station point and in others challenged the presumed design intention. This made them crucial additions to the mostly disembodied and asubjective but ultimately schizophrenic digital design environment in which they operated.

P_1435's Historical Trajectory

My method of approaching historical precedents in the narrative writing presumed that the figures in the work were personified by their authors and that they could have interjected subject positions through the design process. In this way, historical content became raw material for the creative process, mutating through its incorporation into creative writing and design.

Following the evolution and integration of figures in the design precedents yielded crucial lessons informing the invention of body agents. In the case of Michelangelo's New Sacristy, the tracing of his carefully constructed and evolving depictions of figures in drawings showed their continuous and reciprocal interaction with imagined architecture. The supposition that these figures enabled the simulation of subject positions is affirmed based on the forceful subjectivities indicated through the enigmatic and expressively distinct figures that had been drawn and became part of the built work, as they even seem to assert their ownership of the project.

The exploration of *putti* figures in the work of Bernini revealed their diverse performances. The bodies of Bernini's *putti* are vehicles allowing for engagement with real and imagined materialities. As

13.1

13.1 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH positioned in site 1, 2016. Timber, acrylic, spray paint, 1,500 mm×300 mm×3,150 mm. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

representations, they appear to move fluidly and sometimes simultaneously through dichotomous realms such as the human and angelic, celestial and mortal, and the stable and contingent. They are meant to convey heightened emotion through direct appeals to the onlooker, contributing to the meaning and permeation of narrative content interwoven into the buildings of which they are a part.

While temporally and stylistically distinct, Pichler's work shares a commonality with Bernini's *bel composto*, particularly in the way his figures – part sculpture and part architecture – encourage engagement with the architecture, architect and onlooker. In terms of the fragmentary history of the figure in architecture compiled here, Pichler's figures pick up on modernist themes discussed in Chapter 9 such as early post-humanism and the abstraction of the figure. Yet, set adjacent to the modernist examples, Pichler's figures at St Martin offer a strong critique: while they are post-humanist, they are not the anonymous figures of the Bauhaus, and while the figures are abstracted in moments, they incorporate particularities and a specific grounding which convey deeply personal qualities and a fascinating mythology; this allows them to be woven into the fabric of architecture and sites.

P_1435's historical trajectory through the book shows a significant becoming in the form of a self-realisation, beginning his tale with despair brought about by his digital incarnation. As P_1435 recounts his development in *Il Regno* alongside his memories of the past, this awareness gradually sharpens. P_1435's traversal through history reveals a cross-section where a continuous dialectic dynamic between traditionally understood subjectivity and technological developments plays out.

Deeply Dionysian at heart, P_1435 consistently resists historical shifts and technological developments in art and architecture, which he views as at odds with emotional, sensual and entangled modes of being. This tension is evident even in his telling of the events in the Renaissance where he emphatically disavows the relatively novel technology of perspective, following his champion Michelangelo. In the narrative, this selective opposition to technologies comes to a head as P_1435 grapples with his findings on modernism in Chapter 9. While ontologies and practices underpinning modernism in some ways aimed to reinvigorate agency amidst a mechanised world (particularly in the post–World War II period in Europe), many of its practices had the effect on the subjects it sought to address of reinforcing a displacement of the subject. As Sigfried Kracauer put it, the subject was 'thrown into the cold infinity of empty space and time'.[1]

In the narrative, P_1435 realises that the projection of normative measurements and subjectivity he finds in Neufert's figures excludes P_1435 as a non-normative subject, and he intuitively bridles against it. His state in the narrative as a cyborgian, digitised, ever-changing sprite fuel his ambivalence towards what he begins to see as the recurring 'univocal' model from the Modulor and the Vitruvian Man. While to some extent P_1435's past 'appearances' as described in the narrative could be considered as an affirmation of an idealised Renaissance humanist subject, his discovery of Neufert's 'robot human' causes P_1435 to consider that in some respects designs predicated on figures such as the Vitruvian Man left P_1435 on the outside of the definition of the ideal human subject.

P_1435's new vantage point on the idealised figures that he took for granted in the past are in part due to his cyborgian reincarnation. His digitised body shifts forms, traversing phases of abstraction and distortion where form intermittently loses its grounding in the past, taking on permutations that defy traditional notions of embodiment and representation. Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston describe this phenomenon: 'technology makes the body queer, fragments it, frames it, cuts it, transforms desire'.[21] P_1435's body, as an augmented original prosthetic, becomes ever transformable, inherently multivocal and leaky, in the sense of Haraway's cyborg, where corporeal boundaries are transgressed. While at first P_1435 reviles his digital body's state of flux, he recollects moments of transformation and hybridity in his past as well, and begins to embrace the capabilities that his newfound contingency allows. The moral of the tale is not to say that 'becoming digital' on its own solves the complex and deeply ingrained problems of hegemony or univocalism, not least because digitised and cyborgian bodies can also hold properties which allow them to become 'anthropogenic machines' par excellence, sometimes bringing technology's efficacy to bear in problematic ways. Yet, the glitch-infused, animate, easily distorted, hybrid, schizophrenically abstract and hyper-real figure revealed in the book's design vignettes present potentialities for subjective modalities which create space for alterity to flourish.

Limitations Inherent to this History

Renaissance Italy pervades the work in this book. As Chapter 2 noted, this milieu is particularly important to the context from which my own architectural design emerges, and although much discussed by countless scholars over centuries, I felt it deserved exploration in the context of the figure in architecture, as it leaves an imprint on the consideration of the figure and body in architecture. By selecting precedent figures from historical contexts from which an idealised canonical figure solidified, and treating historical figure types and designs as material to adapt and change, my intention was to question the immutability of figures that leave a lasting legacy in architectural design. While engaging this time period revealed potentialities, it also posed limitations to address contemporary issues.

For instance, an ecclesiastical underpinning permeates the precedents. This runs counter to much contemporary society and buildings. Most of the architectural precedents discussed in the preceding chapters were spaces of worship or sacred, votive spaces; a Roman Catholic strain runs throughout them. Even Pichler's work follows this pattern, as arguably his Roman Catholic background forms an undercurrent in his design of the figures and buildings at St Martin. Of course, I do not intend my work on body agents as an argument for a particular denomination or spiritual belief to be introduced into spaces that are quite rightly secular or dedicated to other spiritual belief systems or cultural values. There is much to learn from architecture steeped in other belief systems or cultural contexts, and body agent–based approaches situated from these perspectives would be immensely valuable, undoubtedly challenging many of the assumptions brought to bear by the precedents I selected. For all of its limitations to address contemporary contexts, the authors of the devotional architecture discussed in the book treated their idea of the human subject and the inseparable architectural design that addressed it with lavish and exquisite care, and I mean to put forward body agents as means to achieve such attention to the subject, secular or not.

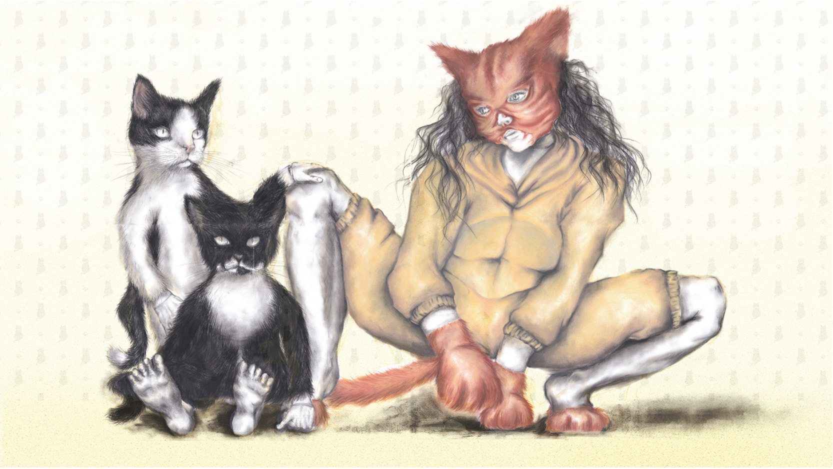
My strategy in the studies was to engage aspects of the digital and figural to make the body itself unfamiliar. I aimed to create images of bodies that defied easily falling into contemporary categorisations to make them highly specific access points

to subjective realms of alterity. P_1435's specific route through this history revealed moments – for instance, in the gender ambiguity of the ostensibly male *ignudi* who P_1435 describes taking the form of women in the New Sacristy design drawings, and P_1435's observation of the alteration of European figurative ornamental typologies in Central and South American Colonial Baroque, which Guido recognises as political acts of rebellion, and in the appearance of a female *spiritella* in the Palazzo Vecchio – where the orthodoxy of the canonised European figure was broken within the context of historical architecture itself. Through writing dialogue between various voices in the book, I meant to flag historical moments where a rupture occurs or where ambiguities or contradictions arise. These junctures offer opportunities for perspective. These moments are worthy of more study to realise the potential of architectural figuration to give voice and presence to people that traditional European and Western architecture has played a role in overlooking or oppressing.

Images of body agents in my original design work shown in this book do defy traditionally normative notions of the figures inhabiting architecture which are passed on from the Vitruvian and interwar modernist legacy. For instance, as a toddler, P_1435 defies normative assumptions of age, and arguably both P_1435 and the limbless Torso defy normative assumptions regarding ability. In many ways, however, the body agents in my study remained tethered to their original epistemes in ways that limited their capacity as devices to interrogate crucial present-day questions regarding contemporary categories of race, ability and gender. Specific, direct and radical exploration of how bodies falling into these traditionally non-normative categories can be incorporated into architectural design is necessary and urgent. The recent album cover art by the Afro-Cuban American painter Harmonia Rosales for King's Disease by Nas struck me recently as a demonstration of how traditional European figure types can be reappropriated with great impact in the context of art and popular culture to address groups overlooked in traditional European art.

In the context of architectural design, my students' work in MArch Design Studio 25 (DS25) at the University of Westminster, where a body agent–based approach frames and informs the students' projects, has proven to me that a body agent–based approach has the potential to address a broad array of contemporary issues productively, including particular groups of people, by bringing a range of perspectives and subjects to bear on design. In DS25, students learn about the history of the figure in architecture and bring their own diverse backgrounds to the design process. They start each year by inventing body agents that allow them to address issues and subjects relevant to themselves and imagine those of others, while also generating the beginnings of spatial and material architectural languages.

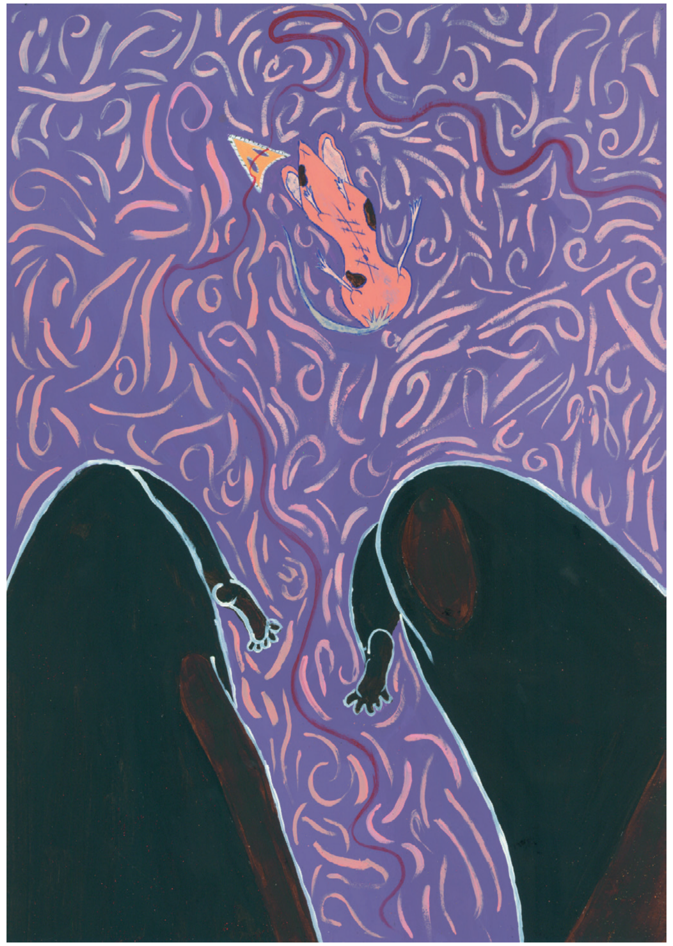
For instance, 5th-year DS25 student Lauriane Hewes created a project that speculated on changing relationships between animals and humans through a project for a show home for a single millennial



13.2

13.2 Lauriane Hewes, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Portrait of the Millennial Family, 2020. Digitally altered pastel drawing.

parent of aliuranthropic cats. To frame the project both imaginatively and critically, she created a window into the world of her project and connected it to contemporary social and technological developments. Part of this process was the construction of her own body agents. To do this, she made large-scale drawings of the imagined inhabitants of her project: the millennial female protagonist – and the prosthetically augmented cats – was an alter-ego that stemmed from Hewes's experience and the issues that she saw as important to her and her peer group (Figure 13.2). Another 5th-year student, Shaden Meer, also reconsidered the relationship between humans and animals in her design of a Mouse Transgenesis Laboratory, beginning her project by studying Haraway's writings on companion species. Resonating with joyful, nuanced depictions of black women in the paintings of contemporary American artist Theresa Chromati, Meer studied them and based her images of scientists working in the research laboratory on them (Figure 13.3).[3] Infused with this philosophical and aesthetic underpinning, Meer's own painted storyboards exploring the relationship between scientists and mice led to a project where the laboratory mice are revered co-inhabitants. Fourth-year student Megan Woods began her project by imaging a body agent as her alter ego, equipped with bodily traits allowing for superhuman and constructive abilities. Told in the form of a graphic novel, her project began with a reformulation of the Vitruvian Man as her alter ego, and then the invention of a science-fiction narrative where 'her alien' acrobatically experiments with catenary structures connected to the orbital tower in Stratford, London (Figure 13.4). This project playfully springboarded from the alien's story of opportunities amidst a feeling of otherness to the design of a live–work space for a community of displaced people. Another fifth-year student, Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz, imagined the dynamic between two body agents to initiate exploration of notions of purity and pleasure in the design of his project. Envisioning a Ballardian narrative centred around the Subject – an allergen fetishist – and the Handler – a design-minded sadist – led to a proposal for a pollutant filtration station which not only purifies the air in and around St Paul's Cathedral, but is also a chapel of hedonism, where allergen fetishists indulge in rituals of perverse pleasure (Figure 13.5).



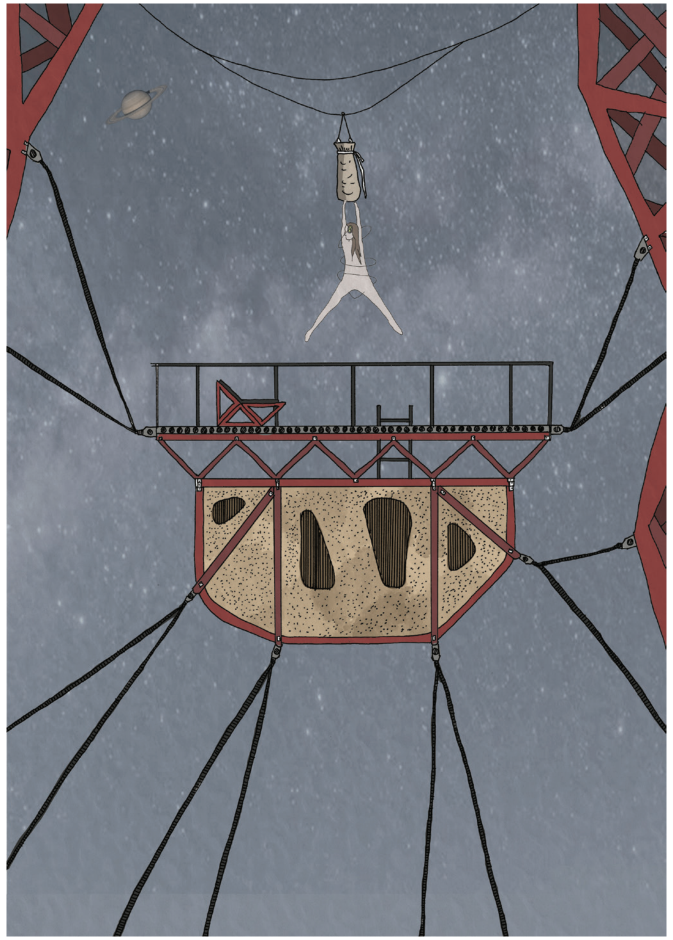
13.3

13.3 Shaden Meer, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Scientist's View of Oncomouse, 2019. Acrylic on paper, 420 mm × 297 mm.

Writing as a Research Methodology

As I anticipated, in the historical precedents I examined and the design vignettes I pursued, the figure, as a representation of the human body, proved an indispensable vehicle to cultivate and interject subject positions in the design vignettes, and the figure as a device remained a central focus of the inquiry. More unexpected at the outset was the degree to which narrative writing and the figuration as a literary construct would play a role in this process. In a sense, as I wrote from the point of view of body agents, the textual emphasis of Lyotard's original notion of the figural began to supersede the importance of the Deleuzian version of the concept as a driving force in the work. The narrative writing, particularly from the viewpoint of P_1435, allowed for a complex character to emerge, altering the course of the research and helping to create interrelationships of seemingly disparate strands of history, design, images and text.

P_1435's character was partly an autobiographical construct – for instance, he and I arrived at Wates House at the same time, and were similarly sceptical about predominate digital design techniques of the moment – and in this way, his voice was often an amplification or permutation of my own. Yet, his character was an amalgamation composed from historical material and traits and voices of colleagues and others from my own life. This added to his function as a contrapuntal voice as the construction of this persona involved a



13.4

13.4 Megan Woods, 4th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Frame from '1926' Graphic Novel, 2020. Digitally augmented pen-and-ink drawing.

channelling of other voices which were not necessarily complicit with my conscious aims at the outset. I began to consider body agents much like the heteronyms of Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, which he intentionally did not call pseudonyms, as they were more than noms de plume. Not just tropes which allowed him to address or explore particular subject matter, for Pessoa, the heteronyms were akin to other selves that spoke through him.[4] The heteronymic property of body agents enabled what Deleuze would call a 'double-becoming', where 'the author takes a step towards his characters, but the characters take a step towards the author'.[5] In this sense, through the construction of the conception of the other, the self is extended towards the other and vice versa. The historical ingredients in the assemblage of the body agents' characters intensified a dual ability of projecting the self outward (to the imagined other situated in the historically remote episteme), and reflecting inward (back to the self as an 'intercessor'). This bidirectional dynamic, as David Burrows and Simon O'Sullivan point out, allows an imbrication of reality and fiction where 'characters themselves become the story-tellers'.[6]

As a literary device integral to the design process, I found that the interjection of P_1435's perspective, which simulated a dialogue of alterity, catalysed a recurring acknowledgement of the imagined other in my process. This added to P_1435's function as a grounding element, providing continuity to the design process, as his voice became a recurrent, reliable factor. P_1435's character was shaped by my imagined experience of his designs, further solidifying the reliability of his presence in them. Yet, at certain moments, the incorporation of the literary aspect of his voice into the design process augmented the impact of his visual presence in the work, challenging my view of the objects, spaces and assemblies I made, altering the course of the design and generating unexpected outcomes.

13.5

13.5 Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz, 5th-year student at University of Westminster MArch Design Studio 25, Triptych of the Handler's Studio, 2020. Digital rendering. Narrative imagery shows prosthetic devices designed in the Handler's studio and the Subject being exposed to allergens.

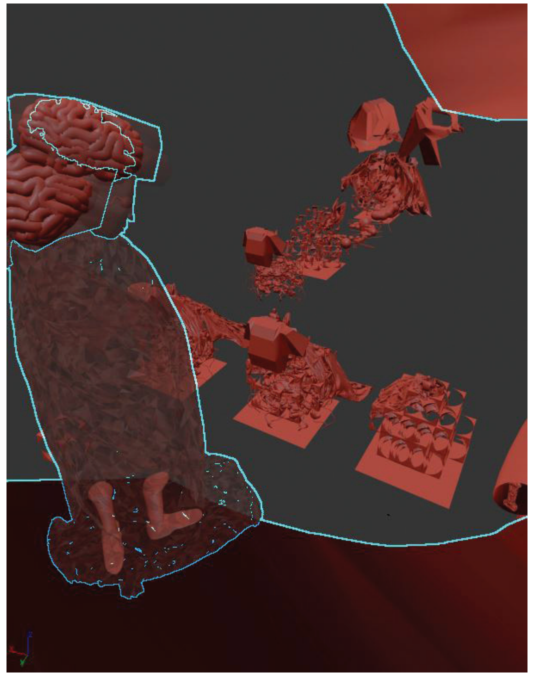
Humour as a Tactic

Another unexpected aspect which surfaced in narrating through P_1435 was the role of humour in negotiating the complex theoretical and historical terrain exposed in the studies. P_1435's character enabled me to make associations, connections and leaps across historical time and points of view. I see humour in this context as a feature of what Hans Georg Gadamer would call the 'non-purposive' activity of play.[7] Gadamer observes that play, as part of artistic creation, allows for additional instances of imbrication. Specifically, he observes that a work that evidences play as an element of its creation puts forward an invitation for the viewer to 'play along', thereby breaking down the separation between the audience and the work.[8] Play – and specifically play that entails humour – is not necessarily a welcome tactic in academic research. Yet, I hope that whether the reader giggled or groaned at P_1435's antics in the narrative, the comedy was part of the invitation to 'play along'. I also hope that the work demonstrates an argument that humour's role in architecture holds potential as a productive – and serious – tactic, and that body agents show potential to mobilise it.

Potentialities

Authorship and the potential for collaboration

This study also brought up issues of the role of individuality and authorship in architecture. Basing the invention of body agents on historical precedents linked them to



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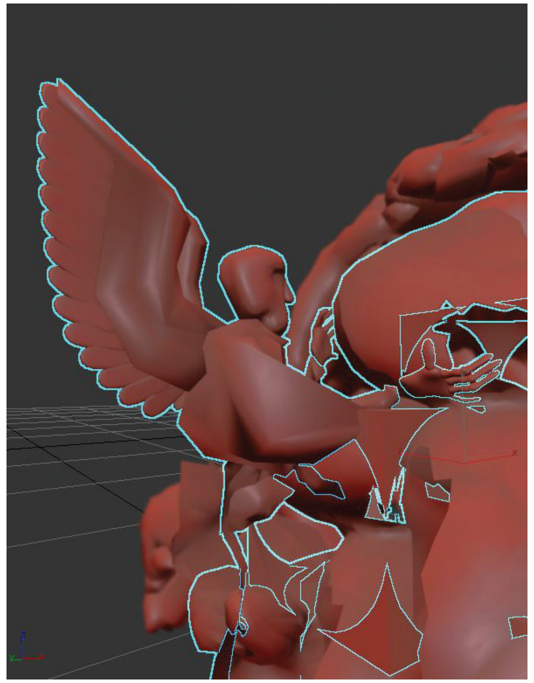


13.7

13.6 Alessandro Ayuso, Laura Kershaw, Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz et al. Screenshot of working process for plusFARM Exquisite Corpse project, 2020.

13.7 Alessandro Ayuso, Laura Kershaw, Alexandros Tzortzis de Paz et al., screenshot of working process for plusFARM Exquisite Corpse project, 2020.

tradition and to other architects, and the narrative voice of the body agents, particularly P_1435, as mentioned, incorporated my imagined or inferred viewpoints of others. Still, the body agents in my design projects were *my* body agents. This association with a particular author was important to endowing body agents with particularly situated subject positions. This characteristic of the methodology left the body agent–based approach open to questions about the capacity of body agents as devices for collaboration.

Recently, the collaborative potential of body agents was tested as part of an architectural exquisite corpse charrette hosted by New York–based collective plusFARM. In an aim to rethink collaboration in the age of COVID, the project gathered together an international group of architects to design a project through a single digital file which was passed successively from architectural team to architectural team. In this situation, body agents were devised to be associated with particular architectural qualities and tectonic elements, with particular modus operandi (Figures 13.6 and 13.7). While this experimental process did not constitute a complete and rigorous analysis, its anecdotal successes suggested that body agents have the potential in collaborative design situations to enable a continuous thread in the often disjointed digitally based collaborative design process, interjecting a particular human presence amidst a

contingent digital scenario that otherwise lacked stable reference points.

Overcoming the limitations of the body proper

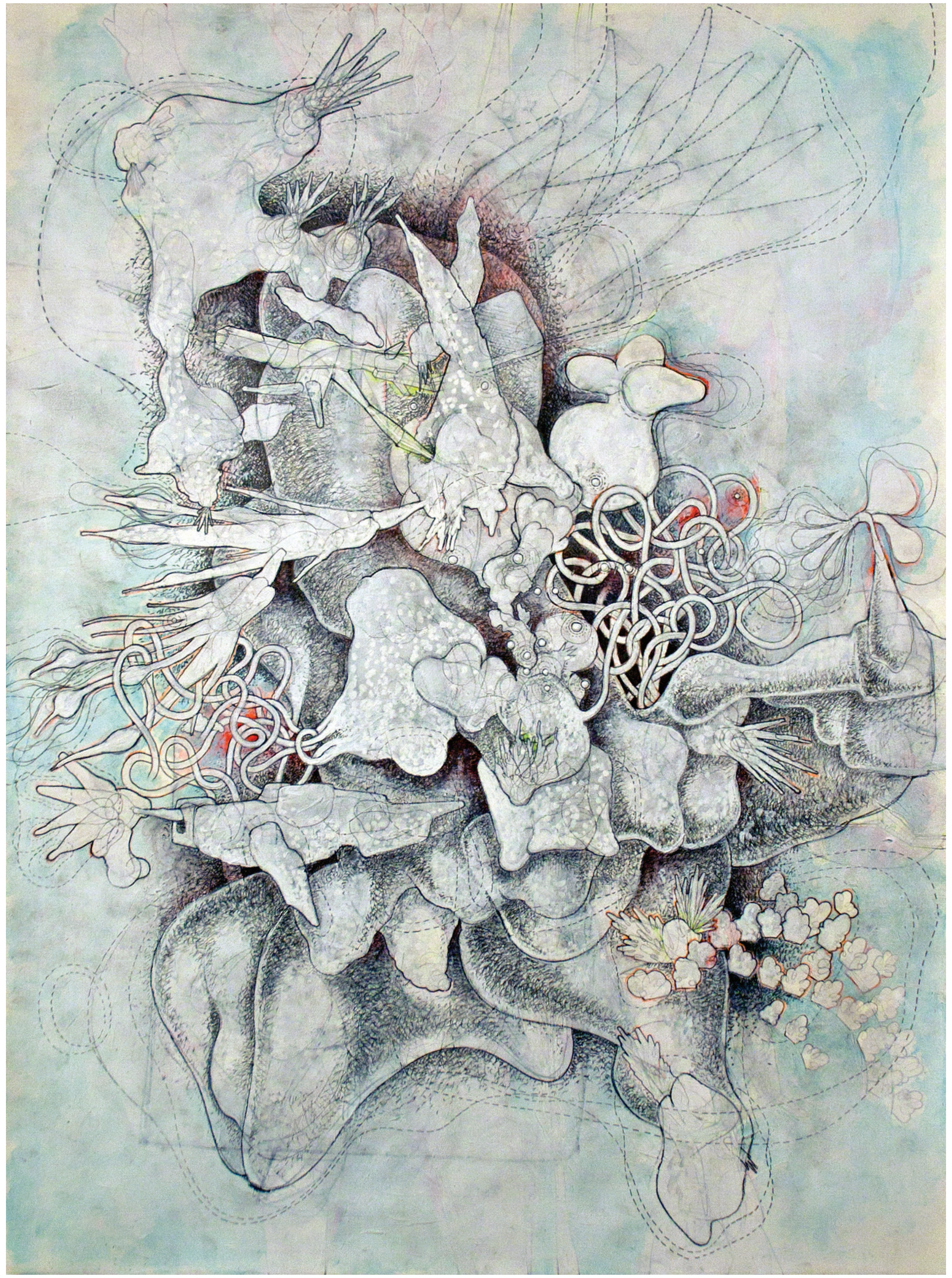
There were additional parameters in the framing of this study that I began to see as limiting the exploration of figures in addressing other important aspects of subjectivity. For instance, the focus on the digital design environment, particularly the 'everyday' context of the one similar to what I experienced in architectural practice, was itself a limit. In my later work, I sought to broaden the set of practices that constituted my working methodology. Picking up on the blurring of art and architecture in the precedents I had examined, I introduced more practices associated with studio-based work. Historical precedent and typological forms also became limiting to the approach to the rethinking of the expression of the body proper. I found that exploration of the subjectivity of alterity necessitated images of bodies that were more extremely contingent or that were unlikely assemblages or were even unhuman.

With my agent bodies drawing series, I explored the spatial potentiality of the body as what I saw as an unbound posthuman assemblage. The 'Agent Body' drawing series consists of 20 mixed-media drawings done over a two-year period (Figures 13.8 and 13.9). The drawings consider the post-human body from the inside out. While the figures I designed via digital media in my previous work were often hollow meshes – literally bodies without organs – the embodiment captured by these handcrafted drawings offers a counterpoint to the digital images and are more akin to the notion of organs without bodies. In this way, the drawings are intended as spatial suppositions about body images that could occur when the limits of the original prosthetic of the body is surpassed and the body itself becomes a source of expression. The depicted assemblages of particularities are drawn in a way meant to evoke a layered collision of organic and inorganic, machinic and corporeal parts, along with architectural notations and Looney Tunes-esque cartoon forms.

In this work, I aimed to maintain an ambiguity of scale and an incompleteness of form to allow for a shifting series of *mise en abyme*, where the drawing could present a convoluted space, a vast or miniscule object, a strange body or perhaps a vast construction. Through this oscillatory perception in which the drawing alternately conjures an interior or exterior, object or space, large scale or diminutive, I aimed to move fluidly through unstable boundaries from the interior of the body to the exterior of architecture.

This drawing series was crucial to the formulation of the aesthetic language in my depiction of the blurred and assembled embodiment of the designed figures in my series that followed. Leaky Embodiment Alter-ego Personas (LEAPs) are multi-media representations of tragicomic actors with uncooperative bodies, presenting a monstrous – even alien – subjectivity (Figures 13.11 and 13.12). Fabricated through a full-scale construction process of these figures, involving CNC machining, 3D printing, laser cutting and hands-on

13.8 Alessandro Ayuso, In the Sky, 2015. Mixed media, 760 mm × 560 mm.



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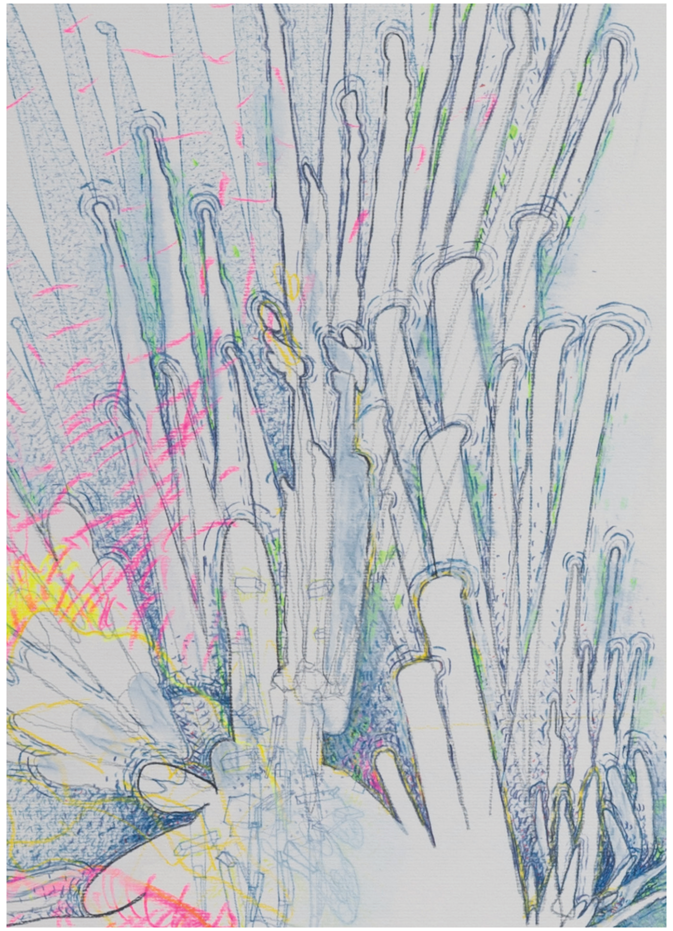


13.9

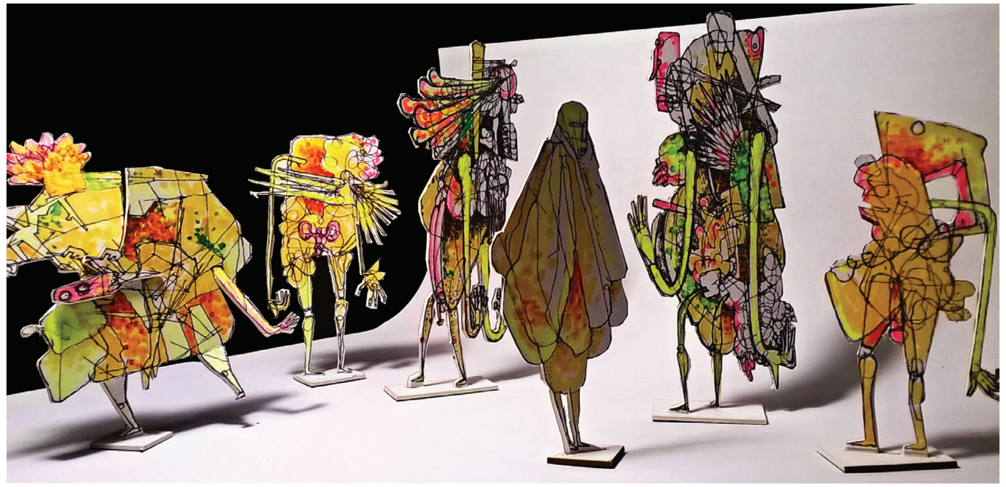
13.9 Alessandro Ayuso, Ghost Organism 2 (detail), 2018. Pencil, ink, acrylic on paper, 760 mm × 560 mm. Photograph by Can Sengunes.

sculpting, designing and fabricating, as well as mixed media and analogue painting and drawing, they suggest not only spaces and entities within the body and extending from it, but also the prospect of the body itself as an architectural assemblage.

LEAPs form a dialogue with the places in which they are constructed and situated. For instance, through the process of constructing them, components are periodically transported, relocated and placed in the environment. Elements of the environment form the backdrop from which they are visually apprehended, influencing the outcome. At times, shadows, insects, rain and dirt touch the surfaces as they are fabricated and drawn on; sometimes, these elements are directly registered in the compositions (Figures 13.12–13.14). LEAPs are built and installed physically in situ, but are also digitally animated and camera tracked, where their digital aliases navigate contexts where they may seem incongruous and not 'at home' (Figures 13.1, 13.11 and 13.16). This transposition from one place to another is part of probing the relation of the virtual and physical architectural body to its context.

The LEAPs are further developed through portraiture, a process informed not only by the process of oil painting itself, but by iterative digital modelling exploring framed views of their volumetric, material and tectonic composition (Figures 13.17 and 13.18). Through this multilayered process of working which yields a range of artefacts and vantage points of the LEAPs, their personalities, narratives and subjectivities come into focus and form an evolving interrelated speculative scenario beyond the scope of any singular artefact or snapshot.

Within the context of research, LEAPs are Alognon Pragma – a platonic category of 'a thing without account, a business without rational principle'.[9] The artistic artifacts which convey the LEAPs have a singular imperative: to generate, access and unearth particular feelings and subjectivities; they are architectural inasmuch that they live up to this goal. In this way, LEAPs slightly differ from the body agents in my



13.10

13.10 Alessandro Ayuso, LEAP scale figure models, 2018. Card, marker pencil, ink, scale 1:25. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

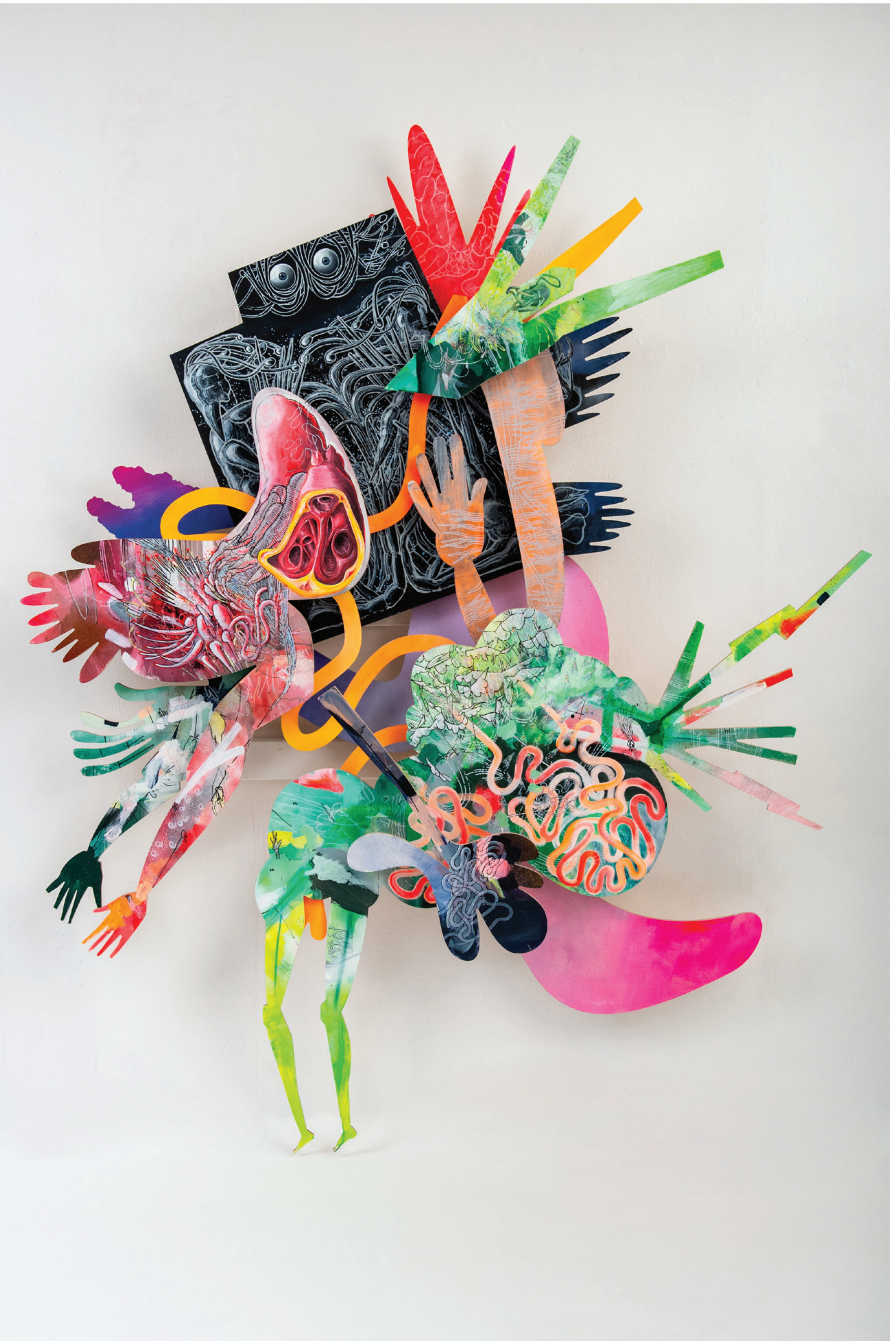
design work in the previous chapters, who purposefully emerge from architecture's history and practices.

The body agents' value is not held in any one drawing or passage, but rather as part of a series of expositions on the capacities of an overall approach. I intend them as an invitation to other designers to create their own versions of body agents. The many different figures and perspectives would undoubtedly enable manifold, diverse, valuable and particular subject positions to influence architectural design.

Notes

1. Kracauer as quoted in Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject*, 6.
2. Halberstam and Livingston, *Posthuman Bodies*, 16.
3. Cooper, 'An artist making a powerful statement'.
4. Pessoa was known to have said 'I subsist as a kind of medium of myself, but I'm less real than the (hetonyms), less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all'. Ciuraru, 'Fernando Pessoa and his heteronyms'.
5. Deleuze as quoted in Burrows and O'Sullivan, *Fictioning*, 20. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 222. I was reminded of the salience of Deleuze's concept through discussions with Chuxiao Wang during supervision of her Bartlett MArch Thesis 'Monologue of the hell mouth and its architect: Interpreting creature-morphic architecture in fictional writing', 2021.
6. Burrows and O'Sullivan, *Fictioning*, 20.
7. Gadamer, 'The relevance of the beautiful', 23.
8. Gadamer, 'The relevance of the beautiful', 25.
9. McGuirk, 'A nomos for art and design', 2.

13.11 Alessandro Ayuso, FI_a_3. CNC cut plywood, timber, acrylic, spray paint, 3D printed ABS, 1,850 mm×350 mm×2,300 mm, 2018. Photograph by Can Sangunes.



13.11

13.12 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH fabrication process, 2016. Components in the midst of being transported. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

13.12

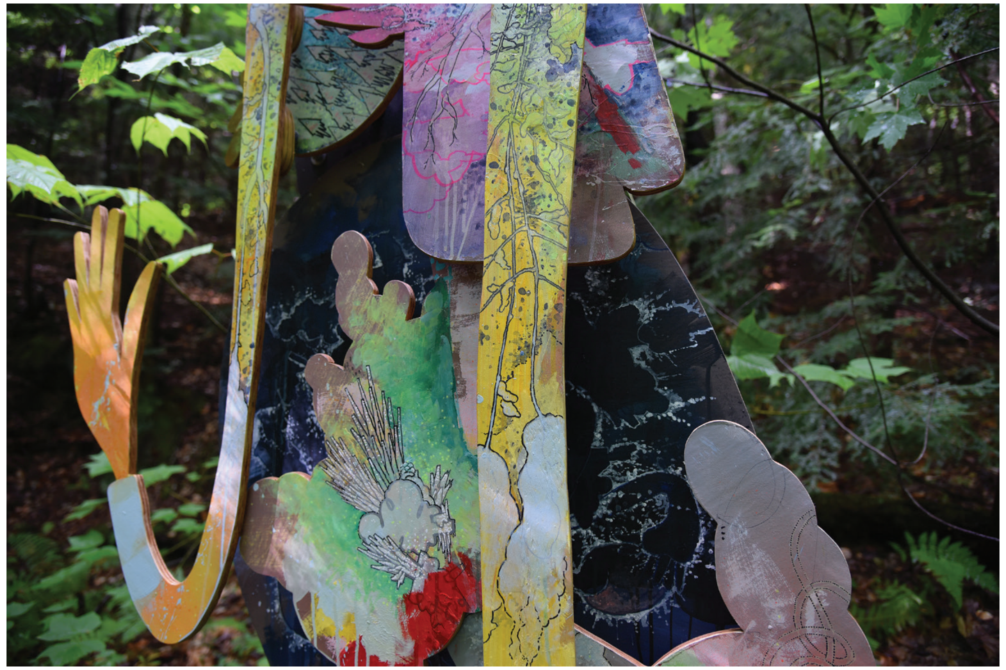
13.13

13.13 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH fabrication process, 2016. Components in the midst of being transported. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

13.14 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH situated in site 1, detail, 2016. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.

13.14

13.15 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH situated in site 1, 2016. Photograph by Alessandro Ayuso.



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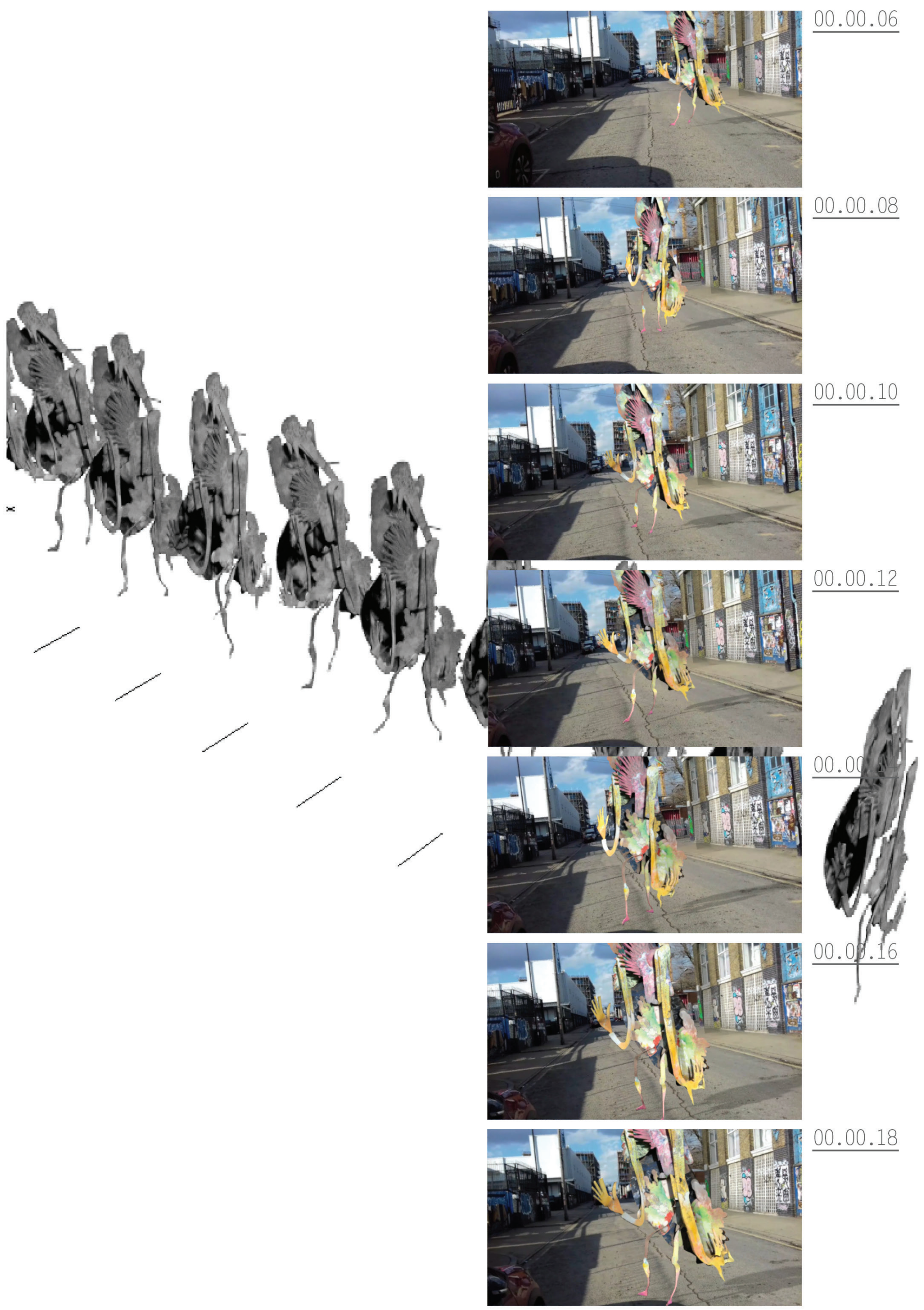
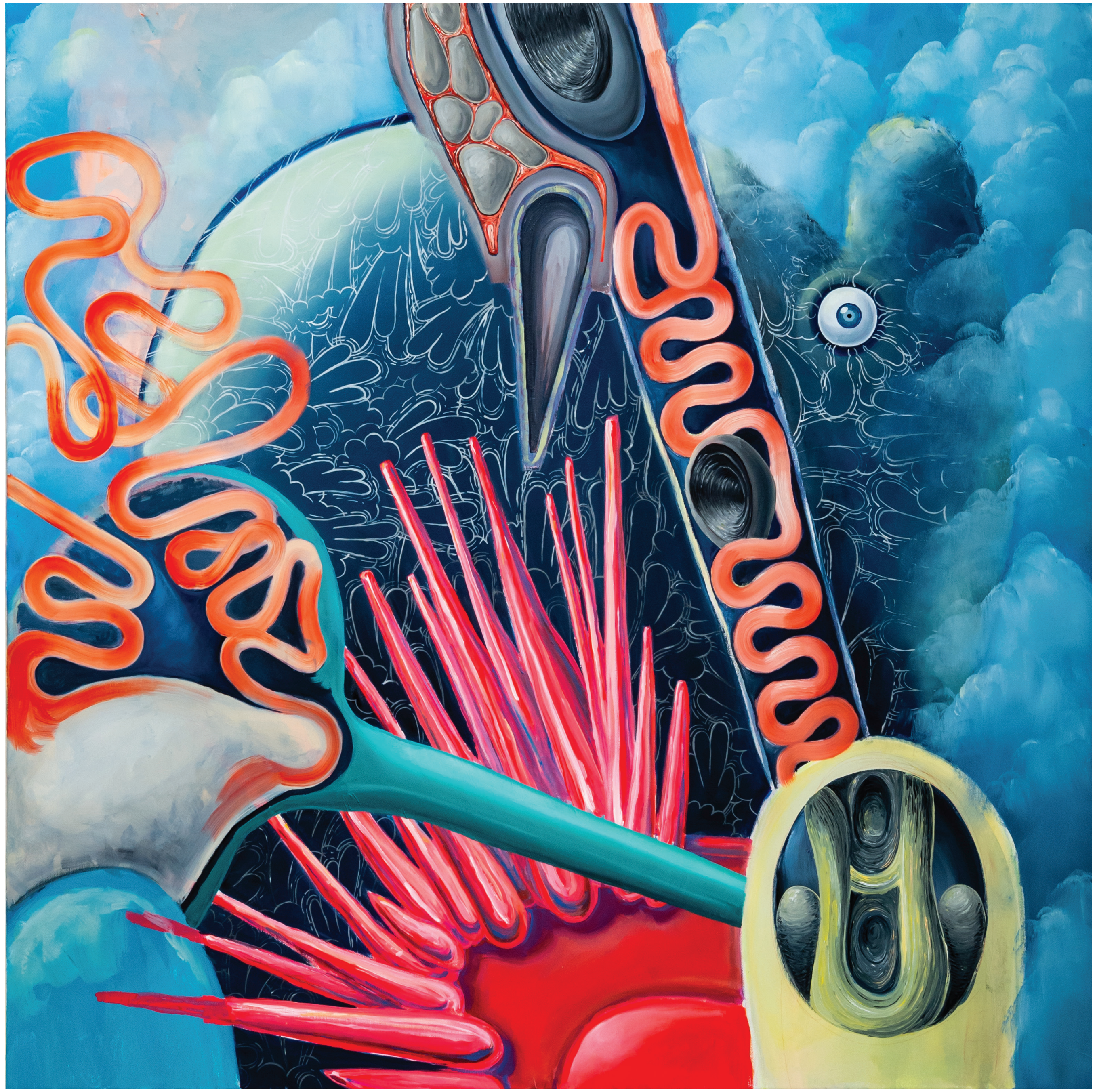


13.16

13.16 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH wandering Fish Island, vignette 1, 2018. Composition of draft film clip stills, camera tracked animation of digitally rigged model (background image of animation of digitally rigged model).

13.17 Alessandro Ayuso, OL_BNH Portrait 1, 2018. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 1,010 mm×1,010 mm. Photograph by Can Sangunes.

13.18 Alessandro Ayuso, FI_a_3 Portrait, 2019. Oil on canvas, 1,010 mm×1,010 mm. Photograph by Can Sangunes.



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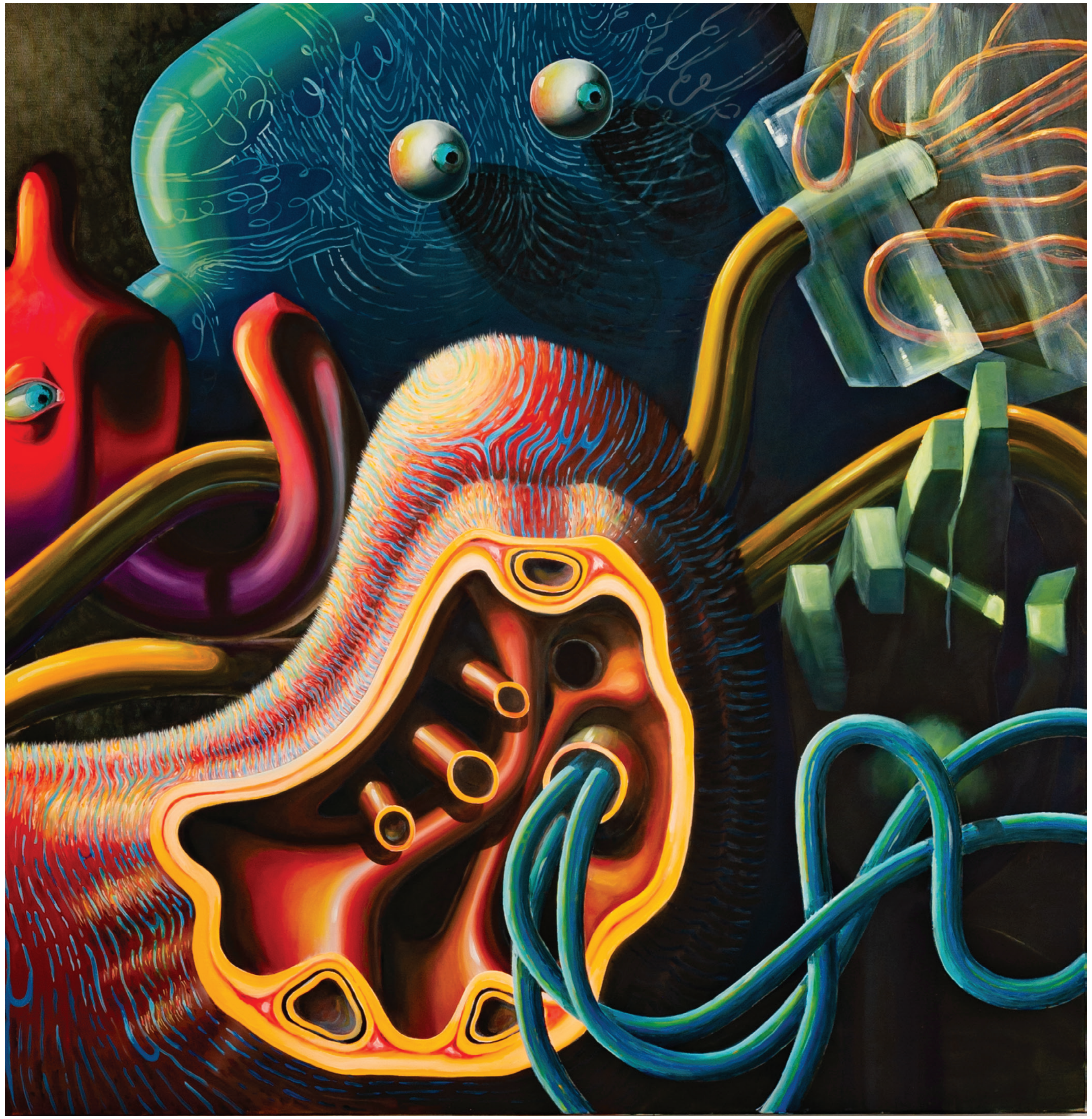

13.18

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DESIGN RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE

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Experiments with Body Agent Architecture puts forward the notion of body agents: non-ideal, animate and highly specific figures integrated with design to enact particular notions of embodied subjectivity in architecture. Body agents present opportunities for architects to increase imaginative and empathic qualities in their designs, particularly amidst a posthuman condition.

Beginning with narrative writing from the viewpoint of a body agent, an estranged 'quattrocento spiritello' who finds himself uncomfortably inhabiting a digital milieu (or, as the spiritello calls it, 'Il Regno Digitale'), the book combines speculative historical fiction and original design experiments. It focuses on the process of creating the multi-media design experiments, moving from the design of the body itself as an original prosthetic to architectural proposals emanating from the body.

A fragmented history of the figure in architecture is charted and woven into the designs, with chapters examining Michelangelo's enigmatic figures in his drawings for the New Sacristy in the early sixteenth century, Gian Lorenzo Bernini's physically ephemeral 'putti' adorning chapels and churches in the seventeenth century, and Austrian artist-architect Walter Pichler's personal and prescient figures of the twentieth century.

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