



**TRANSACTIONS:
MATERIAL-IMMATERIAL**

PROJECT 01

LIGHT:

FORMING A MATERIAL WORLD FROM LIGHT?

"Material is spent light"- Louis Kahn

Rene Descartes: Diagrams from "Trait des Passions" c.1640
Image reproduced from Architecture and Urbanism April 1992

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This is a project about tracing shadows and becoming acutely aware of this activity of tracing we employ both literally and virtually in the conceptualizing of architecture. Parallel projections and perspectival methods are unconscious tools in our design process as we trace figurations around conventions we learn as well as around our own biases. The project aims to bring to awareness the "screen", the virtual space where our reality resides multi-dimensionally. This is a speculative and experimental project and requires a systematic yet open ended approach. Stan Allen's paper titled "Between Drawing and Building" and Louis Kahn's utterance, are both form the provocations for this abstract exercise.

The Greeks believed in the idea of reality as a coincidence of two lights: one that emanates from our own eyes and one from the heavens. It is the convergence of the two upon the perceived thing which, to them, imparts its reality of presence. Perception can be thought of as a plane of reception, a membrane where our mental projections and that of the object meet. It is the plane that requires constant adjustments to merge and reconcile differences between the object and our mental projections (expectations, presuppositions etc.) of them.

Parallel projection derives from a perfect and ideal light, a divine light. It creates idealized projections of ideal objects that exist only in our minds. The representations of these are but only lesser copies of an ideal. Orthographic (parallel) projections are not merely neutral tools of architecture. Instead they habituate us to a plane of perception that separates us from the world (the other). The ancients (in the east and the West) on the other hand did not see themselves as removed from the world. They were inextricably immersed in it. We are most often unaware of this projective plane. Having abstracted the world through this mediating plane, and having become unconscious of it, we the Moderns, project our mental ideations back on to this plane and expect the world to perform in passive way. The plane of reception has become the plane of anticipation, expectation.

THE PROJECT:

The idea is to begin with a primary object and through selectively subjecting it to projections, create other interesting and unexpected perceptions of it. Anamorphosis should underlie this process as an intention. How does certain *casting of light* cause unexpected and interesting results and causes an awareness of our assumptions about the object therefore an awareness of our own perception?

The project will be engaged by teams of two. The experiment entails constructing an *object* a rectangular volume and the construction of a *screen* (Size and materials to be discussed in class). Once these have been made a series of light projections of the object upon the screen will be documented through some type of tracing process.

PARAMETERS FOR THE OBJECT:

Conceptualize and construct a rectangular volume. This object can be some combination of skeletal, planar and solid elements. The design of these attributes of the object will be in response to that of the screen as well as to a predicted interaction between the two because of light. (*Will it be partially frame, partially skin? Will it be planes arranged in a way that imply the form? These decisions will already also be guided by predictions of how light might play with this version of the primary object.*) Materials can range from being opaque to transparent. This might influence a hierarchy in the way the contours register on the screen.

PARAMETERS FOR THE SCREEN:

The screen shall not be transparent (this will encourage tracing a pictorial likeness). As one would expect, the screen will have the attribute of "flatness" but it should not be a single flat plane. Some strategy to disrupt this flatness is required. Continuity of its plane is also open to challenge too. Some mechanism that allows mobility within the screen could permit other mutations of the object.

PARAMETERS FOR THE EXPERIMENT/DOCUMENTATION:

The process of experimental playing, it is expected, will be guided by the formal logic inherent to the frame and the object pairs. Selected instances of screen-object-light should be documented through tracing on the screen's surface (*surface documentation*). Design of the screen should be approached with this question of how the tracing can be facilitated/ achieved. In addition to screen-projections, you must also document the relative positions of the object and the screen (*spatial documentation*). Each team must produce twelve such tracings. These have to be converted into presentable drawings (tonal and/or line)

PROJECT PHASES:

This project may be extended into a second phase of translating drawings back into re-constituted forms.

preliminary SCHEDULE:

01/26: Project introduction/ Begin work

01/28: Desk+ Pinup Critiques of ideas through sketches and study models

01/30: Screen+Object to be completed at start of class; Study/present ideas for projections