Bad haBITs : on the propagation of coverture for Renaissance Venetian noblewomen

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Bad habits:
On the propagation of coverture for Renaissance Venetian noblewomen

by

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Abstract

This Thesis is a creative project within the fields of Women’s Studies and Architecture. It focuses on how gender is encoded and decoded in architectural spaces, especially those considered ‘feminine’ archetypes. The objective is to understand the circumstances surrounding the alteration of prescriptive spaces by the people that inhabit them and to lend character to these “after-spaces” through graphic and literary representation. The site of investigation is the Venetian Renaissance convent.

One of the earliest convents in Venice, San Zaccaria has a rich history. As a liberal Benedictine convent, it was notorious for its noble roster as it was for the illicit acts that took place within. Ironically, once a home to vice, it now houses the Carabinieri, the Italian Military Police. Vacillating between discipline and indiscipline, the turbulence of these two forces that once filled its walls challenged not just the strength of the foundation of the church but also that of the Renaissance Republic.

The places of interest in the confines of the convent are the places that ‘contain’ the possibility of slippages. Places that potentially house and invite actions against discipline while requiring still yet a different system of rules by which to subvert the order. These places are architecture’s spatial refuse, yet become a welcomed refuge for those who entered under the ‘guise’ of divine intentions. They are the focus of this thesis.
Preface

In VITRUVIUS The Ten Books on Architecture it explicitly states, "Architecture depends on Order."\(^1\) Order is defined by the proper execution of the following: Arrangement, Eurhythmy, Symmetry, Propriety, and Economy. Vitruvius defines Arrangement as putting things in their proper place, and how this is expressed is through the representation of plans, elevations and perspective. What follows is a scholarly and creative composition of reflections and theoretical excursions into a critical process of making architecture.

Architectural representations are about ordering and coding. They are accompanied by an index or notes that help one understand the function or activities that occur in a space and their material connection. If the space is an office, reception area, kitchen, closet or storage, select acts are inscribed upon the bodies that inhabit them. What is excluded from the representation is what I call the 'lived experience'. The codes that so clearly define the program of space and the kinds of activities that take place suggest to only the critical eye the perfunctory performative nature of that space. For example, "kitchen" is a space in which to cook. If, through the lens of historical narrative, one begins to look closer, desiring to excavate the sedimented layers, one finds that the body in turn is capable of marking that prescribed space, leaving behind traces and stains as a residue that narrates other acts (rites) or activities (ritual) that have taken place. This 'lived experience,' I argue, is how the body actually uses or misuses space.

Two important aspects mark the method of research for this thesis. The first required me to view a particular architecture, San Zaccaria, through a cultural lens that had marked the women

who inhabited it as outside or marginal to its making. The second required me to view a particular aspect of architecture culture through an intellectual lens, Women's Studies, that is often discredited as a valid academic discipline because of its base in subjective experiences. Yet subjective—lived—experiences are what I'm interested in.

San Zaccaria is in Venice, Italy, outside the American continent; Women's Studies is across campus, outside the Department of Architecture and the College of Design. I would have to travel, literally and figuratively, over long distances and short ones, by foot and through email, in order to accomplish this work. I was not confined to the comforts of my College or those of the dense aisles of Parks Library. I became less “domesticated,” if you will, in order to engage this topic. There was a time when Feminism and Architecture coalesced. This occurred during a period of Post Modern Architectural theory, for which this Department was once well known. Though fleeting and temporal, this so-called “movement” provides a contemporary precedent of study, which in turn has created many questions, most importantly: What became of the work? Little did I know at the outset that this question would guide me to places far more removed than Post Modern architectural theory. In fact, this was the question guiding me through the historical precedent study of the Renaissance Venetian convent, which is the focus of this thesis. Reframed, that question is: What became of the voices that once occupied this archetype. The question of architecture’s relationship to the feminine, then, will have answers from two separate fronts.

The site, San Zaccaria, provides historical and narrative evidence of the ordering nature of architecture and the disordering performances enacted by the inhabitants. This evidence will be incorporated into graphic representations of the church’s layout and in the three-dimensional representation of the “façade.” The “façade” will be viewed as a habit forming a civic image and a
habit worn by the inhabitants. Through the excavation of space and history, the 'lived experience' is re-coded into a new vocabulary of space. By utilizing this vocabulary in the re-representation of spaces, one can begin to see what had been excluded and how it subverted the codes of culture and architecture: thus, providing a way to begin the look forward.

Thesis Organization

This thesis is a survey. Bad haB1Ts takes a look back, then looks further back, before it looks forward. It begins by looking at the discipline. It then looks further back by re-imaging the representations of an architecture that could be considered a gendered 'feminine' archetype, in a way that would include by graphic suggestion the 'lived experience' of the inhabitants.

There are two noticeable format characteristics driving this thesis. Graphic design shapes the meaning and impact of the document, creative typeface having been used in a critical way.

The images are not to be considered "figures" that illustrate what the text is communicating, but rather visual ways to communicate what text cannot. No captions or page numbers will appear on any such passage.
I like complexity and contradiction in architecture. I do not like the incoherence or arbitrariness of incompetent architecture nor the precious intricacies of picturesqueness or expressionism. Instead, I speak of a complex and contradictory architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience, including that experience which is inherent in art.

But architecture is necessarily complex and contradictory in its very inclusion of the traditional Vitruvian elements of commodity, firmness and delight. And today the wants of program, structure, mechanical equipment, and expression, even in single buildings in simple contexts are diverse and conflicting in ways previously unimaginable. The increasing dimension and scale of architecture in urban and regional planning add to the difficulties. I welcome the problems and exploit the uncertainties. By embracing contradiction as well as complexity, I aim for vitality as well as validity.

Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture. I like elements which are hybrid rather than “pure,” compromising rather than “clean,” distorted rather than “straightforward,” ambiguous rather than “articulated,” perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as “interesting,” conventional rather than “designed,” accommodating vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim duality.

I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning; for the implicit function as well as the explicit function. I prefer “both-and” to “either-or,” black and white, and sometimes gray, to black or white. A valid architecture evokes many levels of meaning and combination of focus: its space and its elements become readable and workable in several ways at once.

But architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation toward the whole: its truth must be in its totality or its implications of totality. It must embody the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion. More is not less.2

2 Venturi, Robert, Complexity and Contradiction (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1983) 16. I have found similarities in my own critical and historical research methodology employed in ‘Bad ha’Bits’ with Robert Venturi’s architectural criticism in Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. We both look to the past in relation to the present in a personal way that relates to the effect of the form (or the program) of space on the human spirit and its experience. Written from the perspective of architects on architecture, rather than scholars on the topic of architecture, both works provide a way of seeing architecture without prescribing a method of production or a way of experiencing space. Both are executed through a re-reading of architecture in relation to cultural and social phenomena, opening multiple narratives, meanings and interpretations of history and space.
CHAPTER 1: Act 1 LOOKING BACK:
The Feminist Project
**Part 1: Mop-Up Work Revisited**

*Cleaning up the mess they left behind*

I live and study in a place where viewing architecture through a feminine lens was once legendary. My work reminisces that of the women who grappled with the intersection of feminist theory and architecture long before me. I live in a world of tales and stories: of miniskirts, big jugs, one potato two potato, etc., and even architecture critics complementing women on their clothing rather than their work. I entered this college at a time when these women whom I began to admire began to leave the institution. In beginning my own similar exploration, I, seemingly, am without a guide. These tidbits of tales and past articles written are mere laundry lists, remnants that I have to navigate independently. I feel deserted.

In the past six years that I have attended this institution (five undergraduate, one graduate), I have had three women studio professors out of ten, from which I received instruction within my first three years. However, it was in the last three years that I began to focus my exploration on culture, women, the body and architecture. Although not entirely by choice, these later years were supervised by men. If architecture could be a medium used to excavate stories of the silenced voices of women, why do I feel there are no longer women with whom I can work and share the desire to explore the marginalization of women in architecture? Is this not a dilemma? Where did these women go, what kind of work are they doing now? Did feminist theory and architecture become passé, or did they feel that they had reached a dead end?

The first thing I must do is look back.

To understand the Feminist Architectural movement that occurred in the 1980's and 1990's, I began to realize that I had to establish the context within which, and the theory from which it emerged. Enter Postmodernism. Post, a word with multiplicitous
meanings- as a prefix it means after, later or behind, Post as a noun is a pole of wood or metal fixed in the ground in an upright position, serving as a support, marker, or place for attaching things, Post as a verb means to assign someone a particular position for a period of duty. Postmodernism is, in part, related to that which it holds in opposition or that which it immediately follows: Modernism.

Emerging in the 1950’s as a term in literature to distinguish certain characteristics in contemporary literature from Modernism, Postmodernism rejected the idea of a single narrative and reveled in a play of incoherence, discontinuity, parody, complexity, popular culture and metafiction as a way to re-represent or re-read held beliefs. Postmodern projects were characterized by looking exploring both current and past social, historical and political issues in order to enrich meaning on many levels. Postmodernism is a broad term and period of time that covered theories such as structuralism, post-structuralism and deconstruction. Deconstruction sought to dismantle or debunk truths. “As formulated by the French thinker Jacques Derrida, deconstruction is a fundamental critique of certain intellectual assumptions that underlie Western thinking.”

Western thought and culture had been organized and structured on assumed centers that are accepted as universal truths. These truths have been defined by difference, meaning generated by absence. Such categories imply a universal meaning to define or name by difference with a negative connotation. Deconstruction focuses on a specific text to bring to it a close reading to see through words to make or break meaning. A circular play was performed until terms could be shown to be irreconcilable, dismantling the center and opening avenues for new readings or multiple meanings. Architectural theory and feminist criticism interested with Deconstruction in the 1980’s and 90’s adopting the approach to expand the restrictive structure of the discipline of architecture to

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include and create multiple meanings and inroads for the marginalized or de-centered to embody multiple identities, singular, collective, complex, both/and, broadening architectural practice and theory with inclusion.

Modernism was a development that arose in the late 19th century in the realms of literature and the arts that rejected history to propelling forward to create anew with the advent of new technologies and progress. It was a move away from the idea that man was made in the likeness of god, and an acceptance of Darwin's evolution theory that man was made in the likeness of apes and evolved into a rational thinking being, a maker of their own destiny. Modern architecture expressed an aesthetic that symbolized universal truths or a grand narrative through a rationalized, minimalist functionalism. A singular reading was created at the expense of definition through binary oppositions rendering relationships of either/or, this or that, in or out. I am interested in this exclusionary aspect of modernism.

The Modernist movement of the early twentieth century Europe, having evolved through the ranks of humanism and enlightenment, was a search for universal truths, beauty in simplicity, an ordering of the disordered or chaos, resulting in an 'othering' of right and wrong, what is good and bad. The canon was solidified and knowledge was firmly structured. It represented a break from classicism in terms of visual order, yet it held fast to the principles of male-centered philosophical discourse, rationality, order and control. The irrational and the disordered was excluded from discourse but were more than welcomed in the domestic.  

Architectural modernism, as a movement, was a collective effort to produce a social reform. 'Movement', a term too radical for America to swallow, was renamed 'International Style'. This

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2 Ibid., 200.

3 Domestic, relating to the home, everyday life, the vernacular, and most important, women, women's world and women's work, will be returned to at the close of Part 1.
allowed a reading that was temporal and less political. The official christening of the International Style dates back to the 'Modern Architecture: International Exhibition' in 1932, at the Modern Museum of Art, New York City. This show jointly curated by Philip Johnson and Russell Hitchcock exhibited contemporary American and European architecture. They embraced modernism as an aesthetic novelty rather than as a progressive social theory. They made it clear that there was no political or social agenda behind it. In addition, in America the International Style began to take on a completely new ideological identity, capitalist corporate America.

In 1939, Mies Van der Rohe, the godfather of Modern Architecture, migrated to America. Upon relocating to Chicago, IL, he met a doctor named Edith Farnsworth in 1945 at a dinner party. Desiring to build a weekend retreat home, she was looking for an architect. He fulfilled her needs and by 1946 the design for the home had been fixed. In 1947, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Mies exhibited his work again in his own retrospective exhibition, curated by Philip Johnson. Making its public debut in this show were graphics and a model of the Farnsworth house. Although the house was not completed until 1951 it had already gained notoriety, no one had thought it could be done, a hovering box of glass and steel floating over the landscape. Floor to ceiling glass panes encase the house only intermittently interrupted by the white structural steel columns that ground it. Turning space inside out, everything was put on display. A captive, Edith would awake to gawking pilgrims peering in and paying homage to the glass temple of the International Style. She was out of place in her own home. So complete in its minimalist ordering, her inhabitance tainted his beautiful object, making it messy. Mies had created a
machine for living in that denied anything visceral. She profaned what was considered by architecture culture to be sacred.¹

Edith sold the house in 1968 to Lord Palumbo, who reverently returned it to its intended order. Palumbo has recently decided to part with his gem and has put the house up for sale. The Farnsworth house is to be auctioned by Sotheby’s like any other art object equivalent.

**INTERLUDE 1**: Base

At some point, Modernism was declared without a pulse. It is believed its TOD (time of death) was 3:32 p.m., July 15, 1972. This moment marks the detonation of Pruitt-Igoe, a megalithic low-income housing complex in St. Louis, MS, built in 1956. Pruitt-Igoe was thought to be the crowning point for modernism, yet was a

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¹ The reference to Mies, Edith and the Farnsworth house is here being used as a contemporary (Modernist) version of an archetype whose form and program was intended for a woman who, once inhabiting its interiority, began a performative process of subversion. I view Edith as a subject situated within an architecture and cultural context (domesticity) to which she vowed (gave commission) yet did not adhere to its mandate, as it worked against what she desired for a ‘lived experience’. She refused the prescription, as did the nuns of San Zaccaria

⁵ The ‘Interludes’ will not be conventionally structured but will manifest an underlying progression that will branch out along trajectories using the basic elements of a classical column—base, shaft and capital—as an ordering system. The classical column represents the reification of ordered structure. The Classical orders of columns are categorized into three distinguishable types, the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. The Doric column dates back to about 600 BC and is typified by its fluted shaft and a capital consisting of a simple curved member. It is described as stout, masculine and standing without a base. The Ionic column that developed in the late Fifth century BC became more slender and refined. It is easily recognized by the capital’s pairing of volutes that resemble rams horns. The Corinthian column is the most elegant and ornamental of all the columns, its shaft is even more slender and taut than the Ionic and it is topped with a plumeage of double Acanthus leaves.

From Simmons, Leslie H., *Construction: Principles, Materials, and Methods*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), 1125, we learn that caught between two compressive pressures, a column is expected to bear the weight of all that is placed on top of it. Simmons writes, “A column acts primarily in compression. Its horizontal dimension measured at right angles to its thickness does not exceed 3 times its thickness.”

With this knowledge, a postmodern theorist might reveal a slightly different set of nuances. In Bloomer, Jennifer, “Big Jugs” in *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, eds. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden (London: Routledge, 2000), 771, we find “Western Architecture is, by its very nature, a phallocentric discourse: containing, ordering, and representing through firmness, commodity, and beauty; consisting of orders, entablatures, and architrave; base, shaft, capital; nave, choir, and apse; father, son and spirit, world without an end, Amen.” And, “In the Garden of Eden, there was no architecture. The necessity for architecture arose with the ordination of sin and shame, with dirty bodies. The fig leaf was a natural first impulse toward architecture, accustomed as it was to shading its vulvate fruit, its trunk and roots a complex woven construction of undulating forms. Was it the fig tree that was hacked up to build the primitive hut (that precursor to classical architecture)?
failure on all accounts. Charles Jencks, architecture critic and
historian uses this moment to reference the death of one thing and
the birth of another, Postmodernism. Dating the birth of and
defining the meaning of postmodernism is not as cut and dry as
Jencks would like us to believe.

Postmodernism is a slippery thing; it only recently emerged
as an academic study in the 1980's. It is not bound by discipline, it
crosses the barriers of architecture, philosophy, literature, art,
film and cultural studies, bridging gaps and overlapping. It is
multi-disciplinary and multi-vocal. What can be coherently said
about postmodernism is that it acted defiantly against modernism
and all that it entailed: functionality, minimalism, universal
truths, aesthetics, otherness, linear thought and the grand
narrative. Postmodernism sought to undo or implode these structures
from within the framework. It was a time for the marginalized or
de-centered to become vocalized. Theorists sought to dismantle
truths and knowledge by playing with language in a plethora of
narratives that worked within the structure to expand it, creating
new ‘knowledge’. Anything but linear, postmodern productions
became fragmented, layered, interstitial, collaged and re-
montaged. Meaning became multiplicitous. Allegory reigned over
symbolism. Nothing was sacred. Subjectivity became viable. Things
got messy, bloodied, bodied and boobied. “This was the moment,”
writes Michael K. Hayes, “when language invades the universal
problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin,
everything became discourse.”

Concurrently, Second Wave Feminism maintained that the
personal was indeed political. Women’s experiences became viable
theoretical resources. First Order Feminism might have
emphasized how women were marginalized, de-centered and

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'othered' outside of the canon, knowledge and discourse. Second Wave Feminists would work to create, recover, appropriate or foster a distinctively women's culture.

Coalescing in time and sometimes space, feminism and architecture emerged in the postmodern era of the 1980's. Similar to the Women's Studies in general it arose out of the recognition of glaring absence of women's experiences, histories and work that has been ignored by the masculine canon. Feminism in architecture closely aligned itself with the discourses of French deconstruction (Jacques Derrida), literary theory (post-humanists, James Joyce and Walter Benjamin) and psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan). This inter-mixing of theory created a new Feminine architecture that posited the feminine "as that condition which is always already repressed, misrepresented, and violated in the very structure of architectural thought." For Jennifer Bloomer, feminine did not necessitate the opposing definition of masculine/ feminine to designate male/ female, she applied a more universal marginalization to the feminine, anything 'othered' outside or caught in the middle of the binary phallocentric discourse.

What is called for, then, is a new architecture "written" out of the radical alterity of women's difference, a "minor architecture" that reverses the traditional desire for identity and mastery, and architecture that enunciates, against phallocentric thought, the sexual embodiment of women as a...architectural inscription of the marked body.

7 Ibid., 758. This excerpt is taken from Michael K. Hayes editorial introduction for Jennifer Bloomer's work "Tabbies of Bower."

8 Jennifer Bloomer was Professor of Architecture and Director of the Post-professional Graduate Program and the Laboratory for Experimental Design at Iowa State University during the years 1992-2001. A renowned architectural theorist and educator, she lectured and wrote extensively during the last decade of the twentieth century. She served on the editorial boards for Assemblage and Architecture New York. She is the author of Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi (Yale University Press, 1993). After leaving the University she established her own practice with her husband Robert Segrest, Jennifer Bloomer/ Robert Segrest Architecture, in Athens, GA.

9 Hays, op. cit., 758. “minor architecture” is a term applied to those works that rework the major architecture canon. The term was appropriated from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's idea of minor literature. A minor literature works with the major literature or canonical work and uses its language to rework it under the surface. It is done in two ways, the first is to enrich it like James Joyce and the second is to take on a sense of poverty to the point of sobriety like Franz Kafka. Jennifer Bloomer notes Minor Architecture in her dictionary list of terms in Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi.
The feminine in architecture called for a new ‘body’ of (women’s) work, the valorization of the ‘marked’ body, the reappropriation of and embodiment of theory and flesh. Jennifer Bloomer’s project “Tabbies of Bower” enunciates the female experience of pregnancy and childbirth, which is a time, psychoanalytically speaking, that is before the separation of self and other.

A significant body of work emerged at this time concerning the feminine in architecture. The produced collection of essays and published books now act as reverend references that tell the tales of times past. The following are the canonical works of ‘minor architecture’.

1992. *Sexuality and Space* was one of first if not the most definitive gathering of essays written by women in the discipline of Architecture. A symposium called ‘Sexuality and Space’ was held at Princeton on March 10 and 11, 1990. The focus of this symposium was to address and discuss the question of the absence of discourse on sexuality in architecture. Until this symposium and publication of articles, representations of desire and sexuality in Architectural discourse were viewed conspicuously and often ignored. The major question that this symposium and book explored was not whether there is a relationship between sexuality and space. However, this relationship had already been conceded to be evident and inter-related. Instead, the question would become how is space sexually inscribed.

1996. *Architecture and Feminism: Yale Publications on Architecture* was conceived with the desire to create an un-going debate on the issue of feminism and architecture at the Yale School of Architecture. It is the result of an open call for papers. Although this collection is not as influential as *Sexuality and Space*, it is a significant contribution to the furthering of Feminism and architecture in the 1990's.

1998. *The Architect: Reconstructing Her Practice* 1998 is a collection of twelve autobiographical essays by twelve different women in the practice or education of architecture. These essays mark a turning point when the discipline of architecture was beginning to shift from its traditional male dominated culture into a more encompassing and critical cultural practice.

2000. *Gender Space Architecture* was published last out of all of these collections. It is a retrospective collection of essays on the intersection of the subjects, gender, space and architecture.

Surrounding these 'bodies' of work, a discursive babbling brook flowed. Many people were talking, but the question was, what were they making?¹⁰

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¹⁰ Catherine Ingraham, a former Iowa State University faculty member and architectural scholar is reported to have said that her writing is her architecture. Jennifer Bloomer's texts, too, have been likened to architecture in their interwoven spatial style of excessive punning, inter-text, hypertext, theoretical citation and storytelling that surfaces and masks spaces and voids into a complex structure. Understandably, a problem arises in the discipline of architecture called "theory versus practice." If one does 'theory', is 'one really making, in the practice sense of the word? Or, is there more productive value in taking action to realize something emerging from theory? These questions never seem to go away, much less find satisfactory answers. When theory is mostly talk and chatter, one is viewed technically to not be 'doing' in terms of making, as in taking action to produce a change or create a product. Perhaps unfortunately, one must 'do' physically, materially—not literally—in order to be making. This is a shaft somewhat difficult to swallow.
INTERLUDE 2: Shaft

Architecture is a profession centered on making. Although architects are removed from the actual labor of the erection of structure, the representations that they do make are translated and realized by the hands of skilled laborers. Even though they are not directly involved in the making, they are seen as the creator of space.

In 1989, the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University was completed, a deconstructivist manifesto. A slash or spine of white scaffolding ruptures the non-building on the non-site. The building is a fragmentation of past, present and future, and an overlay of urban grid onto campus grid. Its multi-layered volumes, experimentation with materials and finishes fragment and integrate site and history in a perverse way. Architect, Professor and theorist Peter Eisenman (and who is coincidentally married to Cynthia Davidson, ANY Architecture New York editor) put his theoretical ideas to practice in architectural built form. His architecting involved replacing a functional object with a theoretical one. In the matter of making, he was doing it.

Whether or not this is or was a successful project is not the question here, the fact that he put theory into practice made it viable. At this time there were few among feminist theorists engaged in making architecture. This left them open to criticism, both from academia and practice. Such criticism proved to be problematic, impeding them and their work from being taken seriously. In this profession, talk and chatter are negotiable, built form is not. When challenged to realize their work as physically inhabitable spaces, the feminist did not necessarily respond with a flurry of activity. In all actuality, their talking seems to have ceased. Their work seemed to slowly fade into the background and was thought to only be a theoretical trend. Architecture and the Feminine over the years became an untended garden, overgrown with weeds, or at best forgotten as fable.
INTERLUDE 3: Capital

In 1994, a special edition of "ANY Architecture New York" magazine was published under the title Architecture and the Feminine: Mop-Up Work. This edition stemmed from a symposium that was held on November 30, 1993 at the Guggenheim in New York City. A poster billing cites, "Working in the slipping mess behind and beyond architectures of the weak, the formless, and the pliant, architect Diana Agrest, classicist Ann Bergen, architect/artist Karen Bermann, philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, and art historian George Hersey will discuss projects presented by Durham Crout, Michelle Kaufmann, Liquid Inc (Amy Landesburg and Lisa Quatrale), and Claire Robinson. The symposium will be moderated by architect and critic Jennifer Bloomer." This event, sponsored by ANY magazine and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, displayed the powerhouses of the movement, the people most likely to get ones attention. The event held a year before the publication of ANY, and it involved all of the future contributors to the magazine.

The symposium and magazine edition are both strange and familiar. For out of the eleven contributors, three are/were connected to the Iowa State University Architecture program, yet only one has remained on the faculty. Karen Bermann was and is currently an Associate Professor of Architecture, Michelle Kaufmann passed through the doors before me as a student yet her name still resonates, and Jennifer Bloomer, architect and theorist, was a Graduate Architecture Professor whose name alone drew many students to work under her. She left when I was in my third year in the undergraduate Bachelor of Architecture program and, unfortunately, the only contact I had with her was when she served as a critic on my first pre-architecture review. I was so nervous that I could only remember her as the woman who could talk endlessly. I had not grown accustomed to receiving criticism, much less criticism framed by feminist theory.
The ANY magazine has greatly influenced the work that I now do in the area of women and gender studies in architecture. It often acts as a collection of precedents that I can reference. It also makes me feel that I am not alone in my efforts to expand the boundary of architecture. Yet, here in the problem lies: the magazine was published ten years ago. What happened to the 'movement' that was once so viable that a whole magazine was dedicated to furthering the pursuit of feminist theory in architecture? What happened to these scholars, academics and theorists? Have their motives changed and, if so, what were the causes?

Having noticed the absence of these women who were once breaking ground with their theoretical work, I realized the only way to begin to fill the gap was to try to make contact and ask a source directly.

I chose to contact Jennifer Bloomer.

At that time, she was the 'it' girl. She was lecturing, teaching and publishing her work in just about every venue. She was influential. I also fondly remember her as the one who loved to talk. However, the question was, was she willing to talk now?

I emailed her.

I had waited a bit for her reply to a short set of four questions. When she did, she politely apologized for her late response, as she has been incredibly busy fulfilling her role as a principal architect at her and her husband's joint firm, Jennifer Bloomer/ Robert Segrest Architecture Design Planning in Athens, Georgia. The new role she notes is very different than her previous academic one.

I will share our communication unedited, for it is the only way to capture Jennifer's voice.
1. What were the driving forces or intentions behind the symposium and magazine edition?

“Cynthia Davidson, Editor of ANY, asked each member of the ANY Editorial Board at the time to plan a symposium and guest edit an issue of the magazine that would reflect the symposium’s content. Much of the thrust of my work at that time had to do with deconstructing historic conventions of architecture theory and practice, and particularly with the role of “the other.” I proposed the title, “Architecture and the Feminine: Mopping Up Work” at a Board meeting. Because it was so decidedly controversial among the Board, Cynthia and I realized it would probably be a good issue. [The military term "mopping up operations" refers to the extensive work that comes after an actual battle - it is a phrase that is more familiar to us now, during the so-called war in Iraq. But the point was to address the “second wave” of feminism in architecture, as well as to insert the obvious irony of “women’s work” into it. Somehow, the title got changed to “Mop Up Work” - I do not recall the specifics.] A major intention for me was to bring to the public eye some of the work of younger women working on peeling away the shiny skin of the canonical in architecture. (I had known Amy Landesberg as a student both at Georgia Tech and both her and Lisa Quatrale at Yale, where I taught. I was Michelle Kaufmann’s project advisor at ISU.) At the time, a focus on materiality and experimentation with materials was not the common endeavor that it has become, and, to me, this was important to emphasize.

2. What kind of impact do you feel the symposium, magazine, and other publications had on architecture?

“Who knows? In the mid-90s, issues of the feminine and architecture were pronounced as fashionable and therefore over after a year or two by the powers that be in architecture theory. [Note how Michael Hays in Architecture Theory Since 1968 editorializes “Tabbles of Bower” as a project of dated feminism; the project was specifically and comprehensively about the notion of what Aristotle called the “excluded middle” in all dualities, and about the hegemony of the dual structure in general. It was not a proposal of a so-called feminist architecture.] I believed then, have written, and believe now, that a feminist architecture is not architecture at all. In other words, the entire history of western architecture is completely defined by excluding both inferior and middle terms of dualities; and if feminism is the work of tearing
down such structures, the phrase “feminist architecture” must needs be an oxymoron. In addition, as my friend Ann Bergren wrote in her letter in the issue, that a woman who works with the feminine in architecture does so at her peril. On the other hand, did. I still have hope for a future generation – perhaps yours – who will make this a false premise.

“I do know that the magazine issue was the first (perhaps only) issue of ANY completely to sell out the month it hit the stands – so it grabbed attention. The fact that today young women such as yourself are studying it may suggest that its strongest impact is in service to something yet to come.

“Having just proofed what I’ve written so far, perhaps we can hope that the work we were doing on emphasizing materiality along with form, and not simply form, might have influenced in some way the burgeoning of experimentation with material in architecture of the last decade.

3. Are you aware of any current architectural practices or projects that explore issues of gender in built form, perhaps as did Liquid, Inc.?

“I am not, but I am very much out of the loop, as I no longer travel in experimental circles. I do know that Mary Kihl at Arizona State University and formerly at Iowa State put together a symposium on this subject about two years ago. You might contact her for information.

4. What can you tell me about the work in which you are currently involved? Does it relate to your theoretical works, and if so, how?

“Five years ago, I would never have believed that I would come to say what I am about to tell you. Design work in the academic setting is truly a minuscule part of what happens in purely professional offices. Much of the difference lies in the complete absence of the many aspects of “the bottom line” in the academy, vs. the inescapable presence of it in the office. Our office is only four years old. And as most young practices that have no academic salaries to back them up, we primarily have been interested in the old saw of Get The Work, Get The Work, Get The Work. Our projects have ranged from residential additions to a flying trapeze dance studio to renovations and rehabilitations of historic buildings to shopping centers to urban design work.
Architectural practice without the academic cocoon is surprisingly (to us) difficult and complex, and the equation of time = money (the client’s, complete with all the psychological baggage that goes along with that) is very real. Paying employee salaries, rent, and for machinery and equipment, computers and software, materials, etc. (i.e., the architects’ money) has been a great challenge of these first four years.

“All that having been confessed, I would say that the way we run the office has a great deal to do with our theoretical perspective: all projects are collaborative, and the office ambience is one that supports play and joy in the work, while meeting those tight deadlines and budgets. The office is one big space with huge north-facing windows — no cubicles, no separation of people. There is a lot of laughter and fun, and a lot of respect among the four members of the firm. Five months ago, we instituted a policy of paying everyone, including ourselves (the partners) the same — this is a radical no-no in the Book of Practice, but we note that already it has made a considerable difference in both the emotional climate and the productivity of the firm. In our culture, it is this that literally puts our money where our mouths are in saying that the firm is more collaborative and communal than hierarchical. The icing on the cake is that already it has dramatically improved our financial success.

“Furthermore, we continue to push material experimentation in ways that certainly reflect the theoretical work. Often we are successful with convincing clients to take what many consider real risks in going outside the stud and sheetrock box. As our local reputation has grown, we are attracting more clients who are sympathetic to design experimentation and risk.”

Accordingly, THE FEMININE IN ARCHITECTURE IS OFTEN MISCONSTRUED AS A FORMAL PROJECT, A SIMILAR TRAP INTO WHICH MODERNISM FELL. INSTEAD, IT MIGHT BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD AS A PERFORMANCE IN LIGHT OF PERFORMATIVITY.  

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12 Refer to “Part 3: A NEW VOCABULARY OF SPACE (IN THREE PARTS)” of this thesis for clarification of the distinction between performance and performativity.
SUMMARY

As I find myself drawing my thoughts to a close, I find it more than appropriate to end with a beginning. *Architecture and the Feminine: Mop-Up Work*, opens with an exchange of letters between Cynthia Davidson and Jennifer Bloomer. Jennifer writes her letter, intended for Ann Bergren but accidentally sent and replied by Cynthia, in the midst of juggling her domestic chores, doing laundry, cooking dinner and making a Halloween costume for her daughter. In their exchange, they discuss that the domestic must be acknowledged as a central position and starting site for work to be done on the feminine. They find the domestic to be a place of strength, in that their ability to juggle all that the domestic entails finds its way and enriches how they manage their professional roles in architecture. They also acknowledge ANY as a temporal location for the feminine to surface.

I believe that ANY—and other forms of media—provides a temporary site for the feminine in architecture, a site through which the feminine will pass, traveling, like Claire’s nest, to a new kind of “home,” a site informed by but not limited to the domestic (i.e., the feminine) as it is defined today.

Cynthia ends her letter with these parting words to Jennifer:

Jennifer, you need to get someone to help you with the laundry, because there is a lot creative site searching, not to mention mopping up, yet to do.13

I find myself performing some of my own mop-up work, in between flipping loads of laundry, and having just showered (I prefer to write in my pajamas with a mug of coffee by my side). I realize that the feminine and architecture though it may not be omni-present, it is ever present. Jennifer Bloomer now out of the academic and theoretical loop, as she would say, has found her theoretical ‘body’ of work transpires into a methodology for

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practice. There is really no start or finish to the architecture and the feminine, it is always undulating in and out of our lives, surfacing in unexpected ways, though often unnoticed. Like laundry, it will always be folded up to be put away, only to be dirtied once again.
Part 2: Architectural Precedents

On Representation: The Temple of Love

"THE TEMPLE OF LOVE is now at arm's length. It is utterly Magnificent! Standing at the center of the periphery, this architecture contradicts its appearance from the distance and does not conform to a single geometry, structure, or scale. Plans, sections, and elevations could not, therefore, be rendered objectively. This is, indeed, the antithesis of a Classical Temple..."  

The following project, The Temple of Love, was completed during the spring of 2003 as the culmination of an undergraduate professional degree and a springboard for graduate studies. It depicts the theoretical stage on which the play [ENTER HERE] is performed.

The Temple of Love and [ENTER HERE] You Will Become Metabolized take their cue from the 1992 work of Alberto Pérez-Gómez entitled Polyphilo, in the sense that they explore the spirit of architecture as a dynamic of performance persuasion. Like it, they are a departure from conventional genres of architectural writing/thinking—as well as representation—as they attempt, to speak of essences beyond form, function and materiality but enlivened by them.

In Temple, one finds a nearly indecipherable but highly ordered edifice, stretched out along a linear axis. There is a clear beginning and end, between which a visitor must pass through four bodily-transforming stations. One must pass through a total of seven programmatic spaces from beginning to end, the first acts quite conventionally as a threshold and vestibule; then completing passage through the nave to the altar, past the sacristy to the ossuarium, a ritualistic cycle is enacted.

In the section, one sees a subterranean compartment that links each station channeling and collecting all that is proffered to

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the deepest well, the final collector where it fuels the machine, machination in action. Beyond the holy of holies, much like an environmental landfill, the final sacrifice finds its resting place.

The vertical elevation presents the most intriguing view. In it, one perceives many things: some technical, others anthropomorphic, but most certainly a vestige of the human body.
Part 2: ARCHITECTURAL PRECEDENTS

On Architecture’s (Not So) Gentle Persuasion:

Enter Here...

a whiff from the Marge’s elastic banded abdomen
(available abroad on a “cash-in-hand” basis)
carries me away
through a network of tiny canals
on a harness
a carriage of safety pins and stockinettes
(whose tracks from a map of his life)
not stopping at Eros, Porno and Obscene
into a hen-house and a diary
peck, peck, peck, scratch, scratch, scratch
with too much pressure as well as too little
to the dead black, no light, verve substance of the low life
of architecture
for proper fit and care...

The following design project is a script. It attempts to investigate—through use of dialogic text and imagery—the nature of architecture’s (not so) gentle persuasive methods of conditioning its ‘proselytes’. Hence, the haunting question: to what degree does one have to give their bodies to be admitted?

[ENTER HERE] You Will Become Metabolized is a three-act architectural play, the setting of which is a fictitious Temple of Love and its environs. Its storyline is about a pilgrim who is internally grappling with becoming an Other, which is the programmatic wish of the (not so) inanimate Temple. Constructed as a dialogue of whispers and rumors between the two central characters, “it” (the Temple) and “she” (the subject), the play reveals the tangled necessity one has for the other throughout the arduous performance of nightly rituals.


16 In an effort to adhere to the visual representation of the images for this project, originally exhibited in Gallery 181 at Iowa State University College of Design in the Fall of 2003, this thesis document presentation is executed with double-sided printing. It is believed that this formal departure from the standards of the Graduate College best represents the continuity of the serial images in exhibition, which intended a viewer to visually comprehend each image bracketed by others and uninterrupted by a blank or “white” space. I thank the Graduate College Thesis Office for understanding my presentation requirements in light of its own and for granting me this liberty.
Through verse and visual script, this story of physical transformation unfolds. The subject, recalling the image of The Blessed Lodovica Albetoni by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1671-1674 at S. Francesco a Ripa, Altieri Chapel, Rome, Italy) represents an idealization of death, as the modernist notion that "Architecture is a machine" is magnified to reveal its seductive power and consumptive nature.

NOTE:
Sections of verse are followed by corresponding sets of images. These text sections have running page numbers that continue from one section to the next, irrespective of the images. The images bear no page numbers and are printing on both front and back of each sheet, as they are intended to be a continuous strip without border, in order to flood the reader’s visual field.

Cast of Characters

[the PILGRIM]
somebody that goes on a journey to a holy place for religious reasons.

[the lady-in-waiting]
somebody that patiently waits their due turn

[the disciple]
somebody that strongly believes in the teaching of a leader, a philosophy, or a religion, and tries to act according to them.

[the confessor]
somebody that makes a confession

[the purgatoress]
somebody that purges

[the stigmatist]
somebody that bears stigmata

[the Intestate]
somebody that has died without having made a legally valid will

[the MINISTRANT]
somebody serving as a religious minister. somebody that gives aid to others.
ACT I. THE PILGRIMAGE

THE JOURNEY BEGINS: THE FIRST STEP OF SLIPPING REALITY INTO DELUSION
Moving steadfast with destination as her goal,
she appears, far off in the distance, as a faint and smoky illumination.
The belief is now held.
This time it is real.

The Pilgrim glides across the earth,
barely leaving traces of her traverse.
The thought of redemption lifts and propels her forward.
Never once does she stray from her path.

CATROPICAL HESSITATION: LOOKING INTO A MIRROR, SEEING A DISTORTED IMAGE OF SELF
Shocked that it exists, she is transfixed momentarily,
almost dropping to her knees in awe.
Reaching out she is steadied, taking a moment to reflect.
She sees her destination calling, and beckoning her forward.

She contemplates her readiness and wonders,
“Am I worthy?”

THRESHOLD ONE, A RUMINANT DECISION: WITH OPEN ARMS IT IS EAGER TO GREET YOU.
Toiling until this point, she arrives in a state of abstinence, in preparation for her judgment.
She is ready to receive the sacrament that will be bestowed upon her,
Her hesitation is over, now is the time long awaited.
[SILENCE]
ACT II. RITES OF PASSAGE FOR THE LADY IN WAITING

ENTREATY, ABLUTION, AND ABSOLUTION RITUALIZED: THE SECOND STEP, ASSESMENT, BEGINS

AB INITIO: ANONYMITY IS GIVEN IDENTITY
IN the vestibule
This is her CEREMONY.
Many have been before, many will be after.
Now it is hers.
It is completely devoted to her.

She rises to the vestibule.
It has awaited her arrival.
She makes her mark at her stall,
becoming a member of the choir.

Joining her voice to those that have sung into silence.

[It is AWAKENED!]

DON'T LET THESE WORDS BE IN VAIN: PROFESS YOUR FAITH
Prostrated before it, she offers herself.
Words cannot be formed.
Her eyes speak of her anxiety and willingness to be received.
Will her plea be heard?

REVERENT PURIFICATION: A TENDER AFFAIR WITH THE 'DISCIPLE'
AT the crux of the vestibule.
Stepping to the Crux of the orifice, resting in the prongs,
Before her lies the basin, Asking her to purify herself.
She entwines herself in its outstretched fingers, reaching down into
the Piscina.
Caressing and cleansing, impurities are washed away.

The Sacrifice is ready to be made.

Pistons SALIVATE. Its JOWLS are eagerly opened.

ABSOLUTION: SILENCE CAN BE A DEFINITIVE
CREAKING and SCREECHING
it settles in equilibrium,
quietly nestling its arms.
It is an act of profession.

[SILENCE]
TRANSCENDENCE IS GRANTED THROUGH THE DESIRE FOR ANOTHER

THE ASCENSION
PASSAGE through the Narthex

THE CRUCIBLE BEGINS
IN the Nave, station One.

THE FIRST TOUCH: SVELTE, SINUOUS, AND SINISTROUS
Her feet touch the cold metal plate, a shiver unnoticed.
She turns around, taking the position she innately knows.
Looking back to the stairs and vestibule, she takes a deep breath

click, click,
click,
click.

GROANING softly, it lowers its delicate fingers down,
wanting to make contact.
Her lips twitch into a slight smile.
She closes her eyes in expectation.

Gears turn, according to the message from above,
acting in translation it opens its grasp.
It quickly retracts its outstretched fingers
Into an embrace, stopping just short

The Scribe taunts tenuously.

Her skin raises, tightens, as the points of fingers
touch barely yet perceptibly, she exhales.

FEATHERY CARESSES: CONSCIOUSLY STANDING UPRIGHT, YOU DO
NOT WILL IT, YET
SIGHING in exhale around her, it COQUETTISHLY begins to
work.
Her eyes open in sudden alarm, and quickly close.
Entranced in the dance splaying across her body, stoically erect,
not wanting to interfere with her partner.

[It moves in a choreography,
tuned to her alone.
Rhythmically teasing, on the verge of penetrating.
It restrains itself to just TOUCH]

Machination in action.
DUALING DESIRES: IT JOSTLES AS IT RETRACTS ITSELF, DENYING THE CHANCE TO LINGER.
Its intimate touch recoils to wait for another, unsatisfied it is STILL HUNGRY.
Momentarily transfixed, her muscles scream from the release of stern attention
Somewhat bewildered, looking up she asks for more.

Calix is PARCHED.

THE CAVALCADE CONTINUES: PROMENADE
Consternation passes, she turns around with enthusiasm, ready for the next RITE.
Looking ahead with longing, she floats over the gangway and steps.
Enthralled with the thought of what was to come.

Slightly TITTERING in forewarning, not given recognition

PRICKLE TO THE TOUCH
IN the Nave, station Two
ALLURE TO REALITY: AN EAGER EMBRACE.
She steps through its arms onto the slightly dewed grate turning and looking down at the last station.
She stands defiantly taunting it.
Narrowing her eyes, she sees the arms closing in

click   click   click

CLICK

Her eyes widen.
It opens its claw with outstretched fingers,
Swiftly it breaks for her with FORCE.
Slowing down, sinuously in approach.

She catches her breath.

She hears it come alive
Looking up she sees it ready to pounce
Encircling her
Taking a moment to CALIBRATE.

[SILENCE]
THRESHOLD 2: FORGIVE ME FOR I HAVE...
IN the Nave, station Two
SHUDDERING, LURCHING forward
Pricking discrepancies at the surface,
Demanding an OFFERING
ENTER THE CONFESSION

She exhales

Locking her in,
her breathing becomes shallow.
Kneading the surface, trying to extract a confession
Welling from within her, on the verge

Looking up from below; its mouth open, anticipating the admission

THE FIRST TASTE: A DESIRE TO BE QUENCHED
RUMBLING in its famished state
she tries to look down, but is enveloped
METICULOUSLY it inscribes her penance upon her body
Willing peccavi.

She contracts and releases her body, in an effort to expel her sins.

Embracing her tighter in consolation.
Brought to the surface she proffers.
Warm on her skin, beginning to trickle down, streaking and staining, marking her as one.

Her body shudders

A singular drop slides down
to the instep of her foot
SQUEEZING still deprived of sustenance
The drop slips and releases, plunging into the depths of the Taster below.

SWALLOWING greedily

She gasps.

A PORTENTOUS MOMENT:
Slowly, in a caress, it withdraws its grasp.
Slightly unsteady, she reaches out
Creaking, it regains composure.
Her hand reaches out for her absolver.

They meet.
It slinks away.
Their fingertips touch and slip past each other.
Gears turn, retracting the Harrow for the next hearing.
With her arm outstretched, she yearns for its return.

The CREAKING ceases.

[SILENCE]

A drop hits the grate and falling, RESONATES.
SWISHING around, it SAVORS this time.
She looks up at her hand, realizing she is bleeding.
SWALLOWING.

Her mouth opens slightly, she brings her fingers to her lips.

After she turns around, her step a little bit slower.
Reverently she looks up.

GROANING from beneath, acknowledging her presence.

PAUSING
Looking back over her shoulder,
the fire from the torches behind her become extinguished.
Smoke impels her forward to the illuminated absolver ahead.
Believing that she is close to absolution, she smiles.

She leaves a trace of her passage.
A FALSE RECONCILIATION: A SINNER MUST ALWAYS REPENT IN the Nave, station Three

A YEARNING FOR MORE GROANING and CREAKING, it awaits her arrival Stepping through the narrowed arms onto the platform She PAUSES

Looking down, she sees marks that have begun to crust; casually brushing it away. CREAKING becomes more INSISTENT She begins to turn her head upward in recognition.

[click click click click]

Like a pendulum released, swooshing down Caught mid-motion, looking straight ahead.

HOVERING around her, in the faintest touch In an effort to make contact, her skin reacts INHALING, It constricts, sinking its teeth below the surface. She is POSSESED.

chunking away, they slump at her feet and slide through the grate, into the open mouth of the Calix

She FLINCHES, she cannot fight it.

SCREECHING, it HALTS.

Afraid that it is a false truce, she closes her eyes in a plea. Leisurely it EXTRACTS it teeth from her, savoring the Taste SLINKING back into position.

Once released, she opens her eyes, looking for a retreat

Sliding upward, eased by the sludge proffered, it moves more efficiently.
Looking for the steps that she climbed in approach, she realizes that they have been retracted.

Turning around, the only exit is the gangway, leading to the next station. She doesn’t want to go on. With a loud CLANK it nestles into position.

She is afraid it will pounce, yet gingerly steps onto the gangway.

Swaying under her weight.

Catching herself, she looks below seeing its entrails leading the sludge to be digested. Greasing and easing the mechanism.

Her offering used to enable the device.

Realizing its Ravenous nature, she steps to the ledge. [CONTEMPLATING]

The gorge echoes, and taunts her from below.

[SHAKING] she wants to claim defeat.

Looking up, she begs for perseverance, but no longer knows who she is asking. [QUIVERING]

Looking at the platform ahead, she seeks solace.

Mustering up the courage to go on, she PROCEEDS leaving a trail of her Offerings along the way

OMINOUS ALIMENTATION: A SINISTRUOUS IMPLANTATION

Stepping up onto the grate, the stairs disappear. She is trapped between its arms and the Harrow above.

[TREMBLING]

Its fingers dance above her in ANTICIPATION

The Harrow slips and slides, greased by her sludge
Awaiting its cue.

Unwilling to give up.

She quells her FEAR
Lifting outstretched arms,
she submits to its Ravening Necessity
It SALIVATES

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK.

No hesitation.
It POUNCES,
Diving its SEARS into her.
Fully entering, they become CONJOINED,² it becomes Adnexa,³ holding her up.

She becomes the possessory.

[SNARLING]
Her faith wavers for a moment.
It TEARS VORACIOUSLY.
Laniaries dig into her MEATUS,
Expelling all discrepancies, forgiving all sins,

Sculpting into perfect purity.

The more she offers, the more diligently it works.
Contributing to the collection below,
Slush becomes PAPPY.
Closing her eyes and tilting her head back, she wills it to CLEANSE.

Absolving GREEDILY

Professing her faith, her indulgences fall,
further Sludging the mechanism
She surrenders, allowing it to strip mine her
She is PECCANT.

It is IMPLACCABLE, emaciating her

Pleasure ceases.
Becoming intolerable, she GRITS her teeth. Bearing it no longer, she is SATIATED. She opens her eyes, ordering it to cease. Grudgingly it Halts.

Commanding emancipation, it slides out.

Released from the Prosthesis, she can barely stand.

With a loud CLANK, it retracts. Deprived of strength, she smiles through a grimace. Persevering through her endurance.

EXIT THE STIGMATIST
Gathering the last of her will, she turns around victoriously. Seeing the Altar illuminated before her, like a beacon, she begins.

It Lures her.

Dragging herself forward, determined to meet her glory. Oozing out of her, she still proffers unaware. Falling and spilling off the gangway.

It gladly opens its MOUTH.

Savoring her once again, pushing her through its entrails. Breathing becomes labored. She keeps her eyes directed forward.

She slowly makes it to the center of the Altar.

Offerings smeared from here to the last Station, marking her toiled traverse.

EXHAUSTIVE pause.
ACT III. THE FINAL SACRIFICE

THE REALIZATION OF LOSS: SHE HAS ENTERED THE PENTRALIA
Looking up, she is overcome with awe
Closing her eyes and bowing her head,
She feels Filiopietistic
For those that have passed before her

With half-opened eyes, she sees her feet.

Her eyes widen in SHOCK.
She covers her mouth with stained hands, stifling a SCREAM
Seeing for the first time, unable to recognize,
Her emaciated, PULPY state.

In her struggle for absolution, she has lost herself

She has become Neither/Nor

Now a MONSTROSITY, something else.
Realizing her lose of self,
She loses her will, COLLAPSING
Forever insentient.

EXIT THE INTESTATE

Growing cold, her myrr can no longer be wrung out.
She is useless.
Offeratory arms hook the body and lifts it above the Altar
Performing an obligatory Rite

Pivoting around, hooking the body on the line leading to the OSSUARIUM

DISAPPEARING INTO A SEA OF ANONYMITY.

THE END.
CHAPTER 2: Act 2 LOOKING FURTHER BACK

Bad habits
VENEZIA, comprised of about 100 islands, 400 bridges and 2000 alleys, is a city of mysteries, mazes and amazement. Built upon millions of wood pylons driven into the sand and silt of the lagoon, brick and stone buildings appear to float on water. It is not a mirage but a marvel. A webbed city woven with Calli, Rami, Sottoporteghi, fondemente and canals, stitching an intricate tracery that contains and pockets, leads and alludes, confounds visitors and comforts Venetians. A city of secrets, stories and secretions, this city for centuries has mystified and intoxicated treasure seekers. Lazily poised it beckons you with arms open and legs slightly parted. What are you looking for, gold, love or a masked rendezvous? What will you throw down, will you gamble your fortune, your heart or even your life? This siren of a trading city will gives much, but it will also take more. You will always return looking for what you may have lost. This city guards its secrets yet flaunts its legends. It will send you in many directions through confusion and grand illusion. But stay the path of your heart and your feet will follow. And with faith you may find stories yet untold, hidden in the nooks and crannies of this deceptive majestic city. It is a place of Bad haBItTs.

To be a wife, a mother, a nun or a whore, these were the only options. In Renaissance Venice, women were not defined by their own identity, but by the role others had destined them to play within the social fabric of the Republic. For Venetian noblewomen the first three were the only permissible roles. Of these, donning the habit was the most common. The convent was a place negotiating the dual programs of virtue and vice, chastity and illicitness, and of good intentions gone awry. Re-imaging the convent church to communicate this duality is the focus of CHAPTER 2: Act 2.

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18 For tightly managed families, the nunnery was the site to house females for whom there was no other convenient place. See King, Margaret, Women of the Renaissance (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 84.
The Time: XVIc and XVIIc Renaissance Venice.

The Setting: Behind/Within walls that enclosed spiritual brides.

"In a widespread Latin saying, which went one further than the Venetian maritar à monacar, the problem of the female appetites was thus summed up: *Aut Maritus, aut murus* (if not a husband to govern her, then a girl needed a wall to contain her)." 19

The Sentence: Bricks and Mortar, Gates and Grates.

From the Council of Trent, Canon 5: Decree on regulars and nuns.

In 1563, the Council of Trent decided to impose forced enclosure on all female religious communities. This compulsory enclosure was reconfirmed by Pope Pius V’s Papal bull *Circa Pastoralis*, 1566. 20

The Mood: Deprived of liberty, forced into vocation.

The women of longing (naughty nuns) long to be elsewhere, transported physically, mentally and sexually, they desire to be released from their shackles, their ‘arranged’ marriage.

The Place: The place of discipline and vice, THE CONVENT.

"On the one hand, these virgin colonies were construed as bastions of chastity and prayer, a precious spiritual resource that served to counterbalance the worldliness of the laity. On the other, they were perceived as places of vice and indiscipline, a spiritual liability that put the salvation of the whole republic in jeopardy." 21

The Program: Donning the habit / performing the masquerade

Due to the rhetoric of Renaissance Venetian culture, many women of noble birth were forced into the institution of religion against their will and against good conscious. Attempting to appease cultural desires and perhaps superficially ease the conscious of family, these women took the oath, donned a costume, and ended up performing a subversive masquerade. In this project entitled Bad haBITs, a relationship between the material artifact

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19 Laven, op. cit., 86.
20 Ibid., xxvi.
21 Laven, op. cit., xxiv.
(costume/architecture) and the cultural act (performance/citation) is under consideration.

Cloaking and containing define the role of the convent in the 16th and 17th century Venetian culture and the life to be undertaken by many who were ushered therein. Projecting the superficial image of chastity, a necessary level of assurance was provided whereby it was thought that the obligatory role was performed satisfactorily. Again, this was true for both place and proselyte, its emergence taking on two forms and at two drastically different but related scales: in the garment known as the ‘habit’ and in the habitation known as the ‘cloister’. Similar to the space between the surface of the garment and the surface of the body, hidden spaces of negotiating can be found in the convent church.22

The artificial space of culture engendered an artificial space of the cloister. Together, these made for an environment that either invited or made suitable such acts. These spaces are the focus of the Bad habITs: a project of folds, stitches and pockets.

Within garb (habit) and cloister (habitat), nuns lived and performed the perfunctory routines and ‘rituals’ of monastic life. At the same time, they managed to subvert it habitually, enjoying and allowing forbidden pleasures. While habits worn and habits formed become the symbol of a cloistered cultural performance, the question of this project is to what degree was the cloister itself formed and subversively transformed for gender performativity, both in terms of the hidden culture and the one held up for view.

22 Sperling, Jutta Griselda, Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999) 136. Here, Sperling argues, Enclosure, chastity, and virginity were thus ambiguous and negotiable concepts. The boundaries they signified were supposed to be precisely fixed, but they appeared to be increasingly volatile. The notion of ‘woman’ was also quite unstable. It referred to an extremely vulnerable and degradable kind of human being, whole body integrity and gender seemed to be in constant jeopardy.
Part 1: The Renaissance Convent:  
Conventional Church Plans

Part 1 begins with a document survey of a typical Renaissance convent church. The forward to this section is a collection of archived plans of three Venetian churches: San Servolo, San Hieronymo and Sant’ Alvise. These documents were obtained from the map collection at the Archivo di Stato di Venezia. They depict the typical convent church in Venice during the time of the 8 C. - 14 C.: San Servolo, on the island of Torcello, dates back to the eight century; the origins of San Hieronymo are unknown; and the church at Sant’ Alvise was built in 1388 and stands yet today. These plans provide historical evidence of the architecturally programmed marginalization of nuns within a convent church. Sperling writes, “Female monastic life changed drastically after perpetual encloistering. Rules specified not only how the convent’s interior spaces were to be arranged, but also how, where, when, and with whom nuns were allowed to communicate. Architecturally, convents were transformed into panoptical spaces.”

The drawings that follow, Ripienëzza, Sagrestána di Notte, Secrezione and Delitto d’ Incendiario, are interpretive re-representations of the archived church plan of San Servolo. These drawings highlight, though various graphic techniques, the architectural devices and programmed spaces that were designed to contain the purity of nuns pocketed away, protecting them from public contamination. In particular, they record the device/spaces of the coro di suora, fenestra da communicar, and the ruota as

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23 Sperling, op. cit., 124.
24 Coro di suora is the nun’s choir, an enclosed balcony grated and draped above the entry.
25 Fenestra da communicar is the perforated grate through which the nun’s would receive communion.
26 Ruota is a rotary wheel that could exchange goods from inside to out, stitching these two spaces together without human contact.
locations of disorder. Placing the nuns out of sight, for instance, further indicated their sacred and reserved status and cloaked them in an air of mystery. Their unseen presence piqued the interest of some while putting to rest the minds of others. Although designed with the intent of opacity, the permeable and porous nature of these device/spaces merely filtered activity, allowing select admittance and exchange. Desires nonetheless flowed.
sagrestano di notte
secrezione
delitto d' incendiario
Part 1: The Renaissance Convent:

Conventual History of San Zaccaria

PROCENSSONAL

We will begin our journey to San Zaccaria at the Ducal Palace in the Piazza San Marco, once home to the Doge. San Zaccaria is closely located to San Marco and was always closely related to the Doge. From the beginning of the foundation of the convent church, it has been inextricably linked to the Doge, once the highest power in Venice. Its first patron was Doge Guistiniano Participizo (827-829). According to legend, the Abbess Agostina Morosini of San Zaccaria gave the doge’s successor Doge Pietro Tradonico the trademark ducal horned cap. The very land that you are standing on was once the orchard that bore vulvate fruit for the nuns of San Zaccaria. Pocketed under the Golden Chapel at San Zaccaria in the crypt the remains of eight doges lay. So deeply connected was the convent of San Zaccaria with the doge that he would make an annual procession on Easter Sunday to hear mass at San Zaccaria.

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27 Part 1 continues with a four-part text: Processional, Arrival, Lineage, and Cultural Context. This is a journey that departs from the more generalized study of conventional convent church plans to focus on the ‘site’ that is the core of the architectural exploration in LOOKING FURTHER BACK: “Bad Ha’BITS”, the church San Zaccaria. The Conventual History of San Zaccaria is represented in both text and illustration, and is intended to establish the performative setting of this specific Renaissance convent church. A series of experiential tangential notes provide an interlude before viewing the transitional church drawings. Both Notes and drawings emerged from a desire to imagine the original 9 C. church as it may have existed and to illustrate its growth between the 9 C. – 16th C., hoping to fill the gap of missing documentation. The archived conventional church plans, shown previously, worked as a contemporaneous precedent to reference.

28 Laven, op. cit., 77.


30 My understanding of the Easter procession comes from Joan Zimmerman, an independent scholar who received her Ph.D. from the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. While in Venice in the fall of 1995 she documented the ritual of the Easter procession to San Zaccaria. See Zimmerman, Joan, Venetian Maze: Easter Procession. 7 December, 2004. http://www.bellereti.com/jzimm/Venice/Easter.html
Following his footsteps, emulating a ritual of times past, we move forward to receive sacrament blessed in the presence of disembodied voices.

Begin in front of the Basilica San Marco in Piazza San Marco. Move pass, to the left towards the clock tower and small piazza Campiello of Basilica San Marco. Then turn right so that you will pass the Basilica San Marco and the pozzo in the middle of the square on your right, heading towards the Patriarchal Palace. To the left of the Palace follow Calle Canonica to the Rio di Palazzo, the canal that laps at the back of the palace. Upon reaching the canal hug the fondamente behind the Patriarchal Palace until you reach Ponte Canonica, cross and follow the path to Campo S.S. Filippes e Giacomo. Go through the piazza but follow straight to Salizzada San Provolo leading out of the piazza. Cross Ponte San Provolo at the top of the bridge, you will see the once gated threshold leading to San Zaccaria. Pass under the sculptured archway into Campo San Zaccaria.

ARRIVAL

The Calle leads you along a diagonal line to the corner of the piazza where the front of the church and the old cemetery meet. To your left a series of filled in arches mark part of the old convent, predominately the antique cemetery. The church towers above, guarded by angels perched at the corners of the rising arched quadrants and pediment gracing the tops of the aisles and nave.

Placed deeper in the piazza and pocketed by a gated semicircular garden, the convent tower, parlor and old church connect to the right of the main church. The walls that abut the garden undulate in and out towards the south end corner of the piazza closing in to create a narrow Calle, and the other once gated entrance into the Campo. These walls fortify and contain the

Pozzo is a cistern or well.
Italian Carabinieri headquarters. Their quarters seem to have been folded into parts of the old convent, unseen by the public, cloaked in mystery. Although the space is not original in its entirety, the military compound more than likely covers the extent of the footprint of the old religious compound convent at San Zaccaria.

San Zaccaria once a bastion of virtue and vice is a unique architectural gem in the urban fabric of Venice with its long history and bri-collage of architectural styles. Yet, it remains ill documented. As a religious institution, interior access was very limited to the public. In the 16th century, it became legally impossible to enter under Canon 5 in the “Decree on regulars and nuns”, or forced enclosurement. When Napoleon took Venice in the late 18th century the convent became a conglomerate of religious institutions in 1806, mixing orders and nuns that had been displaced by Napoleon. Slipping from the hands of a religious order, it later became a military institution or barracks until it became the home for the Italian Carabinieri in Venice. As the convent fell from one hand to the next, they always remained folded, keeping its architectural secrets intact. The established dialogue of the space of enclosure eased the transition from one claussen to the next.

LINEAGE

The complex of San Zaccaria is a pastiche of architectural styles that have been collaged together through the years as growth of the church and complex required new and added structures.

The story of San Zaccaria begins with the original Byzantine church that was legendarily found in the Dark Ages.

32 McAndrew, op. cit., 281.

33 King, Margaret, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 92. King notes that the revolution for women religious was “...exported in the person Napoleon, convents were reorganized, rationalized, and suppressed, and testators were constrained to leave wealth to daughters as sons.”
Later in the Ninth Century their first patron, Doge Participazio established a convent along side of it.

There is confusion over whether or not their patron saint is Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist or Pope Zacharias (741-52). The relics of Saint Zacharias were given to the church by the Emperor Leo V and remain there today. The popularity of the church grew as more relics were donated to the church, and due to the rising interest in and pilgrimages to the church, it had to be enlarged and rebuilt several times.

San Zaccaria grew as a wealthy church, only second to San Marco. They sold their orchard, which is now half of Piazza San Marco to Doge Ziani in 1170. The monies were added to the dowries of the noble novices that filled their rosters, keeping their coffers full.

The large part of the church complex, as it stands today, is actually the third church built. In the Fourteenth and early Fifteenth Centuries a Gothic church was built. However, the walls did not stand for very long until it was ravaged by a fire in the 1450's. The fire, thoroughly devastating, destroyed much of the convent and killed approximately one hundred nuns.

In 1458, Doge Francesco Foscari ordered a new church to be built. San Zaccaria the latter, the church that rises before you in Campo San Zaccaria is a rare example of the Transitional architectural period in Venice. Transition is defined as an eclectic period moving from Gothic architecture towards Renaissance. The architectural ‘style’ could be considered both/and—under the first awarded commission to architect Antonio Gambello, it became neither gothic nor Renaissance. Gambello embraced Renaissance architecture, but due to more than likely, lack of knowledge of the classical codes and orders of renaissance, he created a bric-a-brac
architecture that was neither nor. It was his very own invenzione, an architecture bordering schizophrenia. It was undisciplined, unruly, and unordered.

**CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Among the elite society of Venice, at the birth of a female, the question arose, *maritar o monacar*: Would she marry or become a nun? The fate of the child was often decided before she could even utter her own words of choice. The decision of either/or was unique to the city of Venice although the same dilemma arose in other cities and states, substantially on a smaller scale. During the Renaissance, Venice and the surrounding lagoon area was home to no less than fifty convents and many had near impeccable pedigrees of nobility. The ‘effect’ of noble blood coursing through the veins of religious life was due to the ‘cause’ of dowry inflation. Venetians were notoriously known for their pride in keeping their noble lineage pure and contained. As the inflation of dowries rose, many noblemen were unable to provide their daughters with the ‘marriage money’ necessary for securing a profitable alliance, or marriage. The daughters that were not found husbands of esteemed stature were pledged instead to a spiritual husband, Jesus Christ. This ‘marriage’ also necessitated a dowry, of a much lesser value, that found its way into the treasury of the religious institution, the convent. Such a dowry assured women a secure and honorable home until their parting days, under lock and key.

There is feminist debate over whether the spiritual or secular life of Renaissance women wielded more power. It is true that women of the material world were the pawns of patriarchal

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36 King, op. cit., 82. King notes that in a seventeenth-century Venetian noble clan, one of three daughters was persuaded to “monacar”, rather than to “maritar,” but for a Florentine noble clan, there was an exception. During the Renaissance, Florence rivaled Venice in its numbers of cloistered women of noble descent, as many as half of the women of some elite families resided in convent.

37 Laven, op. cit., xxiv.
politics. They were forced into marriages that were deemed ‘desirable’ just as often as their sisters were forced into the convent. The power that these women possessed merely consisted in their choice of fashion, entertaining, and gift giving. Their surname and dowry mattered more than their ‘being’ in the world of politics. Nuns on the other hand were granted the political power to control their own domain and to a certain extent, influence beyond the walls of their confines. Convents were run internally and democratically. Cloisters operated like businesses or small estates in that they not only aided in providing their own sustenance but they also traded and bartered with the outside world. They had to manage not only the financial affairs of their immediate property, the premises of the convent, but many had satellite properties that provided income and needed looking after. They were a self-governing body, electing and appointing to positions certain nuns for given terms. They in essence controlled their own destiny within the convent. Nuns, by far, possessed more political power than their lay counterparts, but they only obtained their voice by an inverse sacrifice, the profession of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

The vows that were ‘mouthed’ by many, performed a spiritual rite of passage, and connoted a physical transition from the material world to the confines of the cloister. The indication of perfunctory profession of faith without conviction of the heart

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38 Ibid., xxx-xxxiii, 15, and 53-57. The religious life held for many the possibility of a higher education, many nuns were literate, educated in Latin and became scholars, illuminating texts and became musicians, although this became limiting after the Counter-Reformation. Nuns also had agency for commissioning artworks. The nuns commissioned the famous Bellini altarpiece of the Virgin and Saints found at San Zaccaria. Although they would not have been to see the painting from behind their curtained choir because it was in the public part of the church.

39 Sperling, op. cit., 137-141. The vestizione or clothing ceremony is the novice’s initial induction into the religious life. The novice begins the ceremony outside the convent at an exterior dressed in her finest lay clothes and then processes to the gate of her chosen convent where she is admitted after questioning by the abbess and confessor through the physical threshold. The ceremony continues within the confines of the convent church where she discards her lay clothing and is dressed in her order’s habit and has her hair chopped lock by lock by the nuns of the convent. This ritual marks the physical transition into the church by discarding all worldly possessions.
implies that women were entering the convent under duress.\textsuperscript{40} For the women who were entering the religious life involuntarily out of family duty and loyalty, the convent loomed ahead as an institution of bodily incarceration. As learned from Michel Foucault, in taking vows, one was in essence sacrificing their freedom,\textsuperscript{41} becoming prisoners of virtue that were sentenced to life for the blood of the Republic.

\textsuperscript{40} On this note, Laven supports Sperling, citing her "recent study [that] insists that the passage of over 50 percent of Venetian noblewomen into convents must have been the result of coercion." See Laven, op. cit., 35. Bracket by author.

A CHASER: *Tangential Notes on San Zaccaria*

(Does this fit anywhere?)

To understand how San Zaccaria grew into a large religious complex, most vibrant and vital during the renaissance era, one must trace the steps back to its beginning. The original church that dates back to the Ninth century has only just recently emerged from obscurity. For centuries it has laid quietly beneath the floor of the old conventional convent church, waiting to be discovered. It is only in the past century in a restoration effort performed after the great flood of 1966 that pulling up the church floorboards revealed the mosaic floor of the original Byzantine church below, excavating what once was almost fabled and forgotten. 42 Documented drawings of the original church may have either been lost or quite possibly had never existed43. Without any archival, architectural or archeological evidence, no one knew that beneath the floor a buried treasure lay. One might conjecture that the original church became the foundation for the old church currently on site, a footprint below, pocketed just beneath the surface. In a city that is constantly sinking the only way to stay afloat is to build up.

The monastery San Francesco della Vigna in Castello also made a very similar discovery after the flood. The old chapter house had been converted into a small chapel for the order of monks. Centuries ago the original floor was covered with a dark wood floor with raised choir seats. During restoration work the

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42 On November 6, 1966, Venice was flooded with over a meter of murky lagoon water. This high water, called *acqua alta*, destroyed many artworks and displaced many Venetians from their homes. This singular disaster brought the world’s attention to the long neglected and dilapidated state of Venice, inciting long overdue restoration efforts. See UNESCO website, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Venice, Safeguarding Campaign: 4 November 1966. 25 October 2004. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/tangible/venice/html_eng/novembre.shtml>.

43 Note that chief architects or *protomagister* at this time did not necessarily convey building through construction documents. Sometimes large-scale models were built and referenced as a master plan. Architects had a hands-on involvement with the construction, solving problems on the fly and designing as it was being erected, somewhat similar to today’s “fast-track” or “design-build” construction processes. Architects were skilled artisans first, such as stonemasons, goldsmiths and sculptors, before endeavoring into architecture.
original floor was revealed and now it is encased in glass exposing a
part of their history now recovered.44

I have always questioned how can history be buried and
forgotten. Do not tales and documents tell the importance of stories
of times past, if not illuminated, then by word of mouth? For
instance, I could not quite believe when I had heard that the
Roman Forum, upon visiting it, was once buried beneath two
millenniums of sedimentation entombing the entire political center
of a once powerful Empire, concealing monuments and civic buildings
from sight and memory almost lost and forgotten. Now excavated
and physically located meters below street level, a bi-
stratification occurs, the world in which we inhabit, full of noises,
pollution and chaos tramps along seamlessly and sometimes
unknowingly over a world that at one time performed their own
similar daily rituals. This world, lying beneath the level of car
tires and shoe soles, is eerily quiet. It is without living presence. Its
voices mute, its stories untold. History can be recovered in the
architecture and artifacts excavated and exposed. These contain
the residue of 'lived experience'. When combined, these bits and
pieces of information synthesize lost stories into a compelling
history.

THE POINT OF MY WORK IS TO SHOW THAT MATERIAL DOCUMENTS CAN
BE MADE TO TELL THE IMPORTANT STORIES OF THE PAST, TO ILLUMINATE
WHAT HAS BEEN BURIED BENEATH THE SURFACE, THE ILLUMINATION
OCCURRING NOT MERELY THROUGH TEXT BUT BY IMAGE OR OTHER VISUAL
AND GRAPHIC MEANS.

44 Upon visiting Venice for the first time in the spring of 2004, I visited San Francesco della Vigna to survey a
similar but opposite monastic enclosure, the monastery. This monastery was operating contemporaneously
with San Zaccaria but has outlived the convent and is still operating today as a monastery and theological
school. I was welcomed by the Director and given a tour through the complex, from the library, to the cells, to
the refectory, through the cloisters and to this particular room, the old chapter house, embedding a memory of
space into my being. This particular passage cannot be cited from a text but was passed on to me by word of
mouth by a man whose name I can no longer remember. The truth is in the experience that I pass on to you.
The Forum as a pagan space was abandoned and left unused filling with refuse after the rise of Christianity. I have visualized 2000 years of dust and dirt, a mound impacted, filling the spaces between structures, and within this natural filling artificial implantation occurring. Artifacts pepper the sedimented strata, a love letter to a forlorn mistress may have been dropped by a messenger and trampled underfoot, an apple core lazily discarded, a broken fingernail, or a precious stone that had fallen loose from its setting, lay entrenched in the earth. These objects buried beneath the surface tell stories, sensual and perfunctory, whimsical and mundane leaving traces of the 'lived experience' of place.

Although the Roman Forum antedates the historical survey conducted in CHAPTER 2: Act 2 LOOKING FURTHER BACK, for me it marks a memory of a time and place when cultural history and architecture coalesced and fed my longing to see and represent architecture as more than a formal and functionally prescribed structure.

In the spring of 2004, I left the states embarking on a journey to find the meat of my thesis. Searching for a feminine archetype that embodied my interests in architecture, Women's Studies and culture. The Venetian Renaissance convent presented itself as an ideal space to research and re-represent, an archetype built for the physical containment of women, dually empowering and marginalizing them. I became deeply interested in the women that were cloistered within, feeling the need to tell their stories. Many were held captive against their will, silenced and discarded. The socio-political setting of forced vocations and forced enclosure was rich with indiscipline. Women were acting out against their oppressors, funneling their suppression into transgressions. The vows of chastity, obedience and poverty, prescriptively encoded into the architecture via what we contemporarily refer to as "program," were being negotiated and manipulated. Rites and rituals were subverted, disordering the prescribed functions of
space. Festering beneath the surface something was amiss, begging to be uncovered. The walls that held them prisoner also propagated activities while hiding them from view, creating a place ripe for illicit fermentation. Numerous accounts of indiscipline can be found in the civic archives, citing examples of misdemeanors occurring between religious women and the lay world. When subversive activity occurred within the cloister between celibates, if found out, was brought to trial in papal courts. Curiously, these records have all been destroyed. Only bits and pieces of convent history have been documented. In order to synthesize and recover a history of these women’s ‘lived experience’, the architecture, artifacts and cultural context all must be considered.

That spring I traveled to Venice searching for a renaissance convent to study at depth. I had visited a handful of convents, but only one stood out. San Zaccaria was strangely peculiar; it was full of mixed messages making it hard to read clearly. I knew that I would have to dig deep to uncover what was beneath the surface. I spent some time surveying the areas of the churches that were open to the public and, with much persuasion, the Carabinieri allowed me into the primary cloister for about ten minutes to survey. Having made my way into the church, I had anticipated going down into the crypt, but I questioned whether it would be open. Having seen a photograph of the crypt before arriving to Venice, it appeared half full of water, filling the space to half the column height. I found this to be true upon visitation. The caption read that the crypt was not always open due to high waters. As I descended down into the tomb it appeared that a walkway would take you through the space just above the level of the water. The space half submerged was both eerie and enchanting. I realized through closer

45 Laven, op. cit., 149-150. In the nineteenth century, records of the trials of nuns in the Patriarchal archives were destroyed. Only a few transcripts have survived.
examination that the crypt was not full of water. On the contrary, the depth of the water was deceptively only an inch or two. The crypt was halfway filled with sedimentation, the water merely kissing the surface. I recollected my memory of the Roman Forum as I stood on a millennium of sedimentation. Unlike the Forum this space had not yet been excavated, embedded in the dirt beneath my feet were stories yet to be told.
Part 2: San Zaccaria di Venezia:

The Cloisters of San Zaccaria

The two cloisters of the convent of San Zaccaria are among the least known architectural monuments of the Renaissance in Venice, primarily because the employment of the convent as military barracks since the mid- or late nineteenth century kept them inaccessible to the public, and because even before that time they were partially immured in the process of conversion to governmental functions. Scholars who might have gained entrance seem to have been unaware of their existence. 

A thorough and able campaign of restoration carried out in the early 1960's provided the first opportunity in modern times to assess properly the architectural conception, but adequate photographs, apart from those taken to document the restoration, have yet to be made.

The opening image of San Zaccaria di Venezia is a newly documented architectural representation depicting the extent of the conventional complex. In its entirety, this drawing perhaps has never been documented before. Combining two separate plans of San Zaccaria found in John McAndrew's Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance created it.

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46 The Cloisters of San Zaccaria is comprised of the text History, Cloister One and Cloister Two. History talks about the rather peculiar nature of the double cloister found within San Zaccaria, while Cloister One and Cloister Two document the architectural presence of the habitat that had once contained the virginal bodies. Though absent now, I witnessed traces of their inhabitation during a short survey permitted by the Carabinieri in the Spring of 2004. For a plan drawing of the programmatic spaces of the convent complex at Ivo Relazione, obtained from the map collection at the Archivo di Stato di Venezia, see Appendix B. There, a complete set of drawings with program translation from Italian to English language can be found. Unfortunately, such thorough documentation of the San Zaccaria complex does not exist in its entirety, although one can imagine that the archetype of the convent defined by the same program is similarly structured.

47 McAndrew, op. cit., 554.
HISTORY

San Zaccaria houses a particular architectural oddity, the double cloister. In Quattro cento Venice, the building of two contiguous cloisters was rather unusual. Double cloisters in other parts of Italy have been known to house both monks and nuns contemporaneously, although in this instance it is highly doubtful.\(^{48}\) Only the names of abbesses appear in building records up until 1491. Building records for San Zaccaria from 1491-1555 have been lost. It is more than likely that the two cloisters housed two conventual groups within the same Benedictine order, one being more observant and the other more lax in rule. These divisions would have been called *Osservante* and *Conventuale*.\(^{49}\) The convent housing two groups is more likely the case being that San Zaccaria was noted for its liberal and lax ruling due to its noble roster, yet within the same order more ascetic and true to vow nuns would have been found.

After the Counter Reformation, which would have had a more uniform organizing reform on the convent, the division of groups was more than likely dissolved.

It is believed that the Renaissance master, Mauro Codussi who finished work on the main church would have also been the architect of the cloisters, although the cloisters do not directly reflect Codussi’s architectural vocabulary. Since the cloisters are quite free of Gothic and medieval interventions that characterized minor architects of that period, and that his name appeared as the last architect associated with San Zaccaria in 1491, Codussi was more than likely the architect.

\(^{48}\) King, op. cit., 82. In the central Middle Ages, there was Benedictine double monasteries directed by abbesses with the assistance of trained monks. However, this was an outdated model not permitted after the Council of Trent.

\(^{49}\) McAndrew, op. cit., 558-559.
CLOISTER ONE\textsuperscript{50}

One can only access the cloistered spaces of the old convent with permission from the Carabinieri. This is not an easy task to do. If permission is attained, you enter through a portal near the southernmost end of the Campo, the location of the land entrance to the headquarters. You will walk through a series of cellular spaces that are partially open to the sky before reaching the first cloister. At the southwestern corner, you enter into the 5 X 7 bay cloister. If you would continue through the cloister, you would reach the water gate entry on the Rio dei Greci, the two major entrances aligning on axis. Shifting your focus back to the cloister, a cistern, centered in the courtyard of the Cloister One stands absolute.

The perimeter piers structurally support the double bay arched vaults, while columns that are more cosmetic are intermittently spaced between them in a syncopation of structure and aesthetic. The columns are an awkward Ionic order. They stand from parapet to capital, equivalent to the length of my body with an arm stretched over my head. The intercolumnar distance is 6 steps, size 37 black Italian leather boots, 11" long, a total distance of 66 inches, or roughly 3 meters.

Looking up, your eye is drawn to the rather large distance that looms as a blank expanse between the ground floor arcade and the second story. There is no visual break, no rationalizing floor to ceiling height. The bland and rather unusual character set this cloister apart from other contemporary cloisters.

On the northern face of the cloister, connecting and dividing cloister 1 from cloister 2 is the location of the original chapter house. A grand entrance is received by a four-arched entry that is differentiated by its ornate decoration. Its prominence is clearly

\textsuperscript{50} The text portions Cloister One and Cloister Two are a blend of my own personal experience and information gained while surveying the cloister at San Zaccaria. See my personal sketches and notes in Appendix C: THE CLOISTERS OF S ZACCARIA. Also, refer to McAndrew, John, Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance (Massachusetts: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1980) 554-559, for parallel historical description.
marked in the detail. The arches have received the blessing or sometimes contamination by the hands of choir nuns passing through on their way to chapter. Soiled and reverently smoothed, these arches remain an original masterpiece that demarcates the space of old and new.

The chapter house, once a location for the communal meeting of law and order of the convent, is now a communal meeting place for those who execute the law and order of Italy to grab a cappuccino or a cornetto. Buon Appetito.

At the northwestern corner of the cloister an elegant Renaissance stair leads to the second floor. An inscription marked with the date 1496 takes one back to the time when this stair would have led into the private sphere of cells, locked doors and solemn secrets.

CLOISTER TWO

While surveying Cloister 1 the Carabinieri repeatedly said, "No, this is the only original," as they diverted me from entering or peering around the corner to Cloister 2. I didn’t believe them. I looked long enough to count the number of columns, but after many frowns and shaking heads, I had to return my attention to cloister one, but I couldn’t stop thinking about cloister two. What were they hiding? What didn’t they want me to see?

At the opposite end of the corridor from the Renaissance stair is a passage that leads to the second cloister. This passage, awkward in its semi curvilinear path, is more than likely an addition made after the suppression of the convent in 1810.

The second cloister is aligned perpendicular to the first cloister with the axis running north to south. Two cloisters running different paths, not in parallel directions, meet in conjunction or disjunction at the chapter house.
Cloister 2 is also a 5 X 7 double-arched bay rectangle but the scale has been stretched, the bay width is longer than six steps and the cloister is considerably larger than the first.

The second cloister employs the stylistic finishes of the first cloister in the details of the columns and pilasters, yet it is more refined and sophisticated. This cloister was likely to have been built after the first one. The changing of proportions from the first cloister to the second appear to be contemporaneous with that of the changes in vernacular architecture between the dates of 1490-1520.

The walls enclosing the courtyard are almost all rendered individually different. Only the north and east sides have an upper arcade, the southern tract is modern. (i.e., the location of the chapter house, now café) The western side has an upper arcade that is open on both sides. A breezeway connects you visually to the back of the church, ambulatory and apsidioles. It is hard to calculate exactly how close the cloister and church are, the space between them seems to collapse visually folded. Could one reach out and touch the stones of the church, would they meet even briefly and abut?

It is only in plan that the refuse of pocketed space between cloister two and the church is revealed.
Part 2: San Zaccaria di Venezia:

Clausura: An Inventory of Misdeeds

In the previous section, the plan of the complex of San Zaccaria and the accompanying text set the architectonic scene, while in this section the Clausura: Inventory of misdeeds lists the disorderly acts taking place within, found in the civil records of Venice between the years of 1395-1626. Extricated from the text Virgins of Venice, Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent by Mary Laven, this factual series of acts took place within or surrounding the Venetian convent, establishing the mood. Some major acts of disorder had taken place at the scene of San Zaccaria while the others were littered all across Venice and into the lagoon area, constituting a script of performative acts that could not be played on any other stage other than the convent.

51 Jutta Griselda, Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 134. Jutta states that “Clausura was thus a circular concept, defined by reference to other enclosed gardens it was intended to guard. Its justification consisted in replacing the concept to be explained by a metaphorically related one already accepted as sacrosanct: clausura was legitimised by analogy to virginity. As an additional hymen, it prevented humans from accessing the nuns’ sacred interior spaces: it was a fortification of their delicate bodily enclosures.”

52 Note: The inventory of misdeeds is a comprehensive list of illicit acts performed by religious women in Venetian Convents between the dates of 1395 and 1626. These stories have been sifted out of the Laven’s text Virgins in Venice from beginning to end, in an effort to recompose them into a chronological index/order and to embellish through typographical inflection and citation. Laven obtained records of these acts by sifting through the civic archives of Venice. See, Laven, op. cit., 1-206.
An INVENTORY of Misdeeds

1395, Santa Croce della Giudecca, Antonio Vanaro was tried for entering the convent on several occasions to have sex with Suor Ursia Tressa in her cell.

In 1474, Sant' Angelo di Contorta, a scandal prone community was finally shut down by the pope.

The Senate passed a law in 1509 that anyone who violates nuns would be sentenced to perpetual banishment from Venice.

Unlawful entry into a convent was a ten-year ban.

Anyone who helped a nun escape received at minimum six months imprisonment.

1509, La Celestia, young patricians were charged with dancing the night away in this particular convent parlor during Carnival.

Laws created by the Council of Ten in 1514 placed sex with a nun, and entering the convent in the same category of severity, receiving the same punishment.

1533, Corpus Domini, problems arose over the election of the new abbess. The abbess elected Veneradna Capello was not accepted by six of the nuns, who acted rebelliously, and were excommunicated by the papal nuncio, and the Council of Ten ordered the nuns to imprisonment in six other convents. But these orders were lessened by the rhetoric of their family to manifest their obedience.

1553, San Giovanni Lateran, an attempted escapee awoke neighbors of the convent in the middle of the night with the plight for their help, she said that she had been kept in the convent prison for six months, was married and forced into the convent.

1554, proceedings occurred against a group of men who habitually crossed the lagoon to hang out outside of a convent were it appeared they were familiar with a group of nuns.

1555, San Giovanni Lateran, Suor Faustina was found in bed with a convent employee, Francesco dalle Crosette and she fled with her lover.

1561, Spirito Santo, Suor Crestina Dolfin attempted to escape from the convent. She expressed that she had entered involuntarily and was forced to enter by physical threat and the inducement of flattery of her father.
1564, San Moffio di Mazzorbo, it was noted to the patriarch that the nuns no longer eat in the parlor, indicating that they regularly had.

San Maffio de Mazzorbo, Suor Brodata told the Patriarch that the abbess is little obeyed, and can rule little.

1566, LAWS ORDERED THAT IF ANYONE SHOULD HAVE CARNAL COMMERCE WITH A NUN THEY WOULD BE SENTENCED TO A TEN YEAR BAN AT MINIMUM AFTER PAYING A 1000 DUCAT FINE. IF A MAN COULD NOT PAY THIS FINE, HE WOULD SPEND 3 YEARS IN JAIL BEFORE HIS EXILE.

San Sepolcro, the abbess was said to have helped aid a young boarder, Meneghina escape the convent. In 1567, she was ousted from her position by their male confessor and local friars of San Francesco della Vigna and they instated a new abbess. Nuns in confusion acted furiously, they refused to be summoned to the chapter room, and friars pulled some of their veils from their heads, a gesture that disrobbed them of their status and dignity. When the confessor announced that they were to vote openly in chapter, many fled and the nine remaining sisters elected the new abbess.

Santa Giustina, 12 nuns were opposed to the prioress.

1567, Sant' Andrea de Zirada, nuns employed two men to do tasks, Zorzi and Hieronimo, in turn siphoning their resources.

Another woman, Zuana, was hired personally to tend 10 chickens for Madonna Suor Gabriela, who supplied her with wine, bread and other things.

The confessor kept his mistress, Felicita and her 8 children at the confessor's home at the expense of the convent.

A group of nuns, Suor Anna Giustina, Suor Gabriela Salamon, Suor Elena Capello, Suor Beatrice Moro and Conversa Suor Anfrosina, gathered near the door, conversing with lay people and missing choir and other communal events.

Suor Beatrice smuggled flour in her dirty washing which she sent to her sister via Zorzi.

Felicita gossips with and relays confessional information to the sisters who hang out by the gate.

It was also witnessed that Felicita had close relationships with these nuns, they were seen holding hands, kissing and touching breasts.

A list of 11 employees of Sant' Andrea was generated in a ban from allowing them admittance to the convent. The list indicated the proximity to the convent, on the same street or campo.
1569, La Celestia, a group of men were charged with serenading the convent at dawn from a boat.

NUNS AS GIVERS, CONNECTING THE INSIDE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

1571, San Iseppo, Suor Deodata was the subject of patriarchal inquiry concerning the convent confessor, his brother Gesparo and the prioress, Suor Ciprianna Moresini. Suor Deodata spoke out about their relationships and chastised him personally in the confessional one day. For her verbal assaults she was sentenced to several months in prison. While Deodata so openly condemned the priest and the prioress, she also had a relationship with a group of male clergy. She had close relationships with Fra Illuminato and Fra Bastian, with whom she exchanged presents. Gifts mentioned by an eyewitness that she would make for the friars were surplices, handkerchiefs, shirts, collars, false sleeves, embroidered hats, and cakes and biscuits. Suor Deodata excluded herself from the communal ordered living of the convent to pursue her own interests and outside relationships. She produced these items in exchange for materials and money, she in a sense set up her own small business in the cloister. She paid a servant to run her errands and network with the friars. She also took in their laundry and insisted to do her own laundry separate so she could wash theirs also.

Suor Deodata was not happy with the cloistered life, it was said that she was forced to take the veil and escape once. She found purpose in her life in making gifts for the friars, for her she was able to fulfill a domestic role. It was never thought that her primary purpose for her works was of a sexual nature.

Many sisters made edible gifts for their families from the convent storehouse, such as cakes, doughnuts, biscuits and pastries.

Santa Chiara, the nuns ask for their daily allowance of eggs to be given to them raw so that they can use them for their own baking needs.

La Celestia, nuns of the convent tore down the wall of the grain storeroom in an attempt to regain control of their food supplies from an outside and opposed rule over them by another more exemplary convent.

Conversations with laywomen, boarding girls and widows sometimes lead to trouble.

Some women were allowed as boarders if they were seeking refuge from a troubled marriage, but at this time it had to be permitted by the Council of Ten

Groupings of young boarding girls were also irreverent and would be uproarious in their cells under the guise of working.
1594, Santa Marta, it was noted that the boarding girls were a nuisance, they ran around as the pleased, some were kept in the rooms of their novice-mistresses, while others played cards all night in their dormitories.

There were many complaints of nuns sharing cells

Corpus Domini, more than one nun sharing a cell.

Spirito Santo, three to four nuns reading or sewing in one room.

Suor Marietta Dolfin also had a close relationship with a converse sister, so close they even shared a bed.

The patriarch told this group of sisters that they must dissolve their relationship.

Santa Lucia, there was a group of nuns that consort far too closely.

San Sepolcro, One sister, Suor Paula Lipamano headed a clique, they would not eat with the rest of the community in the refectory, preferring to dine separately.

Places of work became social spaces

San Zaccaria, the laundry room became the place of private banquets.

Santa Maria de Miracoli, older nuns complained about the polarization between the young and the old, and how the young gather in their oratories to socialize.

Ogni Santi, The Barbarigo family gathers in their own large room above the parlour, where they sleep and gather around their own casks of wine and food.

The time for prayer in one's cell was often used for profit

San Daniel, the Patriarch Zane noted that many nuns sewed and embroidered clothes, handkerchiefs and accessories to be sold outside of the convent.

1594, Santa Chiara was reported to be in poor condition, roof failure and drafts were the cause of the squandering of the convents assets on excessive gift giving.

1594, Santa Marta, it was exposed that significant love affairs occurred between the nuns and the boarding girls.
1595, Santa Croce della Giudecca, it was recorded that illicit and sensual practices took place between some of the nuns.

Servants were also a cause of disorder.

There were two types of servants that interacted with secular society, hired servants of the lay world, and the designated converse sisters who were allowed out of the convent to conduct business.

These converse sisters were often cited for misdemeanors.

1595, Sant' Alvise, it was observed that the converse beg in the lay world for no reason, causing a lose of time and profit.

1595, Corpus Domini, the converse sisters would go to the countryside at their own leisure.

1595, San Sepolcro, it was noted that the converse go to the mainland to beg and collect rents.

Le Vergini, nuns cited that the converse acted like choir sisters and the abbess could not control them.

Spirito Santo, Suor Crestina, a sickly nun had her own personal lay servant, Pasqua who would clean her linens.

1595, San Iseppo, a patriarchal visit observed a clique of nuns, Suor Marietta Dolfin, Suor Dorothea Sforza and Suor Mansueta Pase. They distinguished themselves from others by their elaborate dress, wearing high-heeled clogs, ornaments, silk stocking and gilt lace, their absence in the choir was also often observed.

List of Disorders and Orders:

"Disorders"
Vain Choir Nuns
Disrespectful Converse
Chickens in the Dormitories

1595, Sant' Alvise, older nuns complained about the younger girls who would act exuberantly and gather at the gate to converse with outsiders.

Santa Maria Maggiore, four sisters, Suor Micchiela, Suor Giustina, Suor Lodovica and Suor Chiara, go out to celebrate holidays and often eat in the homes of their families.
1595, Santa Croce, nuns of the Mollino family were offering members of *their family cheap rent in convent properties*.

1596, San Zaccaria, in a *patriarchal visit* it was noted that *nuns keep for themselves the gifts that are bestowed upon them from their family*, when they should be turning them over to the community of the convent.

*Secular fashion observances of the time*—elaborate coiffures, gold jewelry, silk stockings, lace and those notorious high-heeled clogs.

Sant’ Andrea, nuns were wearing low-cut dresses, and long curly locks.

1596, San Zaccaria, the patriarch got wind that *some of the young sisters who had tamed their hairstyles for his visit, quickly reverted back to their elaborate hairstyles once he left*.

1604, at San Daniel it was reported that nuns made *legacies of their cells*.

1605, the Council of Ten ordered the death penalty as the punishment if one was proven to have had sexual relations with a nun.

1608, 15 serious cases of sacrilege within two months were noted, though convent names were concealed

*Verdicts of trials in 1608 and 1609 were found to reveal that 8 out of 15 men had carnal commerce with nuns*:

- 4 had attempted to have sex.
- 3 had taken nuns from the convent to have improper conduct with them, though sex was not the intention.

*It was found in records that men commonly entered the convents through the cellar and led them away by boats*.

1609, Ser Galeazzo Simitecolo led a nun away by side canal to another location *where she had carnal copulation with a man there waiting for her*.

He also led a pregnant nun away to a midwife to dispose of the baby and tried to seduce her nun companion while the nun was occupied.

In October 1609, San Zaccaria had been chosen to be the first convent visited, by the pastoral visits. Only given one weeks notice, it was hard to make any major reforms. *Grounds and private cells were swept of any visible evidence of lax discipline*.
ILLICIT ITEMS MOST OFTEN FOUND IN CELLS: BOOKS, CLOTHES, WRITINGS, DISHONEST PAINTINGS, DOGS, BIRDS, OR OTHER ANIMALS.

1609, San Zaccaria, a group of nuns abused their responsibilities to dine in their rooms and socialize.

1609, Sant' Andrea de Zirada, a group of four nuns preferred to eat in their cells.

There was a lack of observation of seniority, many ate or socialized with their friends and family.

1609, San Daniel, a nun petitioned to have some convent employees removed for their flamboyant displays that they made with their whores in the convent parlour.

1609, San Servolo, during carnival Don Tranquillo, Don Concordio, and Don Cornelio stayed out until the wee hours after being invited to this convent under the pretext of dinner, and a play.

1609, San Maffio di Murano, Oratio Coreggio and his wife Paulina were very observant of the needs of their female dependents in the cloister, he held a party for his niece after her clothing ceremony in the parlour that lead well into the night. He was fined 20 ducats.

1610, San Servolo, it was pointed out to the patriarch that nuns lavish their family with wedding gifts expecting to be compensated reciprocally, socially and materially.

Between 1611-1612, four instances occurred were lay work men were allowed into convents without legal permission.

In April 1611, the abbess chastised Zuane da Rivoltela for working on a convent under the guise of an obtained license.

San Girolamo, builder Zuane Radicchio was employed to construct within the convent church a staircase leading to the organ. Open conversations were held between the abbess and other nuns, but all according to moral conduct.

1611, Santa Croce, two Jewish men were taking refuge from the sun on the public canal outside of the convent and were promptly arrested by the convent magistracy.

1611, Sant’ Anna, a young drunk man boated by the convent singing obscene verses, though non-directed, he was imprisoned for six months.

1611, Santa Croce, the older nuns made a complaint about the young insubordinate nuns.
1611, a musician, Pasqualin was charged with showing his member in the churches of nuns. He would make his rounds around the convents and would wait for the opportune moment to show his member to the nuns.

Between 1610-1612 five cases involving prostitutes were heard before the magistrate.

April 1612, Ogni Santi, Battista a builder was hired to build a wall in the parlour according to the mandates of forced enclosure.

Sant’ Anna, Maestro Battista admitted to dividing a cell into two by building a wall, under the impression that he had the proper license, but didn’t.

1612, Spirito Santo, a prostitute entered the parlour on the vigil of St Thomas the Apostle and was seen kissing Suor Lucietta along with other nuns.

1613, Santa Caterina in Mazzorbo, a denunciation was made against a group of young men who frequent this convent and converse with a group of young nuns sharing dishonest words.

[Sacrilege] Any profanation of things that are sacred or dedicated to God, this included nuns; any crimes involving nuns were crimes of sacrilege.

1614, San Zaccaria, at a time of their most serious disciplinary lapses, Suor Laura Querini and Suor Zaccaria, were heard to have led their two lovers who they had let into the convent around in the guise as nuns, when questioned about it, they responded that the nuns were used to cross dressing, especially at night.

1614, San Zaccaria, the above mentioned nuns, Suor Laura Querini and Conversa Zaccaria, were discovered to have made a breach in the wall of the complex. With the aid of an iron bar taken from Suor Querini’s cell window the two spent over a month breaking a hole in the wall of the canal side in a storeroom, which was six stones deep. They cleverly masked the hole with a stone and terra cotta from the outside and used lime on the inside to fill the cavity. The hole let in their two lovers at two different times. The first time, Querini’s lover called by her pet name, Zuane Cocco and his friend spent the night in the storeroom having sexual intercourse with the nuns. The second time Suor Querini let in Zuane where he stayed hidden for up to two weeks. Suor Querini met Zuane through an outside acquaintance, a woman called Donna Ciprianna, six years prior to his discovery in the storeroom. They built their relationship up through visits across the grille of the parlour. But Querini wanted to consummate their relationship. When the patriarch questioned her, she spoke openly and flagrantly about their sexual activities. She said that every night he spent there they had sexual intercourse. Also during this inquisition it came to
light that she had not entered the convent under her own wishes. She had spoken her vows with her mouth not her heart. Suor Querini had to disclose the true identity of these to men who were called, Andrea Toscana and his cousin Alvise Zorzi. Both men were exiled from Venice and its surrounding land, while Suor Querini and Converse Zaccaria faced the rest of their life behind the walls of San Zaccaria, their already imposed prison.

1617, San Maffio di Murano, a wedding party visited the parlour and were interrogated, not for their own actions. They were questioned about the presence of Nicolo Cressi, a man who was a frequent visitor at the convent. He was believed to have visited the same day as the wedding party, the same day he was released from prison for this very offense.

FAMILIES WERE NOT ALLOWED TO MAKE WEDDING DAY VISITS, ALTHOUGH VISITS IN THE PARLOUR WITH THE FAMILY AND WEDDING PARTY STILL HAPPENED.

San Sepolcro, a man, Nicolo Barbarigo, maintained a relationship with Suor Cintia Bembo under the pretext that they were family, and would visit her daily.

1617, Paulina Coreggio was brought to trial for visiting her 4 family relatives at the convent and for bringing them treats, marzipan, wine and biscuits. The matter seems to be unresolved.

San Girolamo, Fra Cornelio was summoned before the magistrates for visiting his sister, Suor Benetta the afternoon their mother died, and he was told under any circumstance he must acquire a license of permit.

1617, Santa Caterina, an uproar was created outside of a convent by a prostitute and her daughter so loud in fact that the confessor could not hear confession.

Sant’ Andrea de Zirada, A prostitute, Signor Novella, arrived at the church ostentatiously and was noisily surrounded by admirers, while she also picked a fight with a gentleman.

PARLORS WERE KNOWN FOR ENTERTAINMENT

San Sepolcro, two noblemen Gerolemo Giustinian and Gerolamo Dolfin, visited the parlour to carouse and touch the nuns.

1617, La Celestia, Polo Loredan and a sister from the Pisani family were seen to be kissing, with his cock in her hands through the parlour grate.

1617, La Celestia, the priest Gerolemo asked Nicolo Cressi, the man who likes to show his member for a pair of men’s clothing, so that he could dress up his favorite nun, Suor Lucia. He said in return that Nicolo could watch.
Le Vergini, the organist was too familiar with the nuns; he was often in the parlour and given food.

Mandates declared that cells had to be unlocked, no candles could be left burning through the night, and older nuns were appointed to check every cell after the night bell had rung.

1618, San Sepolcro, Suor Gratiosa Raspi paid a boatman to supply her with men's clothes and take her to the friary at Rua, where she wanted to lead a more austere life.

San Rocco e Santa Margherita, both convents observed a group confession called [capitolo delle colpe] one time a year vs. once a week.

1618, Sant' Anna, Piero da Mosto and his wife took two country girls to visit his aunt and cousin at the convent, and being that one of the girls was roughly dressed, therefore unpresentable in the parlour they took their boat to the side canal to meet the sisters and gather, they were caught by the patrolling magistrate within a quarter on an hour.

1619, San Marco e Sant' Andrea, there was a denunciation of a young man by the name of Battista, for he was seen being fed lavishly by a nun there.

1619, San Sepolcro, Alessandro Bronzing, worked ad hoc for the convent. When he was sick he depended on the convent for food, after his recovery he still received gifts of food and was alleged to have committed sexual misdemeanors, but none were proved.

Sex crimes against God:

1- sex with a priest
2- sex with a nun
3- sex in an ecclesiastical setting
4- sex with a Jew

1619, La Celestia, Andrea Fiorelli, was reported to flirt with the nuns so that he would be taken care of by them, he was also spotted at the grated window in the church, or at the little open balcony laughing and kissing a nun.

There was often chatter and laughter in the choir.

Santa Croce della Giudecca, when it was discovered that nuns were not attending services, then were ordered to open one curtain in the choir so that the priest could count heads.

Sant' Antonio, Vicenzo Trevisan was brought before the magistrates for visiting too frequently, and for having an intimate relationship of gift giving with Suor Clementia came to light.
1620, San Giovanni, two Neapolitan neighbor men were seen **flashing the convent across the campo**

1621, San Bernardo, Zuane de Romiso was **charged with trespass onto convent property** for he **had moored at their orchard unknowingly**.

1621, San Servolo, a **guard had to be posted** to keep **whores, bawds and witches** away from conversing with the sisters.

1622, San Lorenzo, Suor Francesca notes that her fellow sisters put on two comedies **one that was worthy and one that was wicked**, the also **stay up with the friars playing cards**.

**FORTY-SEVEN TRIALS OCCURRED DURING THE YEARS OF 1625-1626**, **THEY INCLUDED:**

- 27 **brought against laymen accused of illicit conduct with nuns.**
- 12 **simple breaches of parlor visits.**
- 5 **men eating in the parlor.**
- 1 **a man and his wife had taken up residence at Santa Caterina in Mazzorbo.**
- 3 **men accused of verbal abuse.**
- 1-3 **men making a lot of noise in a parlor.**
- 1 **man accused of wearing a revealing shirt in front of nuns.**
- 1 **man accused of being lasciviously dressed.**

1625, San Sepolcro, a case cites a **man hanging on to an iron railing talking to a nun.**

1626, La Celestia, the Pisani brothers **stopped to wish their sister a good day** and were **hailed in front of the magistrate.**

**CARNIVAL IN THE CLOISTER WAS A TIME TO MASQUERADE**

Miracoli, nuns **sang profane songs, played the guitar and lute and they dressed up as men to put on plays.**

1626, Malamocco, Suor Elena Badoer was **denounced** by her prioress **for consorting during carnival, masquerading in lay clothing, and dancing the night away in the presence of gossips and men in the parlor.**

**San Sepolcro was cited** for **performing plays and tragedies for lay people** hours after sunset.

1626, San Servolo, the prostitute Anzola was **denounced for conversing loudly with the Bonome family in the parlor.**
1626. San Iseppo, Suor Fliorenza, Suor Elena and Suor Chiara were found in the parlour with their skirts lifted with their hands in their undergarments and kissing.
Part 3: A New Vocabulary of Space (in three parts)

Stitch, Fold and Pocket Space

This section will identify a vocabulary for spaces at work within, between and enveloping the prescribed program of the Venetian Convent, spaces that were adapted and reused according to the desires and wills of the occupants. Fold Space, Pocket Space and Stitch Space frames 'habit' as a set of performative behaviors engendered by the strict program and as an embodiment of the act of making the garment of the same name. In making the garment, attention to craft is given to its exteriority and interiority, its presentation and its use/experience: the interior experience of each space is coded on the exterior. For instance, a slit on the outside invites hands to slide in or objects to be safely stowed with a faint silhouette pressing on the fabric.

The vocabulary is given in complementing pairs of drawings and illuminated text. The drawings express the distinct lived experience of the featured space, dually encoding the habit performed and decoding the programmatic space where the 'habitual' performance takes place. The accompanying text defines each term in narrative fashion. Presented as a weave of multiple narratives, some texts cite specific incidences from the

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53 Butler, Judith. "Gender as Performance," A Critical Sense: Interviews with Intellectuals, ed Peter Osborne, 111-112. 2001. 7 April 2005. <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~aoki/Research/Butler/performativity.html>. Butler provides clarification on the notion of "performativity" as distinguished from "performance." She writes, "It is important to distinguish performance from performativity: the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject. What I'm trying to do is think about performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names."

Additional clarifications by this author: Performance vs. Performativity

In performance, one assumes the role of subject. As a temporal experience it is constituted by the fact of its disappearance, with traces of the 'act' that has occurred only documented by the traces of residue that the performance incurred. A costume or garment may bear the dust, blood or sweat of performance. While the space within the performance had taken place may have been manipulated or transformed. A performance is a one-time act consciously performed. A scripted performance may be repeated, but a lived performance can never be exactly replicated. Performativity is a ritualized set of behaviors or repetitious activities. In a sense, one is going through the motions often unconsciously repeating without questioning the act of citation that occurs through these actions. Normative sets of behaviors are often conventions that are passed down through culture as tradition. Constantly performed and re-performed sedimentation entrenches individuals into a rut of accepted behaviors. For the nuns within the convent the program of space of a religious institution and the monastic time-schedule of repeated daily activities dictating when and where these should take place ingrained into the nuns an accepted and perfunctory performativity for cloistered women.
Inventory of Misdeeds, some are imaginative, others take on a visceral tone.

**Stitch space:**
FOR FASTENING AND UNITING, ALLOWING ACCESS TO FLOW.

**Fold space:**
FOR ENVELOPING AND CARESSING, SLIPPING SIDE-BY-SIDE AND CREATING CREASES.

**Pocket space:**
FOR HIDING AND INSERTING (COVETING TREASURES FROM VIEW)

These are the subversive programs/spaces of San Zaccaria. To see them, requires more than skimming the surface. Together, they encompass and weave together the ideas of Bad haBITs.
Stitch Space
On Stitch Space
FOR FASTENING AND UNITING, ALLOWING ACCESS TO FLOW.

Having been forced to take the veil, Suor Deodata, a nun at San Iseppo, had tried to escape once. She resigned herself to the religious life and found purpose in her unhappy home by making gifts for friars. Two spaces or pieces of fabric, flesh or skin are joined together by the methodical movement of thread in and out. Suor Deodata excluded herself from the communally ordered living of the convent to pursue her own interests and network of outside relationships. Slipping in and out, two are cinched together in union. Stitching and sewing defined as women's work is a feminine chore, For she was able to fulfill a heterosexual domestic role that was denied upon entering the cloister, by sewing gifts for the clergy, a domestic task of both making and mending. Alone in her cell, Suor Deodata created her own small business of gift exchange. One who stitches is both creator and healer. The creation of shelter as clothing is made by hand, giving life, volume and structure to a once flat and inanimate object. It in turn gives us one of our most basic needs of survival. Handiwork, an active laboring release, creates a pleasing sense of accomplishment when the desired outcome is reached. In 1571, Suor Deodata was the subject of patriarchal inquiry concerning the convent confessor, his brother Gesparo and the prioress, Suor Ciprianna Moresini. Even though Suor Deodata cultivated her own personal relationships outside the cloister, she spoke out about their questionable involvement. A festering wound on the body, or a snag or a hole in a garment, mended or stitched, heals and extends the life span. Suor Deodata chastised the priest personally in the confessional one day. Sewing transforms the dejected and impedes the act of decay, if only loosely and momentarily. For her effort to correct a possibly corrupt situation, she was rejected by her community and sentenced to several months in the convent prison. Her impetuous tongue was silenced and censored by her peers and superiors Sewing can 'fix' that which may otherwise be discarded. A beautiful new creation can be made from disposed remnants through the act of sewing.
Rhythmical and ritualized, sewing spurs the hands into action, while allowing the mind to travel from its task and wander. Sewn artifacts may be kept or given in exchange and bartered. An eyewitness mentioned the gifts that Deodata would make for the friars, such as surplices, handkerchiefs, shirts, collars, false sleeves, embroidered hats, and cakes and biscuits, creating a give and take relationship. Giving work away selflessly the maker is filled with pleasure. She not only sewed and baked for her clerical friends she brought in their laundry to wash it for them. Stitching together the space between giver and receiver, Deodata paid a servant to deliver her gifts and handle her transactions; a mapping of these tenuous lines is made through the connection or network of inside to out.
On Fold Space
FOR ENVELOPING AND CARESSING, SLIPPING SIDE-BY-SIDE AND CREATING CREASES.

Slipping past and meeting momentarily in a touch is a caress. Piero da Mosto and his wife took in two country girls visiting Venice for the first time. To show them the sights unique to Venice, he decided that they must go see a convent. Oozing in and out of the grate, mixing the pure with the unchaste. Masking and containing what it shields from view, the interior is exposed in a murmur. A nun waits at the cellar door, the folding of space. She desires to take in what is exterior. The aperture between the folds articulates speech when parted, and muffles it when closed. Wearing rough country clothing, the girls were un-presentable in the parlor of his aunt’s convent, Sant’ Anna. Water touches and carries with it traces of both worlds, slipping in and out, lapping at the cellars’ doors; begging entry. Two folds meeting and locking together become a volume of desire, bringing the exterior into the interior space. Knowing entry by the side canal, Piero directed his boat down the canal and moored. His aunt and cousin brought sweetmeat and biscuits. They were excited to greet and converse with their visitors. The Intimate spaces of the interiors intertwine, dance and rejoice when they coalesce, and sigh when they are released. Reveling for less than a quarter of an hour, their party was brought to a halt by the patrolling magistrate. Separating the convent from the lay world by voids of land and water, an attempt is made to distance the two. Two folds may be seemingly different, but there is a unifying element that weaves them into the same plane. When folded, the space between the creases is bridged, joining the two into a seamless flow from one to another. Ser Galeazzo comes to meet her, bridging their worlds at her door, to lead her to where her lover waits. When the folds are parted and un-laid, the small slit becomes a chasm exposing the interior, demystifying it and opening it up for view and scrutiny. Parting folds, she allows him entry.
On Pocket Space
FOR HIDING AND INSERTING (COVETING TREASURES FROM VIEW)

At a time of serious lapse of discipline at San Zaccaria, sacred objects find refuge, hidden from sight in pocketed enclosures. The wall alongside the canal at San Zaccaria was breached, six stones deep, creating an exterior pocket in a storeroom. A space enveloped beneath or behind the surface, providing sanctuary for those things that risk exposure or identification. It took over a month to penetrate the space with the aid of a crowbar configured from a wrenched piece of iron from the grate of Querini’s cell. Filling and blanketed within the space, an ambiguous silhouette is sometimes transferred onto the surface, which may belie more than one wants to disclose. Cleverly masking this new pocket, they covered the aperture with a large stone and terra cotta from the outside and cloaked it with lime from within. Filling the space of the pocket, the object burrows and imprints itself onto the body. These cavities expand and contract, breathing life into them upon inhabitance. Consummating their relationship cultured from across the parlor grate for six years, she took him as her lover. Now becoming an extension to a body other than itself, it moves in cadence with its host’s every movement. Vows spoken with the mouth not the heart and disenchanted with the religious life, Suor Querini and Conversa Zaccaria felt an emptiness that needed to be filled. Lying flat the space is dormant, once filled it is brought to life fulfilling the function that it is designed for. The pocket was filled at first for only one night. One who places objects into the cavities appropriates, acting in secrecy and sometimes dishonestly. Expanding to its limit, encasing Suor Querini and Zuane Cocco (her pet name for her lover) and Conversa Zaccaria and Alvise Zorzi, they were concealed from sight. What is stored and contained within is privileged knowledge, the space providing only temporary refuge was refilled again for a fortnight when Suor Querini and Zuane Cocco had intercourse every night in secrecy until the discovery of the breach was made, knowledge of knowing what is contained, and knowledge of knowing the value of such a precious object belongs
to the one who covets it. Once the breach was discovered, the patriarch himself questioned Suor Querini concerning her misdemeanor. During the interrogation, she spoke flagrantly and openly about her love affair with Cocco. She felt no regrets for her actions, and kept his name secret, pocketed for only her knowledge. Pockets are created intentionally with the purpose to protect, only under extreme duress was he revealed as Andrea Foscarni, hidden pockets can be turned inside out, exposing which it conceals. An empty cavity waits to be filled; it must consume to be satiated. Pockets may also be created out their own desire to covet. Guilty of carnal commerce with a nun, Andrea Foscarni and Alvise Zorzi were banished from the lands of Venice. Forgotten spaces fill with sedimentation, pocketing away that which it is being inhabited by. Slowly enveloped and pocketed, Suor Querini and Conversa Zaccaria were sentenced to remain behind the fortified walls of the their already prison, the convent, forgotten objects can only be re-exposed and extracted through excavation.
Part 4: Habits Formed and Worn: Masquerading as Façade

The Habit Re-Imagined

The following Habit takes a look at the façade/garment as a monastic uniform that was designed to classify orders\textsuperscript{54} and symbolize the devout life, well, at least on the surface.

The section begins circa 1500, San Zaccaria in Castello, with a collage of the façade\textsuperscript{55} and two images of the habits worn by

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\textsuperscript{54} Kuhns, Elizabeth, The Habit: A History of the Clothing of Catholic Nuns (New York City, New York: Doubleday, 2003) 89. Kuhns argues, “Governments and the Church used clothing as a means of control, and conformity maintained their power.”

\textsuperscript{55} San Zaccaria is a rare example of the Transitional architectural period in Venice. A striation of six layered tiers attributed to two architects\textsuperscript{55}, the exterior façade clearly demonstrates the vacillating instability of this period with blurring scale and styles, and interiority with exteriority. It cannot quite be defined as either Gothic or Renaissance but remains somewhere in the middle, a dual of several basic schemes. Overall, one scheme does not quite dominate any other. Yet a clear coherency is never quite struck.

Tier 1. The lowest part of the façade, the socle is attributed to Gambello. As a base, it is stout and strong; no apertures are permitted except for the singular doorway that leads into the nave. The socle is rendered in a proliferation of moldings that are non-classical, flat, colorful and ornamental. Four 4’ thick buttresses that emerge at the corners of the façade and articulate the relationship between the nave and the aisles enunciate the first tier. In between the buttresses is inlaid with panels, striking a rhythm that is not quite followed in tier two. It is said to be thoroughly gothic.

Amid the Gothic styling of the socle, a renaissance punctuation is made in the intricate detailing of the doorway. The ornate detailing is too intricate for the exterior scale of the façade. It is at an interior scale where one interacts more personally with the architecture. The door is just one of many discordant parts...

[Entablature] Between the first two tiers, a weak entablature ties them together. The scale coincides with that of the doorway but in the overall schema, it is uncomfortably narrow.

Tier 2. The intermittent story right above the socle has been attributed to Codussi, but it is not his style. Therefore, it is more likely to have been at least designed by Gambello and possibly executed by his assistants. It is a row of 19 flat narrow arched niches and windows classically proportioned. The niches are topped with shells, an antique symbol that is used more frequently as an interior decoration, seemingly out of place with the exterior scale, reminiscing a pagan symbol on a Christian structure.

The first windows emerge in aisles flanked by dainty colonnettes that are rhythmically spaced between the windows and recesses. The niches do not quite line up with the panels below, jarring to a perfectionist’s eye.

[Entablature] A pause in architectural thinking, the entablature more properly proportioned is the first attempt at ordering the façade. This classical entablature marks the coming of Codussi.

Tier 3. A new rhythmic division is designed ignoring the monotonous division below, dramatically shifting from mass to more surface three-dimensional space, from planar to plastic. This band is elongated, attempting to bridge the sediment strata into a rising verticality.

Pairs of freestanding columns top the heavy buttresses below lightening the façade, popping shade and shadow with a play of light while maintaining a visually disciplining order. Here Codussi begins to divide the façade into a tri-part composition, relating more directly and rationally to the architectural program of the central nave flanked by two aisles, centering apertures in a ration of 1:3:1, that translate into the interior a work of chiaroscuro.
both the Converse and Monache di Coro nuns at this convent, taken from Jutta Griselda Sperling's book *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice*. The differentiation of habits between the two nuns clearly illustrates the demarcation of class and stature between the lay and choir sisters within the same order behind a façade that projects the ideals of community and poverty. The dress of the choir sister indicates how many took the liberty to embellish and alter the sacred garment from its somber intentions of enveloping bodies to a point of sobriety into a more liberal and

ENTABLATURE The frieze topping the third tier is flattened into a ribbon visually tightening and cinching the façade into a narrow and controlled upward movement, a frozen inhalation across the breadth of the façade. Tier 4. This phase takes on an almost new identity. The tier is disturbingly diminished to almost half the height of the one below. The growth of the aisles plateaus with a crowning of arched quadrants that attempt to spring from the corner buttresses to the central nave but fall short of airy flight prematurely flat lining to meet the cornice height, dually drawing a blind eye.

The punctuation of apertures in the nave takes on a new rhythm topping the former three with a symmetrical two. The only aligning features are the transformed buttresses. Although they have become flattened pilasters, they express the impending desire for a unifying verticality, gliding into anti-climatic decrescendo. The corner buttresses are topped with a large rosette and perched angel rising 7' tall. The sudden jump of this movement is less controlled, creating friction. The problem that Codussi has to deal with was, how to be monumental with only small members to work with.

ENTABLATURE There is no real entablature, only a continuation of the weak cornice joining the arched quadrants narrowly across the façade.

Tier 5. Departing from the full width of the church, only the nave rises upward. This tier stands taller than the one below including the distance of base to full architrave, visually squashing the previous band. The symmetrically centered two apertures are reflected across the horizontal, flanked by dainty colonnettes, the smallest yet in the total composition. Tremendously under-scaled they appear to bear the weight of an overwhelming large entablature, half their height.

The flat corner pilasters of the nave emerge as buttresses, attempting to contain any spillage outward under the guard of angels. This tier is carried out the closest to the one below, yet it fails to make reconciliation.

ENTABLATURE Beyond its surprisingly immense height, a new confusion occurs. The previous flat-ribboned entablature of two tiers below is revived with an unexpected application of colored inlays and carved panels. The rising solemnity is broken by ornament.

Tier 6. The façade culminates with a semi-circular pediment rising to cap the façade, inlaid with a blind aperture. It is flanked by two angels carrying the instruments of the passion and is topped by the risen Christ. These figures animate the skyline by day and silhouette against the night sky.

The façade itself fails to reach a coherent expression of cooperative spirit. The overabundant modeling of detail masks a clear expression of structure, or ordering of space. There is also an apparent imbalance in verticals and horizontals. The buttresses try to hold in the façade while the overbearing entablatures pin it down. The move from planar (Gambello) to plastic (Codussi) also seems at odds; the attempt at lightening the façade actually weighs it down, sometimes flipping it upside down or inside out. A univocal message is a lost expression, overcome by a fluttering of whispers and rumors. Each part seems to maintain a certain level of autonomy instead of the expression of unity. A grand narrative is overtaken by multiple messages, revealing more of what it is trying to mask. The order is undisciplined. See McAndrew, op. cit., 34, 268-281.

Sperling, op. cit., 121-122.
Fig. II.
edictine du Monastère de S. Zacharie à Venise en habit de chœur 178
Benedicte du Monastere de S. E. Racarrie a Venise en habit ordinaire dans la maison.
liberating costume. The Monache di Coro habit became a ‘costume’ worn for performances that take place.

**Habits**

‘A girl lies prostrate, her lips touching the stone floor. A black cloth is thrown over her, and lighted candles are placed at her feet and at her head. Up above her, the litanies are being sung. All the signs suggest that she is dead. She is witness at her own funeral. From within her bier she accompanies the singing with tears and sobs, sacrificing all her senses to suffering and pain.”

These words were taken from Archangela Tarabotti’s account of cloistered life, from her memoir *Inferno Monacle*. Her account is an eerie depiction of the *mutatio vestium* (ritual change of clothes). This ceremonial act asks the participant, a willing novice, to leave behind any vestige or remnants of the lay world and veils her body with religious cloth. The performative act of cloaking and shrouding the body in the habit symbolizes death and rebirth into the spiritual life. The garment consecrates that which it is inhabited by into a holy object. The sacred image that the habit so powerfully projects, denies sexuality and individuality to the one who bears it. Many found security in this holy container, in turn accepting this new identity and wholeheartedly projecting it outwards. Others may have found a different sense of security in donning the habit as a performative masquerade, its projection of divine intentions allowed for wayward activity to be pocketed within, cloaked and contained, remaining out of sight. If the superficial surface were unwrapped, exposed and spilling out, marking and staining the surface, the

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58 *mutatio vestium* is also called *vestizione*.

59 Kuhns, op. cit., 51.

60 Ibid., 45, 103.
'lived experience' housed within this container would surface, revealing what it conceals.

Three main events marked the passage of a nun's life: the rituals of clothing, profession and consecration. To be accepted into a spiritual community, a nun only had to process through the ritual of clothing, becoming a Lay or Converse sister. If a nun would profess her vows, she would rise to the status of Choir sister.  

The separation between these two classifications of nuns was marked by many distinctions. Lay sisters were usually of the common class, they performed the physical labor around the convent, they were typically less educated and were denied agency in convent affairs. In turn, they typically paid a substantially lower dowry for a life of servitude. Yet, some Converses were given the privilege to leave the confines of the convent to conduct convent business such as collecting rents. The strata they inhabited in the convent were the servant class. Choir sisters on the other hand were predominantly of noble birth and able to afford the full dowry, securing a more plush life. Having Lay sisters to take care of the physical and menial labor around the convent, time was then freed up for the Choir sisters to pursue, intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Only professed nuns were allowed to hold office, affect decisions in chapter and become abbesses. Choir sisters inhabited the highest strata; in the cloister, they were the elite class.

Upon entering into a religious order, novices were asked to take vows, of poverty, chastity and obedience, accepting community life and denying autonomy. The ideals of equality though could never be attained; the very structure of the cloister was inherently divided by classifying sisters as either Converse or Choir sisters.

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61 Sperling, op. cit., 137-140.

62 Kuhns, op. cit., 77. Here, Kuhns indicates that "The office of abbess was the highest leadership position a woman could hold in society. These religious 'monarchs' were addressed as ‘Sovereign’ and ‘Majesty’ and enjoyed great power."

63 Ibid., 103.
This division was even amplified through dress.\textsuperscript{64} From the beginning of Christianity, even before the establishment of religious communities, those that wished to follow a more ascetic and devout life separate from secular society differentiated themselves through dress. Forsaking worldly pleasures, they often donned the dress of servants and that of the very poor, clothing themselves in the roughest and poorest materials.\textsuperscript{65} Through time as religious communities became established the habit defined was often modeled after the contemporary dress of the poor. The adopted styling of secular clothing was worn two different ways in the cloister. Lay sisters wore habits more directly emulating the secular poor, while Choir sisters wore a similar version although their clothing was often more ornate and elaborate and modeled after secular high society rather than that of the lower class. Dress clearly demarcated status and established acceptable roles both in and outside the cloister. A common complaint was that the Converse would act and dress like Choir sisters, breaking unspoken rules defined by dress. Alterations and modifications performed on the habit by both Lay and Choir sisters emphasize the desire that many had to retain individual identity.\textsuperscript{66}

The habit itself is an emblem that physically embodies the mission of an order. It also served as an ordering device, intentionally made to classify and categorize distinctions between separate orders. The habit served as a monastic uniform that identified communities. For example, the Benedictine order was known as ‘black nuns.’ They adopted a completely black habit and scapular, metaphorically symbolizing separateness, mourning and

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 29-30.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 61, 76.

\textsuperscript{66} Laven, op. cit., 2-5. Laven’s findings are that pastoral visitations noted modified habits and luxurious self-adornment as an act of opposition against uniformity.
Habits both identified and were common property of religious communities. Ideally, communities would own all of the convent's habits and distribute them to the community equally on loan.\textsuperscript{68} One sister, the Vestiarian (the one who looks over the garments) would be in charge of the care, laundering and distribution of the habits. The ideal condition of communal property was hard to attain for it necessitated a certain level of wealth to obtain uniform dress. For this reason many variations on habits occurred.\textsuperscript{69}

Nuns, typically the Choir sisters, often received trunks as part of their spiritual dowries from their families upon entering a convent, filled with clothing, food, wine and personal objects to decorate ones cell. Clothing given to a nun from her family was often allowed to be worn as a habit. For many the flow of gift giving did not end after their admission, the lay world and spiritual world were stitched together, woven back and forth, keeping many sisters in touch with the latest fashions. Although these modified habits were mandated to be modest and simple many often took the liberty to dress elaborately, reminiscing the lay world that some were forced to leave behind.\textsuperscript{70}

Popular High fashion at the time was highly decorated and ornate. Venice, famous as a trading port imported rare cloth from all over the world. Noble women wore silks, satins, brocades, and laces. Secular dresses set shoulders wide apart, necklines dipped low, opening the chest for view, dresses could be either front or back laced, and skirts and sleeves alike were voluminous. Women often wore their hair in beautiful braids, curls and coifs and were

\textsuperscript{67} Kuhns, op. cit., 68, 76.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 67.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 33.
bedecked in the finest jewels, gold and pearls.  

At this time in Venice, the only women allowed on the streets were peasants and prostitutes. Noble women like their fellow were cloistered too, in their own clausura the domicile. Society designated the home, as a safe sanctuary from the dangerous streets. The only regular departure noble woman made from their homes was to go to Sunday mass. Every Sunday provided women the opportunity to dress in their finest attire, parade and process to church. These women put themselves on display flanked by their servants and quite often would be seen towering heads above the crowds with the aid of their dangerously high-heeled clog shoes, zoccoli.

Sunday mass offered the chance for both of these women to coalesce within the same space, though rigidly divided and segregated, every so often a fold in the choir curtain may have parted, offering a glimpse of the lives that some tried to emulate.

The “habit re-imagined” is my reconstruction of the choir sisters’ habit. Like the Renaissance sisters’ alterations and decoration of their own habits to project a certain identity, I have taken the liberty to fashion the habit into a more modern dress by translating the drawing of the habit into a fitted garment intended for my own body.

Overcoming the masquerade entails the act of folding a semi-constructed habit of black satin-backed taffeta into a [re]presentation of the façade of San Zaccaria. The façade is more than an applied surface of cultural rhetoric or an architectural representation. Instead, this façade exhibits that which it once attempted to mask. Expanding beyond the strict confines, the spaces secrete onto the façade what is intended to remain secret. Challenging cultural expectations, how the space was truly ‘lived’ comes face to face with the public.

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Sperling, op. cit., 120-124, 141.
CONCLUSION: Act 3 LOOKING FORWARD
Constructing My Practice
I have looked back as a way to propel myself forward, to define a potential practice. My project has acted as a guide to articulate a career that has yet to begin.

The nuns of the renaissance convent, the feminist theory of postmodern architecture culture, the women who worked to reconstruct their practice, survived and thrived via performativity. I will, too. Throughout the course of my graduate study, my desire to make buildings has grown surprisingly intense. However, I have not yet landed a job. I have attempted several times. I am sustained by—yes, one could have guessed—a public form of women's work outside of the discipline. My male counterparts seem to have found positions in the proverbial 'firm', and so have a few of the females. The presence of theoretical work in the portfolio, based in cultural studies, seems to still be viewed with suspicion evident in the question, “Where is the architecture?” Mop-Up work has indeed been revisited, in my very body, in my lived-experience.

If one is determined to ask that rhetorical question, which may be heard as:

“Where is the [Feminist] Architecture?”

Perhaps I will have to reconstruct practice, because there is no formal symbol, only performativity. A better question may be,

“Where is the [Feminist] Architect?

To which the answer is “working,” while at the same time balancing her mop-up chores.\[72\]

CONSTRUCTING MY PRACTICE

Architecture should be complex, rich and varied in sensual tonality. It should be provocative, complex and contradictory. I am interested in an architecture that is visceral, that applies 1-2-3-4-5 senses, an architecture that is experienced through the full body. In order to bring this to practice, I have become ‘undisciplined’.

\[72\] For the author, ‘Feminist’ architects are defined by the way they approach their making or perform their critical practice to expand the territories of architecture, allowing for and creating a diversity of practices and architectural typologies. The feminist architect is positioned both inside and outside of practice: inside by education, outside by difference. Such a position is ripe for critically challenging certain aspects of the production of space. Feminist architects maintain an identity that is a complex and rich array of combinations (i.e., parent, professor, sibling and architect, without having to settle into a singular, centralized identity of an Architect. Feminist architects need not be female. Anyone who is de-centered or marginalized that can both be in and out of practice simultaneously and approach architecture as a critical practice can be a feminist architect.
I need to vacillate in and out of the discipline in order to become the Architect I desire. I must become a collector of experiences. I have begun, with this body of work, to tell the stories of others. I must also welcome into my own life experiences that are both complex and contradictory, like the webbed network the Venetian Calle, Sottoporteghi, Ponte and sometimes the unexpected dead-end. Following a straight trajectory within the discipline denies the diversity that I desire. The unexpected experiences that can both confound and leave you breathless is the experience most longed for and lived.

This ‘methodology’ cannot be formally applied to architecture. It is not described by formal symbols, nor quantitatively measured. It is an approach reveling in subjective experiences. It is a collection of lived-experiences. A potential practice will yield a sensuous architecture that is felt not merely observed.

This is how I have begun to implement my approach to making architecture.
DRAW

Contemporary artwork has spun outwards into myriad forms, employing performative, sculptural, and/or technological media to create varied forms and styles. Draw examines the medium of drawing only, the most basic, arguably the first learned medium, and finds an equally variant array of forms, styles, and techniques. As such we find, rather than an expansive spinning outward made possible by experimentation with different media combinations, within one isolated field there is proof of an equally elaborate blossoming from within.

Draw features the work of more than seventy artists (our largest show to date). There is no thematic or conceptual premise for this show; the intent is to exhibit the broad range of current drawing works from a large pool of artists. Of the seventy + participating artists, the majority reside in MN, with others coming from several states on the East Coast, CA, and surrounding Midwestern states. Works range from naive line drawings, to detailed realism, from graphic prints to painterly styles.

Draw runs: November 15 through December 24

Opening event: November 19 from 7-10pm
Idle Hands
THE FITCH 304 15TH STREET DES MOINES, IOWA 50309
Shimmering, compelling beauty revealed in buds, bones

The Moehr Gallery displays the glasswork of Jean-Marie Salen, formerly of Des Moines, and the bronze paintings of T. Oberoi.

By AMANDA PALMER

The Moehr Gallery, 2011 Ingersoll Ave., has inadvertently placed the work of two artists with a darker, thought-provoking concern — glass and bronze, respectively.

For winter, the gallery began displaying the work of Jean-Marie Salen and T. Oberoi.

Salen, a native of Des Moines who studied at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, creates beauty out of ordinary glass. On their own, the pieces have a contemplative beauty that is a blend of color and form, with the colors often shifting to reflect different moods.

The bronze works of Oberoi, who now lives in Copenhagen, are a nod to the ancient city from which he hails.

Architects put art on fast track

Fitch Gallery shows off new industrial-chic space with 'Idle Hands'

For the past month, a series of chic and industrial artifacts have occupied a building in a venue that doesn't technically exist — yet.

The Fitch Building at 205 30th St., formerly known as the BNI Building, has been transformed into an art gallery for the next four weekends.

The building was once a law office and later a bank, but it is now a venue for art gallery shows.

The space has been transformed into a chic, industrial-chic space with the help of Idle Hands.

Morgan moved his firm into the "front" building and expanded to include his home. He then signed on as a partner for the project and decided to open a new location in the downtown area.

"We decided to focus on the downtown area because we wanted to bring an art gallery to the downtown area," Morgan said.

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Appendix A. Complex Monumental of San Zaccaria CHURCH INDEX

a.i. PLAN OF NINTH CENTURY AND FIFTEENTH CENTURY CHURCHES AT SAN ZACCARIA
a.ii. Compresso Monumentale di San Zaccaria (COMPLEX INDEX)
a.iii. ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY AUTHOR (COMPLEX INDEX)
Fig. 26 - grafico del geom. Cesare Zen
Complesso Monumentale di San Zaccaria

1. Chiesa (architetti: A. Gambello e M. Coducci - sec. XV)


3. «Chiesa vecchia» (complesso di costruzioni di varie epoche, dal sec. IX al sec. XV) attualmente divisa in vari ambienti:
   a) cappella d'oro e sottostante CRIPPA del X secolo
   b) cappella dell'Addolorata
   c) cappella del coro (ricavata dalla parte mediana della «chiesa vecchia» nel 1595 c.
   d) «sala gotica» (già ingresso alla «chiesa vecchia», ora adibita a ripostiglio)
   e) parte della navata destra della «chiesa vecchia» con pavimento in mosaico di una chiesa preesistente - sec. XII (non accessibile per la visita)

4. Antico ingresso al Convento delle Monache Benedettine, attualmente «Scoletta S. Zaccaria» (centro di cultura religiosa e artistica)

5. Campanile (costruzione veneto-bizantina, XIII sec.)


7. Antico cimitero del Convento.

8. Ex Convento delle Monache Benedettine.
1. Church (architects: Gambello and M. Condussi-sec. XV)


3. ‘Old church’ (complex of varied constructions over varied periods of time, from the sex. IX to XV).
   
   Divided in varied environments:
   a. Golden Chapel and submitting ENCRYPTS some X century
   b. Chapel of the Grieved
   c. Choir Chapel (extracted from the middle part of the ‘old church’ in 1595).
   d. Gothic Room (Once entrance to the ‘old church’ now assigned to ripostigilio.
   e. Part of the right hand nave of the ‘old church’ with mosaic floor of the church pre-existing sec. XII, (not accessible for the visit).


5. Bell tower (Venetian construction-Byzantine, XII sec).

6. Opposite garden of the ancient cloister.

7. Ancient cemetery of the cloister.
Appendix B. Convent Church Complex IVE RELAZIONE

b.i. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY AUTHOR
The following translations were, by necessity, completed by the Author in her research and initial examination of documents from Archivo di Stato di Venzia, in order to become familiar with conventional churches. As such, there is only at work a beginner’s knowledge of the contemporary Italian language. No claim of absolute accuracy is being made.

_Indice del Pian Terreno_ (Index Ground Floor Plan)
_Indice del Pian Superiore_ (Index First Floor Plan)

b.ii. DOCUMENTS FROM ARCHIVO DI STATO DI VENZIA (STATE ARCHIVE OF VENICE.)
_Circondario_ (Site Plan)
_Pian Terreno_ (Ground Floor Plan)
_Indice del Pian Terreno_ (Index)
_Pian Superiore_ (First Floor Plan)
_Indice del Pian Superiore_ (Index)
Pian terreno.
Indice del Pian terreno

 e

Sua Relazione.

A A. Strada, che conduce al Convento
A B. Viale, che conduce alla Chiesa.
A C. Chiesa.
A D. Porta del Convento.
A M. Lotti attorno al Convento.
D E. Cortile, con Pozzo, o Darsena.
E Cucina.
F Refettorio.
G Stanza del Pigro.
H Cappella.
I Darsena.
L M. A. Stanza di Inventario, e altri uff.
O Stanza di Inventario.
P Darsena.
Q Corrida rustica.
R Porta del Cavro, con Portico e.
S Portico.
T Stalla.
V 1. Mangiatoia.
V 2. Legnaro.
T 1. Darsena impianto.
T 2. Arsenale.
D M. Orto.
D N. Orto.
D O. Orto.
b.i ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY AUTHOR

Indice del Pian Terreno (Index Ground Plan)
(Refer to plan drawing Pian Terreno, below.)

Index of ground floor Plan
at
Iva Relazione

A.A. The road that leads to the cloister
B.B The piazza in front of the church
A C. the church
A B. Door to the cloister

2 A DB DC. The loggia around the cloister
D E Courtyard with communal well, cistern
E The kitchen (sleeping berth)
F The refectory
G Room with a fireplace
H Caneva-kitchen storage?
I Eiazzeria?

L M N. Room for visitors and for other uses
O Room for service
P Pantry or storeroom
Q Rustic courtyard
R Door to rustic courtyard and area below the portico
S Portico
T Stables
U V Laundry room
Y Z Wood storeroom
Z T Two rooms
Z Itchier- Milking stable?
B Z Stairs to the first floor
D M Kitchen garden
D N Smaller garden

dg. D O Plan of the garden plot
E B Street of the Ive Montanna
Pian Superiore.
Indice del Pian Superiore.
b.i. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY AUTHOR:

Indice del Pian Superiore (Index First Floor Plan)
(Refer to plan drawing Pian Superiore, below.)

Index of First Floor Plan
at
Iva Relazione

B> . Stair from the ground floor to the door to the first floor
B.C BC Dormitory
B.D BD Other dormitory
E Loggia for the use of Iva Montanna
F The space above the chapel

G.H.I.L.M.N.O.P Eight cells for Iva Montanna, five cells, two apartments with one common room for all
Q.R.S.Y. TUZ Seven bodies to use three cells, and captain apartments

6.7.8. The area above the ground floor portico
Appendix C. San Zaccaria SITE SURVEY SKETCHES

c.i. SURVEYED PLAN OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY CHURCH

c.ii. REMNANTS OF THE NINTH CENTURY CHURCH AND THE GOLDEN CHAPEL

c.iii. CONVENT ENTRY AND OLD ENTRY TO THE NINTH CENTURY CHURCH

c.iv. SURVEY OF CLOISTER ONE IN PLAN AND ELEVATION

c.v. NORTH SIDE ELEVATION OF CLOISTER ONE

c.vi. DOUBLE CLOISTER ORIENTATION AND INTERCOLUMNAR WIDTH
Remnants of the Ninth Century Church and the Golden Chapel
San Zaccaria  Cloister Elevation

Elevation of eight sides
1 side is a balcony
3 of 4 sides
O.C. w/ gallery
The side over the
bays of entry
leading to the café
San Zaccaria

East Cloister

7 x 300 cross vault
7 x 300 cqm vault

1 cross vault in perimeter of cloister

7 x 7 cross vault cloister

Sambinari cafe adjacent to 2nd cloister

1 bay

2 cross vault

1 cross vault

200 x 3

300 x 3

Surveyed cloister

1 cross vault = 320 cm
Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES


**JOURNALS/PERIODICALS**


**WEBSITES**


**SECONDARY SOURCES**


JOURNALS/PERIODICALS

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