Building Reconfigurations

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Building Reconfigurations

Syracuse B.Arch Thesis | 2018 - 2019
Thesis Advisor Jonathan Louie
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1. to rearrange data into an altered form, figure, shape, medium, or layout.
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La Calahorra. Interior Courtyard.
01. Thesis Claim

Our thesis seeks to leverage the documentation of La Calahorra, a renaissance courtyard in Granada, Spain, to produce aberrations that subvert the order, composition, and material of the original building, creating new architectural translations.

We contend that the reconfiguration of images into static material can be exploited as a design method that fosters new proposals which engage built architecture.

We chose La Calahorra as an example for its transmission of Renaissance pattern book sketches into a building. These pattern book drawings, similar to images today, were known to be copied, reformatted, and circulated during the Italian Renaissance.
La Calahorra
An early instance of this is the use of the Codex Escurialensis as a guide for the creation of the courtyard in La Calahorra. The codex was an important souvenir in the early 16th century, taken from Rome by Don Rodrigo, to his home in Granada as a memento of his trip to Italy. Used as a pattern book for the construction of the courtyard, the codex allowed the building to act as a bridge between the Italian antiquity and Renaissance and the beginning of the Spanish Renaissance. La Calahorra is an example of the abstraction that can occur during the transmission of knowledge obtained from a copy of handmade architectural drawings. The fate of the drawing, image or building cannot be anticipated; the translations are subject to the copyist.
Fig 3.1: Giuliano da Sangallo, *Column Capital*. 1500, hand sketch. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 22).

Fig 3.2: Michele de Carlone, *Castillo de La Calahorra Column*. 1509-1512. Grenadine stone, Granada, Spain.
Building Reconfigurations.
Renditions

We propose three new renditions, loosely based on historical fact, that work to translate the ideas brought to the courtyard from Italy into new projects.

1. Staging La Calahorra

“Staging La Calahorra” leverages forced perspective, staging props, and visual approximations of materially to give a new understanding to the courtyard’s elements and their corresponding assembly, revealing the layers and joints that exist within the new structure.

2. Projection/Mapping

“Expanding La Calahorra” compiles known fragments and rearranges them to build upon the existing structure. Using a process of referencing and translation, images of built architecture, associated with drawings in the Codex Escurialensis, are used as inspiration for further design.

3. Recombination of Scenes:

Editing La Calahorra” is intentionally naïve in its reconstruction, exclusively using photographs that misrepresent the original courtyard as its basis for design. The poor image promotes variety over order, allowing for purposeful misreadings in the reconfiguration of the courtyard.

Through the renditions, we position translations as a pivotal instrument to the design process and through the preservation of certain elements, new projects can surface.
02. La Calahorra
A Brief History of La Calahorra

Don Rodrigo commissions Lorenzo Vázquez, a Spanish architect and builder, to design the renovation of the castle of La Calahorra in 1491 that he obtained two years prior for his successful conquests. The fortified castle was originally constructed and heavily used by the Moors. Don Rodrigo decides to travel in 1497 after the death of his wife, starting in Valencia and going to Naples, later visiting Rome, Milan and Genoa, from there to return to Spain.

On his travels, he encounters the Italian Renaissance and relishes in the art and architecture that were made in the Italian peninsula at the time. He sends word back to Spain in 1501 to slow construction on La Calahorra, for he had a new inspiration in mind for the residence in the Italian style. Don Rodrigo takes his second visit to Rome between 1506 and 1508 to obtain Papal approval of his second marriage and look for further references.

In Florence, Italy, Giuliano da San Gallo takes the Codex Escurialensis to Rome in 1508, only to be passed along the following year to Don Rodrigo or his cousin, Don Inico, for use at La Calahorra. Between the time that the slow work order was placed, and Michele de Carlone is hired to resume work on the residence, most of the first floor loggia is finished in local stone (grenadine) by Spanish craftsmen. Carlone places a request for Carrara marble to be sent from Italy to finish the doorways, columns, capitals, balusters and cornices for the loggia and staircase. The drawings from the Codex are used heavily as inspiration for architectural elements and motifs.
Ground Floor
Model - Detail of Piano Nobile
Ground and First Floor
East Courtyard Elevation
Ground and First Floor
West Courtyard Elevation
Ground and First Floor
North Courtyard Elevation
Ground and First Floor
South Courtyard Elevation
Mapping the Codex Escorialensis

Don Rodrigo first Italian tour starts in 1497, leaving the port of Valencia, Spain and going to Naples, later visiting Rome, Milan and Genoa, from there to return to Spain. His second trip takes him to Rome between 1506 and 1508. During the same time period, Giuliano da San Gallo gathers together the Codex Escorialensis, a collection of sketches from Domenico Ghirlandaio’s workshop, and brings it Rome where it’s acquired by Don Rodrigo.

Once the patterns are selected, Italian marble is shipped to the site from Genoa under the instruction of the stone carver, Michele de Carlone.

Sections of the Pattern Book

The drawings from the Codex are used heavily as inspiration for architectural elements and motifs. The codex itself is comprised of three loosely organized sections:

• Section One (Folios 1 – 11): Makes up the smallest book, both in number and in page size (its sheets are uncropped in binding); these are not folded sheets, but separate leaves sewn together, whence the uneven number of folios.
• Section Two (folios r2-68) is cropped at its outer edges but is relatively complete.
• Section Three (folios 69-82): is clearly distinguished by the homogeneous character of its contents; it is made up of outline drawings, mostly plans of buildings.
Significant Routes

Don Rodrigo (Patron)

Juliano San Galo & Sienese Sketchbook

Don Rodrigo & Castillo

La Calahorra Supplies

Ghirlandaio’s Workshop

Milan

Florence

Codex Escurialensis

Carrara Marble

Don Rodrigo’s First Trip to Italy (1497)

Savona

Genoa

Visit by Don Rodrigo

Recieves order for stonework

Sienese Sketchbook

La Calahorra

Codex Escurialensis arrives in 1508

Farnese Hercules

Rome

Visted by Don Rodrigo

Recieves order for stonework

Sea

Italy

Napels

France

Spain

Mediterranean Sea
La Calahorra
Valencia
Granada
Genoa
Milan
Florence
Rome
Napels
Spain
France
Italy
Mediterranean Sea
Codex Escurialensis (1509)
Carrara Marble (1509)
Don Rodrigo's First Trip to Italy (1497)
Savona
Africa

Significant Routes
Don Rodrigo (Patron)
Juliano San Gallo
La Calahorra Supplies

Don Rodrigo & Castillo
La Calahorra

Codex Escurialensis arrives in 1508
Farnese Hercules visited by Don Rodrigo
Recives order for stonework.
Significant Routes

- Don Rodrigo (Patron)
- Juliano San Galo
- La Calahorra Supplies

Ghirlandaio’s Workshop
Ghirlandaio’s Workshop
Juliano San Galo & Sienese Sketchbook

Don Rodrigo & Castillo
La Calahorra

Codex Escurialensis (1509)
Carrara Marble (1509)

Don Rodrigo’s First Trip to Italy (1497)

Savona
Genoa
Milan
Florence
Rome
Napels
Spain
Africa
France
Italy
Mediterranean Sea

Codex Escurialensis (1509)
Visted by Don Rodrigo
Recieves order for stonework
03. Strategies
Ground and Piano Nobile columns
Primary Piano Nobile Door frames
Secondary Door Frames
Window Variations
Projection/Mapping:  
Column Capitals

Fig. 1.1-1.2: Column Capitals (fol. 22)

Fig. 2.0 Arch of Medinaceli, Spain.

Fig 2.1: A man on a panther (fol. 39v. 0 ).

Fig. 2.2: Tritons and Nereids (fol. 15v. 0 ).

Fig. 2.3: Warriors pillaging (fol. 15v. 0 ).

Fig. 2.4: Abundance (fol. 48v. 0 ).

Fig. 2.5 Unknown or Page Missing

Fig. 2.6 Hercules Farnese (fol. 37)

Fig. 2.7 Apollo (fol. 64)

Fig. 3.1: Victoria of Trajan’s Column (fol. 31)

Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite (fol. 54v. 0 )

Fig. 3.3: Apollo of Belvedere (fol. 53)

Fig. 3.4: Abundance (fol. 48v. 0 )
Fig. 1.1 & 1.2: Column Capitals. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 22).
Fig 1.1 & 1.2: Column Capitals

Similar to a child circling their favorite toys in a toy catalogue for Christmas, in the Codex Escurialensis, a plus sign notated next to the drawing indicates an interest in using the motif in La Calahorra. These marks could of come from the client, Don Rodrigo, or the stone carver, Michele de Carlone.

Some, but not all, of the marked drawings exist in the present courtyard. This could indicate that a later decision was made to exclude them, or that they play a role in the inner doorways that are not currently documented.
Recombination of Scenes:
Honor Hall Door Frame

Fig. 2.0 Arch of Medinaceli, Spain.

Fig. 2.1: A man on a panther (fol. 39v').

Fig. 2.2: Tritons and Nereids (fol. 15v').

Fig. 2.3: Warriors pillaging (fol. 15v').

Fig. 2.4: Abundance (fol. 48v').

Fig. 2.5 Unknown or Page Missing.

Fig. 2.6 Hercules Farnese (fol. 37).

Fig. 2.7 Apollo (fol. 64).

Fig. 3.1: Victoria of Trajan’s Column (fol. 31).

Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite (fol. 54v').

Fig. 3.3: Apollo of Belvedere (fol. 53).

Fig. 3.4: Abundance (fol. 48v').
Fig. 2.1-2.8: Honor Hall Door Frame. La Calahorra, Spain. 1512.
Fig 2.0: Roman arch of Medinaceli. Spain. 1st century A.D

Fig 2.1–2.8: Honor Hall Door Frame
The significant honor hall entry, located on the second floor of La Calahorra, is loosely based on the Roman triumphal arch of Medinaceli. The ABA proportions and three level design are used to compose selected sculptures. The niches, decorative frieze, and bas reliefs are filled with various motifs contained within the Codex Escurialensis.
Fig 2.1: A man on a panther. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 39v.).

Fig 2.2: Tritons and Nereids. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 15v.).

Fig 2.3: Warriors pillaging. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 55).
Fig. 2.1-2.8: Honor Hall Door Frame. La Calahorra, Spain.
Completing the Whole: Honor Hall Door Frame

Fig. 1.1-1.2: Column Capitals (fol. 22)

Fig. 2.0 Arch of Medinaceli, Spain.

Fig. 2.1: A man on a panther (fol. 39v.0).

Fig. 2.2: Tritons and Nereids (fol. 15v.1).

Fig. 2.3: Warriors pillaging (fol. 15v.1).

Fig. 2.4: Abundance (fol. 48v.0).

Fig. 2.5 Unknown or Page Missing

Fig. 2.6 Hercules Farnese (fol. 37)

Fig. 2.7 Apollo (fol. 64)

Fig. 3.1: Victoria of Trajan’s Column (fol. 31)

Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite (fol. 54v.0)

Fig. 3.3: Apollo of Belvedere (fol. 53)

Fig. 3.4: Abundance (fol. 48v.0)
Fig 2.4: Fortuna. 
*Codex Escurialensis* (fol. 48v.).

Fig 2.6: Hercules Farnese 
*Codex Escurialensis* (fol. 37).

Fig 2.5: Unidentified / Lost

Fig 2.7: Apollo 
*Codex Escurialensis* (fol. 64).
Fig. 2.1-2.7: Honor Hall Door Frame, La Calahorra, Spain.
Fig. 2.4: Statue of Fortuna. Honor Hall Doorframe. La Calahorra, Spain.
Fig. 2.4: Fortuna. Rome, Italy. 1st or 2nd Century CE.

Fig. 2.4: Fortuna. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 48v.).
Fig. 2.6: Hercules Farnese.
La Calahorra, Spain.
Fig. 2.6: Hercules Farnese. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 37).

Fig. 2.6: Hercules Farnese. Rome, Italy.
Projection/Mapping:
Ground Floor Windows

Fig. 1.1-1.2: Column Capitals (fol. 22)

Fig. 2.4: Abundance (fol. 48v. 0)

Fig. 2.6 Hercules Farnese (fol. 37)

Fig. 2.1: A man on a panther (fol. 39v. 0)

Fig. 2.7 Apollo (fol. 64)

Fig. 2.0 Arch of Medinaceli, Spain.

Fig. 2.2: Tritons and Nereids (fol. 15v. 0)

Fig. 2.3: Warriors pillaging (fol. 15v. 0)

Fig. 3.1: Victoria of Trajan's Column (fol. 31)

Fig. 3.3: Apollo of Belvedere (fol. 53)

Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite (fol. 54v. 0)

Fig. 3.4: Abundance (fol. 48v. 0)

Fig. 3.5: Unknown or Missing
Fig. 3.1: Victoria of Trajan’s Column. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 31).

Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 54v. 0).

Fig. 3.3: Apollo of Belvedere. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 53).

Fig. 3.4: Fortuna. Codex Escurialensis (fol. 48v. 0).
Fig 3.1–3.4: West Facade Ground Floor Windows

These two significant windows flank the staircase on the first floor. Their balustrades echo the larger one on the second floor that encircles the courtyard. On the left window, facing the staircase are carvings of Victoria of Trajan’s Column (fol. 31) and Aphrodite (fol. 54v.0). On the right window, facing the staircase are carvings of Apollo of Belvedere (fol. 53) and Abundance (fol. 48v.0).
Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite.
Codex Escurialensis (fol. 54v.).
Fig. 3.2: Aphrodite.
Codex Escurialensis (fol. 54v.).
Projection/Mapping:
Second Floor Doorways

Fig. 4.1 Candelleri (Fol. 21v.)

Fig. 4.2: Entablature (Fol. 19v.)
Fig. 4.1: Candelieri.  
Codex Escurialensis (Fol. 19v.⁹)
Fig. 4.1-4.2: Second Floor West Facade Doorway

Fig. 4.1-4.2: Second Floor South Facade Doorway
Fig. 4.2: Entablature (fol. 21.V.9)
Fig. 4.2: South Facade Doorway.

Fig. 4.2: West Facade Doorway.
04. Exercises
Misreading the Courtyard

The set of renderings and models here explore the perception of depth, and the remapping of an image onto surfaces. They speak to some of the various misreadings of the project that can occur by only looking at images and elevations, such as imagining elements as much thicker than they actually are, or seeing first floor columns as projected forward while on the second floor, the columns are on the same plane as the back wall.
Building Reconfigurations.
Model Images
Model Images
Translating the Salle Door Frame

In a similar light to how drawings were continuously traced, retraced, and updated with current artistic trends in the 14th and 15th century, this series focuses on how the door frame element might continued to be retranslated and understood through digital process. The original door frame, photographic in perspective, was warped and redrawn with lines. From there, 3d and 2d images and drawings were generated as an experiment to test how different elements fair in the relaxation of forms, loss of resolution, and translation into new physical forms.
Caption
Doorframe_BM_DPI300_R45_D1.psd
Doorframe_MB_125_R0.psd
Doorframe_Texture_Blur_10.psd
Doorframe_Texture_Blur_20.psd
Doorframe_VG_D45_C100.psd
Doorframe_VG_D65_C100.psd
La_Calahorra_Doorframe_Drape_2.ai
Postcards from Places that Never Were
These postcards illustrate a fictional map of the use of La Calahorra’s courtyard elements across the world. It is an exercise that tells the story of a history that never was, but also a story of translation and copies, a phenomenon as common to the architectural discipline as the use doors, columns and windows.
honor hall door postcard CROP.psd
**Pattern Rearrangement**

These renderings take the courtyard as base material that can be divided and intentionally recombined in a number of ways. This is in relationship to how pattern books were used at the time to create and recreate various building elements. Entablatures and motif could be applied to important domestic homes as well as religious and civic buildings.
Column_Duplicate_01.psd
mixed_01.psd
Screen_01.psd
Wall_Elements.psd
05. Renditions
Staging La Calahorra

In the 1970s, southern Spain became a popular shooting location for American movies. La Calahorra was used in two films and recent TV show, highlighting the primary courtyard and the castle’s exterior.

“Staging La Calahorra” proposes that weathering and poor drainage have led to the erosion and partial collapse of the courtyard. The courtyard is recreated using props and thin, temporary structures held up by steel scaffolding. This rendition is an approximation of the staging that occurred in previous film sets. Photographs are projected onto the surfaces to create new materials that will be recorded by the camera. The elevation is a composite image from online photographs.

The assembly is designed to frame three specific views of the courtyard. The walls are perspectively distorted, to exaggerate the geometries of the structure. The first view is a panoramic sequence of the courtyard interior, followed by a close up on the ground floor and shot of the second-floor corridor.

Projecting images onto material is a process that is similar to how the La Calahorra’s masons copied sketches from the pattern book into stone relief. This is an early example of translation, which Robin Evans addresses in Translations from Drawing to Building. In this case, the image of the stone elevation is projected and warped to match the perspective.

In “Staging La Calahorra”, the use of set props as layered temporary structures is explored to create new configurations. Through the mapping of distorted photographs onto flat surfaces, images that were once active and circulated online, become printed static materials used to imitate the courtyards appearance. This method of reconstruction, using visual approximations of materially, forced perspective, and staging gives a new understanding to the courtyard elements and their corresponding assembly, revealing the layers and joints that exist within the new structure.
Building Reconfigurations.
I. Staging La Calahorra
Courtyard Backing
False Perspective Box Set
I. Staging La Calahorra

False Perspective Box Set
Building Reconfigurations.
Expanding La Calahorra

Eight years after the courtyard’s completion, La Calahorra was abandoned and was never used as a permanent residence again. Its structure remained unchanged for the next 5 centuries.

In “Expanding La Calahorra”, additions and modifications continue to develop the courtyard after the original date of completion. Building upon a process of referencing and translation, images of built architecture, associated with drawings in the Codex Escurialensis, are used as inspiration for further design.

The Renaissance masons, unable to see Roman building elements in person, constructed the original courtyard by referencing a pattern book of sketches that depicted fragments of Itailan antiquity.

This rendition of the courtyard combines and reconfigures photographs of Renaissance and ancient Roman architecture. These images were specifically chosen for their relation to the codex. The colosseum and pantheon are drawn in the pattern book and Alberti referenced drawings of the colosseum before designing Palazzo Rucellai. It’s important to note that the photographs of buildings are close approximations of sketches found in the Codex Escurialensis. The references are reconfigured and arranged into 4 floors, forming a bricolage of Italian Architecture. The front and back elevations of the courtyard are split, each level loosely based on images found to be related to the codex.

“Expanding La Calahorra” speculates on how the building’s material and composition can be changed after its construction date. It compiles known fragments and rearranges them to build upon the existing structure. Additional floors are created and the new references, translated to fit within the courtyard, are layered on top of the original portions of La Calahorra, accumulating into a wholly new composition.
II. Expanding La Calahorra

Building Translations

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD

Colosseum
Vespasian, Titus
80 AD

Palazzo Rucellai
Leon Battista Alberti
1451

Codex Sketches
Photographs
Expanding La Calahorra
Building Reconfigurations.
Building Reconfigurations.
Editing La Calahorra

Dismantling and relocating renaissance buildings was common in Spain during the turn of the twentieth century. In 1913, a fireplace, two door frames and Serliana archway were taken from La Calahorra and moved to a residence in Madrid.

“Editing La Calahorra” proposes a reality where the existing courtyard has been entirely removed and relocated. The courtyard is rebuilt based on a number of poor images that document its original structure. Hito Steyerl defines poor images as affordable derivatives of high-resolution photos that transform quality into accessibility. They are “thrust into digital uncertainty at the expense of their own substance”. This rendition of the courtyard references low-res photographs and bootlegged VHS tapes which have been uploaded online. These documents can alter our understanding of the building through imaging effects such as blurring, color shifting, interference, slicing, stretching and warping.

This recreation is intentionally naïve in its reconstruction, exclusively using photographs that misrepresent the original courtyard as its basis for design. The use of reference images to design a building is similar to the method of construction used for the original courtyard. Drawings of ancient Roman motifs in the Codex Escurialensis were used as inspiration for many of the building elements in La Calahorra. When reconfiguring these poor images and their effects into La Calahorra, a translation of active images into static materials occurs.

There are a number of ways the photographs are reconfigured into the courtyard. Some of the building elements are softened in shape like a blurred photo. Others are sliced or shifted, similar to the distortions seen in the video stills. The entire front courtyard is spherically warped into a form that speaks to panoramic images taken of the original building. The poor image promotes variety over order, allowing for purposeful mis-readings in the reconfiguration of the courtyard.
I. Staging La Calahorra

Reconstructed Courtyard

Layer 1

Layer 2A

Layer 2B

Layer 3A

Layer 3B
III. Editing La Calahorra

Reconstructed Courtyard
III. Editing La Calahorra

Spherically Warped Courtyard

Warped Courtyard
Reconfiguration Techniques

III. Editing La Calahorra

Image: Color Shift
Model: Shift + Color

Image: Blur
Model: Soften

Image: Pixel Sorting
Model: Shift

Image: Scan Lines
Model: Cut + Shift

Image: Static Interference
Model: Warp

Image: Static Interference
Model: Soften + Mask

Building Reconfigurations.
III. Editing La Calahorra

Reconfiguration Techniques
Building Reconfigurations.
Building Reconfigurations.
06. Reference Material
Image Archive
The image archive documents La Calahorra. It contains scans of codex sketches and photos of Ancient Roman fragments on which the sketches were based. It is also comprised of more recent images of the courtyard, such as movie stills, travel photography, documentaries, drawings, and low-res photographs. This archive serves as the context, as we did not visit the site in person.

It’s divided into categories.

01 Initial Fragments
   01A Buildings from Antiquity
   02B Elements from Antiquity

02 Sketches of Fragments
   02A Codex Escurialensis
   02B Additional Sketches

03 Documentation of a Building Based on Sketches from Fragments
   03A General Photographs
   03B Photographs of Elements
   03C Additional Sources

04 Documentation of a Building Based on Images Made by Others
   04A Orthographic Drawings
   04B Models

05 Images from Popular Culture that Modify a Building
   05A Video Stills
   05B Poor Images
   05C Photographs of Relocated Fragments of a Building

06 Reconfigurations of a Building Based on Images
   06A Projected Elevations
   06B Relocated Elements
   06C Door frame Translations
   06D Courtyard Recombinations
La Calahorra Exterior
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Exterior
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Courtyard
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Courtyard
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Second Floor
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Second Floor
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Second Floor
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Second Floor
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Interior
Michele Carlone
1512

La Calahorra Stairs
Michele Carlone
1512

Second Floor Column Capital
Michele Carlone
1512

Honor Hall Doorframe
Michele Carlone
1512

Fortuna Relief, La Calahorra
Michele Carlone
1512

Building Reconfigurations.
La Calahorra Exterior
Michele Carlone
1512

Colosseum
Vespasian, Titus
80 AD

Roman Arch of Medinaceli
Artist Unknown
90 CE

Fortuna
Artist Unknown
120 CE

Hercules Farnese
Glycon
216 CE

Fortuna
Artist Unknown
120 CE

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD

Second Floor Column Capital
Michele Carlone
1512

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD

Pantheon
Marcus Agrippa
125 AD
La Calahorra’s Elements in La Casa Del Infantado
1945

La Calahorra’s Serliana Archway in La Casa Del Infantado
1945
These postcards illustrate a fictional map of the use of La Calahorra’s courtyard elements across the world. It is an exercise that tells the story of a history that never was, but also a story of translation and copies, a phenomenon as common to the architectural discipline as the use of doors, columns and windows.
Additional Work on Souvenirs

Souvenirs play an important role in the ability to transmitting knowledge from one site, person, or point in time to another. Evans points to how the translation from drawings to buildings is not always exact - this is also true for souvenirs. The transition from project to souvenir does not always assume a one to one relationship; often the souvenir translates certain qualities while ignoring others. They are manufactured representations separate from their origin with their own identities and unique attributes. The first time the word souvenir was used was in the 18th century when Grand Tourists began to explore Europe. At that point, souvenirs were mainly for the aristocracy and took the form of artists’ models and paintings, but today they possess much less valuable forms, as symbols of a tourist culture that is “unable to engage with a moment or place.”
Seeing the Original

Debate

Selection

Return (Distancing)

Displaying in the domestic home

Collection of Individual objects

Designed collectible series

Original

Souvenir

Context

Home
Product Source

Built Project

Plan
Elevation
Section
Axon
Perspective

Scale Models

1:1 Mock-ups + Drawings

Subject Reproduction

Built Project

Souvenirs
Photographs
Renovation
Reconstruction

Subject

Source

Reproduction

Product
Color | Materiality | Resolution | Part to Whole | Use | Value | Depth

Snow Globe | Cufflink | Music Box | Mug | Children’s Toy |

Lasercut Lapel Pin | Decorative Plate | Painted Plastic | Magnet | Metal Magnet | Minature Model |

Cookie Cutter | Sand Castle Mold | Jewelery Holder | Charm | Metal Model |

Pillow | Rubber Magnet | Ceramic Pasta Holder | Metal Model | Shiny Metal Ornament |

Glass Water Dispenser | Ceramic Jar | Colored Plastic | Stackable Cups | Gold Painted Glass Ornament | Painted Miniature Model | Metal 3D Puzzle

Building Reconfigurations.
Flatness

Architecture is compressed into a single surface. The back is no longer relevant. Evaluational relationships take priority as one can only guess at the original plan. They offer a single angle, faking depth by painting shadows and employing visual projection tricks.

Flatness works to reduce the project to an icon that can be displayed on a variety of surfaces, losing its site to the background of whatever its “on”.
Fragmentation
The referential building is not viewed as a sacred composition, it’s dissected and split up to the will of the souvenir. Concept is kicked to the curb as entablatures are broken to make the rim and base of the coffee mug. The building is hollowed out and windows plugged to act as a container for fluids deemed much more important than the original content. The number of floors are forgotten in the repetition.

If the viewer is unfamiliar of the built project, the fragment misguides and presents itself as absolute.
Definition
Architecture usually demands a one-to-one correspondence between the represented idea and the final building. Precision and control are king when it comes to assemblage and images.

Souvenirs oppose this notion by embracing the low definition, partly due to the tourist’s lack of interests in these matters and attributing the rest to the tools and materials that define the souvenir. Crisp edges, accurate proportions, and materiality are the first things to go. It’s only important that they are somewhat close... ish to what they are being compared to.
Utility

The image trumps its use. Souvenirs often subvert the functional qualities of an item. Plates, golf balls, and spoons are elevated as display. Their sentimental value makes them too prized to use in any traditional setting. Those that do encourage interaction do so as a representation not of the lived experience but the secondhand experience.

They articulate a tension between the exotic and ordinary... Between local culture and homogenized globalism.
Souvenirs transmit original materiality into textures and color. No longer made of the same “stuff”, the focus turns to the surface. They exaggerate seams, apertures, and primary elements over the flat wall, aiming for visual complexity or stark contrasts rather than accuracy. Visibility dominates precision. Bricks and rustication are forced into larger than life scales in order to be rendered in new materiality.

Souvenirs work to distill the most relevant qualities into visible artifacts.
Key Readings:


Carpo begins by introducing an important moment in the early 1500s - a shift from verbal descriptions to printed images which changed the whole process of architectural design. The spread of printed images generated a new visual environment and encouraged higher standards in the transmission of visual information. The sign of the print, rather than an artist’s signature, soon became the trademark of documentary trustworthiness. Handmade architectural drawings and drawings from the antique, as a result, were still valuable but not the best method for making a factual copy.


Eco works to define and provide examples for fakes and forgeries, noting how they were understood in the Middle Ages as well as contemporary society. The reading is split into the following topics: pseudo-doubles, false identifications and its categories, historical forgeries, the difficulties of authentication procedures, pseudo identifications, as well as historical truths and traditions.


Evans states that the translation of drawings to buildings is much like the translation of languages - it is meant to convey something without altering its original meaning, but it is often impossible to maintain this continuity, with things becoming bent, broken and lost along the way. Architects must suspend critical disbelief in order to preform their task, as it is impossible to avoid elements getting lost in translation.
There are two possibilities for translation, according to Evans: the redefinition of architecture in favor of creating consumable art that stands separate from the original, or the use of the transitive, communicative qualities of the drawing to better it or emphasize certain aspects.


Jacob writes about his encounter with Madelon Vriesendorp, who’s better known for cover of Delirious New York, and her collection of familiar objects. While belittling souvenirs as “the pathetic symbols of tourist culture, exposing a total inability to engage with a moment or place,” he also admires their ability to be much more than representations of the past. Coming from a history of the Grand Tour, They are both document and proposal, for they do not always have to be faithful to the thing they represent and can propose alternative futures.

Additional Readings:

Projects:
Hughes, Michael. Souvenirs. 2006-ongoing.