

**Death in/of the City:**  
The Place of the Cemetery within an Emptied Architecture

By  
Antonio Zedda

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

**Master of Architecture**

Department of Architecture  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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DEATH IN/OF THE CITY:  
THE PLACE OF THE CEMETERY WITHIN AN EMPTIED ARCHITECTURE

BY

ANTONIO ZEDDA

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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I am also thankful to my many friends who aided in the discussion, construction, and set-up of both the installation and final presentation. A special thanks to Mark Bobyn, Ian Corne, Neil Minuk, Jae-Sung Chon, Jonathan Hughes, Peter Suter, Dave Ecclestone, Neil Gray and Tricia Brennan.

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To my video mentor John Gurdebeke, Artist-in-Residence at Video Pool in Winnipeg. John, a video-artist, agreed to work in collaboration, experimenting with the potential of video as an alternative recording and didactic tool. John's patience and wisdom reify the potential of video as an art form and provide credence to the ever-increasing desire for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Finally, this document is dedicated to my parents, Lina and Luigi Zedda, for their never-ending perseverance, patience, and love.

Antonio Zedda  
May 7, 1994

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## **Abstract**

A series of loosely connected 'experiments/explorations' were fused under the auspices of a thesis, questioning the validity of both the cemetery and abandoned heritage buildings within the urban context.

The thesis began with a question: "*Is the cemetery relevant as place within the city*"? The intent of this question was to explore the burial of the dead and their connection, representation, and relation to the living within the city. It purported to explore the cause(s) which necessitated the gradual exodus of the urban cemetery to the periphery. As a literature survey was being conducted examining the historical condition of the Western cemetery, a separate 'survey' began, questioning the relationship between the cemetery as a place of death within the city and the death of the city itself (through an architecture rendered non-functional and value-less). The thesis evolved towards a synthesis, witnessing both the re-use of abandoned architecture and the cemetery's potential replacement within the city.

## **Method**

The thesis departed from a traditional format opting instead for methods and procedures which best recorded, represented, and conveyed the intentions of this exploration. The most significant variation involved the use of video; a collaboration was established with an artist from Video Pool (Winnipeg) interested in exploring the potential of video as a recording and design tool.

With regards to surveying the history of the cemetery and modern perceptions thereof a variety of methods were utilized. These methods were also administered to solicit information regarding the condition of abandoned buildings within Winnipeg's urban environment.

- a. Literature search.** This involved an extensive survey of available literature including academic texts, periodicals, professional manuals and propaganda, mass media (journals, newspaper, radio).
- b. Interviews.** Approximately 15 individuals from varied backgrounds were solicited to give a wide range of responses concerning among other things: the relevance of the cemetery to their own concepts of death.
- c. Questionnaires.** Two separate questionnaires were devised to solicit responses concerning the perception of abandoned buildings and the significance thereof within varying contexts.
- d. Video Recording.** Video was utilized on one level to record the condition of the cemetery within Winnipeg and on another as a narrative tool: fusing together diverse fragments of history, perception, and interpretation into a cohesive whole.
- e. Site Installations.** In order to better understand 'site' and public perception towards an abandoned architecture, several site installations were constructed. One was located within the former Bank of Commerce building in central Winnipeg, and another was placed within the Faculty of Architecture Gallery on the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus.

The implementation of methods informed and permitted the proposal of an alternative architecture through the relocation of a celebrated death on varied sites within the city centre. The design proposal rehabilitated an abandoned building through the re-location of the death ritual onto different sites within the city.

## Results

The results are synthesized into a collection of documents varying in format. They include: video narratives, notebooks, installation documentation, interview data, and design proposals.

The final documentation is categorized as follows:

**0. *A Fragment(-ation) of Memory:***

*Questionnaires, Comments, Sources and Scripts.*

Format: Bound document, 8 1/2 x 11 vertical, approx. 110 pages.

A collection of texts constructed throughout thesis research and synthesis. The document contains questionnaires, responses, and conclusions in addition to written scripts used as a basis for video production. It ends with a bibliography of texts utilized during the thesis research.

**1. *Notebook: The Absence of Death.***

*A Collection of influences, thoughts, and directions towards a thesis on an architecture of death.*

Format: Bound document, 8 1/2 x 11 landscape. approx. 67 pages

A document which introduces influences and intentions guiding the exploration of the thesis topic. It presents an overview of initial perceptions pertaining to both the place of the cemetery and abandoned buildings within the city of Winnipeg.

**2. *The Dis-discovery of the Bank (of Commerce building).***

*Documentation of a mnemonic vehicle: a multi-media installation.*

Format: Bound document, 11 x 17 landscape, approx. 58 pages.

*Between October 25th and 29th, 1994, four fragments were inserted within/ on the former Bank of Commerce building in Winnipeg. The Building, having remained closed for 24 years, was made accessible for five days with the intent its discovery would infect the public with a memory behind the facade.*

The document summarizes the intent, construction, and results of a multi-media installation located within a vacated bank building in downtown Winnipeg. A list of public comments recorded during the installation citing potential users, memories, and perceptions is also contained within.

**3. *There is no Security***

*Narrative Histories of Bankers' Row, The Bank of Commerce Building, and a Winnipeg Past.*

Format: Video. approx. length 12 minutes.

The video piece combines archival footage, photographs, literature, and taped footage of downtown Winnipeg focusing on the Bank of Commerce Building. The video is a key component of the installation constructed within the bank. It narrates the condition of the bank: from its prestigious placement in the heart of Bankers' Row in 1912 to its eventual vacancy in 1969. Is the building functionless? Is there a value in occupying the bank once again? Who benefits, which intentions and on what basis are they to be considered...?

**4. *Walk through the Bank***

*A video walk through the Bank.*

Format: Video. approx. length 15 minutes.

The video presents the absence of the former Bank of Commerce building: behind the grand banking hall and the richly paneled offices accessible to the public, lay some of the most telling and relevant spaces supporting those visible to the public. The piece records and makes *virtually* accessible the deteriorated spaces above and behind the marble facades, putting forth an alternative understanding of interior place.

**5. *Time, Building, Body***

*The evolution of the Western Cemetery: the periphery, perceptions, and the professionalization of death.*

Format: Video. approx. length 45 minutes.

The piece puts forth the tenuous yet necessary relationship between the city and the cemetery. It begins with the myth of the Garden of Eden and carries through to the modern day practice of drive-in funerals. Interwoven within this main narrative are sub-narratives which present varying interpretations of the cemetery and of death: interviews, literary sources, professional propaganda, and the mass media.

**6. *Design Portfolio:***

*The design of alternative places of death within the city.*

Format: 11 x 17. landscape.

The documentation of a three week design exercise proposing the placement of death within the realm of the city. Three sites are suggested: The former Bank of Commerce building (ceremony, administration), a vacant site facing the former bank (garden, coffee/magazine stand, cafeteria), and the edge of a riverbank park (crematorium).

## Chapter 1:

### ***A fragment(-ation) of memory***

The *dis-covery* and re-appropriation of artifacts, arcitecture, and a bank.

## Preface

Memory, whose discovery as an art is credited to the Greek poet Simonides, refutes oblivion as it embraces absence. Its invention is recounted by Cicero in his *De oratore*. Summoned one evening by a message from two young men attending outside (Castor and Pollux, to whom he has just dedicated a lyric poem of praise), Simonides retreats from a banquet and its guests, only to witness their untimely death with the sudden collapse of the hall's roof. The destruction is so severe and the bodies mutilated beyond recognition, that family members are unable to identify those killed. Simonides, able to recall the seating configuration of the guests at the banquet, reconstructs the order of the (dead) bodies for identification. The tragic absence of the face and its recollection: the image of the no-longer relevant and yet still revelatory body ensues as Simonides evokes a 'place' and faces no longer present. Yet the present smolders in the ruins of the banquet; what remains mutilated beneath, becomes coded through a fragmentary collection of images and rubble above (memory): only to become the foundation for a prosthetic (mnemonic) body, a new structure whereby recollections are deposited for safekeeping.

If similar, an emptied architecture dominates a street as an impotent: The (bank) building succumbs to the image of its skin, while its misplaced corpse lay within, absent.

*...the [deposited] mediation is not concerned with re-creating nor with eliminating the context: the work is presented in its current condition of a testimonial fragment; its evocative force is all the greater when the environment in which it is set proclaims and measures the temporal distance (and therefore functional, cultural, etc.) that separates it from its original location (from the act, the motivations and the context of its creation); its potential for expression and communication is brought out all the more when the surroundings in which it is presented are able to stimulate, liberate and relate it to a time with the aesthetic sensitivity proper to the moment in which the museum is founded.<sup>1</sup>*

**September 12, 1993**

**The signified and its signification some time later.**

If the memory of an artifact remains latent, an architecture deposited within its site remains but an isolated freight, destined for loss.

ENTER the

**mnemonic vehicle(s)**

**defn.** 1. a device to assist an individual or collective towards the evocation of a past. 2. a means of discovering an action arrested or an aura dissolved by time.

*Hopefully you don't score an A grade in your studies for this. After all you did hardly anything to deserve it.*

*It was here all along....like Europeans "discovering America"<sup>2</sup>*

The notion of dis-covery necessitates a substantial 'distance' from what is to be revealed; the volume's latent sub-facade existence insures neither perception, nor a connotation consistent with either nascent intentions or accumulated connotations. When the photograph no longer

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<sup>1</sup>Gilberto Botti, *Gae Aulenti: Architecture and Museography*, in Lotus International 1987/1 (New York:Rizzoli International.) p.63

<sup>2</sup>Excerpt from comments received during installation. Former Bank of Commerce Building, Winnipeg. October, 1993.

elicits memory or the building is vacated beyond the web of either experience or aura, absence is made absolute. Site is severed, memory is suppressed, and time is trapped once again by the act of physical decay. Fragments of heritage; columns, cornices, entablatures, ...become but broken shards: slivers in the skin of beaurocrats.

If a sign(facade) only traces the past bequeathed beneath a building's surface, the fragment, as a foil introduced within, potentially evokes its concealed reality.

**Memory** = a (relative) memorial or amomental monument.

The facade text (c.1912), intended as a sign (bank), becomes through the passage of time symbolic. A story of time and events transforms the sign into a connotative symbol. Barthes considers a facade on at least two levels: one of meaning (intention) and another of form (connotation). The former depends on the context of the signifier for intended meaning. It can be read: it has sensory quality, it exhibits a richness of materiality and color (text(-ural)). It also purports meaning through its experience: it exhibits a history of place, time, memory, facts, and conditions. Its meaning could thus be considered complete.

Yet Barthes includes that at the level of myth, "meaning regresses to form; the form *leaves its contingency behind: it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the ...[stone facade]...remains. The form has put all this richness at a distance: its newly acquired [poverty]...calls for a signification to fill it.*"<sup>3</sup> On one level, the severing (vacancy or demolition) of a building from its site or a fragment from a building as site can be viewed as reducing meaningfulness to again nothing but sign; Walter Benjamin's notion of the "aura" of presentation is reduced to a mere pretense of a former reality (representation and/or metonymy). If however, a myth of the facade and the building behind ensue, fragments placed within have a potential meaning, albeit with a new distance. With the facade distanced (but not

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<sup>3</sup>Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. (Toronto: Grafton Books. 1972) p. 127

severed from its meaning), it is able to receive a new signification while retaining the shadow of a former meaning.

**And hence the modern preoccupation of architecture with the signification of the skin at the expense of what lay behind, within.**

Will the former Bank of Commerce building, if ever occupied, stand only as a hollow prop; a puppet, or an object of aesthetic determinism? History rewritten, repeated often enough, becomes an unquestioned and unquestionable truth. The architecture as fragment is dispersed as a talisman, integrated among the blank rambling facades in the hopes that its pre- or postmodern metonymy mandates both meaningfulness and justifies adjacent ( )modernist additions. But Barthes reveals a latent possibility in which the fragment *"does not suppress the [former] meaning, it only puts it at a distance... the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the [new] form.... will draw its nourishment."*<sup>4</sup>

**But when is the building severed absolutely from the city as site, and unable to commit future signification?**

Never. Liberated from a totality of which it was once part, the bank building is able to accept new signification. Regrettably the new signification has potential to (re-)commodify the former bank, a consequence of the reduced totality of the building to object (through 'heritage designation', or 'market-style' commercialization).

*Turn this into something useful, where its architectural structure may be admired. Possibly a bank, concert hall, or a new museum... and just maybe we could get some "good art."*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Roland Barthes, *Ibid.*, p. 127 *"... it is also important that this past be perceived as the present of the Flaneur, who is ready to depart from the tradition to look for appearances and beginnings and whose memory of a single event may take on, and in some cases, negate, a whole tradition, the narrative of a single happening...."* See also the collection of essays on Postmodern Culture, *The Anti-Aesthetic.*, ed. by Hal Foster: specifically Douglas Crimp's *"On the Museum's Ruins"*, p. 43-56.

<sup>5</sup>Excerpt from comments received during installation. Visitors were asked to respond to the following:

*Let non-profit organization use it for nominal rent... a full-time common office could be run. The large banking hall could be a large common use area... bingo, dance, conventions, etc. Kitchen and storage could be downstairs. Many small businesses could also take space and use the office secretarial service that would come with the rent. .<sup>6</sup>*

*The old relationship between the viewer and the viewed is stood on its head. **By treating works of art like mere facts, the modern attitude attempts to commodify and sell cheap** even the mimetic moment of art, ...Today the consumer is allowed to project his impulses and mimetic residues on to anything he pleases, including art, whereas in the past the individual was expected to forget himself, lose himself in art in the process of viewing, listening, and reading.<sup>7</sup>*

Take the Haida totem pole placed within the stunning post-text of the anthropology museum (cemetery): deceived by tactile reality, a public consumes the severed object, content its literalness somehow galvanizes meaning; a public interested in the collection of memories and souvenirs. It is no-longer important that one understands, as much that one reads (form and not history). A definitive meaning ensues, a denotation which renders representation and metonymy. A re-definition is but an inefficient epitome of meaning; Meaningfulness as it existed previously within an aura of context: place, ritual, memory, and presence is no longer visible. The reduction is as precise as the archeologist following the path of actions past to disclose what was, but only in form, as a representation of what was: for one is unable to enliven the aura of a prior existence.

**But as definition is proscribed, so too is death.**

And what better place to display the inhumed but within the confines of the museum(?). But what of the 'state' which condemns the mnemonic architecture (as fragment), not towards the

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*Please feel free to comment on the bank building and the installation display. What suggestions would you make for possible uses of both the banking hall and the rest of the building which has remained empty for 24 years? If you remember the bank when it was open prior to 1969, what do you recall?*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>T.W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) p.25

finitude of death, but to some transitorial state where meaningfulness is not severed absolutely, whereby a transformation re-accumulates some value other than representation? If not the museum then where: the street, the vacant site, the event...?

**1912**

Bank expired (non-functional) **1969**

(mnemonic) vehicle = memory prosthetic **1993**

**The unintentional monument ?<sup>8</sup>**

The bank building as monument/fragment: a certain 'value' ascribes the memory it elicits or the decay-prevention it receives. If one agrees with Baudelaire's *Flaneur*, of the city evoking itself in the perceptions garnered by its inhabitant(s), does the city rely upon its relics and abandoned fragments to ensure the perpetuation of a meaningful narrative?

*In this sense, no place, no monument to the city can really be said to have a function determined a priori on paper. Whatever the actual a priori function (a market, a park, an avenue), what brings the place into consciousness is the fact that the encounter with the people makes it different in reality from what it was supposed to be on paper, if only because the individual assertion of this presence by every single one of those people in it negates better, demands the negation of a place for others, and with this negation, the negation of all other people.<sup>9</sup>*

If the pedestrian, the driver, or the passenger perceive the city as does Baudelaire's *Flaneur*, the city becomes a collection of ever-changing narratives dictated by devices found within its stage (and not from the memory intended in its memorials, monuments, drawings, or fixed historical descriptions).

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<sup>8</sup>Attributed to Alois Riegl, from his essay on *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, and cited by K.W. Forster in *Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture* in *Oppositions* Fall 1982:25.

<sup>9</sup>Marc Eli Blanchard, *In Search of the City* (Saratoga: Anma Libri) 1985: 75

**The city is seldom a static entity: an object consumed or a meaning understood. It recedes and reveals in the moment of both its time and space. And it is within this aura, Blanchard argues, in which memories linger, and the *Flaneur's* myth of the city evolves.**

**But myths are considered a burden towards an 'objective' understanding of the city. History clouds the 'present' as it precariously makes its fragmented case: unsure soft spoken experiences still resonate within the ( )modernist city.**

*Some objects are carelessly discarded and buildings willfully destroyed, while others are being collected or restored. What holds for one may be meaningless for another: some buildings attract interest precisely because they have fallen in ruins, and others require careful maintenance to sustain their meaning.<sup>10</sup>*

And memory is what one evokes from the city as it infects perception with decay and distance. **For the city is always interested in condoning the partial death of its body in the desire to perpetuate and renew itself.** Values establish the criteria determining what is preserved and what will be discarded. The city perpetually reduces its totality (history) into selected fragments which become the talismans for all things past. The *Market Building, Dominion Bank, Childs Building, Old City Hall, Empire Hotel, the Royal Alexandria, or the McIntyre Block*, become the sacrificial lambs, the offerings to the constructive city; the past is collected, edited, and deposited clumsily in the few remaining structures: a refuge for the homeless (history).

*A landmark of historic Winnipeg...should draw tourists to it to see old Winnipeg. Make this the centre for Winnipeg Tourist Info...Exchange walks, etc. This is worthy of Government money to support.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup>K.W. Forster, *The Modern Cult of Monuments* in *Oppositions* Fall 1982:6

<sup>11</sup>Excerpt from comments received during bank installation, Oct. 25-29, 1993.

Douglas Crimp, in his *On the Museum's Ruins*, cites Eugenio Donato's essay about Flaubert's comedy, *Bouvard and Pecuchet*, whose characters become the precursive curators of a history objectified, reduced, and subject to categorization.

*Its (the museum) representational and historical pretensions are based upon a number of metaphysical assumptions about origins - archeology intends, after all, to be a science... Archeological origins are important in two ways: each archeological artifact has to be an original artifact, and these original artifacts must in turn explain the "meaning" of a subsequent larger history. Thus, in Flaubert's caricatural example, the baptismal font that Bouvard and Pecuchet discover has to be a Celtic sacrificial stone, and Celtic culture has in turn to act as an original master pattern for cultural history.*<sup>12</sup>

And thus, the detritus fragments, assembled within the museum succumb to a homogeneous categorization, a systematic framework to which *Bouvard and Pecuchet* ascribe a new (fictional) meaning. The remaining fragments (memorial/monuments) of Winnipeg's past, **the architecture of both Bankers' Row and the surrounding Exchange District, huddle within the museum of the city centre(cemetery)**, subject to both historicist documentation and prosthesis by beaurocrats, academics, and a market economy. A system of invention designs this 'artificial' memory and supplants to it a validating presence within the realm of the city. What is in danger of becoming oblivious is 'rescued' and re-memorized; the transitive quality of space accepts the disfigurement of one set of memories (and their replacement) by the deposited system of another. In a passage from *The Art of Memory*, Frances Yates cites the *Ad Herennium*<sup>13</sup> for its description of the mental construct necessary to posit 'artificial memory'. "...artificial memory is established from places [mnemonic loci] and images... A locus is a place easily grasped by the memory, such as a house, ...Images are forms, marks or simulacra of what we wish to

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<sup>12</sup>Eugenio Donato, in his *The Museum's Furnace: Notes Toward a Contextual Reading of Bouvard and Pecuchet*, quoted in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. by Hal Foster. p. 49

<sup>13</sup> The title given to a work dating 86-82 B.C. in which the author, an unknown teacher of rhetoric, defines two general types of memory: natural (which is born with thought) and artificial (which is confirmed with training). From Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, (Chicago:University of Chicago Press. 1966) p. 5

*remember.*<sup>14</sup> The historically designated (perhaps non-functioning) structure succumbs to appropriation; its familiarity (as heterotopic?) and distance from an era of which it was once an intricate part, make it an eligible candidate for artificial memory. What from its past has become misplaced or concealed, only too well translates forth when it becomes an appropriated crypt for the expired events one (society) wishes to preserve and re-serve.

*The images we have placed on them for remembering one set of things fade and are effaced when we make no further use of them. But the loci remain in the memory and can be used again by placing another set of images for another set of material. The loci are like the wax tablets which remain when what is written on them has been effaced and are ready to be written on again.*<sup>15</sup>

The 'crypt' becomes both a place of the in-visible and visible, the dead and the living (dead), and the memory of a place past and one constructed artificially.

#### **The death of the city through its reduction/preservation?**

The city acquiesces mortality (slums, 'skid-row', dilapidated building, cemeteries) by concealing and/or removing vestiges of its occurrence, while concurrently appropriating 'selective' decay (towards the objectification of history) and thereby attempting to arrest its dissolution indefinitely. This paradox assures fragmented architecture the designation of container for both a reduced culture and past. As values dictate the desire to evoke a proscribed memory through an embalmed architecture, the last vestiges of a period past are appropriated, homogenized, and consumed.

*Once tradition is no longer animated by a comprehensive, substantial force but has to be conjured up by means of citations because 'it's important to have tradition', then whatever happens to be left of it is dissolved into a means to-an-end.*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1966) p.6

<sup>15</sup>Frances A. Yates, *Ibid.*, p.7

<sup>16</sup>T. W. Adorno, *Prisms*. Translated from the German, Samuel & Sherry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1980). p.175

As Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pecuchet* appropriate a baptismal font and proscribe to it the fictitious designation of a Celtic sacrificial stone (which consequently is made to epitomize Celtic culture), so too the vacated bank building becomes a signifier for a past totality.

*...the undisturbed process of dilapidation and decay does, of course, break up the original wholeness of a building or artifact, yet the idea of the fragment arises not from the gesture of salvaging a piece of the whole but from disregard or even denial of the value represented by integral works.<sup>17</sup>*

The **mnemonic vehicle(s)** evokes a latent past by reifying an architecture which has become both fragmented and embalmed. Introduced within as a catalyst or kinetic container of perception, connotation and perhaps myth-making(-shattering), the homeless vehicle (history) inhabits the functionless architecture. I watch as memory infects perception, experience gels meaningfulness, and history fragments mortal remains.

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<sup>17</sup>Kurt W. Forster, *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, in *Oppositions*, Fall 1982:3

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## Chapter 2:

### **Video Script One**

#### ***There is No Security***

*Narrative Histories of Bankers' Row and the Bank of Commerce Building*

## site (sight)

As a survey of the attitude, history, and business of death was being conducted, a separate search was taking place to determine possible locations for a place of death within the city. Understood at the time of query was the possibility of creating a place of ritual, sanctuary, office and preparation.

More importantly, it was a search for places latent with memory, yet emptied of 'function'. (not buildings already erased from the city: for example, the Empire Hotel, old City Hall, the Dominion Bank, or Firehall No.1, but rather buildings 'emptied' but not yet demolished: Canadian Bank Of Commerce, Ryan Block, Imperial Bank, or the Bank of British North America.)

The interest focused on the notion of the building as an empty site, because as mentioned previously...

*"... in its absence as function(-al), the building continues accumulating presence. Its shell, its materiality absorb the invisible time of the city. A photograph of one's grandparents reveals no action, no direct use. Its value lay within its ability to attract the gaze; for it is in the gaze that dis-discovery reveals a different temporality.*

*However, when the photograph is destroyed or the building demolished, absence is made absolute. Site is severed, memory is erased, and time is trapped once again by the act of physical decay: the mirror is made opaque by cracks. Fragments of heritage: columns, cornice, entablatures,...as collected and categorized shards, assume a Piranesian quality of loss"<sup>1</sup>*

## An \_th degree memory burn.

The *Exchange District* is one large memorial; building, burning, burying.

Or an insect in amber resin:

forgotten in the rush to build parking lots.

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<sup>1</sup>Antonio Zedda. In reference to the Empire Hotel facade project for W.P. Thompson, 1992.

*"We are exploring a number of design options for the development of the parkade and in doing so, are studying the possibility of...retaining all or part of the existing King and Bannatyne facades..."<sup>2</sup>*

### **Is it the best place for death in the city?**

Though representative of an era and type of building crucial to the development of Winnipeg at the turn of the century, the building itself or its spatial quality lacks potential as a gathering space, or a ceremony space. After considerable research it was decided:

The interior was extensively damaged in the fire, and would essentially need to be gutted.

**(gutted.** *defn. 1. to remove the intestines from; eviscerate 2. to destroy the interior of, as by fire.)<sup>3</sup>*

The building would better lend itself for office or residential use.

The building was not extensively unique (i.e. of a civic stature). Rather, it was similar in intent and style to other warehouse buildings in the area.

### **Bankers' Row: 1890-1915**

While the Warehouse district represents a type of building crucial to the early development of Winnipeg as a trade and distribution centre, the numerous bank buildings established on Main Street between William and Portage Avenue secured Winnipeg's position as an important centre of commerce.

*Canada's chartered banks played a key role in financing Winnipeg's growth and that of the prairie west. It has been stated elsewhere that many of Winnipeg's banking houses borrowed funds on the British money market and in turn loaned capital to prairie entrepreneurs.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup>Excerpt from letter addressed to the City of Winnipeg by Bedford Investments concerning the development of a parkade on the Ryan block site.

<sup>3</sup>David B. Guralnik, ed., *Webster's New World Dictionary*, Nelson, Foster & Scott, Toronto 1976.

<sup>4</sup>David Spector, *Monuments to Finance*. V.2. Report of the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee. 1982. p.4.

The institutions along what was formally known as 'Bankers' Row' exhibit qualities lacking in the warehouse typology of the King Street area. The salient reality of these bank buildings is that they remain intact, even though the majority sit 'empty': the Bank of British North America, the **Bank of Commerce (24 years)**, the Imperial Bank, the Royal Bank, the Union Bank Tower and Annex; shells of their former selves.

*"Main Street between the railway stations, therefore became the gauntlet every immigrant, every Christmas-shopping farm family, every going or coming harvester, had to run. Even for the strong-willed who were full of resolve to stay sober, Main Street was hopelessly booby-trapped. Between the railway stations and the nearest bank they had to thread their way through more thieves and confidence men..."*<sup>5</sup>

*Between the C.P.R. and Union Stations the concentration of hotel bars per block would have rivaled the saloon concentration in the Chicago loop. From Higgins Avenue to Portage Avenue pedestrians were never beyond the range of the Aroma of booze that wafted through the windows and doors of the hotels.*<sup>6</sup>

**A temple to commerce adjacent its antithesis or a firm stone in a flowing stream?**

The banking establishments pronounced their civic duty as did the drinking establishments nearby:

*Whiskey sold for a dime a shot, beer a nickel a glass. For many that was only a down payment. After a few drinks they would fail to notice the fingers extracting the final payment from their pockets.*<sup>7</sup>

Both banking hall and drinking establishment were places of social gathering and public exchange. Perhaps a relevant attribute favoring Bankers' Row as opposed to the warehouse

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<sup>5</sup>James H. Gray *The Boy From Winnipeg*. Macmillan of Canada, Toronto. 1970. p.9

<sup>6</sup>Gray, p.8.

<sup>4</sup>Gray, p.8.

district as a gathering place for death. The bank buildings had been designed as places of public interchange rather than as only spaces for storage and/or distribution.

When one speaks of 'Bankers' Row' attributes of stability, permanence, formality, monumentality, and heaviness are applied to describe the architecture. But very few speak of the banks as a collective of memory: **memorial**.

These buildings unlike other more 'flexible' types from the early 20th century, have remained in use as banks; partially due to the fact they contain great banking halls, which were and are difficult to re-adapt for other uses. They have remained unscathed by modern interventions, due in part to their inability to readily transform. As a result five of the remaining eight bank buildings survive underutilized or 'empty' of function. As memorials, however, they wield more latent power than their overbearing facades did some 80 years ago. The intention at the turn of the century was to create an image of protection, truth, and power such that each financial institution would be able to lure customers into the confidence of parting with their money. Time never established a public trust for these fledgling outposts of eastern banks. To convince was to overwhelm in the only way possible: physically and financially. The banks enticed architecturally with Greek temple, Roman temple, Neo-palladian, or Renaissance palace facades (usually enclosing a large banking hall), ensuring conveyance of an instantaneous quality of permanence, stability, and trust to the client .

*Viewing themselves as guardians of the nation's wealth, early twentieth century Canadian bankers opted for Grandiose Greek or Roman temple-like renditions. The closeness of these structures along Winnipeg's Bankers' Row necessitated that each building outshine its competitors in lavishness and expense. Important corporate pedestrians would find appealing colonnades denoting security, stone facing materials conveying strength, and marble and walnut vestibules expressing wealth. Inside these halls of finance, the themes continued.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup>David Spector, *Monuments to Finance*, V.2 Report of City of Winnipeg Historic Buildings Committee. 1982.

Is it not ironic that Bankers' Row at one time the physical and spiritual foundation of Winnipeg's financial base, has become its antithesis: a foil to Winnipeg's continuing financial dismount (making the physical stability associated with these structures today all the more absurd)?

**Canadian Bank of Commerce: 389 Main Street**

I first *dis-covered* the Bank of Commerce building three years ago:<sup>9</sup>

*Summer, 1991...*

*A South American artist is constructing an installation within the bank and has left one of the bronze doors ajar. During lunch one day, I notice the black of the open bronze door and decide to enter. The darkness envelopes, as I submerge and dissolve within. A blinding darkness: one that comes from both the absence of light and the loss of awareness; it appears non-existent at first, this 'other' of the facade. And it is non-existent to the thousands who pass daily in car or on foot; **FROM POINT A TO POINT B**. The facade had been studied previously; the fenestration pattern clearly indicative of an office use contained within. Expectations of a two-story banking hall with upper floors devoted to office space fade in the absence. Moving forward in the depth reveals yet another entrance. Upon passing this marble threshold comes the realization of an incredible volume suspended above, within: the banking hall. I have been deceived and now stand humbled within its container.*

**The bank's facade protects nothing but a fragile volume of air from certain dilution by a city, some thirty feet through the wall.**

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<sup>9</sup>The use of the term *dis-covery* should be elaborated upon. Its utilization in this document follows an archaic definition of *discovery* which attributes to it "the act of revealing or disclosure." It is not, as has been misinterpreted, a *discovery* which appropriates, projects, and commodifies the potency of the bank. The bank pre-exists my intentions; I am able only to reveal this pre-existence with the hope its presence becomes all the more affirmed.

Of Winnipeg's great monumental banks at the turn of the century, the Canadian Bank of Commerce was perhaps the most grand. The second of two buildings to occupy the Main Street site, it solidified Winnipeg's emerging title as the west's financial centre.

*The Bank, as you know, applied to the City of Winnipeg for demolition permits last July for the... [Bank of Hamilton building and the Canadian Bank of Commerce building]. These permits were not granted and instead, on October 5 last, the City designated that the buildings be preserved because of their special architectural features. The Bank of Commerce Building has been vacant since November 11, 1969 and the adjoining Hamilton Building has been vacant since February 1978. I might add that the Union Tower Building, which adjoins the other side of the Bank of Commerce Building, has never been more than 50% occupied for the past ten years and is now about 30% occupied.<sup>10</sup>*

Realizing the inevitable growth of the Bank in the near future, company officers began procuring adjacent properties on Main Street in preparation for their announcement in 1910 to build a new structure. "Bank of Commerce Will Erect Palatial Structure" hailed the title as it appeared in the March 16, 1910 issue of the *Manitoba Free Press*. At a cost of \$750,000, the architects, Darling and Pearson of Toronto, created a truly monumental edifice. The building was a testament by both the lavishness of materials used and the advanced construction techniques applied.

*The Bank moved out of the Bank of Commerce Building in 1969 to become main-floor tenants of the Richardson Building on the corner of Portage and Main. We have always thought that our participation in the development of Lombard place and the corner of Portage and Main contributed to the City's development in conjunction with Trizec, also at the corner of Portage and Main. Commercial space... draw(s) tenants away from the older buildings in Winnipeg and makes it even more difficult to find tenants for buildings like the Bank of Commerce Building or the Hamilton Building.*

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<sup>10</sup>Letter from Mr. Donald Fullerton, President and C.E.O. , Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, to Mr. Pierre Burton, Chairman, Heritage Canada. November 20, 1978. Fullerton is responding to Burton's disapproval of the Bank's decision to demolish the Bank of Hamilton Building and the Canadian Bank of Commerce Building. This letter will be interspersed within the text.

"Its (the neo-classical facade) characterizing features include a rusticated base, monumental columnar facade, and an ornamental balustrade"<sup>11</sup>. The facade appropriately introduced what was to be revealed on the interior. As in the Imperial Bank of Canada with its lobby preceding a banking hall on the ground floor, the Bank of Commerce overwhelmed clients as soon as they left the sidewalk and pressed through the bronze doors.

"Framed with two protruding pilasters of the Ionic order, each door conveyed an image of stability, highlighted by the word "Banking".<sup>12</sup>

The bank facade, as a masked wall, extends inward from the street through to the banking hall. Some 30 feet of procession leads the clientele from the street into the lobby and finally through a second threshold revealing the banking hall within. This wall (between the street and the banking hall) contains the Manager's office and the savings bank. "By channeling depositors into a room 30 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet high, the Bank of Commerce separated individuals from the highly-prized corporate clients."<sup>13</sup> **The blessed and the lessened.**

***Money became the new religion, banks the new temples, and bankers the new high priests of finance.***<sup>14</sup>

The banking hall was conceived with truly monumental dimensions: 100 feet long, 72 feet wide, and 50 feet high. "Rising fifteen feet in height, paneled marble walls surrounded the room. Above this level, twenty fluted Doric columns supported a cornice."<sup>15</sup> Most grand of all was the 52 foot diameter circular dome skylight which illuminated the banking hall below.

***By any standards the Bank of Commerce Building is inefficient: the banking hall rises through three full stories and occupies 75% of the total ground area, to say nothing of the rentable floor***

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<sup>10</sup> Spector, p.34

<sup>12</sup> Spector, p.34 And upon the other doors are emblazoned the words 'truth' and 'commerce'. A narrative of the facade and the volume within is miniaturized upon the doors as an introduction and re-affirmation of the institution's intent.

<sup>13</sup> Spector, p.35

<sup>14</sup> Spector, p.9

<sup>15</sup> Spector, p.35

*space which is comparatively small.<sup>16</sup> After nine years of maintaining the Bank of Commerce Building at heavy expense, with no prospect of a solution to the problem, the Bank did not feel it was justified in continuing to maintain the building. Our plan to demolish both the buildings was made with the intention that the lands would be used sometime in the future for the expansion of Winnipeg's business centre at Portage and Main. In the Meantime, an attractive park land area could be maintained on the site which surely would be much better than allowing the two buildings to lie vacant for years to come.*

The banks upper stories surrounded the banking hall's glass dome. On the third floor, the western director of operations was housed in an office 40 ft. long and 22 ft. wide. With opulent quarter-cut oak paneling on the walls, a modeled panel ceiling, and a large open fireplace, it was a definite statement of his value to the bank's flourishing western operations. The remainder of the third floor contained clerical staff offices servicing the regional director. The next two floors flanking the domed skylight were used by the bank's chief inspector and solicitors. A restaurant, washrooms, and caretaker's suite occupied the top floor.

### **A dead place within the city?**

As a memorial, the Bank of Commerce is a hollowed shrine?

*(shrine - defn., 4. a place or thing hallowed or honored because of its history or associations).<sup>17</sup>*

It is a monumental shrine, but a fragile one nonetheless. A monumentality which threatened its existence in 1978. And a monumentality which renders the building of little 'market value'. It sits vacant today, empty of function, as it has for the last 24 years: a memory to absence? Its demolition today might go unnoticed, for it has remained absent from the city; unreal for over

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<sup>16</sup>Excerpt from letter addressed to the Committee on Environment, City of Winnipeg by Pitblado & Hoskin, Solicitors representing the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. November, 1978. The letter asks for proper response to appeals filed regarding denied demolition permits concerning both the Bank of Hamilton Building and the Bank of Commerce Building. The city had in the process listed the buildings a Grade 1 designation, thereby preventing demolition from proceeding.

<sup>17</sup> David B. Guralnik, ed., Webster's New World Dictionary, Nelson, Foster & Scott, Toronto 1976.

two decades. Like a brother who leaves home for a new life in a distant city: He is not 'dead', only absent of reality and becomes instead a real memory. The photographs, facades, and letters serve only to stir the mind's memories. But if I were to die, would not my memories of him die as well. Our generation has forgotten, losing with it the memories associated with the bank behind the facade. Except for the visible surface which has become a photograph, a screen propped up on Main Street, the building behind has become non-existent. It is the mask which has continued as a reality, behind which the remainder of the banking hall remains latent, invisible, and unknown to the rest of the city.

Yet in its absence as function(-al), the building continues accumulating presence. Its shell and materiality absorb the invisible time of the city. A photograph of my brother reveals no action, no direct use. Its latent value lay within its ability to attract the gaze; for it is in the gaze that discovery reveals a different temporality. And this is possibly where its value lay as a place of death within the city. For it exists as a memorial and will continue becoming memorial as its otherness is revealed.

Only one question remains: can an architecture be introduced within the site of the bank building to embody the notions of our death and the death of the city? The site in essence is non-existent other than the surface. An architecture introduced within could reveal this latent existence and perhaps interpret through intentions another potential. The site then become, not an 'empty' space within the city, but rather a latent volume hidden within six walls: an architecture of the inside, the invisible, and the dead.

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## Chapter 3:

### **Video Script Two**

#### ***Time/ Building/ Body.***

*The evolution of the Western Cemetery: the periphery, perceptions, and the professionalization of death.*

(fade up from black - images of eyes, mouths, noses, etc. ending in shots of hands - camera moves along various close up views of interior surfaces in the bank)

J.C. Bennett:

***"This world that we know through our senses, the world that is known through the senses, if you realize it, is a world of surfaces... we see surfaces."***

(shot from inside of bank looking out dirty window as pedestrians pass by on the sidewalk)

***"And in this world the characteristic is separation - one body is separated from another. ...the world of bodies."***

(archival footage of people in downtown Winnipeg including old views of the bank building if possible)

(fade to biblical image of Adam & Eve in garden of Eden)

Becker, *The Denial of Death*, p.68:

***"In this myth is contained...the basic insight of [the] psychology of all time: that man is a union of opposites, of self-consciousness and of a physical body. Man emerged from the instinctive thoughtless action of the lower animals and came to reflect on his condition. He was given a consciousness of his individuality and his part-divinity in creation, the beauty and uniqueness of his face and his name. At the same time he was given the consciousness of the terror of the world and his own death and decay."***

(close-up on faces of Adam and Eve, bleed in image of lush garden)

Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread*, as cited in Becker, *The Denial of Death*, p.69:

***"But the real focus of dread is not the ambiguity itself, it is the result of the judgment on man: that if Adam eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge God tells him "Thou shalt surely die." In other words, the final terror of self-consciousness is the knowledge of one's own death, which is the peculiar sentence on man alone in the animal kingdom. This is the meaning of the Garden of Eden myth and the re-discovery of modern psychology: that death is man's peculiar and greatest anxiety."***

(fade to black)

(fade up archival footage of people in downtown Winnipeg)

Barb Patterson:

***"What happened to your ancestors will ultimately affect you and you must maintain that connection with what happened to your ancestors in order to understand what's happening to you."***

(fade up archival footage of car driving slow on Portage Ave. or Main street)

Colvin, *Architecture and the Afterlife*:

***"...the normal practice was to bury outside the walls along the lines of the main road. When one approached a Roman city, one of the first things one noticed were the tombs of its citizens."***

Zedda:

***"The Romans, though content with removing the dead from the city proper, were not content with isolating tombs within walled cemeteries. The tombs erected along main roads, greeted travelers as they passed through the city gates, and yet they were somehow excluded from the ground and protection of the living. These mausolea embodied the taste and prominence of the wealthy; the poor were relegated to mass burial: first within Rome and later on the periphery of the city."***

(fade up to wide shot of bank at night)

Rilke:

***"In this town the last house stands  
as lonely as if it were the last house in the world."***

(shots of night sky from car as it moves through streets - lights and building tops pass through the frame.)

***"The highway, which the tiny town is not able to stop,  
slowly goes deeper out into the night"***

(aerial shot of downtown Winnipeg at night.)

***"The tiny town is only a passing-over place,  
worried and afraid, between two huge spaces-  
a path running past houses instead of a bridge."***

(shot looking out window of car at dusk, looking at cemetery beside the highway on main street north of perimeter as car passes.)

***"And those who leave the town wander a long way off and many perhaps die on the road."***

(fade to black)

Michel Foucault, *Other Spaces: The Principles of Heterotopia*:

***"...the curious heterotopia of the cemetery... is certainly an "other" place with respect to ordinary cultural spaces, and yet it is connected with all the locations of the city, the society, the village and so on, since every family has some relative there. In Western culture, one might say that it has always existed. And yet it has undergone important changes. Up until the end of the 18th century, the cemetery was located in the very heart of the city, near the church."***

(Shot out window past cemetery at dusk outside perimeter. Slow motion...)

***"From the 19th century onwards each of us has had the right to his own little box for his little personal decomposition, but it is only from the 19th century on that the cemetery began to be shifted to the outskirts of the city. In parallel to this individuation of death and the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery, an obsession with death as "sickness" has emerged. It is supposed that the dead transmit sickness to the living and that their presence and proximity to houses and churches, almost in the middle of streets, spreads death. This great concern with the spread of sickness by contagion from cemeteries began with insistence towards the end of the 18th century, but the cemeteries only moved out to the suburbs during the course of the 19th. From then on, they no longer constituted the sacred and immortal wind of the city, but the "other city", where each family possessed its gloomy dwelling."***

(slow motion shot from moving car looking up at the building as it passes through frame in daylight)

Barb Patterson:

***"I'm just thinking of a game that some young children we know play, that, when you're driving in a car, you hold your breath past a cemetery."***

(bleed the shot from bank to driving past cemetery on Portage Ave. or Osborne St.)

Leman, *The Event of Death: A Phenomenological Enquiry*, p.55:

***"A couple of years ago, an up-to-date mortician in Atlanta offered a modern solution to the 'viewing' problem; he built a drive-in mortuary where the tilted body of the deceased could be viewed through a window. People could drive by, perhaps leave a card, and keep going. They didn't have to get involved in the uncomfortable business of personally sharing grief and offering compassion."***

(slow pan shot of facade of funeral parlor with signage clearly visible. See Cropo Funeral centre on North Main.)

(fade to black)

Barb Patterson:

***"And you wonder , what does that say about death?"***

(fade up to aerial shot of Banking district - night)

Ray Cosentino:

(talk about driving past parent's home on the way to the cemetery)

(fade up slow motion past houses on residential street in Winnipeg)

(fade in shots of St.Boniface and St. John's Cemetery)

Zedda:

***"In Winnipeg in the late 1800's cemeteries were established adjacent to family settlements and churchyards: both St. John Cemetery and St. Boniface Cemetery are two of the oldest. There exists a certain direct relationship between the living and the dead in these cemeteries, perhaps due in great part to the adjacency of burial to worship. Along with the rapid growth of Winnipeg at the turn of the century, cemeteries began severing their direct relationship with the sacred spaces of worship. The dead were soon to be buried in newly established cemeteries on what was then the edge of the city. As the city grew around the cemetery, the dead slowly became part of the urban environment."***

(fade up walk through St. Boniface Cemetery at night)

(fade down St. Boniface Cemetery. Fade up figure of Christ on the cross (statues, etc.)

Zedda:

***"It was only with the dawning of Christianity, that suddenly the site of death became significant as a means for the salvation of the spirit and eventual resurrection of the body."***

(shot of Christ on cross within church)

Colvin, *Architecture and the Afterlife*, p.101:

***"So far as death and the afterlife were concerned, Christianity introduced a new and radical idea: that of salvation. For the Christian, life on earth was merely the prelude to an after-life infinitely richer and (for those who deserved it) more rewarding than anything human life could offer."***

***"If the Pagan's tomb was designed to keep alive a man's memory on earth, the purpose of the Christian one was to secure him a place in the queue for Heaven on the Day of Judgement. For this the prayers of the faithful and, above all, proximity to the body or the relics of a saint were important."***

(stills of medieval cemeteries, biblical scenes of death, etc.,)

Zedda:

***"Though mausolea continued to be built in suburbia, an increasing number of the wealthy chose to group themselves and their mausolea around tombs of saints and martyrs (within the consecrated space of the church).***

***Christians viewed the body in death as a link to a saint and his spiritual powers. Thus, the martyr, whose condition of internment was of supreme importance, provided the common man with a proxy to God."***

(Interior of St. Boniface Basilica (exterior) bled with footage of bank interior)

Rilke:

***"And the great cities, Lord, what are they?  
Places disintegrating and abandoned."***

(superimpose: close up in flames).

***"The city I know resembles animals fleeing from a fire.  
The shelter it gave has no shelter now,"***

(aerial shot of Bankers' Row - daylight)

***"and the age of the cities is nearly over."***

(fade to black)

(fade up B & W shots of close ups of patients' faces as they are being diagnosed - apprehension.)

***"Men and women live there stunned, thinned out,..."***

(Dissolve to: camera walking through abandoned rooms in the bank.)

Maurizio Ferraris, *The City in Negative*, in Lotus International 38:40:

***"A crypt is generally taken as concealing a corpse, but in order to protect it from what? What is a corpse meant to be preserved intact from, if not, at once and at the same time, from life and death, which could come upon it from outside? And to make sure that death cannot have a place in life?"***

***Protection and exclusion are the features of every crypt or cemetery."***

Doug Shearer or Michael Cox or Ray Cosentino or Bill Chody:

(Talking about the isolation of the dead, and how they bridge the gap/distance)

Rainer Maria Rilke (AW 1, 274):

***"We live in a time of transition. The past temples no longer have meaning for us; our age has been disinherited... the inability to relate to the future can become positive if it strengthens our ties to the past and directs our attention to preserving in both the inner and outer worlds those structures of the past which stand as monuments to the unity of the temporal and eternal. Like all constructions of man, such structures exist in the temporal world and are subject as any modern cerebral creation to change and destruction. Yet in all their impermanence they stand as witnesses to the presence of the absolute world of the stars within our own, drawing from their eternal, unchanging realm into ours."***

(camera approaches windowsill inside the bank, looking out at all the dingy cement buildings outside)

Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*: (sonnet 1, 24; sonnet 2)

***"In our frenzy of action our strength is going like that of swimmers."***

*...but our very breathing is "invisible power" if we but knew it: breathing is "pure exchange" of world space with intimate being ... stored space ... how many of these places in space have always been in me? Many a wind is like my son. Do you know of me air, still full of places that once were mine? You, who once were smooth bark, and now round volume and leaf of my word."*

(back to camera walking through very dark and damaged parts of bank interior)

Zedda:

*"It was as Etlin points out, during the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century that the momento mori (or wall) became a physical space within the city. Occupied by the wealthy, the wall was divided by arcades "each bay was a type of private chapel over the sepulchral vault fashioned below." The Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris was the momento mori of Paris until it was legislated out of existence in 1786. "These warehouses of death were intended, in the words of an eighteenth-century chronicler, as "appropriate images to represent the folly of our human vanity."*

(close up of gravestones or mausoleums with evidence of individuation of plots. i.e.- photos, flowers, candles)

Zedda:

*"The spatial breakup of the cemetery represented the social stratification of 16th and 17th century France. It could then be understood why the important elite were interred within the confines of a chapel associated within the main parish. "Those who could afford an individual grave crowded in a small area by the petit charnier (located closest to the church), containing the statue of Death." The remainder of the populace was crowded in mass graves in the remaining portion of the cemetery. In addition to these, in a plot furthest from the church, was located a section for burials from the church run hospital of Hotel-Dieu, "which interred the poor in charity burials." Thus continued the stratification of life in the city to the space of the cemetery in death. Though the elite were buried within the same consecrated ground as the commoners, their proximity to the parish ensured publicity and assured resurrection and forgiveness."*

Herman van Bergeijk, *Necropolis, Metropolis*, in *Lotus International* 38, p.79:

*"For centuries, the cemetery placed close to the places of worship, remained a circumscribed space allocated to the dead, distinguished on the face of the earth as a sort of archetype of the city. For the living, it represented a tangible memory, a monument to*

***individuals and local history, a link, a sign of security and belonging to a community or a group. The churchyard was a place of pious memory, a space dividing the future from the past but at the same time fusing them as one. With the development of the modern metropolis the "harmony" was broken. The city of the living thus became definitively separated from the city of the dead: a process of alienation which no modern effort has managed to arrest."***

Richard Etlin, *Between Two Worlds* in Lotus International 38.

***By the 1780's "the new burial grounds had to use the rigor and clarity of geometry to reflect the social distinctions customarily found in the cemetery."***

***An architect, by the name of Capron, proposed circular formed cemetery: a witness to the concerns of hygiene. "In this age of pre-bacterial science, medical wisdom held that "corrupted" or foul smelling air which filled the cemetery and the hospital, was the agent of illness or even death and had to be removed by the wind."***

***"Circular forms assured no corners in which foul air might be captured."***

Zedda:

***"The beginning of the eighteenth century witnessed a shift in emphasis from a blind belief in old religious values as a basis for urban existence in favor of a more enlightened concern for hygiene and well-being"***

Barb Patterson:

***"Do you know how sick you are?"***

***I'm very sick. I think I'm going to die but nobody speaks about it."***

(shot of dead pigeon on the ledge of the outside window frame as seen from inside the bank.)

William May, *The Sacral Power of Death*,. p.117.

***"The modern hospital segregates the sick and the dying from their normal human resources. As doctors have observed, in an Arabian village, a grandmother dies in the midst of her children and grandchildren, cows and donkeys. But our high level of technological development leads simply to dying a death appropriate to one's disease - in the heart of the cancer ward."***

Rilke:

***"I am nobody, and I will be nobody too."***

***Now I'm too small to live, of course:  
later it'll be the same."***

(stills of archive photographs showing the bank in its heyday in the 1920's or 30's)

***"Mothers and fathers, think of me."***

(interior of bank- pan from grandiose main banking hall with its dome to inside an office room in disrepair.)

***"Of course it isn't worth the trouble of raising me:  
I will be moved down anyway.  
Nobody can use me: it's too early now;  
tomorrow, too late!"***

(fade to black)

(shot of late 19th century and early 20th century plans for rational, zoned city)

Zedda:

***"The enlightenment found cause to question the validity of the cemetery within the city. Improved health and improved physical environment were seen as the keystones to a new rational, beautiful city. Thus the corruption of the air was considered a hindrance to a healthier city. The Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris was accused of emitting foul disease-filled air. "Air is our element ... we contract mortal illness when the air in which we live is corrupted or filled with putrid miasms."***

***"The 'de-christianization' of death as Vovelle has termed, commenced in the mid-seventeenth century. The waning of religious significance coincided with the fear of death as a possible source of risk to the living within the city. A reform movement was established to change the space of death within the city."***

Voltaire:

***"What, these people bury their dead in the same place where they worship divinity? Their temples are paved with cadavers? No wonder... [Paris] is ravaged so often by these pestilential diseases."***

Zedda:

***"The reform movement was gaining momentum: the removal of the cemetery from the living city was seen as a remedy to both the social and physical ills associated with its location. The fate of the body and soul after death which had once been the exclusive domain of the clergy, suddenly became subject to the rational science of physicians and reformists. The new myth, which was fast becoming solid structure, was at the same time dismantling an old myth, which for so long had set the course for both the living and the dead. What might be viewed as interesting and relevant to the eventual removal of the cemetery from the city was the gradual assimilation of (the thought and science of) the Enlightenment upon religious beliefs; the association of the dead within the sanctity of the church space became tenuous and eventually dismissed as 'unholy.'***

Sloane, *The last Necessity*, p. 53:

***"Placing the grave in the garden represented a major shift in the European attitude toward death and the dead. Romanticism, with its emphasis on the elegy and the boundary between life and death, found the location of the grave deeply symbolic. Death was transformed from something grotesque into something beautiful. The loss of family members and the private trauma of death became the focus of the death ritual, replacing the more open, public ritual of past centuries. The rural cemetery was a result and emblem of that transformation. Death became an occasion of solemn celebration."***

(footage of people walking in either St. Boniface or St. Mary's cemetery)

***"People lounge in them and use them for walking, making love, weeping, sentimentalizing, and everything in short. The new cemeteries provided an outlet from the daily routine of city life. As the first planned landscapes generally open to the public in America, rural cemeteries were immensely popular."***

Zedda:

***"Falling within this type are Brookside and Elmwood cemeteries"***

(fade to black)

(fade up to pedestrians walking along busy Portage Avenue)

Barb Patterson:

***"What I think we need though, is to give people in society more experience with death."***

(slow motion shots of leaves falling in the air)

Rilke:

***"The leaves are falling. This hand here is falling.***

***And look at the other one ... It's in them all."***

(slow motion altered shots of acrobats on trapeze leaping toward each other)

***"We're all falling. This hand here is falling.***

***And look at the other one ... It's in them all."***

(close up studio shot of hand holding the clay fetal figure- matte against shots of fast moving clouds on an overcast day)

***"And yet there is someone, whose hands infinitely calm, hold up all this falling."***

(fade to black)

(fade up to photographs and paintings of images of gardens through the ages - shots of mourners: stoic, not depressing.)

Barb Patterson:

***"People need a quiet place, and as early as 300 A.D. they talk of a pilgrimage to reflect on death. And all that is saying - 'Here's a sanctuary, here's a space."***

(footage of elderly woman posing formally for the camera - camera moves in slowly from a medium/wide to a close up of her face.)

***"Let's suppose I was 87 years of age, and I had restricted mobility, and not very much money."***

(as camera moves in on her slowly superimpose shots of green leaves from tree branches over her image)

***"I would want to have a place where I felt that nature was celebrated, the living was celebrated as well as the death."***

(as camera stops on a close up of her face the greenery dissolves out)

***"I would want it to be quiet; and I'd want to add my personal touches."***

(fade to black)

(shot of exterior of the bank building as night fills the frame)

Michael Cox or Doug Shearer:

(speaking about 'places' at the lake, in the woods, away from the city)

Zedda:

***"The cemetery was to undergo tremendous change from the 1850's to the 1950's as a place of death within the city. Philippe Aries, in his 'Western Attitudes towards Death', notes the displacement of the site of death. "One no longer died at home, in the bosom of one's family, but in the hospital alone." This period also marked the rapid commercialization and technological advancement of the cemetery."***

***"Relationships between the living and the dead were also re-ordered, as the burial process was professionalized. Nurses and doctors cared for the dying, morticians handled the dead, and cemetery superintendents beautified the grave."***

(footage of early 20th century Winnipeg, or stills of public parks, etc. from the era)

Sloane, *The Last Necessity*, p. 113:

***"City dwellers wanted a ...control of the urban reality, to define it, shape, and order it according to an evolving urban ideal, a Celestial City of shapely boulevards, healthful parks, comfortable and secure private habitations, and elegant public buildings. The search for order was punctuated by an emphasis on a rational, efficient city, which was beautiful and comfortable for all its residents."***

Zedda:

***"At least on the surface. In a time of increasing poverty, crime, and social dysfunction the city felt it was able to mask the "ugly reality" in a veneer of beautification. This is where the avoidance of death received its seminal conception. No longer would the reality be accepted; limitations of existence, the will of nature in its beauty and devastation; the limitations of both the thought and body of man, these became overbearing in the mid to late 19th century. The aesthetic of reality became overbearing. The mask ensued. It was only part of a trend towards a greater specialization throughout***

***the city. Spatially, the city was split into zones of use. Economically, these zones increasingly fell under the jurisdiction of a specialist or profession.***

Barb Patterson:'

***"If you deny your own mortality, what are the implications of that?"***

(fade to black)

(shots from inside the bank looking out the window at its own huge stone pillars - camera slowly moving, changing its viewpoint)

Rilke:

***"No, what my heart will be is a tower,  
and I will be right out on its rim:  
nothing else will be there, only pain  
and what can't be said, only the world."***

(camera walking through the abandoned bank- various shots of apparently dead people with eyes closed - at peace)

***"Only one thing left in the enormous space  
that will go dark and then light again,  
only one final face full of longing,  
exiled into what is always full of thirst,"***

(matte shot of bank exterior pasted onto a moving idyllic watery environment)

***"Only one farthest-out face made of stone,  
at peace with its own inner weight,  
which the distances, who go on ruining it,  
force on to deeper holiness."***

(fade to black)

(fade up to camera panning closely among various architectural drawings)

Sloane, *The Last Necessity*, p.181.

***"The strangeness of the romantic landscape was missing in memorial parks' more accessible and practical arrangement. Memorial parks provided a private, more secular, and comfortable environment for lot-holders and prospective customers."***

(fade up shot driving past cemetery billboard on Portage Avenue, west of perimeter)

Zedda:

***"The memorial garden is also in the business of perpetuating itself: a giant billboard on the periphery at the edge of the freeway; not just a place of the dead, but a commodified place of purchase for the living. The illuminated text: words manipulated by interest groups in their desire to mask reality and provide 'choice' through a commercially-based universal service for all. Merits of the new cemeteries were projected, while in reality they appropriated the methodology of an overly oppressive system of burial and control. Individuality was now given only token address."***

(fade up shot of suburban front yards focusing on lawn ornaments; cut in background: shots of periphery cemeteries)

Zedda:

***"The lawn of the memorial garden was first and foremost an extension of the suburban 'front lawn' which had so much become a trait of new suburban residential developments. It seemed fitting then that the memorial garden would want to capitalize this fact. Statues of gnomes, deer, and pink flamingos would be replaced by ones depicting Jesus as a gnome, David as himself, and Mary Margarine; and in the same way, this banal landscape would remain as inefficient, unused, and disregarded as it had become in the suburban front lawn."***

(fade to black)

(fade up exchange district, looking up at buildings from road, fade in demolition of building )

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *We Will Never Die*:

***"What an idea - moving a dead man from one town to another! No one would lend you a car for that. And nowadays, if you're a nonentity, you don't get a hearse and a funeral march - just a quick trip in a lorry."***

***Once people used to go to our cemeteries on Sundays and walk between the graves, singing beautiful hymns and spreading sweet-smelling incense. It set your heart at rest; it allayed the painful fears of inevitable death. It was almost as though the dead were smiling from under their grey mounds: 'It's all right ... don't be afraid.'***  
***But nowadays, if a cemetery is kept up, there's a sign hanging there:***  
***'Owners of graves! Keep this place tidy on penalty of a fine! But more often they just roll them flat with bulldozers, to build sports grounds and parks.'***

(fade down shot of demolition, mix with signage of cemetery from slides "please keep off." etc.)

Sloane, *The Last Necessity*, p.167:

Quoting Hubert Eaton, the founder of Forest Lawn Cemetery: a cemetery prototype which was to redefine the contemporary North American method of burying the dead.

***"I believe in a happy eternal life. I believe those of us left behind should be glad in the certain belief that those gone before have entered into that happier life. I believe, most of all, in a Christ that smiles and loves you and me. I therefore know the cemeteries of today are wrong because they depict an end, not a beginning. They have consequently become unsightly stone yards, full of inartistic symbols and depressing customs: places that do nothing for humanity save a practical act, and that not well."***

***"I shall try to build at Forest Lawn a great park, devoid of mis-shapen monuments and other customary signs of earthly death, but filled with towering trees, sweeping lawns, splashing fountains, singing birds, beautiful statuary, cheerful flowers; noble memorial architecture, with interiors of light and color, and redolent of the world's best history and romances. I believe these things educate and uplift a community."***

(fade up shot driving slowly through memorial park, focusing on barren appearance of landscape, fade in to gaudy lawn ornaments)

Sloane, *The Last Necessity*, p.159

***"The basis for Eaton's memorial park cemetery can be traced back to 1915 to J.J. Gordon in his writings in the Cemetery Beautiful: "The Ideal Cemetery-Memorial Park", whereby a five-acre park was presented with an ornamental entrance, without visible markers or memorials. "Few but have felt the chill that strikes the heart when standing in the office of some cemetery, even the most beautiful, and seeing the gleaming monuments, silent reminders of the shortness of life. [In the memorial park] there is no note of sadness. The***

***flowers fling their fragrance far and wide, the fountains tinkle merrily and it is a beautiful park and the onlookers enjoy it."***

(fade into above shot, manicured suburban front lawns and farmers' fields)

***"A section without monuments and with restrictions on plantings remained what the designers planned and the managers desired. Maintenance was easier, the appearance was simpler and cleaner, and the clutter of the graveyard was eliminated." The monument-free sections were seen as egalitarian.***

Zedda:

***"It seems less a concern with egalitarianism, than towards a statement of economy for the developers of these cemeteries. It was in their best interest to devalue the 'memorial quality' of individual markers. This effectively eliminated the individuation of sites, and thus eliminated further a connection with the living. All markers followed a particular size, location, and engraving style. It was appropriate for a society which had become physically and emotionally severed from the cemetery; the ritual had become appropriated by professionals who serviced the dead."***

Barb Patterson or Doug Shearer, or Michael Cox or Bill Chody:

(speaking about their feelings towards how they memorialize their loved ones.  
i.e.- how they make the sites of their dead specifically individual.)

(close-up shot of sameness of memorial plaques in memorial cemetery)

Sloane, *The Last Necessity*, p.183:

***"Individual bronze markers that were flush to the ground helped many twentieth-century Americans overcome their reservations. The new markers were invisible until you approached the grave site, which increased the lot-holder's privacy."***

(fade up footage of grass-cutting equipment on golf course, front yard; snow clearing equipment)

Zedda:

***"Yes, but how could one actually locate the specific name plate if in fact they were all constrained to strict familiarity? That is, assuming 'loved ones' actually found reason to***

*visit the barren un-emotive landscape. I propose two fundamental reasons why the use of bronze markers ensued (no longer called 'memorial', or 'monuments'). First, in order to permit ground maintenance equipment access (specifically grass cutting machinery), the less obstructions hindering movement the better. Secondly, making use of bronze markers rid the cemetery administration of dealings with stone masons, who were seen as external to the grasp of the service package, uncontrollable (and thus undesirable).*

*"With the convenient migration of the cemetery from the city, ensued the increased use of the crematorium as an alternative to earth burial."*

James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, p. 185:

*"The fundamental function of a crematorium is to dispose of bodies. It must have other functions as well,... for religious rites may be celebrated. Ceremony is a factor in the disposal of the dead throughout all history, and the rites involve actions, words, music and movements which add up to a pattern forming the framework within which feelings are expressed. Unfortunately most crematoria have no recognizable form, and their purpose is lost in a welter of crude and pompous design."*

*(fade in slides of crematorium, oven machinery, etc.)*

Winnipeg Free Press, December 22, 1991. p. A3:

*"They say you can't tell what it is from the outside, but we know what's going on in there," she said.*

*"I do alot of barbecuing on the balcony in the summer. I don't want to be cooking here while they're cooking there."*

Margaret Laurence, *The Diviners*. p.423-425.

*The sign no longer reads "Cameron's Funeral Home." It is now an enormous crimson neon, letters about a million feet high, and it would appear at first glance to apply to some publicity-worshipping evangelical sect.*

**JAPONICA CHAPEL**

*Underneath, in more modest lettering, are the words:*

**Free Parking for clients.**

**Die now and get free parking forever. Almost worth it.**

Zedda:

***"The profession provides the most insight into our peculiar relationship with death. I was startled, surprised, and saddened by the corporate nature of the death industry. The services first struck me when I attended funerals a few years past. In the last 12 months, I have witnessed much more of this competitive industry, realizing that death was big business underneath a thin veil of understanding and concern. I visited a number of establishments in both Winnipeg and Vancouver. Vancouver proved the most startling; it was during my stay that I visited the first crematorium in the province to lease space in a strip mall."***

(fade up shots of Delta B.C. crematorium: front entry and rear delivery, adjacent outlets)

**This excerpt is from a telephone conversation with a proprietor of a Crematorium', located within a strip mall in Delta, B.C.**

**A.Z.: *Why the location?***

**R.Y.: *We felt it made good sense, ...why not?***

**A.Z.: *Was there any opposition to your decision to locate in the mall?***

**R.Y.: *There was...[and] there is some now. It seems people [our neighbors] feel a little uncomfortable with the idea of what is going on next door.***

**The following is an excerpt from: *The International Cemetery Supply Association Manual of Services and Conduct, 1987:***

<b><i>Don't say</i></b>	<b><i>Say</i></b>
<b><i>incinerate</i></b>	<b><i>cremate</i></b>
<b><i>cheap</i></b>	<b><i>economically or modestly priced, or inexpensive</i></b>
<b><i>corpse</i></b>	<b><i>deceased or deceased person, or your father, etc.</i></b>
<b><i>undertaker</i></b>	<b><i>mortician or funeral director</i></b>

***Cremation chamber- This term is generally preferred.***

***But never call it "OVEN" - "RETORT" - "FURNACE or INCINERATOR" - WATCH IT !***

(shots of funeral parlor; office area, chapel, etc.)

**Evelyn Waugh, *The Loved One*, p.42:**

***In a little chintzy parlor he and his hostess sat down to make their arrangements.***

***"I must first record the Essential Data."***

***"Now, Mr. Barlow, what had you in mind? Embalming of course, and after that incineration or not, according to taste. Our crematory is on scientific principles, the heat is so intense that all inessentials are volatilized. Some people did not like the thought that ashes of the casket and clothing were mixed with the Loved One's. Normal disposal is by inhumement, entombment, inurnment, or immurement, but many people just lately prefer insarcophagusment."***

(shot moves from public areas to preparation, holding areas, not visible to public)

Evelyn Waugh, *The Loved One*, p. 65:

***"The pickled oak, the chintz, the spongy carpet and the Georgian staircase all ended sharply on the second floor. Above that lay a quarter where no layman penetrated. It was approached by elevator, an open functional staircase eight feet square. On this top floor everything was tile and porcelain, linoleum, and chromium. Here there were the embalming rooms with their rows of inclined china slabs, their taps and tubes and pressure pumps, their gutters and the heavy smell of formaldehyde."***

Zedda:

***"Death was banished from Society, only to fall into the hands of professionals. No longer was the wake taking place within the home; it was transferred to the funeral home. The body, even in death was denied its condition: embalming, a trait exclusive to North America, took hold as a result of the American Civil War, arresting decay even in death."***

Sloane, p.174:

***"Embalming contributed to the transformation of the funeral into a celebration of life. Corpses appeared as 'sleeping' participants in the funeral, which allowed funeral directors and mourners to focus on the survivors rather than the awful reality of the dead."***

Zedda:

***"A fantasy world ensued. Unable to deal with the reality of the city, the body, and of death, Forest Lawn, typical of many 'memorial gardens' enveloped a 'virtual reality: one which suppressed fears, dirt, and decay in favor of avoidance, beauty, and synthetic immortality."***

(shots of body, funeral home etc.)

Gillian Smith, CBC 'Open House' on Death and Dying. Audio p.7:

**"But death is taboo. Death is forbidden. We hide it in funeral homes: we no longer wash the bodies ourselves; we no longer lay out our own parents and wash them and dress them in the clothes that we choose."**

**"We hide them in funeral parlors; strangers wash them; strangers powder and make up their faces to make them look like some conception of a living person - and what they are is dead! So we hide the dead from ourselves. You're not even allowed to bury someone yourself."**

(footage of body, funeral home etc.)

Barb Patterson:

**"Well, is there such a concept in architecture as 'responsive architecture'?"**

(shots of people's faces each dissolving into the next, one after the other)

**"In terms of, you would have an area of land for a cemetery, and you could offer people different things according to their needs?"**

Rilke, (AW 1,274-275):

**"Temples. Those products of Man's prodigal heart we know no more."**

**"...When in truth the most visible joy is not revealed until we transform it, invisible in us. Nowhere is world, my love, but within. The monuments, cathedral and temples which more innocent peoples could hew out of themselves into solid granite or stone, we must build within ourselves out of our experience of relationships and change."**

**"By 'saying' them, but by saying them so lovingly and understandingly that our word reveals their humble truth - and truth is eternal. Perhaps we need not single out for special distinction the things of art such as 'the column, the tower of the cathedral,' though with them we may astound the angel more; but the ordinary familiar things may do: 'the house, the bridge, the fountain, the gate, the jug, the fruit-tree, the window' provided that we may fill them with our enraptured feeling. Even our mourning and sorrow may find shelter and form in a thing, die into it and emerge as a song."**

Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language* p.354:

***"The presence of the dead among the living will be a daily fact in any society which encourages its people to live. Huge cemeteries on the outskirts of cities, or in places no one ever visits, impersonal funeral rights, taboos which hide the fact of death from children, all conspire to keep the fact of death away from us, the living..."***

***"Never build massive cemeteries. Instead, allocate pieces of land throughout the community as grave sites - corners of parks, sections of paths, gardens, beside gateways - where memorials to people who have died can be ritually placed with inscriptions and memories which celebrate their life. Give each grave site an edge, a path, and a quiet corner where people can sit."***

(bring up the open large front doors of the bank at night - slowly they close as if by themselves)

Barb Patterson:

***"Like why does the architect have to be someone who plans things and then leaves. Why can't an architect be an ongoing..."***

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### **Audio**

*Gillian Smith*. Excerpts from transcript of CBC 'Open House' on Death and Dying. (October 1992) Courtesy CBC Open House Transcripts. Toronto

*Barb Patterson*. From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda. (Winnipeg 1993)

### **Video**

*Michael Cox*. From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke. (Winnipeg, 1994)

*Douglas Shearer*. From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke. (Winnipeg, 1993)

*Raymond Cosentino*. From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke (Winnipeg, 1993)

*Neil Bardal*: From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke (Winnipeg 1994)

## Chapter 4:

### **Questionnaire One**

*Perception(s) of an abandoned architecture*

During the installation, the public was invited to comment on the installation, the bank building, and suggestions for future use based on the following question:

***Please feel free to make comments on the bank building and the installation. What suggestions would you make for possible uses of both the banking hall and the rest of the building which has remained empty for 24 years? If you remember the bank when it was open prior to 1969, what do you recall?***

A binder with paper sheets and a pen was placed at the end of fragment #4 (within the banking hall).

89 of the approx. 800 visitors to the installation responded, in some part, to the series of questions.

The installation was, in part, an attempt to present (through public experience/perception) the former banking hall. Though the building had remained relatively unscathed, it was difficult to present or convey its quality as a bank after having remained inaccessible nearly a quarter of a century. A common solution would have been to re-present the history of the building as denoted by specific interest groups: by historians as a heritage landmark, by developers as a commodity for future utilization, and by bureaucrats as a designator of civic identity.

Though an attempt to re-present the bank had been considered, it was understood its intent, whether political, historical, or economic, would convey a limited connotation of the building's former meaningfulness. The need became apparent to solicit public connotations of the bank as perceived.

The responses were reviewed, revealing three general categorizations of comments. The public perceived the former bank as:

**a) a mnemonic aid. The return visit elicited memories associated with the bank prior to its vacancy.**

*I once did part of my banking here. Pleased with the privilege of a return visit. Also used to warm up here while waiting for the Transcona bus, then known as the White Ribbon Bus Lines operated by the Dunn family of Transcona.*

*My father, brother, and sister-in-law all worked here in the late 1950's and early 1960's. I remember it as a beautiful, awe-inspiring building and it still is.*

*Henry Penner P.Eng. (Retired)*

*I did an inspection years ago on the condition of the stonework at the street-side; in good condition then.*

**b) a monument to a period past (both as a sign representing the former glory of early 20th century Winnipeg, and as one of many heritage buildings in need of preservation).**

The building became the signifier for a reduced past; while other similarly grand financial and political edifices had been demolished, the former Bank of Commerce building was spared.

Applied to it was the designation of signifier: both for a history and buildings no longer present.

*Wonderful architecture - we really need to save this historical record of a grander age. Wonderfully presented.*

*Built with a sophistication and elegance that are unmatched in modern architecture (just like Europe, eh?). A great pity to simply let it pass.*

*Whatever happens, don't let it be torn down.*

*This bank is definitely a beautiful example of architecture. I hope Winnipeg in general will be able to appreciate its architecture and history. We need to preserve it.*

*A landmark of historic Winnipeg. Should draw tourists to it to see old Winnipeg. Make this the centre for Winnipeg tourist information: Exchange walks, etc. This is worthy of government money to support.*

*Many visitors to our city ask to see structures such as this ... to open it up to public activity (concert, art, theater, etc.) would make one more attraction to our great city. Thanks for letting us see it... Great history to our historic town.*

*History. History. History.*

*Very little of it in Western Canada. Something we should appreciate more.*

c) **as carrying a potential for new use.** Those familiar with the former bank as only an empty, non-functioning bank, perceived the building as possessing a potential (for future use): as a commodity or signifier, and not necessarily associated with its former intended use.

*The rotunda would be a great place for chamber music, especially woodwind and/or brass ensembles, perhaps even for a string quartet. The live acoustics would possibly be suitably damped by the audience.*

*New council chambers for city of Winnipeg!*

*Make the main floor area an public sculpture court. Put an exclusive five-star dining area behind the counter (define have and have nots along historic lines). Use offices for kitchen, etc. and marble private dining rooms.*

*There are a lot of good ideas here so far for uses. I especially like the performance hall suggestion and I agree with the person who said not to make it a 'Forks style' market which is cheap commercialization. I look at this huge room and don't see much need to spend money on renovations or restorations- It is nearly perfect as it is.*

*A landmark of historic Winnipeg. Should draw tourists to it to see old Winnipeg. Make this the centre for Winnipeg tourist information: Exchange walks, etc. This is worthy of government money to support.*

*Nightclub!!!*

*Rare, world-class structure! Should be opened to the public to help build awareness of the beauty and magnificence of the early 20th century architectural structures that Winnipeg has. Restaurant, theatre, City of Winnipeg tourist information centre? Anything, but open it and keep it as it is.*

## **Conclusion**

The installation and ensuing comments provided a more lucid understanding of the complexity associated with interpreting and understanding abandoned heritage buildings. The former bank's meaningfulness was by no means understood universally by the visiting public; connotations varied depending whether the visitor carried any cognizance of the building as a bank prior to 1969, or whether they were viewing it for the first time as an unseen artifact: ready to project new interpretations.

The act of understanding site through the catalyst of an installation resulted in an exceptionally enriching experience and understanding of place. It became a dialogue connecting the architect, a vacated building, the public, and the city. Through a process lasting approximately three months, one came to understand the building in a variety of levels; the act of recording, measuring, and constructing, enabled an intuitive, sub-conscious meaningfulness to develop. Recording public interaction to both the installation and the former bank building proved an invaluable source from which could be established architectural intentions.

## Chapter 5:

### **Questionnaire Two**

*Perceptions of heritage buildings and their re-presentation: installations within the context of a gallery(museum) adjacent to works by other artists.*

The intent of the second questionnaire was to solicit responses regarding an installation constructed within a public gallery at the University of Manitoba. The installation was part of a show entitled *History, Memory, Architecture*, which brought together artists and architects whose works discussed the mnemonic qualities of architecture and place. As part of the show, several fragments, models, a video piece, and projected images were re-installed within the gallery (having already once been presented within the former Bank of Commerce building). Of interest was the solicitation of responses from students having attended the gallery exhibition with regards to their understanding of the displayed representations.

Habermas, speaks of the relationship between the event, the observer, and the interpreter as "communicative action" (Habermas, 1979). What one observes of an event is somehow transformed when that observer communicates the act of observing first to himself and then to another as a representative communication.<sup>1</sup>

In the experiment, it could be established that the installation is no longer solely a vehicle towards a direct interpretation of the bank, but rather in the context of a gallery space, becomes a mere representation. It is no longer tied to a context which validated its existence; it has instead become an artifact placed within the 'neutral' context of a gallery. How will both the former bank and the installation be perceived within this new setting? Does one visit the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed? Does one expect the museum/gallery to act as a didactic entity? Does one concur with the belief that objects placed within galleries are subject to the viewer's projections, or do they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer?

In addition to the solicitation of comments regarding the disassociation of installation from original context, another series of questions arose concerning the impact of adjacent works of art towards perception. What affect does the adjacency to artists' works present to one's interpretation of an architect's statement: of a building and/or place represented within the

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<sup>1</sup> Habermas, Jurgen. Communication and the Evolution of Society. Trans. by Thomas McCarthy. Beacon Press. (Boston:1979)

gallery setting, severed from the direct experience of (an original) context? Does one perceive adjacent objects within a gallery as separate statements or as parts of a collective categorization (e.g. thematic, chronological)? Is the gallery a suitable environment to present architectural representations adjacent art objects?

## Result

Sample of received comments.  
Based upon 22 respondents.

The focus of this study has been influenced by the works of the theorist Theodor Adorno (*Prisms, 1980*). In a chapter discussing the interpretation of works of art placed within a museum setting, Adorno points to Valery and Proust: two poets whose positions regarding the museum are *diametrically opposed* yet very much connected. Both view the museum as a container concealing mortality: a place where artifacts/objects are laid to rest. Proust, as Baudelaire's *Flaneur (Blanchard, 1985)*, assumes a meaningfulness arising as much (if not completely) from the perceived connotations of the artifacts placed within a gallery or museum. Proust strolls along the *avenues* of the museum in a fashion similar to the *Flaneur*: absorbing the ephemeral quality of the collected works, as if on a Parisian street. As he walks, the encountered 'death' releases artifacts, freeing them from an intentionality bore by the author through (original) site, only to be replaced by the willful interpretation of the observer. The adjacency of artifacts aids in the conveyance of a visually chaotic presentation, further distancing the object from recognizable fixation.

Valery also recognizes this morbid nature of the museum, not with the tragic understanding characteristic of Proust, but instead with a sense of eternal loss. The artifact or art object severed from function, from the intentions of the author and/or the context from which meaningfulness

arose, remains a reduced, commodified object. Valery mourns this loss as he views the observer becoming a consumer of relics (fixing upon them whatever experience elicits).

How would a public react towards the representation of a bank existent, yet absent, within the context of a gallery?

The questionnaire was distributed to a class of third year Environmental Design students in the Faculty of Architecture. Their ability to interpret/visualize representations of both built and unbuilt works reflected upon their overall acceptance (15 out of 22) of the gallery as a suitable setting for the display of architectural works. Yet many observed that mere representation did not suffice as a replacement for direct experience.

#### **Background Questions:**

##### **1. As a place does the museum (gallery) suffice for the representation of a particular history, place, and/or culture?**

Students who took advantage of a visit to the installation within the context of the former bank, unequivocally preferred the direct experience as a means of interpretation over its re-placement within the gallery. Other students, able only to visit the gallery exhibition, were less partial to the authenticity of the bank site as a basis for interpretation.

*Yes and no. The museum provides a place for the presentation and observation of material in a situation that is removed, or a fragmented history, place, and/or culture. This narrow vision restricts what is presented and what can be seen by the observer. Information that is found relevant by those responsible for an exhibition is presented, but there are elements left out that some may find of interest. The museum, in effect, frames what is presented and controls its perception. It could be said that this is a proper way of presentation, where the 'experts' provide the important information for the viewer, creating a proper educational or knowledge gaining experience. But the museum method of presentation is not all encompassing. It is impossible to provide all information for the viewer to sift through and find what is of interest. To visit Egypt or the Met, both have their advantages, and both have their limits.*

*The Museum (gallery) is extremely appropriate for the representation of a particular history, place, and culture. But, I think it is important to note that putting it in this context automatically puts it in a different context of interpretation than, for example, in the building itself. Placed*

*beside commentaries of society, the installation itself begins to speak strongly of culture and how it affected, affects, and is affected by the presence of the bank building.*

*Depending on how the presentation is supported (props, lighting, sound, etc.), it can make a big difference between just viewing a show or partaking in an exhibition. The most enjoyable and hence successful gallery/museum exhibitions I have experienced have been just that, experiences where I not only view, but am immersed within it.*

*The manner in which a show is presented can accurately portray a sense of history, place, and culture no matter which building it is contained within.*

*The gallery creates a disruption of place/context. The bank and other exhibits become objects rather than pieces, spaces, etc. The gallery also suggests value (of the objects) and reaffirms the view that the bank (art and architecture) is only a commodity.*

*No, it does not suffice [as a setting] for the representations of history, place, and culture because I believe that to fully understand something, one must be able to actually experience it. Displays show only what it is like, and are thus mere representations.*

*'Suffice' relative to what? To understand something about the building - physical characteristics - yes. However, the sense of place and awesome power of the place can only be experienced by visiting the bank.*

**2.a) Do you believe one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed?**

Does one, as Valery believes, necessarily possess knowledge of an object prior to viewing? Of the respondents 10 felt the need to possess prior knowledge of the object viewed; another 10 felt it was not a necessity; the remaining 2 were noncommittal.

*Prior knowledge definitely aids in an understanding of what the "spirit" of the building is. However, some sense of this spirit can be inferred in the quality of the presentation i.e. the artistic / emotional quality.*

*One does not need previous knowledge of the object - this allows for a rich interpretation from those who know of the object (bank) as well as those who draw on similar experience.*

*One should only require curiosity as a prerequisite to viewing/experiencing the object presented. The experience should encompass a full spectrum, from one extreme to the other. It is only in contrast that one fully perceives the total object(s).*

*The power of the exhibit will gauge this question. The contents should be able to stand alone and explain itself, therefore not requiring prior knowledge.*

A difficulty arose because the bank building as originally created, set forth clear intentions which were easily connoted by the patronizing clientele; it established a clear link between what the

architects and bankers felt the client desired and what the public knew it needed. Some 80 years later, those once lucid intentions/connotations have become all but muddied; on one level by the fact that intentions have become translucent/abstract (and so too have the ensuing connotations) and on another by the ability of the building to accumulate new intentions while simultaneously conveying diverse signification. The bank, in a sense, already has become severed from 'site' and original intentions. Whether it remains within its urban site or is represented within a gallery setting is of little consequence, or is it?

*Yes, one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed. The creator of the object assumes a basic knowledge in the viewer and uses this assumption when deciding if his object will communicate meaning.*

*I don't think you have to carry previous knowledge of the object to appreciate its representation, but I do believe that familiarity of the object, an awareness of one's own reactions to the building, and observations of the installation in other contexts can create a richer, multi-layered interpretation of information. On the other hand, those approaching the installation with no previous awareness of the object have no pre-set notions which might interfere with the understanding of an abstract concept. Either reaction is desirable and I think both are important to document.*

## **2.b) Does one expect the museum/gallery to act as a didactic entity?**

Of the 22 respondents, 16 felt the need to possess prior knowledge of the object viewed; another 2 felt it was not a necessity; the remaining 4 were noncommittal. The second part of this question is very much connected to the direction of part a). The reference to the gallery as a didactic entity was interpreted by the respondents in two ways: Some understood didactic to mean the ability of the museum/gallery to liberate or encourage self-interpretation, regardless of prior knowledge. Others considered the gallery an effective means of acquiring new knowledge, or conveying clearly stated intentions.

*Partially. The gallery should enhance a person's knowledge on the specific subject, yet continue to allow a personal interpretation.*

*At first, I believed the gallery to simply display and permit the viewer to self educate. Later, I realized it was supposed to convey something specific (and focused).*

*Placing the installation in the gallery automatically puts it in a didactic role because people enter the gallery with certain expectations about the items on display there. The installation responds to this expectation and then fosters other levels of interpretation.*

And yet, only one respondent commented upon the relative irony of the original question.

Though the installation functions as a didactic entity, the building remains 'useless' and empty as a place of interaction only to become a means of education (as an artifact far removed from original intentions). Yet, does the education dwell upon this loss, or does it propose a liberating multiplicity of accumulated or proposed connotations?

*The gallery inadvertently acts as a didactic entity in serving its role as a place where the time continuum is interrupted- 'place' is about human interaction - use . The change from active use to use for education in becoming a museum 'piece' creates an interesting opposition that relates well to the notion of the bank itself being dead but preserved without active function by our society.*

**3. Does one perceive adjacent objects within a gallery as separate statements or as parts of a collective categorization (e.g. thematic, chronological)?**

This question builds upon the previous set of queries. If indeed the installation is aware of both the inadvertent obsolescence of the bank and liberation from fixed original intentions, it posits the potential of having projected upon it a new set of intentions. These fixing, reducing, or naming considerations establish a 'virtual' and temporary context of adjacency. The synthetic environment simulates a natural setting commodified by the intentions of both the gallery and the perceiving audience.

*The gallery becomes a collection of separate elements but are or should be united by theme. Chronological arrangement allows only for a linear reading by the viewer, and thus the total, immediate experience is lost.*

*Adjacent objects within the gallery are read as part of a whole in a thematic sense. Adjacent objects within a gallery are seen as parts of a collective categorization, to a degree proportional to how well people can make connections between them, obvious or more subtle (similar size, shape, colors, or objects closer together than others, etc., will cause the viewer to find a category to put it into (e.g. thematic, chronological ).*

**4. a) Do you believe objects within a gallery are subject for the viewer's projections? b) or do they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer?**

Please refer to introductory statements found within the *result* section for an elaboration of the above question. Most respondents believed the installation carried with it intentions necessary to be deciphered by the observer, in addition to providing an open-ended, non-fixed potential for interpretation to take place.

*Obviously the objects are intended to project some message of history or memory. However, the ability to project one's own interpretations enriches the presentation greatly by touching each person individually.*

*I would expect that the objects must have an intended message or there would be no other reason for producing the objects. On the other hand, the viewer has the opportunity/responsibility to interpret.*

*I believe they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer. It (the object) must have some focus, or the whole thing is so arbitrary/general, the meaning is useless.*

*If I am correct in understanding the question, a person should have an understanding of the nature of the project, but be allowed to maneuver the images or thoughts evolved according to their own mind set.*

*All pieces are open to public perception and projection. All objects should maintain their own meanings as well as those placed upon them.*

**About the installation/bank:**

**1. Have you had an opportunity to visit the former Bank of Commerce building and/or installation when it was open to the public?**

Of the 22 respondents 16 had an opportunity to visit the installation when it was presented within the bank building. 8 respondents did not have an opportunity to visit the installation.

**2. What does the information presented within the installation convey about the bank?**

*The presentation conveys the transformation of place from purpose to memory of purpose. The installation revealed the presence not only of a fine piece of architecture (hidden from contemporary society), but also the decline of the traditional grand banking hall, filled with character and integrity, in the shadow of the modern office towers (and resultant death of the city).*

*The information suggests endangerment/removal/hidden/empty(full)/history significance/irrelevance. It also suggests that survival relies not in its historical significance, but its adaptive re-use (commercialization). I would hope this occurs secretly/quietly, subtly leaking into the 20th century. The installation also expresses a need for exploration.*

*Information within the installation brings to the forefront ideas of what the bank was, is, and could be to a changed and changing society. The bank becomes a record of time, history, and a united dream that lost momentum. The bank is not only reintroduced to the public in its physical form, but in the intangible forms of space, ancestry and the haunting echoes of an activity no longer celebrated.*

*Death.*

*Issues of death, in our culture, and memory of dead ones/things. For me, the bank previously had no meaning. What was extremely potent were glimpses of the bank's life in the video in conjunction with the life of Bankers' Row (i.e. crazy dancing man, pick pockets).*

**3. As a result of experiencing the gallery installation do you desire to visit/revisit the bank?**

Of the 22 respondents, 15 desired a (return) visit to the bank building. 5 respondents did not desire to re-visit the bank building (of these 5, 2 had not previously visited the building).

*I always enjoy roaming around in 'places' with overwhelming evidence of history or past. Searching for markings produced during activities once important. Mystery and the search for someone else's memory is always intriguing - of course I would go back.*

*Not the gallery exhibition, but the bank itself gives me the desire to revisit. I enjoyed the sense of being in someone else's space (ownership) with the knowledge that it was no one's space. Its recent uses suggest a dichotomy between permanent/transitory that appeals to me. It is simply a shell as it has always been (this is relevant in the case of the original tenants as well.) I desire to live in here for a while, it could support me while I support it.*

*Not the bank, but the installation (or are they the same thing). I do not desire to revisit the bank building, but I would like to see the installation in another context and observe public reactions to it.*

*After experiencing the gallery installation, I do not desire to revisit the bank. As the exhibit confirms, there is no life at the bank, because there are no people there. There is no reason for people to be there.*

**4. Do you think the gallery is a suitable place to present architecture adjacent to art objects?**

The response to this question reaffirmed a personal suspicion regarding the perception of architectural representations in contexts acceptable for artifacts or art objects (i.e. devoid of context, etc.).

Many viewed the installation (representative of existing architecture) with criteria administered to evaluate works of art within a gallery. Is the architectural representation reduced to a merely dislocated criteria of interpretation, based solely upon its comparison to other works? Is the inherent meaningfulness conveyable in a setting of diverse intentions and conditions?

*It is difficult because the method of presentation makes the architecture look like art.*

*By placing art beside architecture within the context of the gallery, architecture is associated with art. This promotes architecture as a commodity, among other things.*

*Art and architecture are similar in that they have become commodity. Art is undisciplined and has been a commodity for a much longer time. Architecture is supposed to have a use, but current trends have made the name more important than the use. Preservation suggests commodification.*

*No, the space tends to stifle architecture's broad and expansive nature.*

*Given proper placement/considerations, I believe the gallery could display any artifacts together.*

**5. Who's responsibility is it to preserve 'historic buildings'?**

The respondents cited three major groups under which the fate of historic buildings should be decided: Professionals (Architects, Planners, Historians, Artists, etc.); Politicians; and the Public at large (community activists, students, residents).

*It is the responsibility of architects to educate the public how important historical buildings are. It then becomes the responsibility of everyone to save our heritage.*

*Public.*

*those entities. City councilors, architecture associations, any one that holds the power/influence necessary - should be the force behind restoration and preservation.*

*I believe the city has to take the responsibilities in foreseeing degradation/deterioration of such prominent buildings. This may be ongoing today, but given the present uncertain future/past of this bank, it is obvious that past leaders did not see to this goal/necessity.*

*It is the responsibility of anyone who understands the importance of 'historic' buildings to preserve them, i.e. they are responsible for making those people who have the means to preserve them, aware of the reasons why they should do so in an attempt to convince them to act.*

## **6. Why do you think they are preserved?**

*Remember that door in the closet when you were a kid. The one that went through to your own secret room? Upon pushing open the door a stale damp air permeates your nostrils and soothes your mind. When trouble arose, you would sit there for hours until everything was settled. You kept your best pieces of Lego on the little table beside your little bottle of Brut 33 for special occasions. It was a safe house, within the house. But this house was yours, not your parents. Now every time that you are in trouble, stressed, lost, etc., you long to return to the safety and security of that room: your house.*

*They are preserved? What does this mean: kept hidden away in formaldehyde jars, this is perverse. They are preserved because they offer (in our commercial society) an opportunity for future potential: (money), the bank.*

*Buildings are preserved for the same reason people keep photographs of their childhood - memory. Visual reminders of what once was - affect current actions (regardless if this is considered desirable or undesirable). If you have no record of the past there is no awareness of a future. Humans have a need to locate themselves in time - visual reminders are part of this.*

*Historic buildings are preserved for the same reason that some people look to decipher an intended message in a museum/gallery exhibit. I think it has to do with situating oneself on some type of level ground, to have a feeling of control over one's life. Not understanding the gallery exhibit makes one unstable. Understanding gives one stability. Understanding one's place in time gives stability. Historic buildings are landmarks people can use to situate themselves, not only on the street, but also in time when they have an understanding of its history. The bank is an exhibit for the representation of a particular history, place and culture which will suffice for communication to the users of Main Street. The exhibit, when it was in the bank, reinforced this role. If the bank was ever demolished, what would remain for representation: photographs and videos? Who would see the photographs? What meaning would they convey. Winnipeg would take one more step towards becoming anyplace, or more like a place that has forgotten its origins. The important thing to remember is that once the building is gone physically, it will soon disappear from memory. Eventually the bank becomes whatever the teller of his-story wants it to be.*

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*Gillian Smith*. Excerpts from transcript of CBC 'Open House' on Death and Dying. (October  
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*Barb Patterson*. From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda. (Winnipeg 1993)

**Video**

*Michael Cox.* From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke. (Winnipeg, 1994)

*Douglas Shearer.* From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke. (Winnipeg, 1993)

*Raymond Cosentino.* From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke (Winnipeg, 1993)

*Neil Bardal:* From interview recorded by Antonio Zedda & John Gurdebeke (Winnipeg 1994)

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## **Appendix**

**Appendix 1: Questionnaire One**

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire Two**

**Appendix 3: Video Interview Questionnaire**

## **Appendix 1:**

During the installation, the public was invited to comment on the installation, the bank building, and suggestions for future use based on the following question:

***Please feel free to make comments on the bank building and the installation. What suggestions would you make for possible uses of both the banking hall and the rest of the building which has remained empty for 24 years? If you remember the bank when it was open prior to 1969, what do you recall?***

A binder with paper sheets and a pen was placed at the end of fragment #4 (within the banking hall).

### **Sample of received comments. 89 respondents.**

*You have created quite a gem here. I hope people will experience this.*

*Wonderful display.*

*Whatever happens, don't let it be torn down.*

*This is a living space- thanks for helping resurrect it.*

*New council chambers for city of Winnipeg!*

*Great display. I would love it for an office. Of course that is not possible. Please don't let it become another "Fork's style" market. It would make a neat pool hall... or an office and public area for a socially conscious high-tech non-exploitive business... now you just have to find one. Well done.*

*It figures a building this grand would go completely unnoticed for years. But I have an idea: Public baths, as in Caracalla, Baden-Baden. It is perfectly proportioned. Congratulations- the display and video are perfect.*

*Don't have it destroyed. Rent it out for any number of uses. In a space like this, the only limit to its applications are the ones who would tear it down. Music and baths are great ideas! How about making it into apartments? Great installation!!*

*I want to live here. Call me with estimate.*

*Make it a community project by using corporate donations to restore it!*

*Studio space (in centre)? Building within building? High-tech. structure in "touch" yet not "touching" its past/history?*

*Built with a sophistication and elegance that are unmatched in modern architecture (just like Europe, eh?). A great pity to simply let it pass.*

*Make this installation 'permanent', and incorporate related special events or 'shows'. Community centre; Public indoor space; A convention hall; University of Manitoba, Faculty of Architecture; Public jury/presentation venue. The show is a great idea.*

*Move faculty of architecture (U of M) here.*

*A marvelous ballroom and reception hall or recital space.*

*Excellent display, beautiful!*

*Make the main floor area an public sculpture court. Put an exclusive five-star dining area behind the counter (define have and have nots along historic lines). Use offices for kitchen, etc. and marble private dining rooms.*

*Great audio and visual installation- please extend the exhibition period. Also, in your historical/personal introduction at the entrance, the "South American artist" referred to was Gran Do Espirito Santo, a Sao Paulo-based artist who continues to re-present and juxtapose classical and modernist interiors and facades in his art.*

*Requiem for a building.*

*Thank you both for this wonderful resurrection. Beautiful detailing and aesthetic sensitivity in both installation and video. Inspiring to see architecture and video collaboration. Congratulations.*

*Thanks, I have wanted to see this building for years.*

*Would make wonderful presentation space for architectural projects and displays. This central hall provokes the imagination to remember architecture's past glories. Great display.*

*Make this place a museum for late Faculty of Architecture professors. You executed your ideas to a "T", way to go.*

*Great place for a party.*

*A beautiful building. It would be wonderful for cultural displays, or a fine restaurant with adjoining shops, etc. (after all it is close to many office buildings). Would be a fabulous hotel or apartment building (I'd live here).*

*Lots of essence here (and sensuous too).*

*Un peche montel de permettre ces institutions financieres de vouloir demolir une si belle batisse. Peut-etre pourraient-on pendre les gros Cochons capitalistes qui nous exploitent et abusent? Qui les pendre au centre de cette salle si majestueuse.*

*Very nice and a lot of music and lights. I like the way you set it.*

*Stunningly presented. Congratulations.*

*Way to go Winnipeg! Saved (again) in the nick of time. Beautifully presented- I love the text projections on the floor.*

*Wonderful architecture- we really need to save this historical record of a grander age. Wonderfully presented.*

*Henry Penner P.Eng. (Retired)*

*I did an inspection years ago on the condition of the stonework at the street-side; in good condition then. The banking hall is magnificent and should definitely be preserved.*

*Video was excellent but nothing can compare to the experience of the banking hall- peaceful and powerful.*

*This bank is definitely a beautiful example of architecture. I hope Winnipeg in general will be able to appreciate its architecture and history. We need to preserve it.*

*There are a lot of good ideas here so far for uses. I especially like the performance hall suggestion and I agree with the person who said not to make it a 'Forks style' market which is cheap commercialization. I look at this huge room and don't see much need to spend money on renovations or restorations- It is nearly perfect as it is.*

*I'm rather embarrassed at our city for not being imaginative or committed enough to find a tasteful use for this space. That's a challenge to anyone who reads this and cares and has power.*

*What do we do we do with these items of the past? What a shame to see them disappear into bliss. We are glad we were able to save it.*

*Hopefully you do not score an "A" grade in your studies for this. After all, you did hardly anything to deserve it. It was here all along... like Europeans "Discovering America".*

*The problem appears insoluble. However, it is hoped that a solution can be found which enables the building to be preserved.*

*I feel that this building should be preserved and put to use. It appears to be in excellent condition considering its age. It should definitely not be destroyed.*

*I am surprised that such a beautiful building exists in Winnipeg. It would be a good place to display art or hold special functions.*

*Boy, did the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce make a mistake. To think they chose that hole in the basement of the Richardson building over this.*

*Beautiful. I hope people develop a trend for old things and re-use. People need to realize we need not waste anymore. It is here to use. I'm glad I came.*

*What a shame that this building is not in use: it is beautiful.*

*I once did part of my banking here. Pleased with the privilege of a return visit. Also used to warm up here while waiting for the Transcona bus., then known as the White Ribbon Bus Lines operated by the Dunn family of Transcona.*

*So happy to have seen this beautiful building. Hoping to be able to live and use it somehow.*

*Thanks for letting us have an opportunity to see such spectacular architecture.*

*Quality we rarely see! Is it not a shame that "progress" nearly destroyed such a gem from the past.*

*A bookstore, maybe, or a bank.*

*A landmark of historic Winnipeg. Should draw tourists to it to see old Winnipeg. Make this the centre for Winnipeg tourist information: Exchange walks, etc. This is worthy of government money to support.*

*Make it back into a bank! Whatever, lets preserve this beautiful building.*

*Questo e un bellissimo palazzo e si dovrebbe conservare per storia o usarlo per qualcosa visibile.*

*Turn it into something useful where its architectural structure may be admired. Possibly a bank, concert hall, or a new museum and just maybe we could get some "good art".*

*This building should be a bank. That's all.  
Great tourist attraction. Use it for something, don't waste it.*

*Such beauty as this must be kept alive.*

*I hope some use can be found for this beautiful building.*

*I'd change banks in a minute if this were to be one again. Either that or a restaurant.  
Breathtaking. It would be ludicrous to tear others like it down.*

*Thank you for letting us see it. I think an art gallery would be appropriate.*

*Beautiful architecture- should be preserved.*

*My father, brother, and sister-in-law all worked here in the late 1950's and early 1960's. I remember it as a beautiful, awe-inspiring building and it still is. Now? A museum space for traveling exhibitions; concert space (acoustics?); would make an incredible restaurant space.*

*It is a commendable effort to focus our attention on this empty structure. The commentary contrasted well with the living (i.e. people) and the dead: an apt analogy.*

*What a beautiful building. Thanks for letting us see it.*

*Many visitors to our city ask to see structures such as this ... to open it up to public activity (concert, art, theater, etc.) would make one more attraction to our great city. Thanks for letting us see it... Great history to our historic town.*

*History. History. History.  
Very little of it in Western Canada. Something we should appreciate more.*

*Absolutely beautiful. They cannot build anything close to this today. In England, all the buildings are old. In Canada we tear them down. This one is great.*

*Nightclub!!!*

*Rare, world-class structure! Should be opened to the public to help build awareness of the beauty and magnificence of the early 20th century architectural structures that Winnipeg has.*

*Restaurant, theatre, City of Winnipeg tourist information centre? Anything, but open it and keep it as it is.*

*Keep it and use it. Should be a powerful part of downtown renewal rather than a forgotten orphan.*

*Let non-profit organizations use it for nominal rent. A full-time common office could be run. The large hall could be a common use area: bingo, dance, conventions, etc. Kitchen and storage could be downstairs. Many small businesses could also take space and use the office secretarial service that would come with the rent or pay for service basis.*

*Gorgeous building. It would be a shame to use it for anything else than for office/commercial purposes. Good luck in finding tenants.*

*Congratulations to the artists for the imagination needed to organize this "event". Will Winnipeg cherish its superb heritage, or not?*

*Please don't tear this building down.*

*I would eat her every week! White linen tablecloths, palm trees, and waiters. Please work to save this building! I would help. 269-8718.*

*Yes me too. 2844-6378.*

*Thank you for exposing this world of fragile beauty caged within the monumental and forbidding. The sensitivity and strength of your installation leads to such new and provocative thought.*

*Absolutely marvelous! Would apartments upstairs be feasible?*

*What a wonderful idea, and what thoughtful execution. Thank you.*

*Thank you very much for letting me do a self-guided tour. Can I arrange a daytime tour?*

*Amazing! I wish I could have stayed longer. It is truly inspirational for all of us.*

*Incredible! What an inspiration for anyone. This must be one of the most amazing interiors in Canada. Another bank? What about music- orchestras, the acoustics?*

*I think it would make a very profound, existential cemetery!*

*All kidding aside, I congratulate you again for your efforts. These are the actions we need to undertake to make a difference. Next time try epoxy, it is toxic, but it sticks.*

*A 'place' like this really humbles me.*

*This piece inspires me completely. I think it is some of the most authentic work I've seen in this city. I hope the collaboration continues. Thank you.*

*Compelling, poetic, humbling.*

*This was a fabulous installation. Thank you for sharing revealing this fragment of memory with me.*

## Appendix 2:

Letter of introduction sent to Environmental Design students concerning Questionnaire Two.

Friday March 4, 1994

To: E.D.111 students  
c/o W.P. Thompson

From: Antonio Zedda, Graduate Student, Architecture

Re: **'Discovery of Bank' installation**  
**in History, Memory, Architecture Show**  
in Faculty of Architecture Gallery.  
March 01, 1994 to March 11, 1994

The intent of this request is to solicit responses in regards to the current installation within the Gallery. Specifically, of concern are student interpretations based upon the representations put forth by John Gurdebeke (video) and Antonio Zedda (video & fragments, models). What are your perceptions of the bank, installation, history, etc. within the context of the gallery (museum) and adjacent to works by other artists and architects?

Habermas, speaks of the relationship between the event, the observer, and the interpreter as "communicative action" (Habermas, 1979). What one observes of an event is somehow transformed when that observer communicates the act of observing first to himself and then to another as a representative communication.

In this experiment, it could be established that I am an observer (of the installation within, and reaction to the bank). Your responsibility is to interpret my representation of this observation within the very different context of the gallery (museum).

Bill will kindly fill in the rest about method.

Thank you.

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Beacon Press: 1979.

**Adorno, Theodor W.** Prisms. Translated from the German by Samuel & Sherry Weber.  
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1980.

**Blanchard, Marc Eli.** In Search of the City: Engels, Baudelaire, Rimbaud  
Saratoga: Anma Libri. 1985

## Appendix 2:

Sample of Questionnaire Two distributed to 3rd year Environmental Design students.

Wednesday March 9, 1994

To: E.D.111 students  
c/o W.P. Thompson

Re: **'Dis-discovery of Bank' installation**  
**in History, Memory, Architecture Show**  
in Faculty of Architecture Gallery  
March 01, 1994 to March 11, 1994

### Background Questions:

1. As a place does the Museum (gallery) suffice for the representation of particular history, place, and culture?
2. a. Do you believe one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed? b. Does one expect the museum/gallery to act as a didactic entity?
3. Does one perceive adjacent objects within a gallery as separate statements or as parts of a collective categorization. (e.g. thematic, chronological)?
4. Do you believe objects within gallery are subject for the viewer's projections? b. or do they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer?

### About the installation/bank:

1. Have you had an opportunity to visit the former Bank of Commerce building (389 Main St.) and/or installation when it was open to the public?
2. What does the information presented within the installation convey about the bank?
3. As a result of experiencing the gallery installation do you desire to visit/revisit the Bank?
4. Do you think the gallery is a suitable place to present architecture adjacent to art objects?
5. Who's responsibility is it to preserve 'historic buildings'?
6. Why do you think they are preserved?

Thanks for taking the time to answer the above questions. If you have any comments I can be located in Practicum studio, or at 275-0116.

Antonio Zedda.

## Appendix 2:

### Sample of received comments.

22 respondents

#### Background Questions:

#### 1. As a place does the museum (gallery) suffice for the representation of a particular history, place, and/or culture?

*Yes, It's all in the manner of how it's presented. It does not matter what space it is presented within.*

*As a place the gallery tends to suffer for the presentation of a particular history, place, and culture as it is not widely known to those outside the faculty. 'Place' denotes significance to the people, therefore it would be more appropriate if a broader range of people were enabled to participate in the exhibition, as was the experience in the more public arena of the bank itself.*

*'Suffice' relative to what? To understand something about the building - physical characteristics - yes. However, the sense of place and awesome power of the place can only be experienced by visiting the bank.*

*Yes and no. The museum provides a place for the presentation and observation of material in a situation that is removed, or a fragmented history, place, and/or culture. This narrow vision restricts what is presented and what can be seen by the observer. Information that is found relevant by those responsible for an exhibition is presented, but there are elements left out that some may find of interest. The museum, in effect, frames what is presented and controls its perception. It could be said that this is a proper way of presentation, where the 'experts' provide the important information for the viewer, creating a proper educational or knowledge gaining experience. But the museum method of presentation is not all encompassing. It is impossible to provide all information for the viewer to sift through and find what is of interest. To visit Egypt or the Met, both have their advantages, and both have their limits.*

*The gallery serves adequately as a place of presentation but its location lacks the ability to draw experience from those of other faculties.*

*The simplistic nature of the gallery is proper, causing the architecture not to overpower the exhibits which are contained within. The manipulation of the interior space is the primary factor for representing a particular history, place and culture.*

*It is difficult to represent ideas in such a space as the gallery; it is small and cramped, creating an environment of quick experience, especially during times of heavy usage.*

*The gallery creates a disruption of place/context. The bank and other exhibits become objects rather than pieces, spaces, etc. The gallery also suggests value (of the objects) and reaffirms the view that the bank (art and architecture) is only a commodity.*

*No, it does not suffice [as a setting] for the representations of history, place, and culture because i believe that to fully understand something, one must be able to actually experience it. Displays show only what it is like, and are thus mere representations.*

*Yes, because it was derived, developed out of a history, place, culture.*

*The Museum (gallery) is extremely appropriate for the representation of a particular history, place, and culture. But, I think it is important to note that putting it in this context automatically puts it in a different context of interpretation than, for example, in the building itself. Placed beside commentaries of society, the installation itself begins to speak strongly of culture and how it affected, affects, and is affected by the presence of the bank building.*

*Yes.*

*Yes.*

*Not really.*

*Somewhat.*

*As a place, I do agree that the museum is a suffice representation of a particular place, history, and culture.*

*Depending on how the presentation is supported (props, lighting, sound, etc.), it can make a big difference between just viewing a show or partaking in an exhibition. The most enjoyable and hence successful gallery/museum exhibitions I have experienced have been just that, experiences where I not only view, but am immersed within it.*

*The manner in which a show is presented can accurately portray a sense of history, place, and culture no matter which building it is contained within.*

*The representation of the bank as a building, representing history, seemed more to dwell on the artistic side for the presentation. The information contained within the presentation dealt with the building as this re-discovery, however, the viewer senses it as a place to look into and not actually enter. For myself, to fully understand the complete history of a building, everything must be represented as this place of the past.*

*It is a representation of an era and the ideologies of a time. It is representational of what is current, but to me it is more of a personal polemic of society.*

*The museum has to suffice for those who cannot witness the reality of place and culture. The gallery is a microcosm of past and present - a time capsule for our youth.*

*It suffices well as a representation of history if pieces present are of a special quality and the viewer understands the messages present.*

*As a place, the museum(gallery) does not suffice for the representation of a particular history, place and culture, unless it is in the everyday environment of the intended audience.*

**2.a) Do you believe one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed?**

*Yes, just a little.*

*Yes. I found it confusing because I had not been to the bank to see what the interior was like.*

*One does not need previous knowledge of the object - this allows for a rich interpretation from those who know of the object (bank) as well as those who draw on similar experience.*

*Prior knowledge definitely aids in an understanding of what the "spirit" of the building is. However, some sense of this spirit can be inferred in the quality of the presentation. i.e. the artistic / emotional quality.*

*It always helps to have previous knowledge of the objects being viewed, but this should not be necessary. This is one of the reasons for museums. So that people in London or New York are able to see what Egypt is like without having to go to Egypt, or because they simply cannot go.*

*One should only require curiosity as a prerequisite to viewing/experiencing the object presented. The experience should encompass a full spectrum, from one extreme to the other. It is only in contrast that one fully perceives the total object(s).*

*The power of the exhibit will gauge this question. The contents should be able to stand alone and explain itself, therefore not requiring prior knowledge.*

*The gallery is the only setting for a display; knowing the size restrictions of the space, the presenter should be able to arrange the setting/props/pieces in such a way as to create their own place and meaning.*

*Placing the object in the gallery gives it the connotation of value - either cultural or monetary. It also suggests theft/removal (in a number of senses) and suggests that as a living thing the bank is done.*

*Yes, I believe one has to come with some prior knowledge. As a whole, the (or a) gallery should be able to be read in both short and long versions - that is, one should be able to pick things up from it in a short time, and then in more detail and on expanded knowing after further time is spent viewing it.*

*There will exist preconceptions, no matter what. What is important is that one comes to the gallery with an open mind.*

*I don't think you have to carry previous knowledge of the object to appreciate its representation, but I do believe that familiarity of the object, an awareness of one's own reactions to the building, and observations of the installation in other contexts can create a richer, multi-layered interpretation of information. On the other hand, those approaching the installation with no previous awareness of the object have no pre-set notions which might interfere with the understanding of an abstract concept. Either reaction is desirable and I think both are important to document.*

*I feel one expects to be educated regardless to prior knowledge.*

*The more knowledge one brings to the object viewed, the more one receives from the presentation.*

Yes.

*No, I do not believe that one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed, as a first experience with this institution would be more enlightening with no prior knowledge of the installation.*

*Yes, I believe that some prior knowledge of the exhibition is essential to the success of the show. A visitor may leave the exhibit having learned quite a lot of new information, yet without prior interest or knowledge one may not be persuaded to come.*

*If a person was to view the gallery, they would not need any special knowledge to understand what the gallery is exactly trying to portray. However, for the gallery to be more effective, I believe the gallery/museum should have a special context with the building.*

*No. The purest interpretation is one that has not been adulterated by the public.*

*No, one need not have to go to a gallery with some knowledge of the objects to be viewed. This knowledge should be attained on site.*

*I don't think one has to have background knowledge although my experience within the installation was richer when my background knowledge was greater. The museum or bank can teach but not solely alone.*

*Yes, one has to come to the gallery with some knowledge of the object to be viewed. The creator of the object assumes a basic knowledge in the viewer and uses this assumption when deciding if his object will communicate meaning.*

**2.b) Does one expect the museum/gallery to act as a didactic entity?**

Yes.

*Yes, I feel that one should be able to learn something about the place even though one has not been there. You should be able to get some feel for the place.*

*If the museum is not for instruction purposes, what else is it for?*

*I am not sure what one expects, but I do expect the museum to act, to a degree as a didactic entity. But there is more to it. The museum/gallery is also a place of adoration, relaxation, and the MOMA on Thursday nights is a great place to meet beautiful women. I can stare at a large Motherwell canvas for well over an hour and not learn a thing, but we still do it.*

*Partially. The gallery should enhance a person's knowledge on the specific subject, yet continue to allow a personal interpretation.*

*While the museum can teach knowledge, I think that it also lacks the potential to promote understanding. It tends to treat history in a jewel-box manner rather than as a continuum.*

*At first, I believed the gallery to simply display and permit the viewer to self educate. Later, I realized it was supposed to convey something specific (and focused).*

Yes.

*Placing the installation in the gallery automatically puts it in a didactic role because people enter the gallery with certain expectations about the items on display there. The installation responds to this expectation and then fosters other levels of interpretation.*

Yes.

*In some ways, yea, one may expect the gallery/museum to act as a didactic entity.*

*Yes, a gallery should contribute to the public's betterment. These institutions should provide an enjoyable environment for learning.*

*I believe the gallery should have a special context with the building. Viewing the presentation in the Architecture Gallery did not convey the message effectively in comparison to being there.*

*Didactic in the sense that one comes out with some type of response.*

*No, the whole idea of a museum/gallery is self-discovery.*

*Some do, some do not.*

**3. Does one perceive adjacent objects within a gallery as separate statements or as parts of a collective categorization (e.g. thematic, chronological)?**

*Separate. The objects did not seem integrated.*

*They should be separate statements that relate to a theme or order.*

*Adjacent objects within the gallery are read as part of a whole in a thematic sense.*

*Unfortunately without explanation (or a significant amount of time to ponder the connection), I think it is difficult to make these connections beyond the obvious.*

*This question can only be answered in context. How is the gallery arranged, is there a change in wall color, lighting; does the room bear a single theme? These are things that are designed within a gallery and what is on display.*

*The gallery becomes a collection of separate elements but are or should be united by theme. Chronological arrangement allows only for a linear reading by the viewer, and thus the total, immediate experience is lost.*

*Though in many galleries different artists are grouped together, there continues to be an underlying order to the display. However subtle, the order should be present, permitting a story to be told.*

*In such a limited area, I believe the artifact would tend to be grouped as a theme. However, in the setting of an architecture school, it is quite common to use the gallery in a more random and varying format.*

*While the objects do seem distinct, one searches for a relation due to a common proximity.*

*If it is chronological, it should be obvious. If it is thematic, one may have to examine each object separately, reserving judgment until the end.*

*Both. A collective arrangement made of individual components with the capacity to stand alone.*

*Adjacent objects in the gallery automatically puts it in a didactic role because people enter the gallery with certain expectations about items on display there. The installation responds to this expectation and then fosters other levels of interpretation.*

*The adjacent displays appear to be unrelated entities. 'Discovery of the bank' stands apart as being more so (alone) architecturally relevant.*

*As a separate statement.*

*As part of a collective, chronological categorization.*

*I feel that one may perceive the elements within the gallery as parts of a collective organization, as everything within this gallery seems to tie in with each other.*

*One may perceive adjacent objects as separate or as part of a whole, depending on the proximity and manner in which they are viewed.*

*Certain elements are kept within a certain framework which adds to their collectiveness and helps intensify the presentation.*

*Thematic: a narrative through space, form, and understanding.*

*Collective.*

*It depends solely on the (com)position of the space and the perception of the viewer.*

*Adjacent objects within a gallery are seen as parts of a collective categorization, to a degree proportional to how well people can make connections between them, obvious or more subtle (similar size, shape, colors, or objects closer together than others, etc., will cause the viewer to find a category to put it into (e.g. thematic, chronological ).*

**4. a) Do you believe objects within a gallery are subject for the viewer's projections? b) or do they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer?**

Yes.

*I think the objects should carry a message that the viewer can decipher from. The message should be clear and not ambiguous.*

*Obviously the objects are intended to project some message of history or memory. However, the ability to project one's own interpretations enriches the presentation greatly by touching each person individually.*

*I would expect that the objects must have an intended message or there would be no other reason for producing the objects. On the other hand, the viewer has the opportunity/responsibility to interpret.*

*Objects within a gallery are intended to be viewed by an audience. There is usually information about the objects provided. What the viewer does with this information is at their discretion. There are messages that artists intend in their pieces and are there to be deciphered, i.e. conceptualization. But there is the question as to how much of this is possible and by what group of people, usually quite small. The usual response of people looking at a piece of modern art, perhaps a Rothko, are bound to attempt to project some meaning upon it, this can be observed at any art gallery (especially if you are with my father). But there are also people educated in such areas that are more likely to attempt to decipher, but any deciphering will carry a tinge of personal projection in order to fill in the blanks. This scenario is a little different when looking at historical objects. The gallery atmosphere is different, and there is a stronger didacticism. The accounts tend to be factually based, or at least presented in that tone. This provides less room for personal projection and the intended messages are usually not difficult to decipher.*

*Objects in the gallery carry with them their own message that requires some deciphering on the part of the viewer. This involves him/her actively in the process of 'discovery'.*

*Typically, a message is the driving force directing the artist. The best art will not be linear in meaning, allowing for personal versions of the message to surface.*

*I do not believe anything in life is restricted to a single meaning; the purpose of a gallery is to express a variety of people to an idea(s) from which they can make their own projections.*

*This depends on the viewer's needs and suggests a need for a less esoteric / public level in art and architecture. But, perhaps this is already present in the nature of the pieces as commodity/object. Certainly the pieces exhibited are loaded with a number of levels of understanding.*

*I believe they carry an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer. It (the object) must have some focus, or the whole thing is so arbitrary/general, the meaning is useless.*

*If I am correct in understanding the question, a person should have an understanding of the nature of the project, but be allowed to maneuver the images or thoughts evolved according to their own mind set.*

*Objects within the gallery are obviously imbued with an intended message to be deciphered by the viewer, but the very process of deciphering is subject to viewer projections. This can not be*

*avoided and I don't think it should be avoided because the intensity of any visual representation is created by a multivalent array of interpretation.*

*They are intended to be deciphered by the viewer.*

*Interpreted as both. However, some projects carry an intended message.*

*I believe that the objects within the gallery carry an intended message that is meant to be deciphered by the viewer.*

*I think it is a combination of both. I think that is why exhibitions can be quite enjoyable. It is an individual thing that allows everyone to have their own experience and message depending on the mood of the viewer, knowledge of the material, circumstances that lead to the viewing, etc. No matter how blatant the message, there will always be individual interpretations by some.*

*These are the same thing and are interrupted by whomever is viewing.*

*The objects carry an intended message through the artist. What the viewer sees is often manipulated by what critics tell them to see. What the artist felt, saw, intended the piece to mean can only be understood by him/herself. The true meaning can never really be fully understood because even the artist cannot decipher his own thoughts.*

*All pieces are open to public perception and projection. All objects should maintain their own meanings as well as those placed upon them.*

*I look to decipher an intended message, but not everyone does. I guess objects within a gallery can be either subject for the viewer's projections, or carriers of an intended message meant to be deciphered by the viewer.*

**About the installation/bank:**

**1. Have you had an opportunity to visit the former Bank of Commerce building and/or installation when it was open to the public?**

Of the 22 respondents, 16 had an opportunity to visit the installation when it was constructed within the bank building.

8 respondents did not have an opportunity to visit the installation.

**2. What does the information presented within the installation convey about the bank?**

*It conveys the mechanics of the structure regarding sound and also prestige of the building.*

*It conveys an importance of the history of the building and its importance to the community.*

*The information presented conveys the restructuring of our society's paradigms from fixed to ephemera - a constant trend to the cult of light technology - physics - and our need to retain some sense of ground by clinging to the physicality of the useless bank building - it becomes imbued with new meaning. It is a bastion of place in a placeless society.*

*The presentation conveys the transformation of place from purpose to memory of purpose.*

*The installation conveys the functional inability of the space in today's economic situation. The space is somewhat of a relic, beautiful but useless. The installation conveys lost information to the public about the interior of the bank, and presents the space as something to be remembered, or jar your own memories. By revealing the grandness of the old banking there are implications made toward society and how the role of space and the image of the bank have changed. From the grand banking hall to the automated teller. There is a lot more, but I'm sure that you know about it.*

*A time in our history of great importance replaced by present thought which cares little of its past, allowing it to become ruinous.*

*The installation revealed the presence not only of a fine piece of architecture (hidden from contemporary society), but also the decline of the traditional grand banking hall, filled with character and integrity, in the shadow of the modern office towers (and resultant death of the city).*

*The information suggests endangerment/removal/hidden/empty(full)/history significance/irrelevance. It also suggests that survival relies not in its historical significance, but its adaptive re-use (commercialization). I would hope this occurs secretly/quietly, subtly leaking into the 20th century. The installation also expresses a need for exploration.*

*It gives the person experiencing it that he/she is simply a viewer. And this is good because the grandness of the bank overshadows (and hopefully impresses) the viewer.*

*What it was, what it is, to a greater degree than it was still functioning as a bank.*

*Information within the installation brings to the forefront ideas of what the bank was, is, and could be to a changed and changing society. The bank becomes a record of time, history, and a united dream that lost momentum. The bank is not only reintroduced to the public in its physical form, but in the intangible forms of space, ancestry and the haunting echoes of an activity no longer celebrated.*

*The historic significance of the place - the contemporary problems it suffers - a personal, polemic on the myth and meaning - the public view toward the building and preservation - the installation exposed to everyone a treasure that a few knew existed.*

*It touches on the spirit that is contained within the bank.*

*What it was and what it is / disrespect for history (arch.).*

*The information presented within the installation conveys to me, a building that is lost within the urban fabric of today's world, mostly unknown to people, and waiting for someone to revitalize its life.*

*The information provides reference to the history of the building and trying to perceive the building in the future.*

*Death.*

*The information conveys a feeling of relevant (re-, dis-) covery of a building that seems not to exist because memories created by it have all but ceased to exist.*

*I felt the installation enabled the public to be aware of the building in the first place. Then on a simplistic level it allowed the public to realize the history and great meaning the building carried with it.*

*Issues of death, in our culture, and memory of dead ones/things. For me, the bank previously had no meaning. What was extremely potent were glimpses of the bank's life in the video in conjunction with the life of bankers' row (i.e. crazy dancing man, pick pockets).*

**3. As a result of experiencing the gallery installation do you desire to visit/revisit the bank?**

No.

*I would like to visit the bank and view the installation within its context.*

Yes.

*I always enjoy roaming around in 'places' with overwhelming evidence of history or past. Searching for markings produced during activities once important. Mystery and the search for someone else's memory is always intriguing - of course I would go back.*

*It would be an interesting place to return to or play with the acoustics.*

Yes.

*Not necessarily. The powerful images discovered within the bank are well represented through the gallery display.*

*I would like to see what could be done with the present structure. Having seen it in the installation, I would like to see the building again after revitalization has occurred.*

*Not the gallery exhibition, but the bank itself gives me the desire to revisit. I enjoyed the sense of being in someone else's space (ownership) with the knowledge that it was no one's space. Its recent uses suggest a dichotomy between permanent/transitory that appeals to me. It is simply a shell as it has always been (this is relevant in the case of the original tenants as well.) I desire to live in here for a while, it could support me while I support it.*

*Yes, probably.*

*Not the bank, but the installation (or are they the same thing). I do not desire to revisit the bank building, but I would like to see the installation in another context and observe public reactions to it.*

Yes.

Yes.

*Yes, specifically if it was restored.*

*Yes, I do desire to revisit the bank.*

N/C

No.

Yes.

*Yes, because the gallery already exemplifies this criteria. It is art and architecture.*

*I would enjoy to revisit the bank even without the installation.*

*After experiencing the gallery installation, I do not desire to revisit the bank. As the exhibit confirms, there is no life at the bank, because there are no people there. There is no reason for people to be there.*

**4. Do you think the gallery is a suitable place to present architecture adjacent to art objects?**

*Yes, because they are similar.*

*Yes, because architecture is a form of art.*

*The space is rather small to present installations however.*

*It is difficult because the method of presentation makes the architecture look like art.*

*By placing art beside architecture within the context of the gallery, architecture is associated with art. This promotes architecture as a commodity, among other things.*

*The gallery is adequate for most small presentations but lacks flexibility in lighting, room arrangement, etc.*

*No, the space tends to stifle architecture's broadness and expansive nature.*

*Given proper placement/considerations. I believe the gallery could display any artifacts together.*

*Art and architecture are similar in that they have become commodity. Art is undisciplined and has been a commodity for a much longer time. Architecture is supposed to have a use, but current trends have made the name more important than the use. Preservation suggests commodification.*

*Yes, because both are related to each other, and the more one has sometimes is good because it requires more reflection.*

*Yes, they are the same thing.*

*The gallery is a suitable place to present architecture and art - depending upon the intended message. The preconceived expectations of entering a gallery change the perception of architecture, just as entering an architectural entity would change one's perception of art. In this case, I think it reinforced the undertone of the bank installation.*

*In the Architecture Gallery, I prefer to see architectural representations.*

*Yes.*

*No.*

*In the case of this installation, I do agree that the gallery is a suitable place to present architecture adjacent to art objects.*

*Yes. It is an appropriate facility to voice an opinion.*

*No, because the building and the entire Exchange District have a certain style dependent on the past. If good art was to be installed, I believe it would be more effective if it were art of past periods rather than present artwork which would contrast too much against the bank style itself.*

*Yes.*

*Yes because the gallery already exemplifies this criteria. It is art and architecture.*

*I don't see why not.*

*The gallery is an especially suitable place to present architecture adjacent to art objects. It is in the context of the everyday life of a particularly appropriate audience. The next place it should go is to the Russell building. I don't think its users have benefited from the exhibit as much as the users of the gallery have.*

## **5. Who's responsibility is it to preserve 'historic buildings'?**

*People. It is part of the human built environment. Therefore, we should, as a whole, preserve them.*

*It is the responsibility of the city to preserve the history but also of the people to feel a need to hold onto the city's rich past.*

*The inhabitants of the city - it is their only record of their existence - past, present and future - by preserving or restarting the continuum, i.e. re inhabiting the object.*

*It is the responsibility of architects to educate the public how important historical buildings are. It then becomes the responsibility of everyone to save our heritage.*

*Public.*

*Historic buildings are an integral component in the 'composition' and gives life to a city. Thus, it is the responsibility of all who care about and those who live in the city, to ensure the survival of those entities. City councilors, architecture associations, any one that holds the power/influence necessary - should be the force behind restoration and preservation.*

*Everybody.*

*I believe the city has to take the responsibilities in foreseeing degradation/deterioration of such prominent buildings. This may be ongoing today, but given the present uncertain future/past of this bank, it is obvious that past leaders did not see to this goal/necessity.*

*I am not sure I like the word preserve. I would rather see buildings remain. It is the responsibility of the original architects to ensure that their building is preserved.*

*It is the government's responsibility. Nobody wants to really do it, but everyone expects that 'someone' should.*

*The public.*

*It is the 'people's' responsibility to preserve historic buildings. It should be the initiative of those it most directly affects.*

*The public must convince its leaders(politicians) that we value these buildings and will invest in their preservation.*

*Architects, politicians, the people - the responsibility lies on the community as for the history they represent.*

*Society as a whole, but guided by knowledgeable individuals such as architects, historians, etc.*

*The public.*

*Government.*

*Public.*

*The general public.*

*It is everyone's responsibility. (too cliché?)*

*It is the responsibility of anyone who understands the importance of 'historic' buildings to preserve them, i.e. they are responsible for making those people who have the means to preserve them, aware of the reasons why they should do so in an attempt to convince them to act.*

## 6. Why do you think they are preserved?

*To remind us of our past, but architecturally historic buildings are like dictionaries that guide and educate architectural principles.*

*To maintain the history and sense of history.*

*History, or our built past provide a rooted condition - it provides a sense of primitive orientation to the fixed - especially in an age of the transient.*

*Historical buildings are permanent reminders of our history - origin - past ways. An education for the future. Places of meaning in society.*

*Remember that door in the closet when you were a kid. The one that went through to your own secret room? Upon pushing open the door a stale damp air permeates your nostrils and soothes your mind. When trouble arose, you would sit there for hours until everything was settled. You kept your best pieces of Lego on the little table beside your little bottle of Brut 33 for special occasions. It was a safe house, within the house. But this house was yours, not your parents. Now every time that you are in trouble, stressed, lost, etc., you long to return to the safety and security of that room: your house.*

*As to what this place can be used for... who knows? It is beautiful, yet useless, like a canvass but not so easily stored or displayed. There is not yet a gallery where old buildings are exhibited, other than the Met (the Metropolitan, New York). The space seems to scream out as an aging person that wants to feel useful, and they still are but are not sure how to. Generally, the ideas that come to mind have a public use to them, library, night club, or perhaps it could be come filled with instant tellers.*

*Preservation should not simply prevent the building(object) from deterioration, but requires that the object is restored to its former stature, that is, a useful part of the community.*

*We need preservation to hold on to what little remains of our regional identity - without it, we would complete our path to the 'Miesian' side of architecture.*

*They are preserved? What does this mean: kept hidden away in formaldehyde jars, this is perverse. They are preserved because they offer (in our commercial society) an opportunity for future potential: (money), the bank.*

*They are preserved because they "speak" to us of the past (which is gone) and because nothing can ever be built quite like that ever again. Technology and construction methods have changed enough for the different results to happen.*

*For their beauty due to the real understandings of society and the collective whole.*

*Buildings are preserved for the same reason people keep photographs of their childhood - memory. Visual reminders of what once was - affect current actions (regardless if this is considered desirable or undesirable). If you have no record of the past there is no awareness of a future. Humans have a need to locate themselves in time - visual reminders are part of this.*

*Historic significance. They contain stories about our past which tell us how Winnipeg began. The detail and craftsmanship cannot be duplicated in contemporary buildings. It is a beautiful piece of architecture.*

*For the history they represent.*

*Because they have cultural meaning.*

*They are preserved because they convey history, and life in the early stages of a city's formation.*

*The beauty, the history, the culture, and the achievement.*

*To continue the past into the future. In the case of Calgary, many of the past buildings were destroyed to make room for new buildings because of the economy. As a result, a certain character of the city is lost. Winnipeg is grateful to have such a rich culture expressed through their architecture.*

*Style.*

*Because they now serve a different purpose: bank, landmark, monument. We now have to decide what this new purpose is. With (re-) birth, new memories are created: there is a presence of reality.*

*In a society which thrives on technology and change, it is very easy to lose control of what we have in order to get what we want. Winnipeg maintains history which makes it a much richer city than others. What we have (past) gives us a better realization of what we want!*

*Historic buildings are preserved for the same reason that some people look to decipher an intended message in a museum/gallery exhibit. I think it has to do with situating oneself on some type of level ground, to have a feeling of control over one's life. Not understanding the gallery exhibit makes one unstable. Understanding gives one stability. Understanding one's place in time gives stability. Historic buildings are landmarks people can use to situate themselves, not only on the street, but also in time when they have an understanding of its history. The bank is an exhibit for the representation of a particular history, place and culture which will suffice for communication to the users of Main Street. The exhibit, when it was in the bank, reinforced this role. If the bank was ever demolished, what would remain for representation: photographs and videos? Who would see the photographs? What meaning would they convey. Winnipeg would take one more step towards becoming anyplace, or more like a place that has forgotten its origins. The important thing to remember is that once the building is gone physically, it will soon disappear from memory. Eventually the bank becomes whatever the teller of his-story wants it to be. Any of these questions would make a great essay topic.*

### **Additional comments**

*The bank facade in all its grandeur and austerity, once represented a unified dream of a society, of a culture. It was a statement of the power of economy and the high potential for success. The unified dream of a people has dissipated... the banking hall is but a memory. I think that it would be an injustice to try to reinvigorate what it once was or to introduce a new type of use. Use the banking hall for what it has become - a place for silenced celebration. The bank's screen represents all that a single dream can be and its interior becomes a place for self discovery.*

*"The museum is a place in which the objects, removed from their original locations and their normal functions, become merely images of themselves, on display in a boundless hall of mirrors..."*

*credited to Ignaci de Sola Morales.*

*I liked some of the other suggestions made during the installation. (music, theatre, restaurants, housing, etc.) However these do not seem too feasible.*

*What can you do with this building that will attract people to such a difficult location, that will be profitable considering it is a high rent area, with little usable space,...*

*Tony, I am not sure what can be done with this building, considering the short amount of time i have spent thinking about it, but I am positive that, in a city such as Winnipeg, with so few places, there must be some use for it.*

## **Appendix 3:**

**Sample list of questions used as basis for video interviews.**

### **University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture Thesis Research Video Interview**

#### **Questions to consider for interview response.**

1. How do you feel about the relevance of the cemetery? Is it an important place for you? Do you think it should be closer to the living city or removed completely from it? How would you feel if a cemetery were placed within the city centre? Would it make a difference?
2. How do you feel with the observation made by sociologists and historians that the responsibility of death has been taken out of both the family and the individual's hands and has instead become institutionalized by doctors, nurses and the funeral profession? Has this lead to our distancing and resultant anxiety of death?
3. What do you remember of the funeral ceremony, the place where the ritual, ceremony or act of death was celebrated? How important was the fact that the ceremony occurred in a communal setting? Do you prefer churches, funeral homes, the grave site or some other place of significance to celebrate the ritual of death?
4. What is the relevance of the body? Specifically, I am referring to the notion of the place of burial or ash location and whether it becomes a place of significance (a place you frequent to evoke the memory of the person buried or placed there). Are the places where one lived i.e. House, cottage, place of work, etc., more 'sacred' as places of memory evocation than is the cemetery?
5. Do you think death should be hushed and left as an experience of the individual? Or is it something that needs to be shared by the community?
6. What are your perceptions of your own death? Are you afraid? Do you think about it often?
7. Why is there a desire to remember the dead? Is there really a need for the cemetery anymore as a place in the city?

#### Some Notes:

Please be relaxed in the interview. There is no need to answer all the questions during the interview or have them rehearsed beforehand. The questions above serve only as a general guideline. I am interested in your perceptions, feelings, and experience. In no way do I want to pry feelings which should remain personal. If you specifically do not wish to answer a certain question(s) let me know. If you have other questions, etc. that you think might be relevant do not hesitate to mention them before and/or during the interview.

The taped interview will be used strictly for academic purposes and will in no way be released to the public or media without prior consent.

Thank you,