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Between presence and absence: Phenomenal interstitiality in Eisenman's Guardiola House

Introduction

This paper investigates Peter Eisenman's notion of interstitial space through a critical reading of his un-built project for the Guardiola House of 1988. It is a study of how Eisenman discovered and developed a mode of design which employs a distinctive system of tracing and imprinting. The absent-present traces are the marks or indexical signs which record the steps of a narrative series of transformations, involving the overlapping of figures as exemplified by the process diagrams of Eisenman's many projects.

Eisenman's trace is a consequence of his intention that one is to literally read the building, which stems from postmodernism's development of a linguistic model for architecture, in establishing a theoretical basis of meanings and messages, so architecture could be a form of communication or language (Jencks 1977: pp. 6, 39). This formalism, reflected in Eisenman's insistence on applying a linguistic model to his work and criticism derived from the analytical work initiated by his dissertation (Eisenman 2006). Eisenman's early work employed Noam Chomsky's structuralist linguistics as a heuristic or exploratory device to uncover the syntactic deep structure (Chomsky 1972: pp. 14-32) of architecture as a means of providing its sign of intentionality (Eisenman 2006: p.25). Whilst Chomsky's grammars primarily occupied Eisenman during his formative years, this study demonstrates that the Guardiola House marks the point of a critical shift with the onset of poststructuralism via Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. Here, Eisenman moves from generative elemental structures to the complexities influenced by the deconstruction of these very structures, resulting in something which embraces the coexistence of difference. The Guardiola project is a pivotal moment whereby Eisenman sought to establish innovative ways of conceiving a textual approach to architecture (Kaji-O'Grady 2001: p. 147; Eisenman 1973: 319).

There is a key distinction between his work before and after the Guardiola House, where the traces formed between the constituent figures of the design (grids, cubes, els, etc.) become more important than the figures themselves. The Guardiola House introduced a new form of the trace, that of the interstitial, as a condition of the in-between and the simultaneous coexistence of absent-present figures. This interstitial condition is an innovative form of spatiality, where

Eisenman developed the trace through the operation of imprinting. This is not simply a means of pushing into a surface, but an interpenetration through masses, constituting the blurred geometries not seen in the work prior to the Guardiola House. This notion of interstitiality is a significant shift, which re-framed his whole mode of operating after the Guardiola House.

The *poché* is the pocket of space, found in the thickened walls of medieval castles; an idea fundamental to the work of Louis Kahn, who conceived of walls as hollowed stones, whereby interstitial spaces are contained within solid walls (Brownlee & De Long 1991: pp.56, 68). Eisenman, however, achieves this through a transformative process, where these interstitial thickened masses are a record of the presence of absent steps. Moreover, his innovation of the interstitial is more than just the record of procedural traces, in that it brings the element of chance and open-endedness into the reinterpretation of traditional architectural ideas and practices of designing, developing the *poché* into something more.

Although the trace has been much discussed, existing scholarship overlooks the significance of the Guardiola House in the interpretation of Eisenman's work and thinking (Allen 2006: pp. 49-65; Benjamin 2003: pp. 306-310; Davidson 2006: pp. 25-31). This research remedies this gap by asking: what significance, in terms of theory, culture, and program, does this notion of the interstitial have for Eisenman's work?

The Guardiola House is a diagram of Eisenman's projects, processes, and spatial thinking. The Guardiola is used as a "House of Guards" or a kaleidoscopic lens to observe and speculate on his work. This paper is divided into three parts. Firstly, in order to engage in a heuristic exploration of the house's design process, a reconstruction according to the published documentation was made. Secondly, this is followed by a close reading to compare these documents to the actual development of the design as per the archived documentation. And lastly, a critical interpretation of these processes is made to discuss some of the important discrepancies between the published and archived processes which have implications on Eisenman's later work as well as the wider architectural discourse.

Fig. 1 3D section of Eisenman's Guardiola House (1988) showing the interstitial blurring of orthogonal and rotated figures [CGI: Author, 2013]

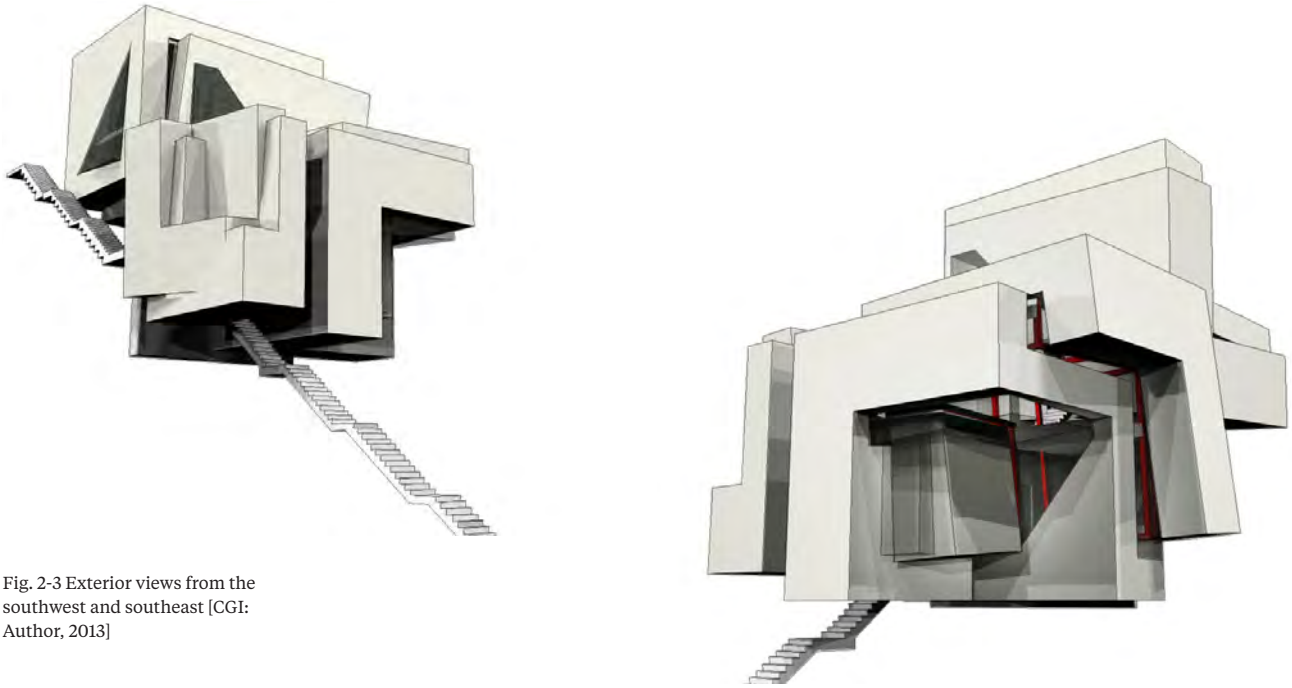


Fig. 2-3 Exterior views from the southwest and southeast [CGI: Author, 2013]

1. The published process

Whereas the technique of superimposition of figures was employed in many of Eisenman's previous projects, especially his *Cities of Artificial Excavation* (Eisenman et al 1994), the La Villette project was the first to distinguish between mere layering with tracing and imprinting, and it is the Guardiola House which first executes this distinction in three-dimensions (Eisenman 1997: p. 134). Eisenman's previous projects dealt with figure-figure relationships primarily in plan, that is, in horizontal two-dimensions, and the vertical third-dimension was achieved with simple extrusions, where the sections did little justice to the more complex plans (Eisenman 1997: p. 134). He argued that the idea of *chora* developed a new condition, such that it is a pivotal idea for introducing tracing and imprinting into three-dimensions (Eisenman 1997: p. 134; Eisenman 2004: p. 51).

In the project's published description, Eisenman is interested in an "other" definition of place, which he finds in the definition of Plato's *chora* or receptacle "as something between place and object, between container and contained" (Eisenman 1989: pp. 9-10). Eisenman then likens the receptacle to sand on a beach, a record of movement, leaving traces and imprints on the sand with each wave receding to the water, or similarly like a foot leaving an imprint in the sand, but traces of residual sand remains on the foot (Eisenman 1989: pp. 9-10).

Derrida describes the *chora* as place, interval, space, or spacing (Derrida, Eisenman, & Kipnis 1997: p. 108), yet it "is neither sensible nor intelligible, it is a third something which does not belong to being ... it is place, but place is nothing" (Derrida, Eisenman, & Lesser 1997: p. 70; Derrida 1997: pp. 15-16). Paradoxically, Eisenman attempts to make sensible the presence of absence of *chora* such that La Villette sought "to bring into figuration an idea of chora" (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis, Leeser, & Rizzi 1997a: pp. 10-12). Yet Derrida reiterates that the *chora* "is that 'something' which is not a thing" (Derrida 1997: p. 18), and can only exist in one's thinking, definable yet paradoxically indefinable

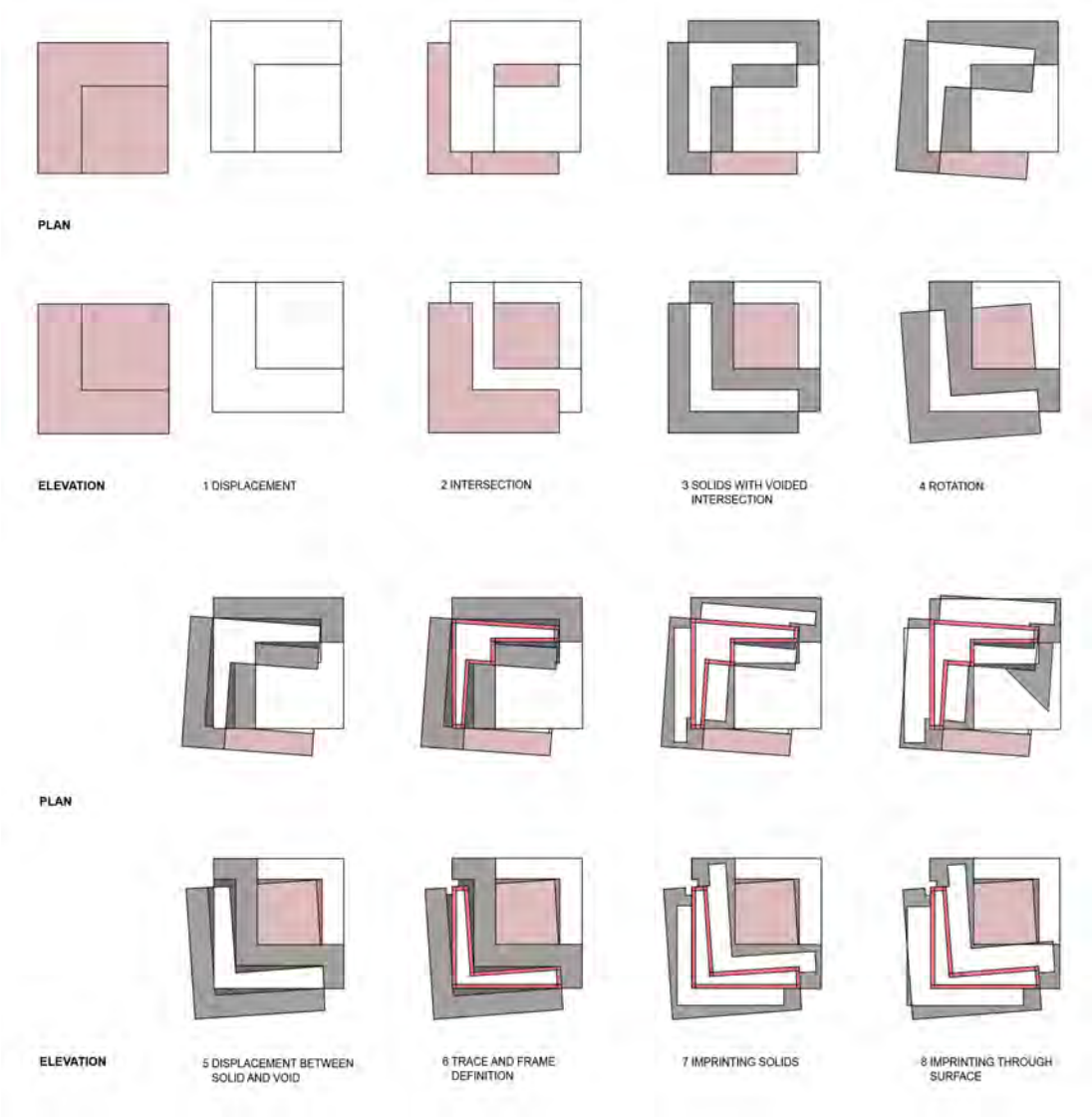


Fig. 4 Eisenman's process diagrams for the Guardiola House (1988), based on Eisenman 1989: p. 12 [Drawing: Author, 2018]

(Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis, Lesser, & Rizzi 1997b: p. 91; Derrida, Eisenman, Pelissier, & Rizzi 1997: p. 35).

Although the *chora* cannot be represented, Andrew Benjamin explains that the *chora* nevertheless has a "productive potential" (Benjamin 2000: pp. 15-16) which is characterized by movement and process. Eisenman interprets the *chora* as a malleable putty-like substance and refers to the Guardiola House as a kind of receptacle that can receive imprints with the potential to simultaneously change its shape and the shape of another; essentially a three-dimensional notation and recording mechanism (Eisenman 1997: p. 134). Thus, he translates, illustrates, or even misinterprets the *chora* with the metaphor of the foot-in-sand, in which two entities (figure and ground) have a reciprocal effect on one another, affecting each other, constituting a "receptacle-like" interstitial condition.

What follows is a discussion of the reconstruction and recording of the Guardiola's formal process based on the published process diagrams but attempted in digital three-dimensions, where the interstitial traces and imprints mark the movement of the transformations. Here, the process begins with an initial condition of a white cube in which a red copy has been removed or subtracted to produce an

el-form (L1). This subtraction forms the basis of the remainder of the iterative design process. The el-form is then doubled and displaced (L2). These are then duplicated and mirrored, horizontally and vertically, to produce the four external el-volumes of the house (L1-L4).

Within the upper (L1-L2) and lower els (L3-L4), the intersections appear as red frames, which Eisenman calls "traces" in his original project description (Eisenman 1989: p.10). These ghosted geometries marking the absent presences of the intersecting volumes seemingly invade the interior of the house.

The four initial els (L1-L4) are duplicated, scaled, and transformed, forming a second set of four interior els (L1A-L4A), which intersect with the external els. This is the interlocking or interpenetration stage of the process, which produces two components. The first component is the imprinted object, where the red interior els are subtracted from the white exterior els. This is the interstitial envelope or *poché*, where the absent-present interior red surfaces are the floors, ceilings, and walls of the house. The second component is the reciprocal of the first component, that is, the red parts sticking out of the white, which become the "windows". The various els are then combined with the pragmatic elements of the house, which are not explained in the project diagrams or description, such as the internal doors, floors, and stairs.

The traces were key in providing interpretations of particular cultural and social aspects of the villa type, that is, the type's anteriority and interiority. Anteriority describes the cultural aspects of architecture, particularly in relation to the evolution or history of types ("conceived space" in terms of Lefebvre's and Soja's trialectics of spatiality), whereas interiority describes the social and empirical aspects of architecture ("perceived space"), such as its functions, perceptions, and spatial organization (Eisenman 1999: p. 37; Soja 2000: pp. 17-19). Here, the white cubic geometries of the Guardiola House set it apart from its natural context, yet they respond to the specific conditions of the place, such as the suspended tumbling of el-cubes down the slope of the site. Though abstracted, the reverberations of these cubes reflect the tumbling of waves on the beach where the house is sited. Challenging social norms, there is an unconventional glass floor to see the sea and the non-structural red frames interrupt the space and movement within the house, such as the frame that cuts through the dining space. Moreover, floors are at times slightly slanted to disturb one's perception of a horizontal surface, and windows are of various unconventional shapes. The interstitial *poché* captures the presence of absent figural volumes as part of a procedural logic, but more importantly Eisenman has translated the *poché* into something more by making the interstitial condition evoke a sense of experiential difference produced by the architecture.

2. The archived process

Eisenman's absent-present traces of the process, evident since his early houses projects, are paradoxical, in the sense that the result may not necessarily correspond to the process of sequential series of transformations. There is an apparent linearity to the published transformation diagrams. But in reality, they are "fictional" and an elaborate means of storytelling, as revealed in the archived drawings which were studied at the CCA, where the various analytical sketches reveal a nonlinear and heuristic decision-making process.

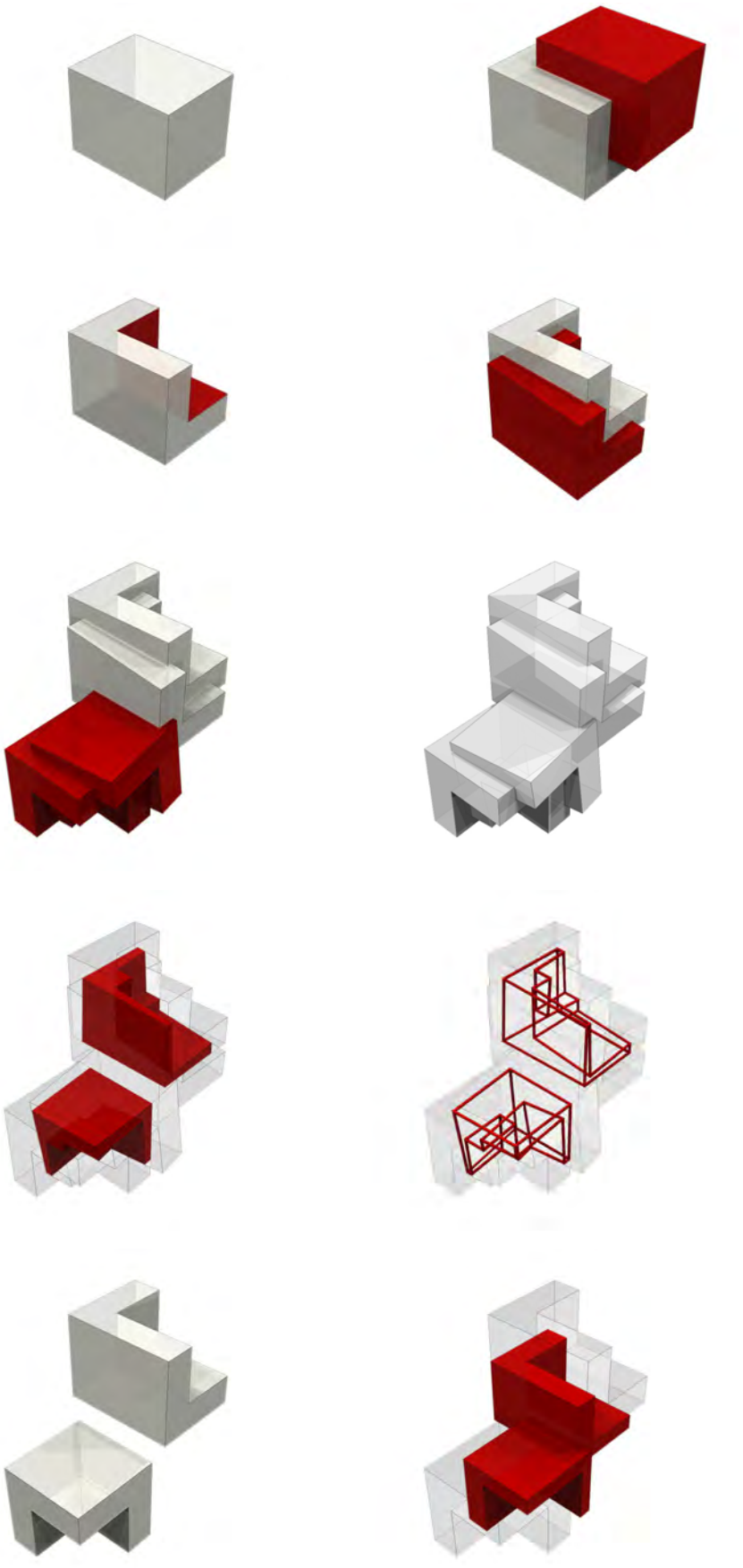


Fig. 5-6 The initial condition of a white cube which is duplicated, displaced, and superimposed [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 7-8 Subtraction producing an el-form (L1), which is then copied, displaced, and rotated, for the upper volume (L1 and L2) [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 9-10 Mirroring the two els to create the lower volume (L3 and L4), producing the four external els (L1-L4) [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 11-12 Marking the intersections as frames [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 13-14 The two orthogonal els (L1 and L3) are copied and transformed (L1A and L3A) [CGI: Author, 2013]

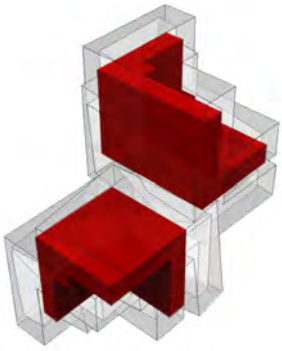
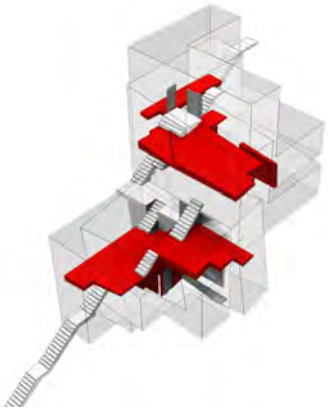


Fig. 15-16 The two rotated els (L2 and L4) are copied and transformed (L2A and L4A) [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 17-18 The transformed (internal) els (L1A-L4A) intersect with the external els (L1-L4) [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 19-20 Subtraction of the internal els from the external els producing i) the interstitial and ii) the interpenetrations (residual parts of the internal els from the subtraction) piercing through the external els to become glazed elements [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig 21-22 Further intersections of duplicated els (L5 and L6) which are subtracted to produce window slits [CGI: Author, 2013]



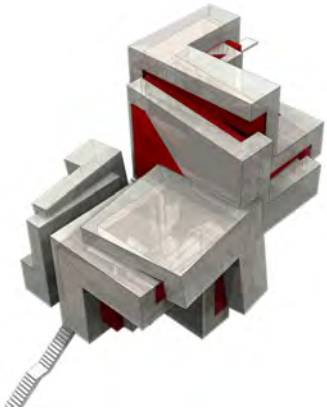
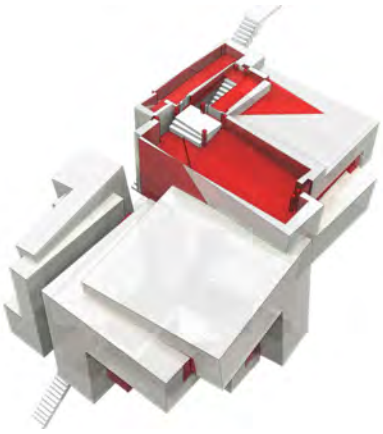


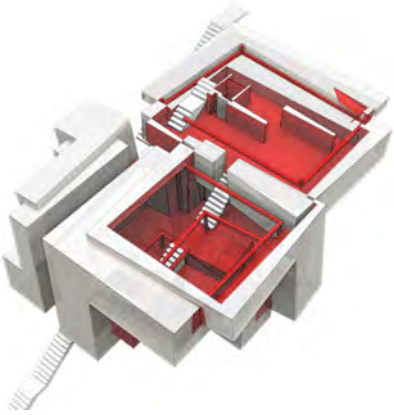
Fig 23-24 Lower els (L3 and L4) extend to produce the lower detached volume (L3B and L4B) [CGI: Author, 2013]

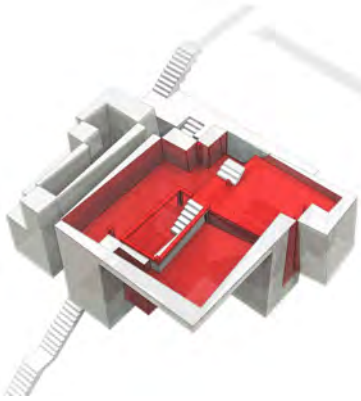
Fig 25-26 Additional elements of the house: stairs, floors, doors, etc. combined with the results of the above process [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 27 Assemblage of all the elements with foundations [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 28 3D longitudinal section [CGI: Author, 2013]







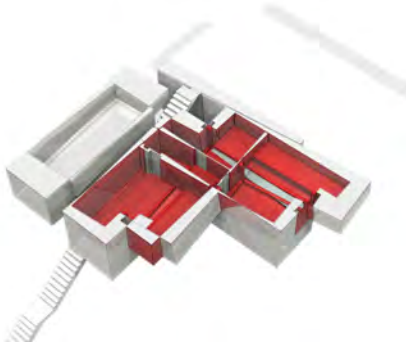


Fig. 29 3D cross section through upper els [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 30 3D cross section through intersection of the els [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 31 3D cross section through lower els [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 32 3D upper level, master bedroom [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 33 3D intermediate level, living and dining [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 34 3D entrance level with glass floor [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 35 3D lower level, son's/guests' rooms [CGI: Author, 2013]

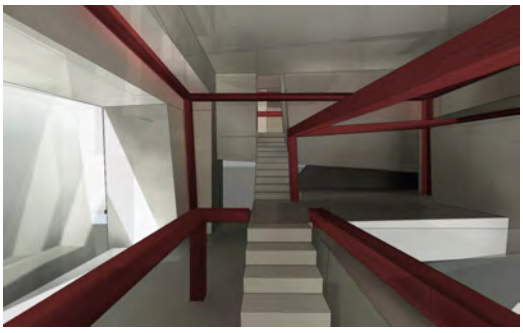


Fig. 36 Interior of entrance level [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 37 Interior of entrance level glass floor [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 38 Interior of intermediate level with red frame cutting through space [CGI: Author, 2013]

Fig. 39 Interior of lower level room with triangular window [CGI: Author, 2013]

Eisenman's traces constitute a morphological fiction, in which a rhetorical narrative retells the story of how the form came about. Robin Evans, who sees the products as generally more interesting and complex compared to their justifications, claims that Eisenman attempts to protect his objects from the viewer by creating a complex narrative (Evans 1985: pp.69-70). The numerous process diagrams of Eisenman's projects imply a sense of movement, time, sequence, and multiple possibilities, which become ironically static in the built result (Evans 1985: p. 72). Eisenman intends his projects to be read as a process. He insists on a complex set of procedures that produced the object—a palimpsest of traces—yet he freezes these in time and space.

The interstitial traces here, resulting from a multi-layered process, are what I call "flattened" in a controlled, step-by-step process to introduce a discourse on iterative geometries. Eisenman's published diachronic process diagrams are flattened in the resulting project, as it is ultimately blurred and made synchronic, but within the representation of this process, he selectively re-orders and re-represents the order of events. Through this anachronic reduction or flattening (deliberate chronological inconsistency or discrepancy), Eisenman intended to idealize and linearize the real pen on paper process, reducing its trial-and-error decisiveness, by creating a post-factual "perfect fiction" of the project's becoming (Leeser 2013).

3. Two discrepancies

There are two important discrepancies between the published and archived processes; these regard the unexplained steps of "rotation" and "imprinting through surface", as per the published process diagrams. These discrepancies revealed an underlying significance of such procedures, as they were not just steps within the process, but fundamental moves, which actually motivate the development of the interstitial condition.

3.1 The tumbling of el-cubes

The transformative operation of rotation in the Guardiola House is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it starts a discourse about the Guardiola project's relationship to the site, and secondly, it is the first project which used rotation in three-dimensions to produce the interstitial.

Daniel Libeskind, in an article on the Guardiola House, inaccurately writes that Eisenman's rotation for Guardiola was a "rotation without motive" (Libeskind 1989). He had already used rotation in the *Cities of Artificial Excavations* where complex plans were produced, combining orthogonal and rotated geometries. It is important to note that the published process resulted from parts of a much wider development in the actual process, which was a development of House X (1975). The Guardiola project started as half of House X, which used el-forms (fig. 10 and fig. 41), but had not yet employed rotating or imprinting, as seen in the early unpublished schemes. In studying the archived drawings, I discovered that Eisenman, only later in the design development, suddenly decided to rotate or tumble the el-cubes into each other, as in the rolling of dice, whereby chance and unpredictability enters into the project. After this, he re-tells the entire process as a linear narrative to re-elaborate the transformations producing this house. The rotation is a pivotal moment in this project, yet Eisenman never talks it. At a certain stage, he decided to rotate the el-cubes, but what informed this?

In an interview with Thomas Leeser, who worked with Eisenman on this project, Leeser comments, "I remember the rotation was a big step in this *poché*" (Leeser 2013). Furthermore, he believes that this rotational shift may have been to do

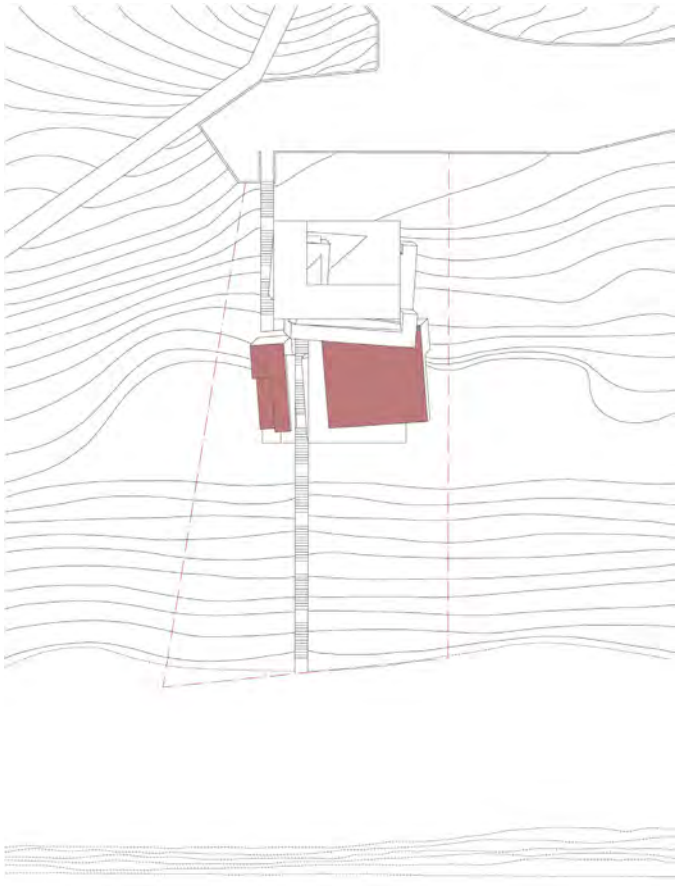


Fig. 40 Guardiola House, site plan (based on Eisenman 1989: p. 19) with site boundary from archived plan; rotation of volumes to southern boundary (lower dashed line) [Drawing: Author, 2013]

with the site, as arbitrary as that may be. On inspection of the archived site plan, it appears that the house's orthogonal volumes are parallel to the orthogonal site boundaries, whereas particular sides of the rotated volumes seem parallel to the diagonal site boundaries, such that they could be referring to the diagonal sides of the site (fig. 40).

The early orthogonal scheme of the Guardiola House is similar to House X. Eisenman here sought to explore interstitial matter, but produced only a singular reading of straight elements, horizontally and vertically. In the published scheme, the rotation tumbled the cubes into each other but, also unified the geometries into a coherent assemble, whereby he presented the interstitial condition as a double reading of absent-present traces of diagonal and orthogonal elements (fig. 41-43).

The rotational shift in the Guardiola House clearly comes from Eisenman's transformative operations employed in his earlier work, even as early as House III (1969-71). However, as seen in House III, the two systems remain distinct, that is, a rotated cube clearly overlapped with an orthogonal cube, where the geometries were not yet merged. As opposed to his earlier houses, where the formal operations were entirely autonomous without external references, Eisenman's cities projects employed the site to generate the forms and alignment, such as the rotation in the IBA Housing project, which was derived from the historical

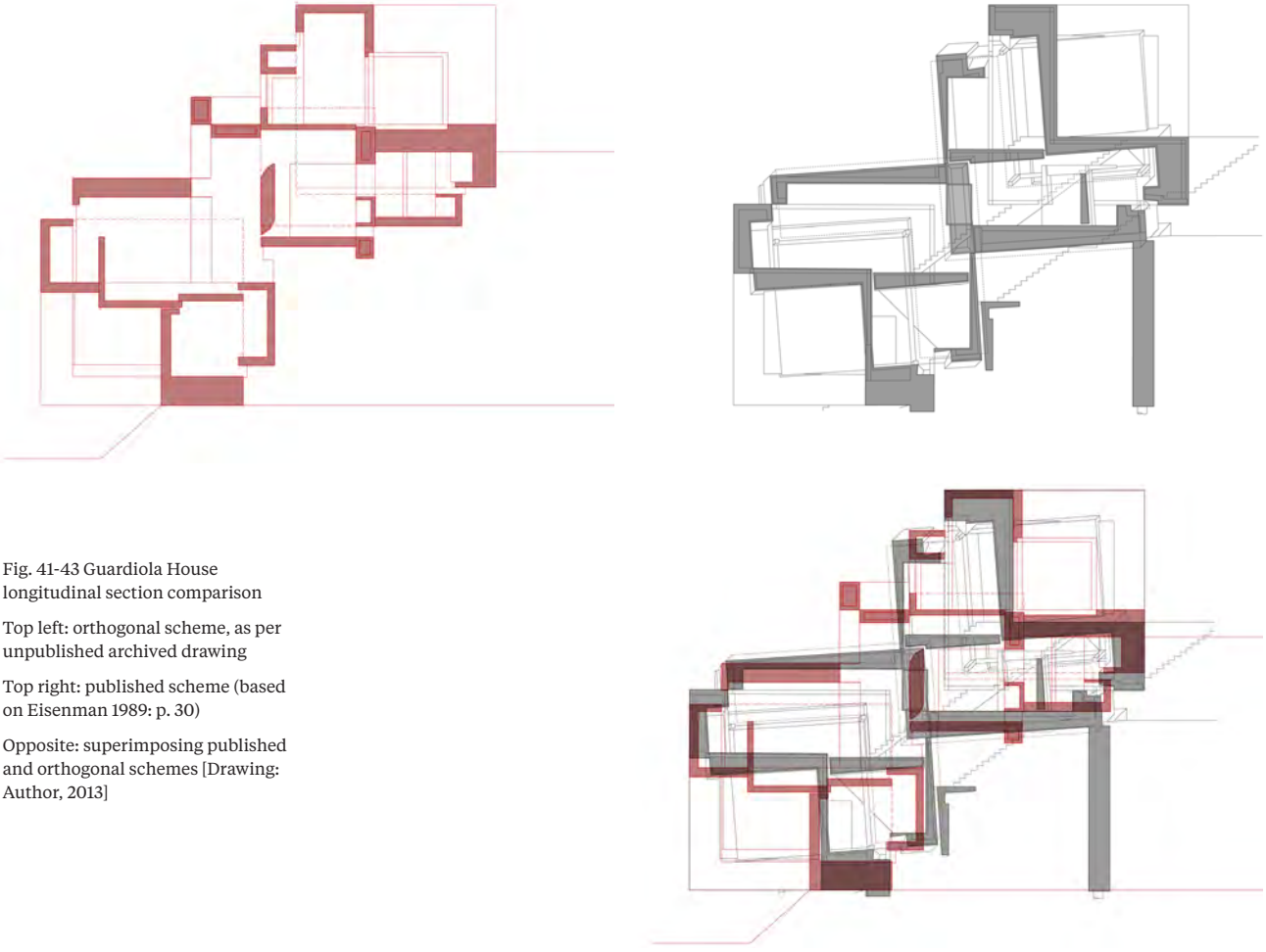


Fig. 41-43 Guardiola House longitudinal section comparison

Top left: orthogonal scheme, as per unpublished archived drawing

Top right: published scheme (based on Eisenman 1989: p. 30)

Opposite: superimposing published and orthogonal schemes [Drawing: Author, 2013]

urban context. For Eisenman, the site is where the story is, and he is interested in making those traces or paths legible (Leeser 2013). Here, we can assume the Guardiola's rotation must have also been derived from the site, and due to its steepness, he rotated in three-dimensions to allow for a more complex vertical quality in the design.

This Guardiola shift, however, goes one step further, as it is more generative—the two systems are blurred to create a third. The figural matrices are absorbed and crystallized by the interstitial condition, in which the constituent geometries are hybridized as absent-present traces and imprints. The interstitial is a new condition between interior and exterior, which is neither yet both at the same time.

The rotational shift produces a discussion of disturbing the idea of surface; the interstitial condition produced gives the house a degree of abstraction, which does not refer to any previous conception of architectural convention. The rotation blurs the entire system by re-conceiving the floor, windows, structure, etc. The elements are not just structural, but become something other. The Guardiola House is not a house in a traditional sense, there are no conventional rooms or windows, as the functions are not necessarily associated with spaces. As Eisenman notes, "The resultant space is clearly different from the space of a house, even though it clearly may function as a house" (Eisenman 1997: p. 134). The architectural elements do not necessarily contain, instead they blur inside and outside, frame and object, and rather than resulting from mere functional necessity, the architecture is intended to be part of a notional and indexical logic (Eisenman 1997: 134). Nevertheless, certain idiosyncrasies particular to the functioning and appearance of the house add more determining factors to the design beyond merely recording a process.

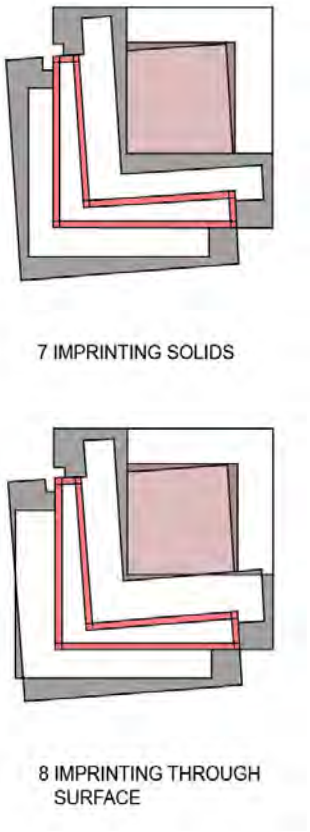


Fig. 44 Guardiola House process diagrams as per original project description [Drawing: Author, 2018]

3.2 Literal and phenomenal interstitiality

Eisenman already had an idea of a house following half of House X. The rotation was a key step, which distinguishes the Guardiola House from its predecessor, by opening up the possibility of an interstitial blurring of orthogonal and rotated figures. This interstitial condition is more than just the meeting or encounter of the foot in sand, but produces a new conception of space, whereby he conceived space as interstitial or in-between, blurring interior and exterior, structure and space.

A particular move in the published process diagrams points to an interesting discovery made in relation to the archived drawings. Substantial to the development and understanding of the interstitial, resulting from imprinting, are steps 7 and 8 (fig. 44). This is the point of the second discrepancy, which relates to Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky's distinction between literal and phenomenal transparency (Rowe & Slutzky 1982, 1976: p. 161). Following their discussion of transparency, Eisenman's work can be understood to be an investigation of the textualization of architectural form and formal relationships, stemming from their distinction between a "literal transparency", which is inherent to substance and physical layering and a phenomenal transparency, which is more conceptual and ambiguous, being inherent to spatial or compositional organization. This paper poses a distinction between what is termed a "literal and a phenomenal interstitiality".

"Phenomenal interstitiality" suggests notions of the ambiguous interpenetrations of the figures producing the design, as seen in step 8 (imprinting through surface), where the interior el pierces through the exterior el in order to manifest

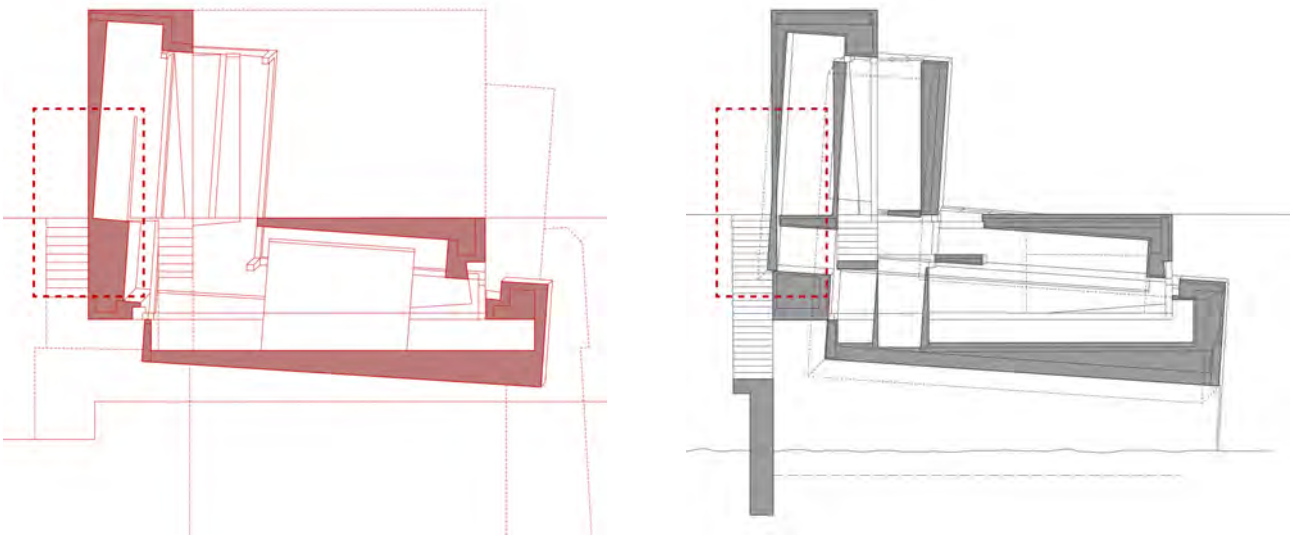


Fig. 45-46 Cross section comparison of Guardiola House

Left: "Literal interstitiality" of a diagonal space inside the red solid (diagonal inside orthogonal) in an unpublished archived scheme

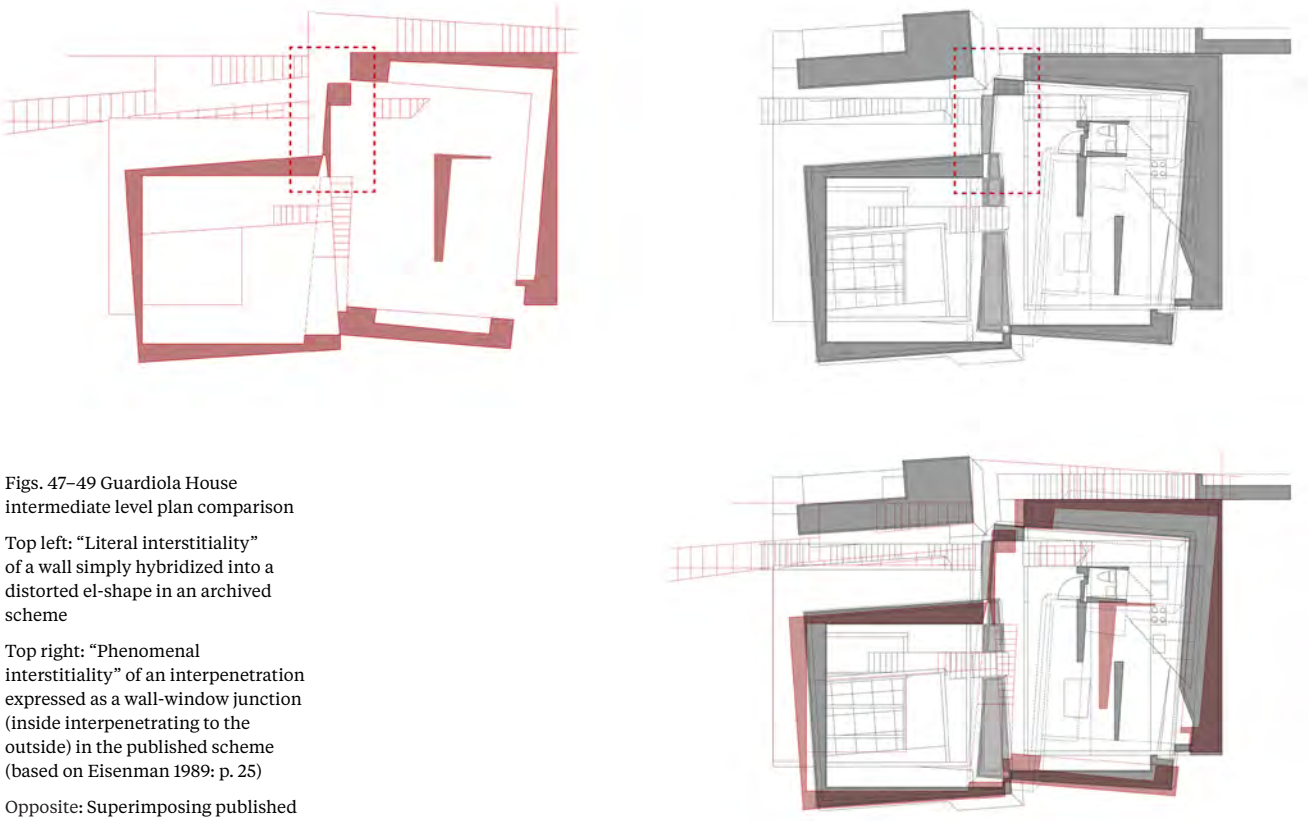
Right: "Phenomenal interstitiality" of an interpenetration (diagonal passing through orthogonal) in the published scheme (based on Eisenman 1989: p. 31) [Drawing: Author, 2013]

and express the interstitial as a hybrid condition. This is in contrast to a condition of "literal interstitiality", where the figures do not fully interpenetrate each other, as seen in step 7 (imprinting solids) in which there is less interaction between interior and exterior els.

Hence, the interpenetration of step 8 becomes particularly significant, as leaving the house at step 7 would have resulted, nevertheless with a blurring of figures, but one not perceivable unless seen in section, such that the interstitial would have lacked a visible or physical engagement. Eisenman saw the need further to express the condition of the in-between in the Guardiola House by making it experienced in its projected built fabric. This he achieves by forcing his translation of Plato's (via Derrida's) notion of the *chora* (as a metaphorical foot-in-sand). As per the published scheme of the Guardiola House, Eisenman intended the interstitial phenomenon to engage the viewer with a more sophisticated configuration of the rotated and orthogonal geometries of the design, where they are merged and hybridized through interpenetration. Rowe and Slutzky's phenomenal transparency is hence deeply embedded in Eisenman's conceptual and experiential thinking, evident in his introduction of a phenomenal interstitiality in which interpenetrating and tumbling absent-present geometries are visibly expressed as a new form of the trace, creating an interplay of simultaneous systems both inside and outside the building (fig. 45-49).

This imprinting stage of Eisenman's published diagrams for the Guardiola House is an example of the anachronic flattening of the steps of the real process, as in reality this stage is a whole series of drawings, but reduced to one step in the published diagrammatic representations. This paradox of the representation of process reveals significant aspects of Eisenman's work and thinking, opening up the multiplicity and textuality of architecture as a discursive practice. The difference between steps 7 and 8 is a difference between Eisenman's real and fictional processes, and their coming together. The clearly distinct moves of Eisenman producing the interstitial condition in step 7 and his articulation of representing this interstitiality in step 8 reflects his intention to linearize a process into an ideal narrative, but also captures the idiosyncrasies of his exploration and expression of this interstitial phenomenon that he discovers in the Guardiola design.

Eisenman legitimated the traces of the Guardiola House through both an empirical and procedural logic. Certain practicalities such as the windows become integrated into the logic of tracing and imprinting. The empirical logic of making the house *work* combines with the procedural logic of *producing* (and *reading*) traces and imprints, and the notion of "phenomenal interstitiality" makes this particularly apparent, as the ambiguity of the design is physically manifested as transparent elements of architecture. For instance, the windows of the house are designed according to the process, that is, the interpenetrations are manifested as glazed components, so that the process (of form making) produces the practicalities (functions) of the house. This illustrates Andrew Benjamin's claim that the interstitial seeks to break or destabilize the conventional and homological relation between form and function (Benjamin 2003: 308). The Guardiola House hence re-conceives conventional design processes and questions the different possibilities of geometric systems and their becoming into built reality.



Figs. 47–49 Guardiola House intermediate level plan comparison

Top left: "Literal interstitiality" of a wall simply hybridized into a distorted el-shape in an archived scheme

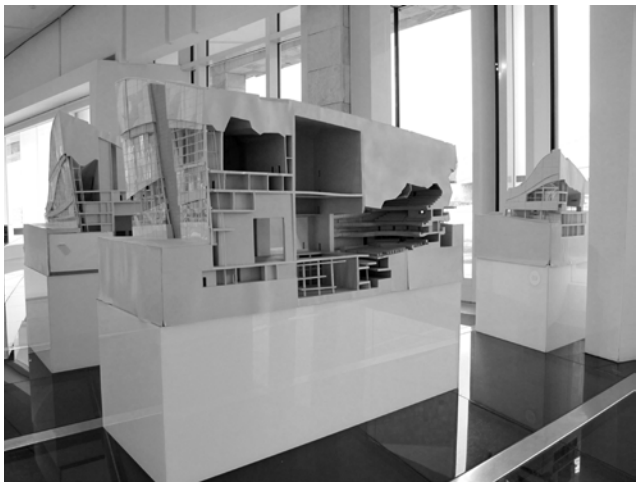
Top right: "Phenomenal interstitiality" of an interpenetration expressed as a wall-window junction (inside interpenetrating to the outside) in the published scheme (based on Eisenman 1989: p. 25)

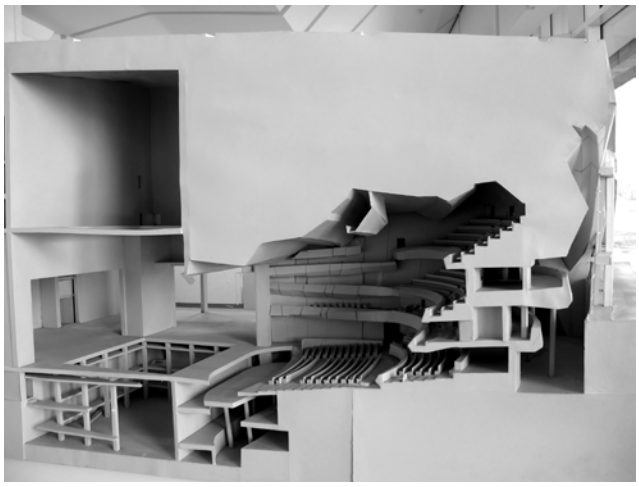
Opposite: Superimposing published and archived schemes [Drawing: Author, 2013]

Eisenman's early works can be seen as examples of literal transparency of the physical overlapping or superimposition of figures and their transformations. A shift then occurs with the Guardiola House, which demonstrates a phenomenal transparency, that is, a superposition or merging of figures to form the interstitial condition. Hence, as opposed to two systems merely overlapped, such as House III, the two systems are integrated and become part of each other, redefining conventional dialectics of architecture, such as inside/outside and figure/ground.

The Guardiola project took the trace to three or more dimensions, by laying the founding operations and principles of the trace as a form of interstitiality. This

anticipates the remainder of Eisenman's projects, such as the hybridized geometries of the Aronoff Center in Cincinnati and culminated particularly in the Santiago complex in Spain. As seen in the model (fig. 50-51) there is 10m of this interstitial matter, where the internal volumes appear subtracted out of the external artificial ground. Here figure and ground is made ambiguous; there is no clear distinction. Instead, there is the interstitial.





Figs. 50–51 Sectional model through Eisenman's City of Culture of Galicia showing hybridized interstitial geometries between the artificial landscape and interior spaces [Photos: Author, 2012]

Conclusions

Eisenman treats architecture as a form of text—narratives told by his architecture. The traces of the Guardiola's *published* process constitute a morphological fiction, part of Eisenman's emphasis on a rhetorical and protective strategy of narrating transformations to retell the story of how the form actually came about as per the *archived* process. Eisenman blurs speculation about whether he based the Guardiola House on a geometric framework (algorithm) or the programme of a house (inhabitation). His objective was both to produce a linear process and to design a house; which became blurred in the resulting project. He blurs the logic of a linear procedure with heuristic exploration of the interstitial condition.

Eisenman's critical engagement with the design process yields results often not achievable by more conventional practices, as his method of design has the ability to make explicit what is often concealed in an unexamined design process, exposing something inherently embedded in the discipline of architecture itself (Allen 2006: 60-61). Such is the case of the innovation of the interstitial condition, which operates between the linearity and nonlinearity of his processes, and makes something out of it, manifesting the steps of a process of becoming and materializing its accidental or chanceful elements.

Though Eisenman intended to code the process, his work subsequently became more sophisticated to the point of non-legibility, and thereby experienced as ornamental effects. The interstitial condition constitutes a paradox of "necessary ornament", whereby the traces are both essential and decorative. The traces are both structural (or apparently so) and indexical—recording a process.

Due to the increasing complexity of the work, the possibility of reading for an intellectual interpretation receded, and certain experiential effects (such as the unexpected dramatic experiences of the grid-lattice at the Wexner Center) took

over the status of interpretation. This created a dialectic between the intended "formal readings" and the unintended "experiential aspects", where formal intellectualization found in tracing the design process stopped being ends in themselves and instead became techniques employed to achieve these unusual experiential sensibilities. Eisenman termed these new sensations of unintended experiences as "affects" (Kipnis 1996: pp. 175-176).

The traces consequently became different from his intentions; they take on an experiential and perceptual quality. The phenomenally interstitial condition of the Guardiola process is innovative—traces record the in-between steps of a design process, as well as producing in-between and ambiguous unconventional architectural elements. In this sense, Eisenman is decorating the house with traces of its own design process, as indexical decoration, yet these decorative traces, as discussed, are also the essential structural and conceptual elements of the house.

The Guardiola's tumbling el-forms are not just iterations of transformations (as per contemporary digital processes), but these transformations are indexed into the outcome. The resulting forms are not just decorative elements, but reinterpretations of traditional architectural ideas and practices of designing a house. It is not just a house, as the interstitial condition starts to question the notion of house-ness (fig. 52). The Guardiola House is thus a *topos* of production, a space of speculation, suggesting alternative ways of designing spaces and articulating functions—as affects of accidental intentions. The interpenetrations constitute the "windows" of various unconventional shapes, whilst the slanted floors and interrupting frames start to engage with the users of the house, challenging the limits of inhabitability.

Fig. 52 Interior of entrance level of the Guardiola House showing the phenomenally interstitial glass floor, which records the in-between steps of a design process whilst simultaneously redefining conventional architectural elements [CGI: Author, 2013]

This house is not only a project, but also an idea and a process of the interstitial trace which becomes paramount to Eisenman's work. The Guardiola House is a resonating and reverberating "idea-process" leaving traces and imprints in his work like the waves on a beach. The Guardiola project proposes a new spatiality after modernism's open limitless space, where the interstitial condition expresses an ambiguity of systems, which not only records the design process, but also redefines architectural elements.

The rotation or tumbling of el-cubes through themselves suggests that Eisenman has moved to the unpredictable, complex, and interpretive "events" of post-structuralism. The Guardiola House happened at a key moment in Eisenman's work, where he no longer worked with the rigid rule-bound transformations of

Chomsky's structuralism, rather, the phenomenal interstitiality of the Guardiola is linked to Derrida's deconstruction, as critique and maintenance. The project maintains the cube, but challenges the spatial conceptions of classical and modern architecture. The Guardiola marks a conceptual shift in Eisenman's approach, a shift from structure to "event", made possible only by the discovery of the interstitial as something more than the record of procedural traces, welcoming the possibility of chance, risk, and the open-endedness of a text.

What remains to be asked is the bearing the Guardiola House has on the discipline of architecture. In the history of architecture, Eisenman's trace in the form of the interstitial is important to the development of the *poché* and design by subtraction. There has been a renewal of interests recently, particularly in the work of contemporary architects such as Aires Mateus, whose works can be conceived as *poché* spaces produced through molding (Cortés 2011: pp. 21-41). Nevertheless, Eisenman translates the *poché* into something other than just spaces within solids. By making absence present, he operates on the strange and distorted geometries of the interstitial to produce an experience of difference.

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