Experience and Expression: A Look at Three Settings
(Work completed from September 1986 – May 1987)

Submitted by

Jeffrey C. Bone

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College of Architecture and Planning
Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
I am pleased to have been influenced by
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South Chicago
The Indiana Dunes
North Chicago

To
My Family

For
Leslie
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Introduction/Summary

conscious adj. 1. a. Having an awareness of one’s own existence and environment. b. Capable of complex response to environment. c. Not asleep; awake

consciousness-raising n. 1. A process of achieving greater awareness of one’s needs in order to fulfill one’s potential as an individual.

The American Heritage Dictionary

This thesis is an ongoing study, a series of works thematically connected probing at the nature of Architecture and it’s making. The work is presented chronologically and can be considered a diary of events, a record of the previous nine months. Each writing, drawing and model represents a point of view (an attitude) expressing an increased sensitivity and awareness of a specific culture. The objective was not to indiscriminately program an object apart from its setting, but rather, to unite, experience and expression. Respectfully, the work also acknowledges and accepts spontaneous impulse, occurring outside the primary focus, as a valuable and viable direction for exploration.

I have chosen three existing settings to look at:

1. A vacant lot in South Chicago
2. A stretch of beach along Lake Michigan
3. An alley in North Chicago

The work presented should raise questions. It is not intended to provide any answers.
Looking to either side of the highway, I wondered why the clusters of farm buildings, still and silent, seemed so beautiful to me.

The Sears tower directly ahead is the first sign that the city of Chicago is near. Whenever I see it come into view, I always remember Leslie saying: "It reminds me of a big rabbit with its ears in the clouds." Then I say to myself: "Jesus, it's a monster!" The entire damn earth seems to be suffocated by a blanket of concrete and dirt.

One time on my way from Muncie to Chicago I saw two solitary structures. One was small and transparent with a steep pitched roof and seemed to be growing from the dark dirt far off in the distance. The other structure was nondescript, I can barely remember it. These brief glimpses made me think of a different building composed of a series of spaces stretching across the landscape from Muncie to Chicago. Bridging the inbetween space, the structure connected the two conflicting landscapes.

2.

original architectural intentions

I will restate my thesis proposal in part: From August 1, 1986

1) It is my intention to live experiencing the day rather than trying to plan the future. So in essence, during the coming year I will try to maintain high ideals, but gather no expectations. I can only hope to realize the emergence of relations among things.

2) Growing up in the country, my childhood was filled with the quiet order of nature. Although, quite content, I found myself at times yearning for the city— at the time the city seemed to have an intensity and volatility the country did not have. Naturally, now, while living in the city, I find myself being drawn to the country and its simple, unpretentious naturalness.
Using the city and the country as points of departures, I am first, interested in studying the ideas and realities associated and disassociated with both, as one and as entities in themselves; Second, in discovering connections and uncovering separations between these seemingly antagonizing things; And finally, examining the effect each other has on the evolution of form and function.

3) Architecturally, I have chosen to develop and explore two different projects simultaneously, one in the city and one the country. Specifically, low income housing within the city of Chicago and an artist's colony in the Indiana Dunes. A simultaneous evolution initiates a give and take relationship with each project feeding off of the other in a positive, and or, negative fashion. Here the challenge presents itself on many different levels of comparison and contrast. Obviously this could introduce the notion of sameness on the part of the designer, so it may also be considered an exercise in control.

4) Though stripped to the bare essential, the project is no more than a proposal to build in the city and country.

Within two contrasting settings I overlayed, what I thought to be, two contrasting building types. At this point, I was assuming that the format of this independent year would continue in the same linear fashion, carrying with it the same intentions, as the four previous years. Mainly, that a building, or in my case two, would be the resultant of a preconceived process consisting of: Definition of building type; Site selection; Historic building research; Concept; Design development; And finally, a building as the product.

Up until this point, as a student, I was always handed a program, conceived and realized by someone else and removed as part of the process of design. In this fashion program and architecture were separate entities and it was assumed that they were right for one another. Many times the architectural program developed through an interest or whim on behalf of the instructor. The point is that I was always told to design from given information. What if there is no one there to hand you anything, what do you do? What if information has to come from somewhere else; where does it come from?
Program briefs

An artist's colony within the tranquil setting of the dunes. An escape. A place to step outside the time consuming routine of daily life into an isolated setting where there are no distractions or interruptions. A place to think and pursue personal interests. As one writer/painter intimated to me while at Ragdale, an artist's colony in River Forest, Illinois: "I can sit and look at that column over there, and see the light as it plays and creates, and think about how I would render it in chalk. You can't do that in the outside world, he said, there isn't time." In the evening, maybe have dinner with other artists and talk; about work, or about the weather. Or remain silent, listen, and enjoy the physical presence of others. This is a place to take the time....

Low income housing within a poor neighborhood in South Chicago. A project. A ridged architectural framework where economy is thought of in every sense of the word. It is money that either makes or breaks the project. The budget affects the attitude of all persons involved. The architect is a social servant, but the possibility exists to receive the project as a challenge. This is an architectural problem and there exists a concrete solution.

PROCEEDING AS AN ARCHITECT...

3.

revised direction

It happened very quickly, I came to a screeching halt, and could not go any further. This is what happened: Initially, I assumed what I thought to be an appropriate architectural function for each site. Without understanding the culture of each setting (especially that existing in south Chicago) I proceeded to program and design low-income housing for the Chicago site and an artist's colony for the site in the Dunes. Eventually, after visiting and talking with the people, and in general, trying to gain an understanding of the culture, I started to feel uneasy with my decision to design housing. What I originally thought to be an appropriate architectural need for the people of the neighborhood turned out to be my preconceived notion of what architecture is about. Housing on the site only served to satisfy the needs of the architect (myself) as "Masterbuilder" by not addressing the specific culture of south Chicago. This was a major turning point.
Slowly, the people and quality of the southside neighborhood had altered my perceptions. I let go, and was upheld and carried forth by their way of life. Letting go was the best and the worst thing that I could have done. On one hand, I was now void of any preconceptions about architecture and a way of designing, though at the same time, I realized that I was face to face with the unknown and had no defined or clear cut process to carry me along. I wasn’t even sure if what I was doing was architecture or if I could call myself an architect. I became interested in a culture that was so totally foreign to me that I was taken by its newness. I wanted so intensely to be just a person; a person honestly trying to understand the culture he was observing.

I feel now that I just can not go through the motions as an architect designing buildings as pristine objects - there has got to be more to architecture than plans, sections, and elevations. Architecture is just not designing buildings, but rather, in my eyes, it is a way of thinking about and looking at life, both inwardly and outwardly. It is an incessantly malleable process in which “an idea can come from anywhere.” My infatuation with the culture of south Chicago has in turn affected my attitudes and feelings concerning the Dunes. My original notions of what needed to be in the Dunes have been put aside, and re-evaluated, in favor of a process more oriented towards exploration. Though personal expression has been emphasized, the framework is constructed through inspiration derived solely from the specific cultures and attitudes associated within the contexts of each setting.

End of Autumn Quater: 11. 19. 1986

"My offering manifests itself in the form of events, both written and graphic. I believe my drawings speak strongly of the people and feelings associated with each setting and culture."

Mid Winter quarter I decided to pursue an interest I had in an alley. The fascination comes from looking down onto the alley from my apartment window one story above. The alley is one block in length and exists in north Chicago.
I was becoming increasingly frustrated and disinterested with my work so I turned to fresh inspiration - I needed some time away from south Chicago and the Dunes. My interest in the alley is from the standpoint of first, a person, and second, a designer. I do not have a program or solution in mind that I might apply to the alley. I'm interested in taking the time to see it and to be inspired by it. I can't stop thinking about the alley, its physical existence when in use by people could be one of the most honest places I have observed. The alley seems to be residual due to its purpose and backside reputation - it is not supposed to be a nice place.

"That which is not obviously attractive is elevated to a thing of beauty." D. Herzfeldt

On December 22, 1986 I met for the first time with the Skinner's at their temporary office in Lake, Villa Illinois. We talked about their wants and needs concerning the addition and conversion of a small suburban ranch style home into the new office/residence for their cleaning business, Quala Care. Notes as per our conversation: The goal of the addition is to provide space for the business; though maintaining enough flexibility in planning as to accept an easy conversion to a private residence. The house addition and garage must be "nice and workable", again stressing resaleability. The office addition will be no more than 700 SF, and the out building (garage) 1200-1500SF.

4.

this is what I have done

Three areas have been chosen to look at:

1. A vacant lot in South Chicago.
2. A stretch of beach along Lake Michigan.
3. An alley in North Chicago.

* Between numbers 2 and 3: A small house addition and large garage.
PART ONE
A VACANT LOT IN SOUTH CHICAGO: 62nd and Dorchester

I had a feeling the fellow in the big blue car parked quietly near the southeast corner of the site was honestly happy. He was happy to have that cool cigarette in his hand, that smile on his face, and that female head bouncing up and down on his hot lap. I believe he was extremely happy and had no reason to hide it - I like that.

and...

I had no idea that three vacant buildings in the neighborhood were taken over and used as operational nodes by two powerful Chicago street gangs - the EL RUKNS and the VICE LORDS. They are also very honest: You step on our turf and I kill you; I need a fix, give me your money. NO MONEY! Then give me your shirt. NO! Bang, you're dead - simple as that.

and...

Prostitutes. Traveling down 63rd street, only two blocks from Dorchester, I was frantically acknowledged by a large chested black woman in a tightly clad, blue sleeveless turtleneck. She shuffled into the street, her eyes intently on mine, pleading for my business. I was startled by the strange casualness of the reality - but I guess survival is her business or should I say existence?

and...

The buildings are also losing it - another layer, another reality. "In five years I'll be able to see from here to Cottage Grove" said McCrackin, afterwards taking a deep drag off of his cigarette. "It's only a matter of time. Anyway, you know people don't live here, they just stay."
In his book, *Genius Loci*, Norburg-Schultz feels: "The existential purpose of building (architecture) is therefore to make a site become a place, that is, to uncover the meanings potentially present in the environment." It seems to me that when approaching design in this way, the architect or designer takes on a different role. He is no longer reacting to the removed demands of a client, but rather he is the interpretative pencil for the people and their setting.

62nd and Dorchester is a flat rectangular plot of land approximately 100' by 275.' It is bounded by the Illinois Central Railroad on the east, Dorchester avenue on the west. Bordering the north and south are apartment buildings. Access onto the land is possible from the east, west, and south. Years ago a small warehouse existed on the site - it was demolished. Traces of the foundation and fragments of the concrete slab still exist along with a few rusty cans, old scraps of paper, and some smooth weathered bricks scattered here and there. Other than people taking shortcuts or walking dogs, most activity takes place on the perimeter of the site. There is one tree on the southwest corner.

On visits to the neighborhood, still with no particular direction, I spent most of my time talking to people, and driving up and down the streets. I contemplated destruction, desolation, hope, and observed prostitutes, gang members and drug addicts. My continual disbelief was starting to affect my attitude.

As a sympathetic gesture towards the site more than the people, my first idea was a proposal to cover the entire site with a slightly elevated wooden deck. In my own mind a subtle, but important initiation. The notion of visibility was repeatedly entered my thoughts. I had this crazy vision of this go-go girl, on display, dancing wildly above a screaming crowd. She was loving it just as much as the crowd - it was totally natural.

9. 16. 1986

Just housing seems inadequate. I'm vacillating between just a building rather than an expression of the site and its surroundings; be it real or unreal, feasible or unfeasible, humane or inhumane - wait a minute, I think it must be real. Yes, at least that. The people, the ground, the sound, the air, are all exciting. I believe things that exist there are real things, and they are genuinely important. The guy, I don't know his name, that I talked to on the south border of the site seemed to be destitute individual. He had a big fat upper lip which made him very hard to understand. But, he sounded sensitive even though every word seemed to be a struggle for him. He fought for the meaning and formation of every word. I found myself doing the same.
A BAD PLACE/ BACK STAIR

An exploration the of the site, its surface negitivity and its surroundings. All the, seemingly dormant, nooks and crannies appear to come alive becoming living and breathing places. Spontaneous emotions accumulated through a number of site experiences.

VERY CONTROLLED: CITY #1

With a blank sheet of paper on my desk and a pencil in my hand, I closed my eyes, relaxed, and cleared my head. Concentrating on the people and environment of South Chicago as well as drawing from my personal experiences I began to let the pencil become an extension of my thoughts. When I felt that I should stop drawing, I did. I felt the drawing to be an emotional blueprint of sorts and used it to build a model.

COLLAGE: 62nd + DORCHESTER (plate 2)

Pieces of the existing neighborhood are juxtaposed with fragments of exploratory drawings creating new positive space and spaces. The negative space, or white space, evolved undesigned through the build up of positive image. It turned out that the residual space was much stronger and consequently more revealing than the architecturally composed space.

May one consider an architectural process involving no architecture at all. Architecture non-architecture.

"Possibility of helping by doing nothing." John Cage
COLLAGE: 3 DIMENSIONAL SPACE (plate 3)

I use the top surface of my desk for writing, drawing, and building. Though, if the ceiling started to collapse I could also use the underside of my desk to take shelter from the falling debris. And, if I had the urge to dance, sleep, hide, or eat I know my desk wouldn't let me down.

The assumption was made that the surface was all that existed - at least that was what the drawing told me. I was wrong. An entirely different space and place existed below the surface that I was not aware of at the time.

This notion may have opened my eyes to the dualistic nature of the site and its surroundings. Simultaneously there exists good and evil, construction and decay, all within the context of night and day. What one may see on the surface does not always reign true in relation to the whole. (?)

An idea and approach concerning a method of interpretation and realization is explored.

Many buildings within this neighborhood have been condemned due to lack of upkeep and absence of landlords. These structures with potentially a much longer life span are helplessly destine for destruction. Only after the building has been sitting empty and dark for a number of years does demolition occur. When occurring in numbers this system contributes to a neighborhood wide deterioration physically symbolizing human negativity and hopelessness. (plate 1)

It is not uncommon for families with many children and little money to secretly, and illegally, inhabit these condemned buildings. Living without heat, water, and electricity these transparent dwellers do not live, but rather just survive. Even survival is redefined when fire strikes and sends children running in incomprehensible fear to the dark voids of windows in hopes of escaping. Invisible people become visible when in the hands of fear.
Does the possibility exist to create something useful out of seemingly useless pieces, to give new life to old abandoned buildings? In this case giving new life would not involve repairing these buildings to serve their old purpose, but rather, the concern is to disassemble buildings that are destined for destruction reassembling the pieces together as a neighborhood project.

A drawing may suggest one possible outcome of a recycled building.

THE MODEL
A three-dimensional suggestion.

* People: Culture
* No preconceptions, stop thinking a building.
* Rethink, Redefine: Evolution
* Enclosure and Exposure
* The dark doorway and the pink Cadillac
* Architecture and idea

(plates 4-11)
a vacant lot in south chicago
PART TWO

A STRETCH OF BEACH ALONG LAKE MICHIGAN: The Indiana Dunes

Standing alone
thinking and looking
Water

Sun glowing on the horizon
Floating
I am floating
Alone
Numb
Seeing

I can feel the humming
My body is useless
physically limp
I don't need it

Sounds, but not human
It's really beautiful
Fluttering
constant fluttering
My hair is blowing

No
no decisions to be made
not now
No
no smile
It's not necessary

A content nothingness
A DWELLING TRAVERSING A DUNE (plate 13)

Spatially, the structure consists of four 17'w/24'12'h (18' to peak) buildings falling 3' one after the other. A continuous stairway extends the entire length of all four buildings physically connecting each structure bringing meaning to the dwelling as a whole. It is possible to travel the stairway, uninterrupted, from one end to the other. It is also possible, if standing or kneeling in the corner at either end of the stairway, to see, uninterrupted, from one end to the other and beyond into the landscape.

At the points where each building delicately acknowledges the other, two things occur. First, in plan, there occurs a passage which perpendicularly crosses the stair and continues outside onto a wooden deck. The deck runs the length of the dwelling. Secondly, as one views the exterior, it is noticable that the corners of the roof peaks in three of the four buildings are sliced off like butter. One after the other each slice is replaced with glass. Light enters at these points dividing the structure into individual pieces. Overall, the dwelling may grow in either direction to infinity.

A DWELLING REFUSING TO TRAVERSE A DUNE (plate 14)

Internally and externally this dwelling is stubborn; it refuses to conform. The interior stair does not believe in becoming a dune therefore calling attention only to itself for the sake of itself. Also, as an object, it refuses to be as one with the sand, instead choosing to ignore it. This dwelling lives with the dream of reaching the horizon line.

It is possible that one day the sand may disappear from underneath the dwelling causing it to tumble helplessly down the dune. In this case, the horizon would remain a dream; an illusion.
A DISCOVERY (plate 15)

Walking in a relatively straight line along the shore near the water, my eyes were drawn to the sandy wall by some extremely precise poles standing randomly on the shore. The clean verticals made me more aware of the extreme horizontal with no visible end. Approaching from the east, the white poles led to a very narrow path weaving its way upward from the base of the straight wall of sand. The warm afternoon sun was in my eyes as I moved forward bisecting the vertical and horizontal. As I leveled off slightly I saw a narrow man made walk continue and disappear, continue and disappear into the sand and fluttering dune grass. To the south, as I somehow expected, was a well defined round platform. It was enclosed and gently held in place by a square wooden frame. I noticed the soft dune grass blur the precise lines of the square frame causing the circle within to seemingly float above the ground. The circles diameter was just large enough to accept my body as I lied down to rest.

FIRST SERIES LEADING TO: A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

A transformation and evolution of the previous work "A Discovery" acted as the impetus for these two studies. The discovery provided a setting for an inhabitable dwelling as well as defining an attitude about the setting. Its like:

Walking in the sand along the water at sunset and discovering a sensuously round smooth stone whispering at your feet; Or after walking in hazy darkness through a woods, unexpectedly stumbling into a clear warm sunny meadow; A sudden embrace by a lover. It was feeling that placed the pieces as they are; feelings about people and places.

The way the water goes around the stones
A feeling they may have
Families hanging together
And going away.

A commotion by the stones
The sand is calm
Only lines remain
Patterns.
The placement of the pieces create spaces inbetween. The functions associated with each piece are created and given meaning by the setting, not square footages. (plate 16–17)

A yearning for
Simplicity
and
Security

There is a place
Away from the city
Where no one
Will hurt you

Pacing back and forth
Back and forth
Over and
Over
Again

Sleeping is so very hard
No—its easy
I don't need much space
No
That's not true
Give me more
Now

Jump into the pit
And step into my
Humble room
THE HORIZON: FLOATING AIMLESSLY (plate 12)

Everything changes on the beach so rapidly though not easily seen. Footsteps become traces then disappear from the surface only to remain through memory—for a moment. The memory slowly turns from a specific mark to a general pattern; one man and everyman pattern, its all the same.

Water sooths the sand changing its color, texture, and its density. Momentarily, a pattern exists only to be erased into a memory of what once was—over and over again. The sound of the edge that leaves traces then replaces them. The multiplication of little patterns.

Water is consistent only in its wetness and in its precision in meeting the sky forming the horizon. The horizon is a constant reminder that everything will eventually end and at the same time will continue forever. The rhythm of the breathing horizon is seen and heard as the waves touch the shore.

A DWELLING: TWO SPACES SEPERATED BY A WALL (a place for one or two persons) (plate 18)

The dwelling lies on the line where the water meets the dunes forming a long wall of sand approximately 15' high. It exists through the erosive forces of the water and is in a perpetual state of change. Forceful waves of water travelling across the shore gradually force change upon the sand, reshaping it and giving it new life. This natural process is accepted as being positive.
The dwelling consists of two cubes dimensionally equal though materially different; one is transparent and the other opaque. The transparent cube sits at the level of the beach remaining vulnerable to the action of the waves. Slipped in behind the cube is a thick wall of concrete and corten steel running parallel to the shore and extending well beyond the cube in either direction. Anchored securely into the existing natural wall of sand, the man-made wall attempts to resist the inevitable erosion of the shore by protecting the sand from the waves while simultaneously sheltering the opaque cube that rests behind the wall, atop the wall of sand. Acting as a historical marker documenting a point in time, the wall will soon become a symbol of what once was.

The dwelling is approached by means of a straight wooden walkway appearing from the dunes beyond. The inner purity of the opaque cube is penetrated only by one simple stairway. While the transparent cube consists of a platform supported by two delicate columns, A brass pole penetrates and passes through the platform anchoring itself into the floor and ceiling of the cube.

Human inhabitation accentuates the sensuality of the dwelling.

A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK (plates 16-17, 19-20)

Nestled within a sand dune overlooking the lake is a place to live and work. The place consists of five structures or pieces each contributing to the setting in their own way. The richness and meaning of each piece is magnified through the interaction and tension of the other pieces. The place is given life through the drama of human interaction. Human and man-made form synthesize, as two people might, resulting in many patterns, associations, and relationships. Simplicity and complexity of life are experienced. The isolation of the setting sharply contrasts the density of the city – for this reason, it is encouraged to be thought of as an escape.

Each structure was derived within the context of a stretch of beach along lake Michigan and given the names: A horizontal walk; A fire pit; A room house; A bath; A vertical tower. Each piece was invented as time went along. There was no program at the beginning, only the water, beach, and sand.
Running parallel with the shoreline the 60' horizontal walk strongly acknowledges the water and horizon. Constructed of screen stretched over a simple wooden framework, it seems transparent when viewed from the beach as it reaches unpretentiously across the sand. Upon closer inspection, the frontal transparency is overtaken by the opaqueness of the structures wall. The white clapboard wall undetectable from the beach though strongly present from the dunes serves a dual purpose in its transitional role; from the beach a back drop, from the dunes a front piece intentionally concealing the beach and water from view. Placed off center within the planar white wall is a sole opening trimmed in a blue border. The opening provides a way in and out of the horizontal structure.

From the doorway a visual connection can be made with the one room house. Its wood frame structure sits slightly below grade and is surrounded by a polygonal concrete wall forming a mote. A blue and white Gustavian awning is attached to the exterior of the structure facing inward towards the white wall. The awning does not signify entry. Within the stark, but warm interior, a fireplace centrally dominates the space.

A fire pit is placed within the exterior inbetween space shaped by the horizontal walk and one room house. A hinged wooden door with a rope pull covers the pit which otherwise can be propped open with a stick.

The bath lies furthest away from the other structures on the sand slightly within a stand of pine trees. Approaching it, one must walk through soft sand sprinkled with dune grass. Shielded slightly from the other pieces, the bath consists of two walls; one opaque and the other semi-transparent. The bath encourages exposure to the elements, though an overhead vine covered trellis may provide some relief from the sun. From certain points within the bath, one can see the other four structures clearly.

Standing atop the tower, one can see beyond the other four structures into unfamiliar territories. The tower is simply a reaction to the vast horizontality of the water, beach, and dunes. A stairway rises to a height of 50' and is perpendicular to the ground plane. To the side of the stair, a 6-story tower rises from the ground leaning slightly backwards resting against the wall of sand. The stair and tower are connected by 3 transparent catwalks occurring at the 2, 3 and 5 levels. As the wind blows changing sand and water, the tower and stair remain stable.
Many of these images explore personal feelings evoked through experiences by the water and on the sand. These are architectural drawings. (plates 20-23)
a stretch of beach along lake michigan
PART THREE
A SMALL HOUSE ADDITION AND LARGE GARAGE: The Skinner's, Lake Villa, IL
(plate 24)

**client:** My husband and would like a house and we would like you to design it for us.

**architect:** What do you both value in a house.

**client:** Oh, we have definite ideas and feelings about what we would like.

**architect:** Why don't you, for me, describe your house as you see it in your own mind.
You could write a narrative or story describing thoughts, spaces, feelings, textures, colors, experiences, or anything you want. Just write a story.

**client:** O.K., but why?

**architect:** As a creative point of departure, I would like to interpret your story, drama, or event. I would like to transform your writing into architecture(s). I will react by doing a drawing and building a model. This will be the first step. We might learn something this way, we might uncover an essence. At this point, please, no preconceptions, or square footages.

**client:** Oh, what the hell!
PART FOUR
AN ALLEY IN NORTH CHICAGO: 1055 West Hollywood

writings

From one story above it is easy to be taken in by the curious activity that takes place in
the alley: it's a modest alley. Sitting in the window, virtually unnoticeable, I may spend
long periods of time just watching. Watching and wondering where the many people come
from. And wondering what makes the alley interesting. People animate the alley. They
appear and disappear, around corners, behind walls, and from deep dark doorways.
(plate 25)

There is this old oriental man who spends his time in the alley collecting aluminum
x cans. Slowly he moves from one dumpster to the next. Reaching in each dumpster with a
wooden broomstick handle, he is careful not to get himself dirty. He wears one brown
glove on his left hand. Cans piled twice his height rise confidently from his homemade
rickshaw. It's a beautiful rickshaw made from weather worn wood and two bicycle tires.
Piled to the sky with the mornings work, he easily maneuvers it as he zigzags back and
forth across the alley. He must have other alley's he goes to. I will not follow him.

*******************************************************************************

We have a neighbor who late one evening was the hostess on America's Marketplace. It
was funny to see her on T.V. because we thought she was just a normal person - that is a
person who doesn't normally appear on television. I ran across the hall and put my ear to
her apartment door to see if her husband was watching her talking head. He sure was! We
laughed and made fun of her continuing to watch the show.

One evening I happened to see her get out of a red Mustang into the alley. She looked tired
and was not smiling. As she walked, I could hear the sound her heels made as they
pummeled little pebbles into the pockmarked asphalt. She walked, dressed neatly as she
had appeared on television. The plain unadorned walls of the buildings remain silent and
silent. Above, wires thick and black hung unsupported between poles. (plates 26-27)
2. 4. 1987 (plate 28-29)
What lies under the seemingly understandable appearance is an architecture that lives. It eats and is eaten from. It is used, but it may also use you. It exists around every corner, within every canyon. It is there, but is not easily noticed - one must see to understand. The architecture may move through when you least expect it. Yes, it can rearrange your belongings, sensibility, and even your life. Though, without people it cannot react or move, let alone exist.

In the alley it hides in the dark waiting to be stumbled onto and brought to life. One step into a door slightly ajar may send your head spinning. Within the rigid concrete frames of the buildings that line the alley, the architecture lies undetected. On the inside, within each apartment the functional, three-dimensional grid is violated. Within, the architecture moves in and out and around creating mysterious, unexplainable spaces. The outside world of the alley secretly meets the inside giving birth to something new.

2. 9. 1987
I'd much rather walk through alleys belonging to neighborhoods than the canyons born of skyscrapers.

* Residue architecture
* A soft human in a hard environment (woman in city)
* The alley is beauty
* A dog chasing a cat
* A crime is committed
"Adventure(nowness) necessary to creative action."  John Cage

AN EVENT, A DRAMA (plate 30)

Like every other day a man leaves his apartment from the second floor. Spiralling down the bare wooden stairway, he runs his left hand along the rail while descending. His right hand is at his side. After one revolution, descending, a door appears and the stairs end. To his right is a heavy wooden door, familiar and black. A serious steel grill covers the top half of the door behind which lies an opaque pane of glass. The alley exists beyond the door.

Like every other time, the man hesitantly pulls the door open to get outside. A musty breeze brushes across his face. It is dark outside. In the alley it is still.

The man is watching the ground as he quickly steps into the alley. The door closes behind him. He stops and looks up. He sees a dark figure racing towards him waving a knife. In slow motion he whispers to himself: "Is this real or is this a dream?"

Turning back in fear, he goes back through the black door. Once inside, he realizes that everything has changed, nothing is the same. Forcefully he says: "I must keep running, I've got to escape." Confronted with only one path he continues through a low narrow labyrinthian sequence terminating in a space containing a tall slender ladder. Throwing his head back to the ceiling he climbs to the top reaching a small wooden trap door in which he slowly pushes open. A fresh cool breeze rushes across his face. Nudging himself through the small opening, he emerges outside, on the roof of the building. Carefully, he walks to the edge where there is one chair. He sits down. Below, he sees a man with a knife silently facing the door.

Above, in the dark, at the edge of the roof, a man in a chair sits still and catches his breath.

in ----------- out
On either side of the alley the grand facades face the public street. They relate an image, a sense of history, presenting a meaning that is on one level easily understood by everyone. People have fun imagining who and what exists behind these decorated walls. These facades tell a story. They talk of the street as a place; they create a setting, a mood. Each individual facade has its own identity within the larger context of the street. Many times this identity is contradictory where the outside does not necessarily speak of the inside. This may or may not contribute to a greater richness of meaning.

On the backside, there are no grand facades lining the alley. Where the formality of the street does not exist, there are only unadorned walls. On these walls no veneer covers the process of construction; the way they were made and the way they stand is fully expressed. Bare, ordered concrete frames filled with brick, that over time have lost their youth, form walls of planar grids. Speaking very softly, these walls tell a different story. Within the rigid frame work, windows were placed from the inside out not intended to be composed.

The fact that the alley has not been intentionally designed, that it exists as residual, is what makes it a thing of beauty. We can learn from its honesty.

There is a story on a wall in the alley. It is rather small and unnoticeable, in one way just a piece of graffatti (an inscription on the wall). The story is short and uncomplicated, it goes like this: Somewhere there exists this vast industrial landscape, rusty, grey, and gloomy. It infinitely goes on, factory after factory, for as far as the eye can see. The sky is dark, almost black, swelling to the point of violence. For days a man has been running naked through this boundless un-giving landscape. He is chasing a glowing white object which has remained just out of his reach, teasing his fingertips. From above, one can see that the man has travelled great distances and overcome many obstacles in his quest for the object, though has always remained two steps behind. A path is emblazoned where man and object have travelled; a whiplash line of green and blue. It remains the only trace of color on the monochromatic landscape. The green of grass, the blue of the sky. (plates 31-33)
an alley in north chicago
PART FIVE
SPONTANEOUS EXPRESSION

A WALK TO THE BOOKSTORE WITH A 13/13/13" GREEN CUBE (plate 34)

Sometimes out of a frustration with working on paper, autonomously within the studio, I find it necessary to get outside. It seems necessary at times to transplant ideas and works on paper into the everyday environment to gain exposure to everyday people; or simply to see how people will react to a "not everyday" situation.

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS (plates 35–37)

My wife Leslie and I were the first subjects. Rather two small color photographs of Leslie and I taken in a small booth at the Muncie Mall were the first subjects. Unknowingly, the two candid photos hung on the wall to the right of me were subjected quite often to my stare. Suddenly, late one afternoon for seemingly no reason at all I had this notion of cutting the photographs in to pieces. Quickly, I removed the photos from the wall and carefully cut them in a way as to preserve the eyes, noses and mouths. I then reassembled the pieces and in the process constructed unfamiliar new faces from the photographs of familiar faces. Finally, I grouped the new faces in a way so that they would seem to be floating, independently of each other on the page; though independent, at the same time, because of their proximity, they can be read as one idea.

Reaching into an old shoebox, my mother-in-law pulled out a hand full of yellowed school photographs taken a number of years ago. Again, using the photographs as a means for reassemblage, I created a sequence of four arrangements using the images of: Robert, Marilyn, Randy, Bob and Leslie Pickall.
ROBE' + MARILYN # 2
116 97.
MARILYN # 4.

116 P7.
"When you try to stay on the surface of the water, you sink; but, when you try to sink you float. When you hold your breath you lose it - which immediately calls to mind an ancient and much neglected saying, 'Whosoever would save his soul shall lose it.'"

Alan Watts, The Backwards Law

SYNTHESIS

Each of the settings exist autonomously in the fact that all three are physically separated by many miles and exhibit different cultures and landscapes. Though simply through my own concerns and interests each are related. Less obvious is the progression of their interrelatedness that increases over time. Simply, as the year progressed, and as I spent more time with all three, it became evident that the individual settings were exerting influences on each other, and synthesizing to form one attitude.

A brief outline.

1) In the beginning, it was the newness of the South Chicagoan culture that produced a relatively pure expression on my part. Many varied experiences within the setting strongly influenced my work and thinking leading to very specific cultural interpretations. At this point things were very new to me.

2) Essentially, it was my experience and feelings towards the South Chicago project(people) and city life in general that inspired a series of three transitional drawings encompassing the Dunes.

3) Chronologically, A Place to Live and Work became the point where dissimilar elements and ideas manifested themselves as one expression of inseparability. As I studied the setting in the Dunes, my expressions became scattered with fragments of the city culminating in a series of architectural pieces containing two languages. A Place to Live and Work is essentially an escape from the city to the country; though not a complete abandonment, for, carried from the city to the country are relics, subconsciously added to the expression. The project is: hard and sensual; rational and irrational; dependent and independent; honest and at the same time deceptive.
5) Ironically, the alley study resulted through a disgust and lack of direction with the Dunes and South Chicago, though contained elements from each.

6) Now, the Vacant Lot, the Beach and the Alley combine creating something new.
Bibliography