

## Home of Memory/ Memory of Home... Homember It A Container for Remembered Space

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### Project Scope

The departure 'space' for this art/architecture project is the space of memories. Memories exist eternally but only in response to the lost temporal spaces they represent. Herein lies the paradox that makes any remembered space formally elusive. Thus, our first problem was determining a language/form with which to capture our own 'remembered spaces'. We began by drawing simple floor plans of all our homes to date.

The results of our self-imposed exercise were surprisingly rich. We reported a range of emotional and reflective experiences. In analyzing our observations of the process of drawing/remembering, one of the most intriguing occurrences was the presence of un-remembered spatial texture, especially the location of everyday appliances. We realized the potential for the exercise to exist less as a documentation of space, and more as a tool for creating or allowing for new awareness: a container for remembered spaces.

The space we thought of generating is twofold: a small, holdable box or envelope which contains a kit or a game including implements and directives for the exercise, and a the resulting psychic space between people and their memories and communal space between the multiple participants. We endeavored to create new ongoing spaces by encouraging others to do the exercise enclosed in the tiny, discrete space of the kit.

We produced a few runs of this tool as a kit to distribute. The kit includes a short list of directions, a pencil and eraser, a piece of paper to draw on and 'memory stimulating' question cards. The questions were generated through our discussions of our own experiences doing the exercise. We conducted interviews with participants to document further observations. Finally, we had a group gathering to consciously hold the space that the kit had generated.

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In our exploration of remembered spaces, we looked at several key texts. Most integral to our theoretical framework was Bachalard's *Poetics of Space*, in which he discusses the process of remembering spaces in terms of poetics rather than factual re-assembly: "Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost." (87) We found in our process and feedback that this was very much the case—the process of remembering space is a flexible, creative process, with primary importance being not on accuracy but on engagement with past spatial narratives.

Of course, spatial narratives are particularly poignant when they involved our living space; the home stage is one of layers of history and transformation, and its space will frame our spatial experiences for life. "When we dream of the house we were born in, in the utmost depths of reverie, we participate in this original warmth, in this well-tempered matter of the material paradise" (Bachalard, 88).

The importance of the early home space was rediscovered by many of our participants, and many discussed the use of processional and event-based narratives as the method of recall. As Mark Rakatansky argues in *Spatial Narratives*, the experience of space is always framed in the temporal scale, and always involves sequence. "On the one hand, all so-called processional architecture operates in a much more complex and indeterminate ways than is generally assumed, and on the other hand, all architecture is processional (in other words, cannot be non-processional)."

Finally, in choosing the form that our project would take, we thought of the highly personal, intense project of the individual remembering personal spaces, and how this effort could accumulate to form some collective memory 'space.' "While it is individuals themselves who partake in the actual physiological process of remembering, it is the social cohort through which memory endures and derives its strength" (Barandon, 9). Therefore, in designing our kit, we felt it was important to connect participants, to have some discussion about the shared experience of recollection. In this process, it became even more clear, to reiterate Bachalard's key point, that the impact of the exercise of remembering, collective or individual, is derived from its process, and the implied continuation of this process, rather than in the specific detail of the memory itself.