

Day 1.

Driving into Hollywood.

The sun is blasting.

It is January.

I check in to the 7 Star Motel, located on Yucca Street.

The sun blazes down like a golden fire.

I haven't been to Hollywood in years, and I take to the streets with great enthusiasm.

I enter room 216, drop my bags and immediately begin to analyze the room.

Reds and golds jump at my senses.

A king-sized bed like a block of red upon the dark red-wood flooring.

Wallpaper lines the room, a combination of two types of floral patterning.

The west wall, a pattern of light blue and pink roses.

Roses.

Like a gift.

Catching the light from the window.

I decide to focus on this wall – as a space, as an opportunity.

What might be done here?

What form of addition can be applied, to interfere, to open up, to suggest a new pattern?

I wonder about rhythm... – is the Motel a sort of rhythm beating out a given architecture?

To begin, I map out a grid structure spanning the entire wall.

Points every two feet horizontally and in one foot intervals vertically, starting from the side nearest the door.

8 points across and 8 points up.

The grid inserts another geometry, another pattern into the room.

It converses with the roses.

I prepare two colors: light blue and light pink, each one paralleling the existing colors of the wallpaper.

Like a dialogue, or an attempt at camouflage.

Applying these colors in small circles, I alternate, starting with pink, then blue, then pink again.

This is applied even behind the furnishings, which, upon moving reveal various cables, stains, scuffs, dust.

The room starts to fray.

Many years ago, I discovered the work of Iannis Xenakis.

Greek composer, working in the 1950s with Le Corbusier, as chief draftsman, engineer, and principal architect on a number of building projects, notably, the Philips Pavilion, in Brussels.

Xenakis pioneered the use of number theories within his musical compositions, to form a sort of musical engineering project.

Numbers, patterns, vectors and lines, methods of distribution.

Xenakis redraws music through architectural principles.

He begins to imagine a new Nature: something immersive, a magic, upheaval.

I leave the room and go outside.

It is quiet.

Suddenly.

I walk across the street, to take photographs of the Motel.  
It hovers in the darkness.  
It is distinct.  
Vacancy.  
Bright lights.  
How many people are here tonight, I wonder.  
Sometimes I find it hard to sleep at Motels.  
Mostly because they change my rhythm.  
I want to stay up.  
To watch late-night movies.  
To write.  
To unpack, and pack again.  
To organize.  
Or fidget.  
The Motel keeps me up.  
It is a space for late-night actions.  
Waking dreams.  
Secret energy.  
In the Motel, I live differently.  
Listening to Ramble On, Led Zeppelin.  
Interstate dreams.  
The highway unfolds in tandem with male fantasy.  
Adventure.  
Displacement.  
Romance.  
Loss and Love.  
The Interstate system brings commerce and masculinity together.  
Capitalism and libidinal drive.  
The Motel is a space for masculine rambling.  
A semblance of home, while disappearing into the dust of tomorrow.

Day 2.

I wake up to the sounds of traffic.

The city is already moving.

Leaving the 7 Star Motel, I check out.

Bags into the car.

Coffee.

The morning is again blasting with a golden light.

A bright blue.

Blasting in.

The city takes the light, like a reflective surface.

Motels rapidly appeared throughout the United States starting in the early 1950s.

With the rise of the Interstate system, initiated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the intensification of the automotive class, the Motel became an operative network accommodating the new mobility of America.

The Motel catered to the transient nation.

It also served the movements of criminality, supporting anonymity, budget economies, and illicit activity.

The Motel found its way into the collective unconscious as site for sexual adventure, a zone for temporary hiding out, and vagrancy.

I move from the 7 Star to the Hollywood Inn Express North.

Located on Hollywood Blvd. just west of Normandie Ave, near Jumbo's Clown room.

Checked into room 125, on the second floor, mid-afternoon.

Dimensions of room: 24 x 12.

The walls are painted a dull beige color.

Dark green carpeting running throughout, slightly electric.

Mis-fitted.

Scanning the room, I wonder what eccentricities may lurk behind the layers of paint, which are caked onto the walls.

I lie on the bed.

Nothing moves.

My attention turns to the corners of the room.

Zones of emptiness.

A dead space.

Bachelard says the corners of rooms are where dreams collect.

I imagine the corners in the Hollywood Inn Express North must be full of them.

To get inside the shadowy crack, full of cob-webs and dust, chips of paint and splattered filth.

To follow the dreams.

Bring them out.

I focus on moving the vertical line of the corners three inches to the right by applying a line of a darker beige running parallel to each corner.

To pull the crack out from the corner, to make it part of the room: to paint the shadow as a displaced vertical.

A line out of place.

I tape off a thin line, and begin to paint.

After multiple attempts to find the correct color, the paint builds up into a raised layer.  
The line appears to have purpose, a left-over mark by some previous action.

Is this working, I wonder.

What am I after?

What am I searching for, here in this Motel in Hollywood, with the sun outside – that  
blast of golden light everywhere.

A new home?

Throughout the year of 1956, Xenakis developed his ideas for the Philips Pavilion as part  
of the Brussels Expo.

Employing a highly unique hyperbolic paraboloid shape, Xenakis applied a rigorous  
conceptual structure to the project.

According to Le Corbusier, the Pavilion was to act as an “electronic poem” including an  
electronic music composition by Edgar Varése, film projections, and an elaborate spatial  
acoustics.

The Pavilion is part of a larger architectural legacy.

To make fantastic space.

Another Nature.

Modernism.

Another formal language.

Like Malevich’s architectural proposals: free-floating buildings without a horizon.

The Suprematist imagined a new spatial experience, a new spatial form of inhabitation.

To be free.

I close the curtains, and hear the traffic outside.

Xenakis bases the structure of the Pavilion on his music composition, Metastasis.

Independent parts distributed within a larger whole.

The building should function as an animated form, infusing space with media.

The Pavilion is not only a shell, but a medial event: housing 400 loudspeakers inside, the  
Pavilion is an attempt to unfix architecture with a sonic-time: Xenakis thinks of it as a  
“sound architecture.”

Composing and re-composing, I begin to think about speed, simultaneity – how it  
organizes space, how it builds relations, distributes energy.

I wonder about driving as a spatial practice, remembering the Carsten Höller work at the  
Tate, from the other year: the big slide located in the Hall, with people sliding down,  
taking the ride.

Carsten calls it, a reconfiguration of the senses.

Day 3.

I take a walk.

Everything floats by.

It is another day of bright light.

The hills in the distance, a clear punctuation.

A staggered horizon.

Nature.

The days are going by.

Motels.

More rooms.

Each room becomes a site for temporary occupation.

How many bodies have slept in this room I wonder each night, as my thoughts turn to dream, and the night crashes in with its varying input.

I am a killer on the run.

No, a searcher looking for home.

No, a drifter with nothing to do.

Bernhard Tschumi defines architecture in terms of occupation and usage.

He claims space is only made apparent with the intrusion of a body.

I enter the Motel room, and in that instant, it becomes something.

Not only form, but a flexing contour.

It gives way to personalized style.

To modification.

At least, in theory.

But the Motel, it stands for such theory – it is temporal architecture, an energetic space brought forward each night as a zone of occupation, and transient performance.

Shall we watch TV?

I check in to the Hollywood Downtowner Inn, room 27, on the second floor.

Located on Hollywood Blvd., just west of Hollywood Inn Express, near Western Ave.

It is early evening.

Dimensions of room: 13 x 18.

The room has been freshly painted in an array of coordinating colors: beige, white, peach, with one wall done in a faux-finish (something akin to a Palm Springs desert aesthetic).

Carpeting runs throughout.

A soft grey color, muting the yellowish light from outside, creating a nothingness underfoot, a soft empty ground.

How to deal with such a clean and thoughtful room?

To achieve a subtle difference to the existing conditions?

I attempt to create a pattern that may appear as “decoration”: to imagine myself an interior designer (from Palm Springs?) adding embellishments to the room.

This is achieved by applying small single brush strokes approximately three inches down from the top of the north and west walls in intervals of two feet.

I use Titanium white to contrast with the beige wall, making each brush stroke an aesthetic touch that may come to find its place, here in the Downtowner.

To further the decorative project, an additional brush stroke is added, this time in beige, applied to the white ceiling, exactly mirroring the white marks on the wall, creating a conversation from vertical to horizontal.

Motels are spaces for clandestine activity.

I think of these actions as secrets.

Leaving secrets behind.

I wonder if the intrusion of the body into space may perform as a primary act of criminality?

Could it be an activity through which we learn creative living, and also ways of violating what is surrounding?

The Downtowner hovers in the night like a mysterious oasis, smelling of Indian spices, night blossoms, and overflowing with palms.

Have I arrived in Tangiers?

I take another walk.

Exploring the walkways, the various staircases, the rooms tucked here and there, each numbered according to some undisclosed pattern.

A system of organization that at some point, somewhere, someone figured out – scratched on paper, or maybe a plan, according to some logic.

In the late 1960s, Xenakis begins a series of large-scale multi-media performances.

These are to take him into a new language.

A new architecture.

Something animated.

Total.

Active geometry.

Employing lasers, computer-controlled sound distribution, spatialization, and projection, the works bring architecture and temporal media into unison.

He aims for a total aesthetic – a massive upheaval of all the senses.

Complete rethinking of perspective: he tries to create a unique universe.

For a project in Montreal, Xenakis presents his Polytope: the audience enters the space, it is completely dark, they are led into the space.

His composition Terretektorh is amplified – a spatial work distributing orchestra members throughout a space.

It is recorded and amplified through numerous speakers.

It hits the ear.

Everywhere.

And nowhere.

Red and blue lights rapidly move through the space, creating patterns, geometries, spatial coordinates within an elaborate spectacle of intensity.

Flicker-Space.

Mesmerizing.

Day 4.

Reading a book on Friedrich Kiesler.

In the 1920s he develops exhibition designs for Surrealist exhibitions.

His work is a spatial articulation of the unconscious.

It is weird, monstrous.

Other-worldly.

And surprising – not only in itself, but also, in what it reveals.

As a lack.

Kiesler in his proposals come to haunt the pure rationality of architecture.

His is an occult-science.

A spider architecture coming to nest within the cracks of Modernism.

I check into the Hollywood Guest Inn.

Located on Sunset Blvd., just east of Highland Ave., toward the corner of Cherokee.

I enter room 232.

It is late evening.

Dimensions of room: 12 x 20.

Peering out over Sunset Blvd., from this room perched up like a look-out post, the view below captures all the nighttime movements of the street, and the endless flow of traffic, including streetlights that blast into the room to illuminate the “birds of paradise” dotting the wallpaper.

The floral pattern spans the entire room, ceiling to floor, looping back even into the bathroom alcove, with its ivory sink and immersing my senses in its peach, pinky, and beige energy (a garden of earthly delight?).

Might the Motel function as a Polytope?

A musical assemblage?

A becoming-tribal?

Can its monotony become a condition for transgressing the limits of architecture?

I search for a way in, to take the sexualized and criminal energy and make it into a spatial action.

The Motel resists.

I decide to take an improvisatory approach, aiming to connect the flowers scattered across the room by using hard-edged lines, here and there, all peachy-colored.

Like a game of connect the dots, the lines cut across the floral pattern, trajectories through the beige territories between the spidery flowers.

To make new configurations.

Points of connection.

Creating new vectors that sharpen the flowery undulations.

The peachy color of the lines echo the birds of paradise, while at the same time developing contrasts, a break and a flow, together.

I remember playing in a band in Los Angeles.

A band is a transient movement.

Made of constant motion, not only in the music, but also in the constant packing and unpacking of gear – the loading of the van, the handling of equipment, the band is a total machine of production, self-sufficient, electric.

A band is also familiar with Motels.

We stayed in hundreds of them.

On the road, out in the middle of fucking nowhere, the desert, the empty expanse, checking in late at night to this or that Motel.

A sort of tribal occupation.

To always be a Guest.

Might the Motel teach us how to be a guest?

How to find occupation within the mobile movements of the contemporary?

To build a temporal space?

Reading a collection of interviews with Iannis Xenakis, he reflects upon his large-scale, multi-media spectacle projects, the Polytopes, which bring sound, light and architecture together, remarking, "In the case of the Polytopes, I was attracted by the idea of repeating what Nature carries out in a grand scale."

A sort of natural geometry.

An energetic condition.

Animate.

Did Deleuze ever stay in the Guest Inn in Hollywood?

I begin to imagine these interventions as permutations, as potential algebraic actions located onto the time-space continuum of the Motel.

A crime of mathematics, a vandalism of set theory that may reconfigure the relation of forms, and the experience of occupation.

What kind of music may be found in the Motel room?

To be extracted, as a sonic trajectory.

Motel Rock.

The audience enters.

They take seats.

No, they walk around.

The lights go out.

The music begins.

First, from the right, then to the left, then, suddenly, from all over.

They are immersed, No, consumed by the sound.

Then, the lights blast through the space to penetrate the darkness.

In 1967 Xenakis presented his Diatope in Paris, just out front of the Pompidou Center.

With the Diatope Xenakis was able to elaborate on previous work, including 1600 flash bulbs and multiple lasers.

The series of lines cut into the existing environment, creating a network of intensity.

I leave the room, to go to the 7-eleven next store.

I open the door slowly, wondering if anyone is watching.

Day 5.

More sun.

It is endless.

A rich immersive energy.

It sets the scene.

Body rhythms.

A new day.

Moving to another Motel, this time, the Saharan.

Located on Sunset Blvd., west of La Brea Blvd.

I check into room 116.

It is late at night.

Dimensions of room: 10 x 16.

The room is tucked into a dark corner, behind fencing that leads out into a nearby alley.

The walls are painted a yellowish-beige offering little surprise, or nuance.

The room is small.

There is a huge TV.

It offers adult movies.

Like a secret pleasure.

The Motel is a space awaiting activation.

What might be done here?

The room is broken up by a half-wall that creates a separation, a small chamber preceding the bathroom, followed up along the ceiling, which hangs down an extra six inches.

The half-wall cuts into the room, acting as an architectural break, catching the light from outside while creating a shadow behind.

I focus on this half-wall, wanting to highlight its edge as it disrupts the feeling of flow.

To accentuate the edge and the lightness caught there, as a line drawn out and hovering in space.

I follow this edge in a bright yellow.

Painting the line of the vertical axis, and then up along the ceiling, as it hangs down into the room, making it brighter.

A line to be followed.

To catch the eye.

The yellow stands out, it calls attention as a cut, a break, a highlight.

It is a new vector.

The glow of the Motel sign shimmers in the night, puncturing the darkness with its wild blues and reds.

The Motel is a space of fantasy – sexual encounters, criminal behavior, secret rendezvous, or holidays under the sun.

In 1967 Xenakis presented his Diatope project in Paris – a multi-media installation of light and sound, using 1600 strobe lights, 6 rows of lasers, mirrored panelling, and 100 loudspeakers.

For the work, he developed a specially constructed tent-form, which was to house the sound and light spectacle.

The bright red alien form gives expression to what's inside – a vessel for the transportation of the senses: a total assault.

To shatter the environment.

Composed for the Diatope project, la Légend d'Eer is an electro-acoustic work using mathematical calculations directly related to the tympanum of the ear. "I have used probability functions to generate the pressure-time curves: that is, I worked directly with the 1/40,000 of a second."

Within the space of the Diatope, something starts to occur: the geometry of Nature, brought against the senses, as a wild mathematics.

Microscopic.

I wonder if anyone will see these interventions?

Will anyone wonder about this yellow line, here in the corner, in this cheap motel room in Hollywood?

What kind of architecture is this making?

The Diatope is essential terror.

De-sublimation.

And fully composed.

Day 6.

Sitting in a café.

I watch people.

Talking.

Each to their own space, like a small demarcation.

The café gets divided up.

It immediately develops borders.

Lines.

Boundaries.

You there.

Me here.

Everything is suddenly clear.

A natural spatial order.

An engrained sense of inhabitation.

Inhabitation-Behavior.

A mathematics with the body occupying this much space.

In the 1960s the Japanese group, the Metabolists, write a manifesto.

They make a claim about the energy of architecture.

The Metabolism of space.

All space is a flow of energy.

And its temporary stoppage.

A life-force.

Architecture becomes a stabilization of such flows.

A temporary gathering.

Already, the lines of architecture start to shake.

Leaving Hollywood, I drive out to Marina del Rey.

To stay at the Ramada Inn.

Located on Washington Blvd just west of Lincoln Blvd.

I check into room 215, on the second floor.

It is early evening.

Dimensions of room: 18 x 20.

The room is the cleanest so far.

Tidy and coordinated in light pastel colors, from soft pinks to light blues.

The walls are covered in wallpaper – abstract patterning of diagonals brushed loosely, as a soft organization, and bordered by an elaborate paisley flourish spanning each wall.

The pattern provides a certain background.

It is soft.

Working with a creamy pink color, I loosely follow the pattern of the wallpaper, painting diagonals that sharpen particular sections, or loosen others.

These are placed at the center points of each wall, followed by a strictly light blue diagonal approximately half-way between each center.

The pattern creates sudden points of attention, catching the eye as it glances around the room.

I wonder about time.

Sanford Kwinter writes, “The temporal factor here is not ‘time’ itself... but rather a general conception of nature as a ‘flow phenomenon,’ a dynamical, richly implicated system of eventual becomings...”

The Motel is time spent.

The time of the day.

Motel-Time.

It is an event.

Without modulation.

Working under Le Corbusier, Xenakis was to act as co-architect for the design of the Couvent de la Tourette, in 1957.

His studies into rhythmic patterns were to be directly played out in the specific design of the window facades of the Couvent: across the large open windows, Xenakis was to distribute a series of cuts breaking up the openness with a particular rhythmical patterning: an uneven spatial figure.

Rhythm is a form of keeping time.

Breaking time.

Reinventing time.

Xenakis is interested in modulating existing phenomenon: the windows rely upon or anticipate the light passing through, at given times of day, during certain seasons.

The rhythmical breaks, the calculations, all aim to respond to the natural shifting of light and shadow.

The building is then a sort of instrument played by sunlight.

Like driving.

The car a frame onto the world.

Against the natural phenomena.

A bubble.

Racing.

Producing effect.

An aesthetics of movement.

With the road an open geography.

Interstate bliss.

Day 7.

There is no more time.

The days are running out.

A delayed flight, gives me one more day.

Suddenly I am hovering.

More time.

I drive along the beach.

Everyone drifting.

The Beach Boys on the radio.

West coast.

I find the Vista Motel.

It is a series of ground floor rooms.

A small community.

Located on Sepulveda Blvd., south of Washington Blvd – on the way to LAX.

Checking into room 219, the early afternoon a soft glow.

Dimensions of room: 14 x 18.

More dark green carpet spanning the floor, off-set by the white walls, scuffed, pocked and blistered here and there.

The room is a conglomeration of “antique” furniture, some from a 1950s suburban fantasy, yellow, orange, and creamy.

I think of Jane Russell.

The film, Outlaws.

She is the object of desire.

Two cowboys, fighting it out.

For her.

Outlaws.

The West.

Might the Motel be a form of Outlaw-Architecture?

The furniture stands out, as the single distinguishing feature.

I had never thought about the furniture, but now, in this room, I begin to realize its importance.

It occupies and gives shape to the experience of room-life.

I approach my task with the simple gesture of applying “dark green dots” to each corner and joint in the room, from the walls to the furniture.

Each angle is marked, from each side (as possible), forming a medley of dots that might, in their distribution, begin to provide another view: might all these marks become the first step toward recognition of the perpendicular, as a core spatial vocabulary?

In 1971 Xenakis presented his work Persepolis in Iran.

Working on-site in the ancient city, Xenakis created an environmental spectacle: using fireworks, lasers, projectors and natural fire, along with tape music for 8 channels and 100 loudspeakers spread throughout the ruins, the work unfolded as an all-encompassing ritualistic bombast of intensity.

Fifty torch-carrying boys ran through the audience.

Flames.

Transformation.

Ritual.

To make a new space.

To become mythological.

Xenakis' fantastic visions are about material transfiguration.

A new body.

To harness the force of nature for a different organization.

Musical constructions.

To inhabit this new space.

Motels give way to the imagination, to transport the senses – to make a new subjectivity?

I speak to a woman staying in the room next to mine.

She is living there.

She smokes constantly.

The room is a cloud of smoke.

She says she likes living there.

It gives her a feeling for home.

I imagine, she is on the run.

Like Bonnie and Clyde.

Escaping something.

Herself?

The Motel is the antithesis of home-life.

It is about something else.

A zone of disappearance.

A new time.

To find another kind of music?