

Applied Semiotics

Parallax and sequence	Represent an action/event in a sequence of five images. Keeping the same time sequence for each of the five steps, represent the same action from five different perspectives.
Semiotic Operations, syntactic level	Apply substitution, omission, and insertion* at the micro and macro levels of the sequence. Keep the time scale unchanged. Based on these operations, represent the original sequence in an optimized manner.
Re/presentation	Choose a word which best represents your final sequence. Represent the word iconically, indexically, and symbolically. Typography and concrete poetry can also be used here. Note the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the representations.
Interpretant Matrix*	Define functions of the word, placing yourself at the pragmatic level. Find relevant categories of interpretants and place the corresponding representations in a semiotic matrix*, according to their sign typology: icon, index, symbol. Define a problem statement.
Supersign	Develop the problem statement into a design project of your choosing. Consider all previous explorations as possible inclusive elements of your project. Aim at the highest possible design level (form-and-content), but allow the results to come out of your semiotic process.  "Imageability", the criterion adopted by Kevin Lynch in the analysis of urban form, and presented in his book <u>The Image of the City</u> , will be adopted as the testing ground for the semiotic approach to design.

This outline is based mainly on semiotics courses presented by Mihai Nadin and Thomas Ockerse at the Rhode Island School of Design, Fall 1983, and Spring 1985.

\*Substitution, omission, insertion, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin.

\*Interpretant matrix, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin and Thomas Ockerse.

\*Semiotic matrix, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin.

Definitions  
(numbers refer to bibliography)

Semiotics     ...discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment. A sign can be thought of as anything that conveys meaning. 5

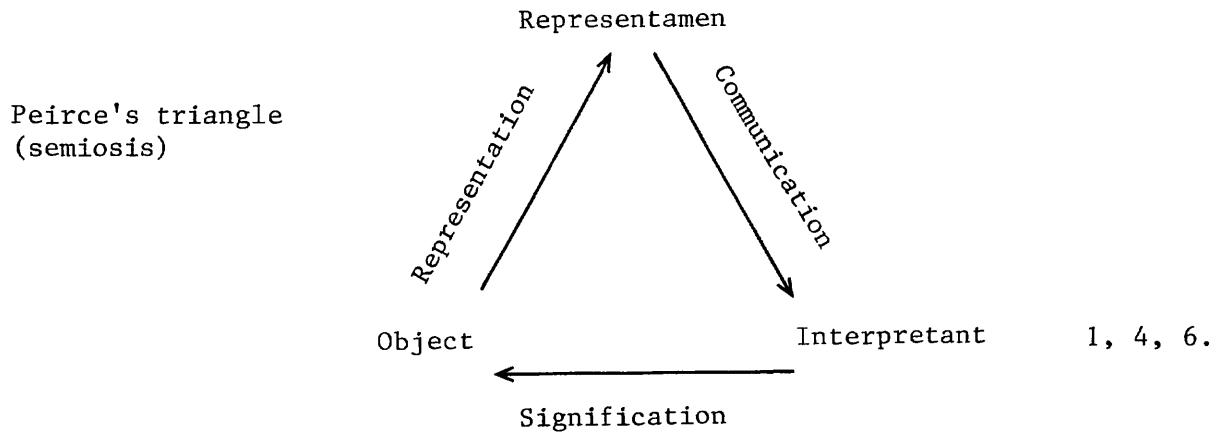
knowledge science of signs 6

general theory of representation 2

general theory of signs in all their forms and manifestations among man and animals, normal and pathological, linguistic or non-linguistic, social or individual. 1

Sign     something which stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacity 6

Semiosis     an action, an influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in anyway resolvable into actions between pairs. 6



Iconic     Modes of representation. Iconic (degree of resemblance, photo);  
Indexical     Indexical (physical mark, fingerprint); Symbolic (based on convention, flag, cross, signature).  
Symbolic     This typology of signs refers only to the primary function of the sign: representation. 4, 6.

Interpretant     The interpretant is not the interpreter. 1  
interpretant as another representation which refers to the same object. 1  
signs are interpreted using signs. 4  
(the interpretant becomes yet another sign)  
the interpretant is a mediated, indirect process, which uses some previous knowledge. 4

## Bibliography

1. Eco, Umberto  
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Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.
2. Morris, Charles  
Writings on the General Theory of Signs  
The Hague: Mouton, 1971
3. Nadin, Mihai  
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Course material presented at the Rhode Island School of Design, Spring, 1985.
4. Nadin, Mihai and Thomas Ockerse  
Semiotics of the Visual / Visible Language  
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5. Nadin, Mihai and Richard D. Zakia  
Semiotics, Advertising, and Marketing  
In 'The Journal of Consumer Marketing,' Vol.4, N.2, Spring 1987, pp 5-12.
6. Peirce, Charles Sanders  
Collected Papers *2.227 - 2.232    2.274 - 2.308*  
Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 1931-1958.

Terence Halks  
Structuralism and Semiotics

Saussure  
COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS

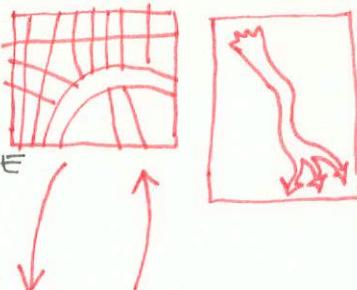
# LECTURE ON "THE IMAGE OF THE CITY" BY KEVIN LYNCH

## CITY

TEMPORAL ART

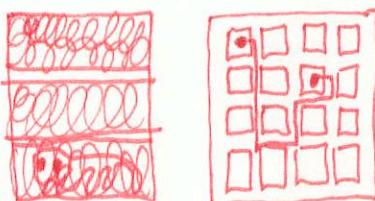
- GENERAL / STABLE
- DETAIL / CHANGING

LEFT                    RIGHT  
↓                    ↓



MENTAL IMAGE

LEGIBILITY OF STRUCTURE  
IDENTIFYING ENVIRONMENT



VISUAL QUALITY OF LANDSCAPE

## ORIENTATION

- COLOR
- SHAPE
- MOTION
- POLARIZATION OF LIGHT
- SMELL
- SOUND
- TOUCH

MEANS OR AIDS TO ORIENTATION:

- MAP
- DESCRIPTION
- SENSE OF GETTING LOST

STRUCTURE

IDENTITY (INDIVIDUALITY) > (MEANING)

PHYSICAL QUALITIES → MENTAL IMAGE

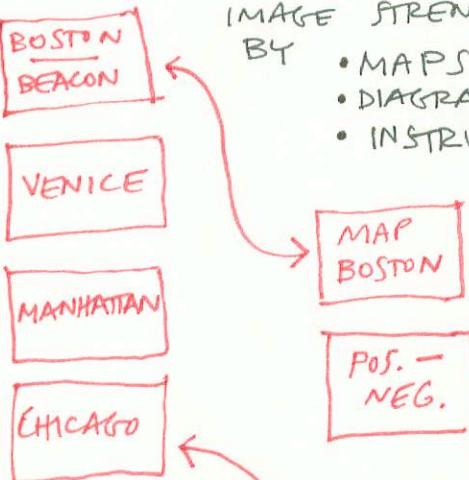
(IMAGEABILITY)

HIGH IMAGEABLE CITIES :

{ VENICE  
BOSTON  
S. FRANCISCO  
MANHATTAN (PARTS)  
CHICAGO (LAKE FRONT)

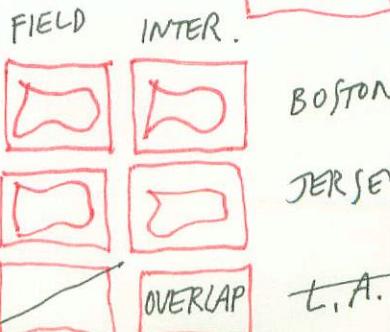
IMAGE STRENGTHENED BY

- MAPS
- DIAGRAMS
- INSTRUCTIONS

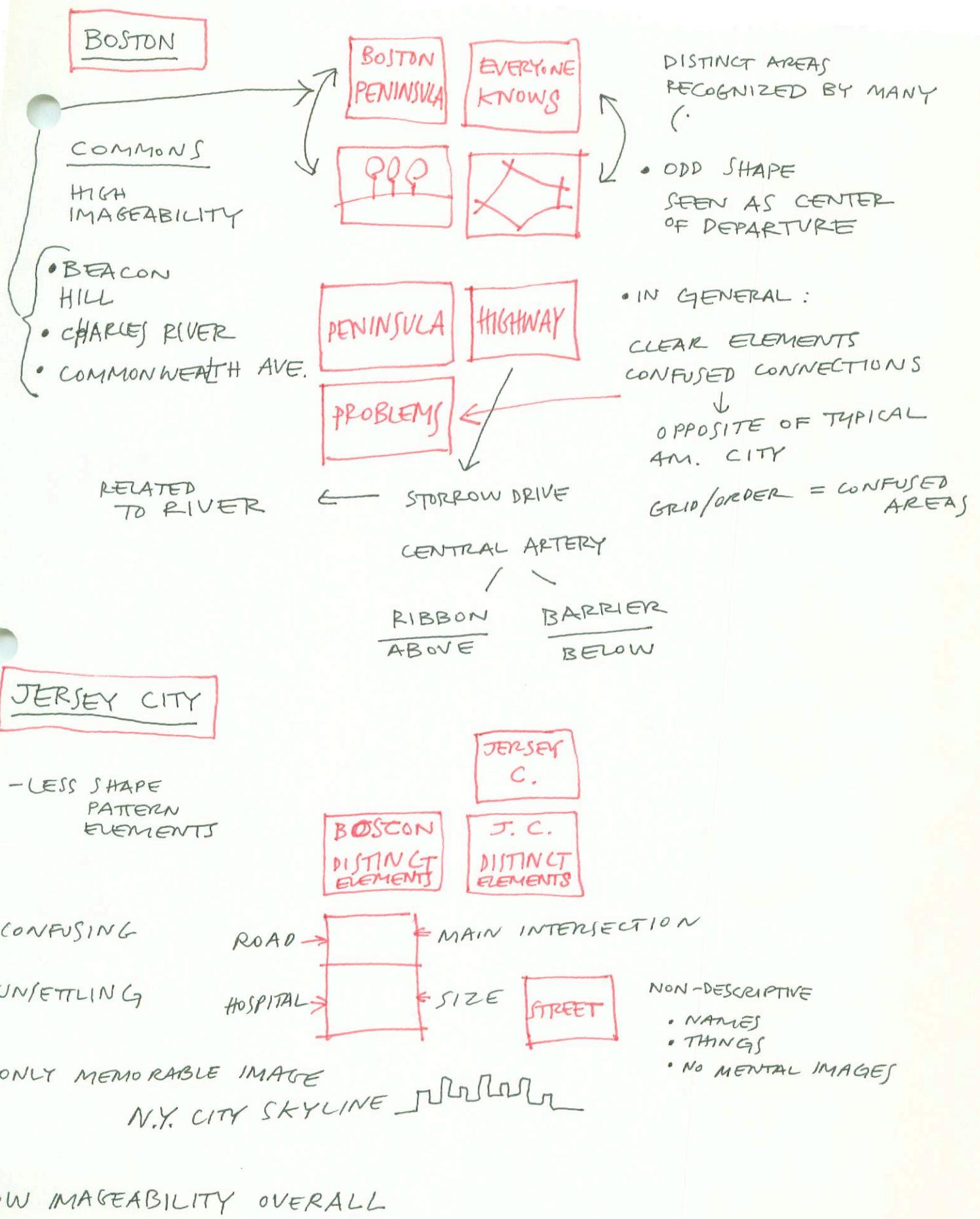


## METHOD

BOSTON	HIGH I.	30
JERSEY C.	LOW I.	15
L.A.	NEW CITY	15



- 1) SUBJECTIVE SURVEY
- 2) INTERVIEWS OF RESIDENTS



## LOS ANGELES

LOW IMAGE

ACTIVE CORE



DOWNTOWN IDEA

IMPORTANCE OF  
SHOPPING

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

FORMLESS

w/out center

SPACIOUS

SPREAD OUT

ALL AGREED ON:

SMOG

AUTO

HOLLYWOOD  
F/WAY  
(NIGHT)

PANORAMIC  
VIEW

IN THE  
FIELD

- FROM ABOVE LOOKS LIKE JERSEY C.



BROADWAY



L.A.  
AT NIGHT



SAN DIEGO F/WAY



(DAY)

## ORIENTATION

• OCEAN

• MOUNTAINS

• HILLS

← • FREE WAYS

LARGE SCALE / VAGUE

SMALL SCALE / HOUSES'

## GENERAL ADAPTATION TO ENVIRONMENT

- WATER, • PLANTS, • OLD,  
• NEW

# CITY IMAGE AND ITS ELEMENTS

(4) (3)

MANY OVERLAPPING

MEANING  $\leftrightarrow$  PHYSICAL ELEMENTS

PATH



- CHANNEL OF MOVEMENT'
- STREET
- WALKWAY
- CANAL

VICENZA



EDGES



- LINEAR BREAK
- BARRIER
- SHORE
- WALL

SWISS



DISTRICT



- SECTIONS OF CITY
- "TO BE INSIDE OF IT..."

NODE

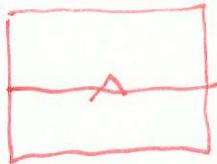
S.PIETRO



- STRATEGIC SPOTS
- CORES
- FOCI POINTS (OF DISTRICTS)
- WHERE PATHS MEET



LANDMARK



- EXTERNAL TO OBSERVER
- REFERENCE
- ORIENTATION POINT

## INTEGRATION OF ELEMENTS

SAME THING AS PATH/EDGE

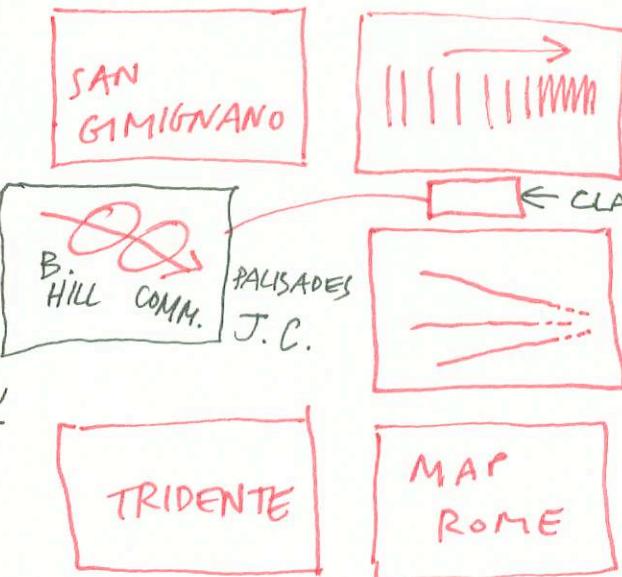
BERN



ISOLA MADRE

# PATH

CONTINUITY  
DIRECTION  
↓  
GRADIENTS  
TOPOGRAPHY  
HILL TOWN



- (4)
- SENSE OF SCALE
  - CLARITY OF REGION ALONG THE PATH
  - DESTINATION OR ORIGIN POINTS

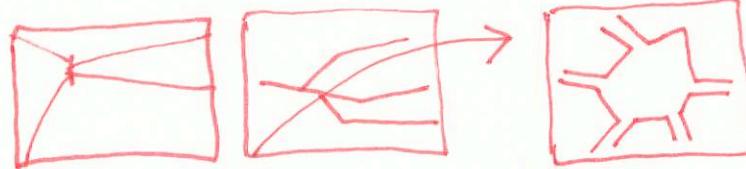
## PATH

- DETACHED FROM ENVIRONMENT



- PROBLEM OF INTERSECTION

- MORE THAN 1
- BRANCHES



- EASIER WHEN GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC IS PRESENT

- MANY PATHS

↓  
NETWORK  
↓

GRID - L.A.



- GRID MEANINGFUL WHEN DIFFERENTIATED

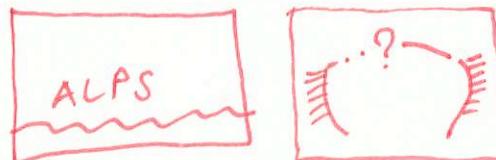
- PROBLEM OF SKEWED GRIDS

- EASY AS WHOLE
- DIFFICULT IN DETAIL

## EDGE

- BOUNDARY BETWEEN TWO AREAS

- LATERAL REFERENCE



- BOSTON
- LACK OF CLOSURE
- SENSE OF INCOMPLETION



- TYPICAL EDGE: ?
- CHICAGO LAKE FRONT.

- NEW YORK EAST RIVER DRIVE
- B/LYN - QUEENS EX/WAY

## DISTRICT

- Thematic

BEACON HILL

SIENA

- EDGES ARE SECONDARY

CORE

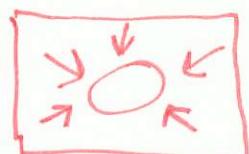
SURROUNDED  
BY

GRADIENT

RADIATION

PROXIMITY

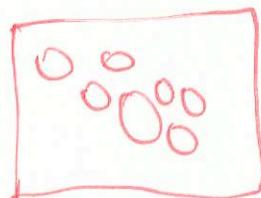
MARKET AREA



- DEFINITE OR BLURRED BOUNDARIES

- MARKET THEMATIC VIVID

- BUT NO SHAPE  
↓  
REINFORCE



District alone  
L.A. J.C.

or MOSAIC  
BOSTON

## NODES

- PATH CROSSING
- CONCENTRATION

IMPORTANT EVEN  
IF SHAPELESS

BROAD & BELVEDERE

VENICE VENICE

VIGEVANO

CLEAR RELATION

MICRO-LOCATED

BUT INTIMATE (HALL)

- SQUARE
- SHARP EDGES
- CONTRAST → CITY
- " → ITSELF

VENICE: S. MARK

PONTE  
PALAZZO DUCALE  
CAMPANILE  
LIBRERIA

LANDMARK

## LANDMARK

(7)

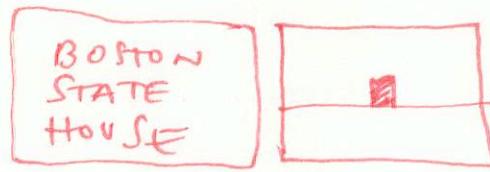
- LOCATION AND ORIENTATION DEVICES

visible  
from any  
location

TOP: IMPORTANT  
BOTTOM: LESS  
IMPORTANT

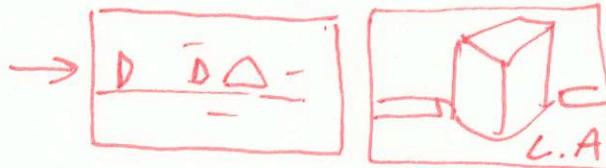
STATE HOUSE:  
BOTH

SYMBOLICALLY  
VISUALLY

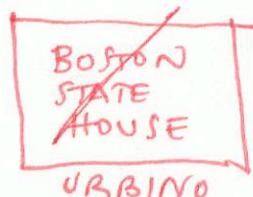
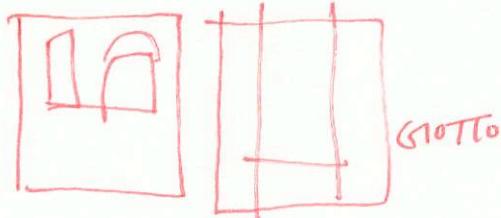


SIMPLE  
PHYSICAL  
ELEMENTS:

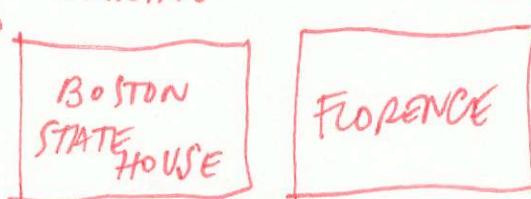
SINGULARITY  
CLEAR FORM  
SPATIAL LOCATION  
(FIGURE/ BACKGROUND)



Visible  
by local  
contrast



RELIGION  
COMMERCE  
ORIENTATION



## ELEMENT INTERRELATION

BEACON HILL

window

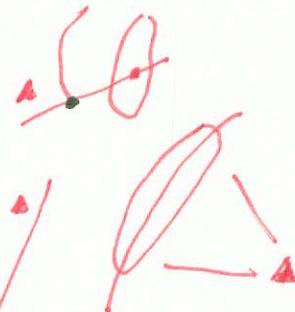
pattern of windows

bldg

district



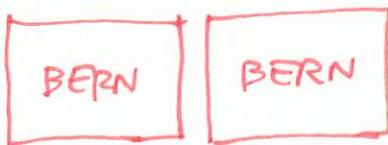
STRUCTURE & IDENTITY



NODES = PATH MEET

LANDMARKS = NODES

PATHS = LANDMARKS ALONG  
↓  
REGIONS

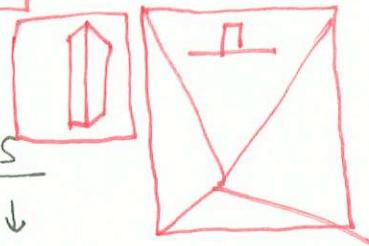


- CONTEXT
- INTER. ORGANIZ.
- COMPLEXES
- LOCALITY

## SHIFTING IMAGE

SET OF IMAGES

ALONG LEVELS  
↓ ↓ ↓



← SOMETIMES NO CONNECTION BETWEEN LEVELS

STREET → METRO REGION

FACTORS: VIEW POINT  
WHICH TIME/DAY  
INFLUENCE SEASON  
OLD/NEW

## IMAGE DEVELOPS:

SKETCH MAP  
BY RESIDENTS

• FAMILIAR MOVEMENT



• ENCLOSING OUTLINE



• GRID + DETAIL



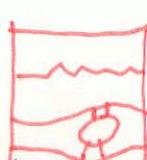
• SET OF REGIONS



STEINBERG:

NEW YORKER

• DENSE NUCLEUS AS START

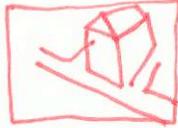
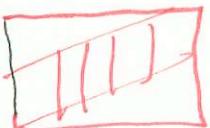


← TOPOLOGICALLY CORRECT

## IMAGE QUALITY

DENSE /  
ABSTRACT

TAX 1

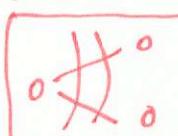


DENSE / DETAIL

ABSTRACT / RESTAURANT,  
2nd LEFT

STRUCTURAL  
QUALITY

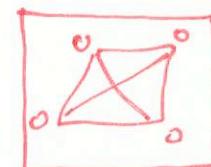
- FREE  
DISJOINED
- DISJOINED  
RELATED  
IN DIRECTION



- FLEXIBLE



- RIGID  
MANY  
CONNECTIONS



BEST BUT  
DIFFICULT BECAUSE  
OF CULTURE

FOCUS

• INCREASING  
PRECISION  
OF IMAGE

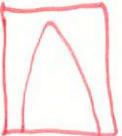
## CITY FORM

OPPORTUNITY TO IMAGINE LANDSCAPE

CLEAR, VISIBLE, COHERENT

DESIGN PATH

URBINO



- HIERARCHY  
FUNCTION

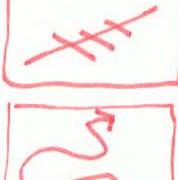


- CLEAR DIRECTION

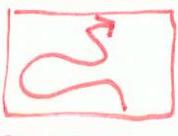


- SENSE OF GOAL  
PROGRESSION

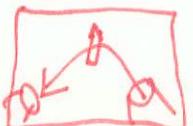
URBINO



- ORIENTATION  
AND SCALE + CLUES



- KINESTETIC

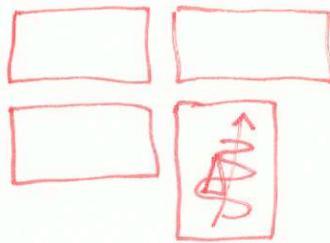


- VISUAL EXPOSURE  
TO (LANDMARKS)

## APPROACH TO PATH

10

TOPOLOGICALLY  
SIMPLE

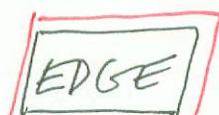


MELODIC

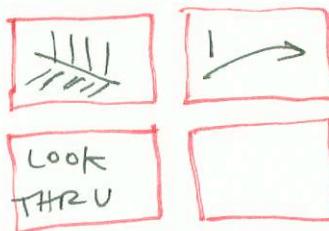
S. FRANCISCO  
FROM BAY

- INTRO
- DEVLP.
- CLIMAX
- CONCLUSION

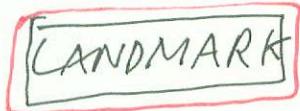
### DESIGN OF OTHER ELEMENTS



LATERAL VISIBILITY



ONE SIDE  
DIFFERENT  
ALLOW  
USE



HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS

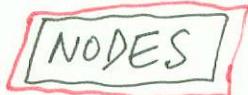
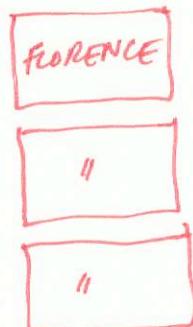
SMALL SIGNS

INTO → SYSTEM  
OF L.

PATTERN



ORIENTATION



CONCEPTUAL ANCHOR POINT

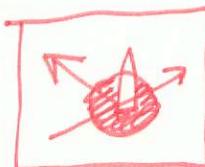
PLACE

SHARP ENCLOSURE

FORM + FUNCTION

TRAIN STOP

SAM  
GIMIGNANO



## DISTRICT

- LEFT
- HOMOGENEOUS CHARACTER
  - BOUNDARY
  - STRUCTURE WITHIN
  - BOUNDARY AS SEAM FOR CONNECTIONS

## FORM QUALITIES → GOOD DESIGN

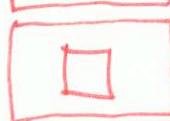
### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

SINGULARITY



SQUARE

SIMPLICITY



COMPLEX → SIMPLE

CONTINUITY



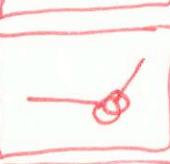
SIMILAR ACTIVITIES

DOMINANCE



FLORENCE

JOINT CLARITY



SUBWAY / SURFACE

DIRECTIONAL VARIATION



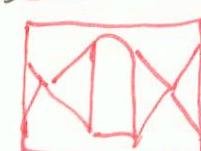
GRADE

MOTION AWARENESS  
SLEEP



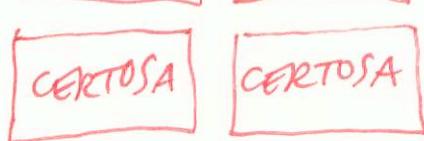
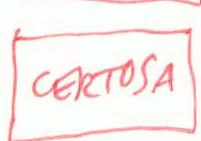
TIME SERIES / LANDMARK  
INTENSITY

VISUAL SCOPE  
GALLERIA



SYMBOL PHYSICAL

SEE THROUGH



MIES / BARCELONA

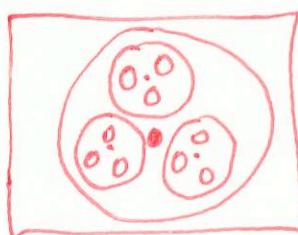
- NAMES & MEANINGS

# METROPOLITAN FORM

MAJOR DISTRICT  
↓  
SUB DISTRICTS

- IDEA OF LIBRARY

GENERAL TO PARTICULAR



STATIC



BASED ON MAJOR ELEMENTS

— RIVER  
— WATER

- LINEAR DYNAMIC BUT

CONTAINED IN SIZE

- LARGE SCALE IMAGEABLE ENVIRONMENTS ARE RARE

- TO ACHIEVE SENSE OF PLACE → :

- \* RESHAPE WHAT IS SEEN
- \* EDUCATION IN SEEING

## SENSE OF WHOLE

ORCHESTRATION OF ELEMENTS

PISA

DISTRICTS

PATH

NODE

EDGE RIVER

LANDMARKS