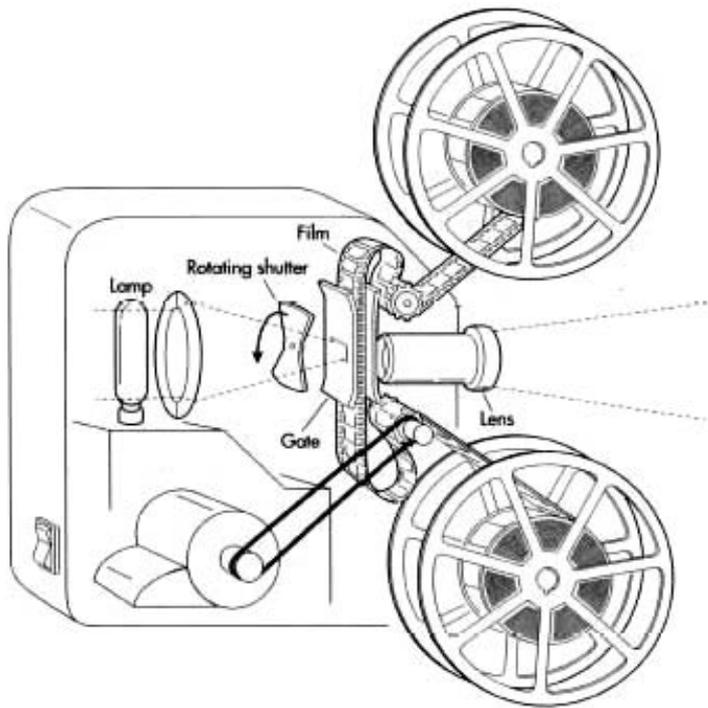


Architecture and Film:

Memory



“Architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of form in light.” - Le Corbusier

Architecture and film use techniques such as movement, behavior, composition, light, shadow, textures, moods emotions, colors (or lack thereof) to create an experience and to tell a story.

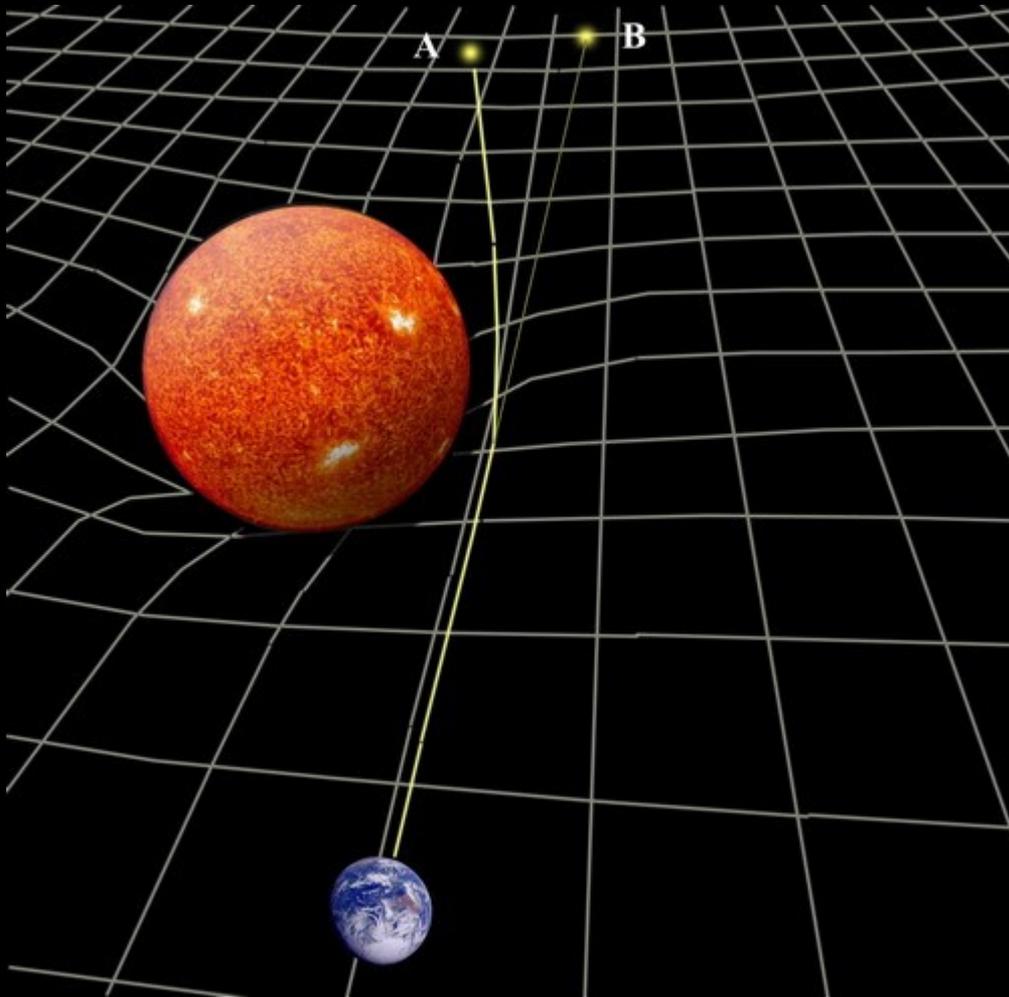
In film, light is projected through film. In architecture it's the opposite: matter is thrown into light.



*What significant discovery of the early 20th Century
changed the way we view the world in everything from art
to science?*

“In order to grasp the nature of space the observer must project himself through it.”

-Siegfried Gideon, Space, Time and Architecture



Special Relativity - 1905

- Time slows down the faster you travel.
- Space contracts the faster you travel
- Mass increases the faster you travel.

Prior notions of time before the 20th Century:



1. Time exists independently of an observer, realistically, and not in relation to any other phenomena
2. Subjectively, having no existence apart from an observer and present only in the sense of experience.

20th Century Notions of Time:



SPACE-TIME

“In relativistic contexts, time cannot be separated from the three dimensions of space, because the observed rate at which time passes for an object depends on the object's velocity relative to the observer and also on the strength of gravitational fields, which can slow the passage of time.”

- Wikipedia

What movement of the early 20th Century may have been influenced by the Theory of Special Relativity?

Cubism

"Space in modern physics is conceived of as relative to a moving point of reference not as the absolute and static entity of the baroque system of Newton. And in modern art, for the first time since the Renaissance, a new conception of space leads to a self-conscious enlargement of our ways of perceiving space. it was in cubism that this was most fully achieved."

-Siegfried Gideon, *Space, Time and Architecture* p436.



Femme en Pleurs (Woman in Tears)
Picasso, 1937



Still Life with A Bottle of Rum
Picasso, 1911

Cubism

" [Planes] now they came to the fore as an artistic means, employed in various and different ways, at times representing fragments of identifiable objects, at others, such things as bottles or pipes flattened out so that interior and exterior could be seen simultaneously, at still others completely irrational forms equivalent to psychic response."

-Siegfried Gideon, *Space, Time and Architecture* p434.

Modular Narrative:

The non-linear narrative or Modular narrative (in this case its an *anachronic* narrative) refers to the reorganization of classical notions of space, time, and causality in the telling of a story.

It allows audiences to inhabit a dual perspective, both immersed in the story and observing it from the outside, which then is evocative of the idea of relativity. Time itself is seen as a type of information in these types of films.

This type of narrative is very well suited to the representation of memory. Traditional story telling typically uses a baseline temporality to establish a "present tense" in a film, then employs flashbacks and flash-forwards to create secondary temporalities.

(This is less typical in film than in literature since in film, there had been a long standing notion established in the noir period, that you don't flash-forward for the sake of suspense).





Mnemotechnics and the art of memory:

The ancient technique for exercising memory without the aid of technology. One would imagine a series of places, or loci, where one would create images of things to be remembered, and the images would record experience or knowledge to be retrieved later, and placed within a familiar space, so that by going from virtual space to virtual space one would simply collect the memories or images stored within these locations.

The loci would be architectural in nature, like walking through a building. This is where the English phrase "in the first place", "in the second place", etc come from. This is also known as "*the method of loci*".



Hannibal Lecter, Mnemonist:

“...Hannibal went to the center of his own mind and into the foyer of his memory palace. He elected for music in the corridors, a Bach string quartet, and passed quickly through the Hall of Mathematics, through Chemistry, to the room he'd adopted recently from the Carnavalet Museum and renamed the Hall of the Cranium. It took only a few minutes to store everything, associating anatomical details with the set arrangements of displays in the Carnavalet, being careful not to put the venous blues of the face against blues in the tapestries.

When he had finished in the Hall of the Cranium, he paused for a moment in the Hall of Mathematics, near the entrance. It was one of the oldest parts of the palace in his mind. He wanted to treat himself to the feeling he got at the age of seven when he understood the proof Mr. Jakov showed him. All of Mr. Jakov's tutorial sessions at the castle were stored there, but none of their talks from the hunting lodge.”

JIM CARREY

KIRSTEN DUNST

KATE WINSLET

Would you erase me?



A MICHEL GONDRY FILM

**ETERNAL SUNSHINE
OF THE
SPOTLESS MIND**

Eternal Sunshine of the
Spotless Mind

2004

Michel Gondry, Director



Eternal Sunshine: The narrative

"In eternal sunshine, the shuffling of images and places, places and images, produces a distorted technologically mediated mnemotechnics that defies spatio-temporal consistency." -Cameron p92



Eternal Sunshine Notes:

- The movie is evocative of the modern notion of "space" where spatial relationships are seen as being relative. In this case relative to Joel's changing perspective on his relationship with Clementine.
- Eternal Sunshine *"portrays a psychological space in which the art of memory is rendered impossible through the technology of erasure."* - Cameron p. 91
- Throughout the movie Clementine's hair is a visual clue as to where in the story that scene is taking place: green representing spring, or the beginning of their relationship, orange for fall, and blue representing winter, or the end of their relationship. Her hair is a way we the viewer can anchor the memories in "movie"-time. The memories start at the most recent and work their ways back towards when they first met.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Clip 1



"Transitions between memories are not only associative... But are also shaped by a narrational logic based on order. In one memory Joel walks from a bookstore where he has seen Clementine, straight into the living room of Rob and Carrie, to whom he has been describing the encounter. This transition is motivated by Joel's retelling of the events of the previous few days, and it establishes a clear relationship between the past... And the present."

-Cameron, p.93





Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Clip 2



“To remember is to repeat, but also to repeat differently, and therefore to reveal the workings of temporality. Joel's temporal anchoring deploys memory not simply as a direct representation of the past, but also as the combination and refiguration of elements of the past. Thus a memory of Joel and Clementine sitting together on the sofa at home takes on fictional qualities as they shelter from the rain at the same time... In this way, even the schematized erasure process fails to completely determine the unfolding of Joel's recollections.”

Cameron, P93





Here is an example of a strong memory tied to a specific space. It's not just in his house but in another distinct space within a space, under the table. It's a memory within a memory, space within a space.

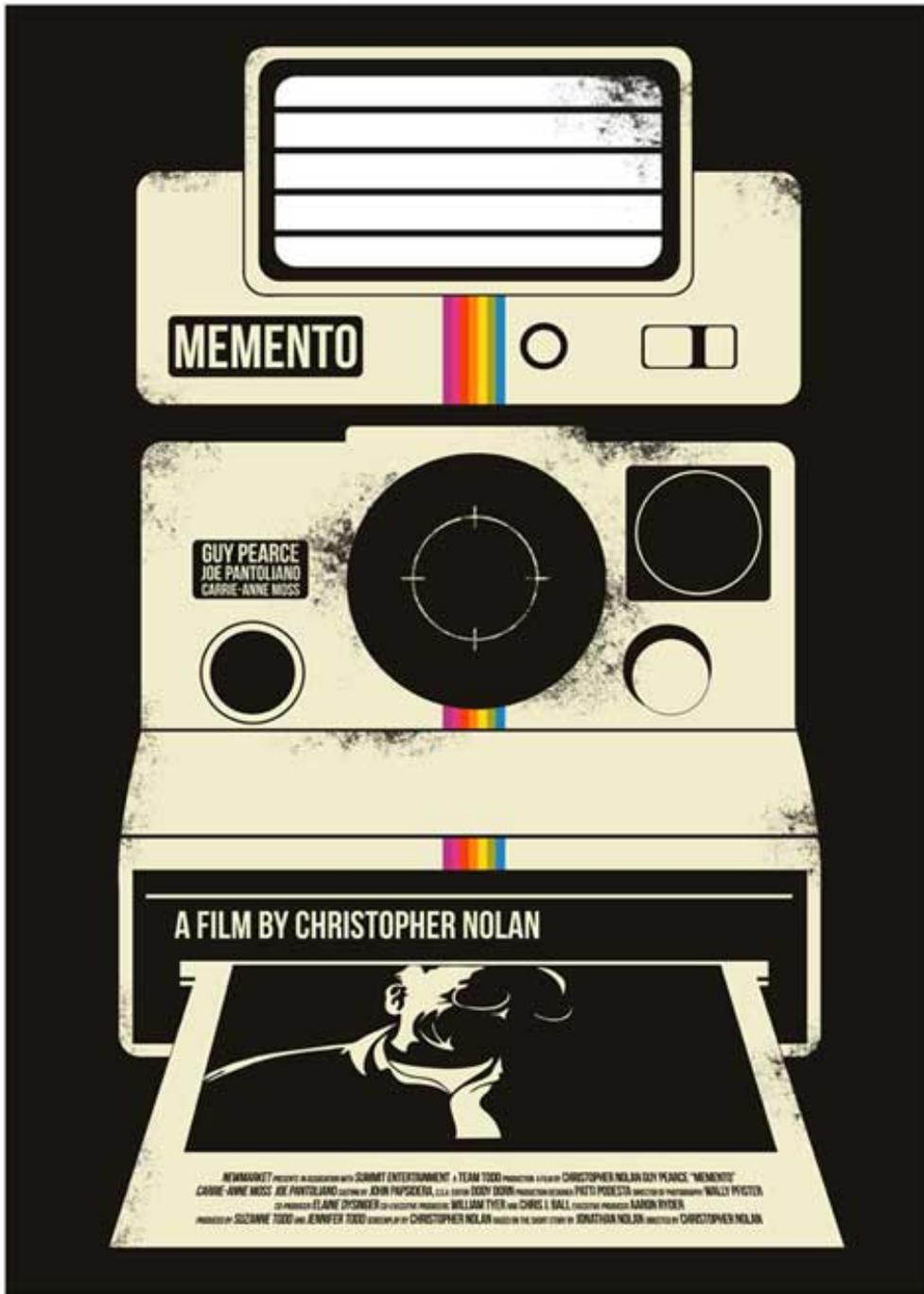


Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Clip 3



More Notes on Eternal Sunshine:

- In Eternal Sunshine, the art of memory is used when Joel tries to anchor himself by traversing the various virtual spaces stored in his mind as memories. His memories are inexorably linked to architectural spaces: the house on the beach, the house in which he grew up, his apartment, the bookstore. But when you throw in the technology that erases his memory these locations begin to get distorted. So mnemotechnics begins to break down, as does his memory.
- Writing and erasure are also metaphors that represent memory. (Similar to the way that photography is used as a metaphor for memory in Memento.)



Memento

2000

Christopher Nolan, Director



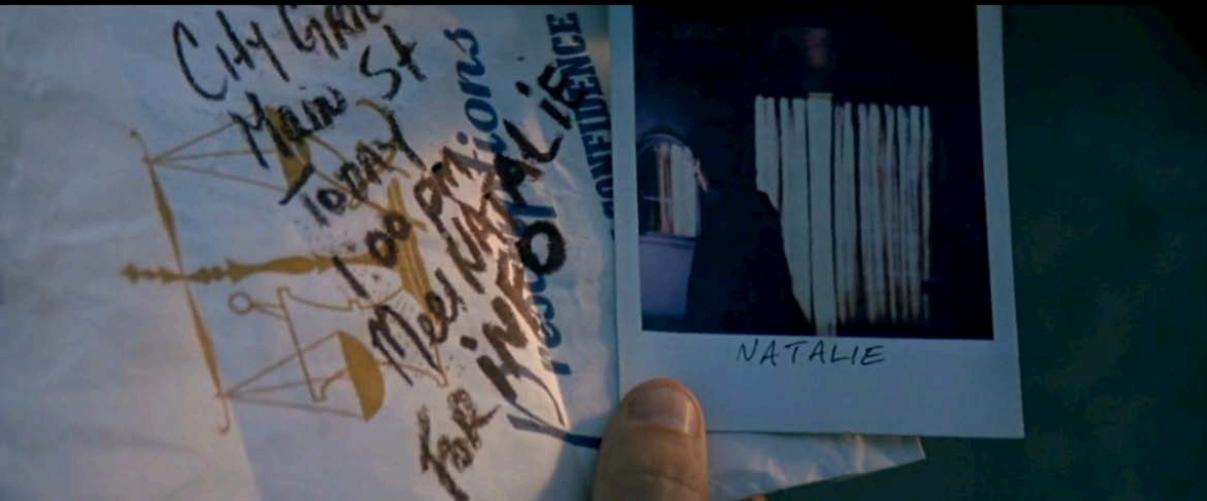
Mnemotechnics in Memento:

In memento the art of memory is transferred onto his body in the forms of tattoos. His memories are not memories, but are "facts" as he calls them, even though some of them turn out to be lies, not truths about his investigation.



Memento and a sense of Place:

- The film takes place completely within a world that is “place-less”. “Non-places” have no historical or cultural identity or individuality. Non-places are spaces of transit, airports, supermarkets, hospitals and motels, for example. These allow for anonymity.
- Non-places tend to create a sense of “time-less-ness”, which is made clear in the film with the lack of contemporary technology. There are no cell phones, computers, and even the camera he uses is analog.





General Notes on Memento:

- Leonard is taking advantage of associative memory in choosing what he wants to remember. He chooses to forget that he himself caused her to overdose on insulin shots. He chooses to forget that she survived the attack. He chooses to forget that he killed the original John G. Sammy Jencks is a projection of his own actions onto another person, which validates what he does in the movie. "Associative memory is subordinated to ordered, narrative memory." P100
- The movie is evocative of the modern notion of time, whereby time is perceived relative to Leonard's condition.

Comparison between Eternal Sunshine and Memento:

- *"Both eternal sunshine and memento invoke the art of memory by showing the ways that the characters attempt to anchor themselves temporally by finding their bearings spatially."*-Cameron p99
- This quote directly links the concept of space-time as it relates to mnemotechnics. Time and space and *place* all are important concepts in the portrayal of these characters in their films.
- In Eternal Sunshine - Joel uses spatial association to try to resist the mnemonic erasure process, while in Memento Leonard must establish order by taking photographs, a form of spatial association, and a surrogate form of memory, in order to try to remember.
- Leonard is creating false memories through erasure. Joel is doing a similar thing. Joel is creating false memories in order to not forget Clementine.
- The two films are opposite in that in one, Joel tries to initially, voluntarily erase his memory, while Leonard is constantly trying to rebuild it from clues he gathers and makes permanent in tattoos.
- *"Memento is the opposite of Eternal Sunshine. Joel begins by submitting to memory erasure, and then decides to rescue the past. Leonard, as he is presented in mementos reverse chronology progresses from temporal anchoring towards erasure. "P107*



Peter Zumthor (Basel, 1943)

- Uses memory as a starting point for designing a building.
- *Thinking Architecture* - His book documenting architectural essays he has written that define his architecture.
- Pritzker Prize winner, 2009
- His architecture is experienced in a RELATIVE way; each person who experiences his work comes to it with their own personal perspective.
- Zumthor's ideas about architecture, that they can evoke memory through one's experience of it, manifest themselves in both the quality of the spaces he creates as well as in the materials he chooses to create them.



Steilneset Memorial to the Victims of the Finnmark Witchcraft Trials

2011

Vardø, Norway

Peter Zumthor, Architect



The structure is evocative of the fish racks the locals made and used. It is a temporal architectural gesture, harking back to the indigenous historical architecture of the area.



The horizontality of the building matches the horizontality of the landscape.



The other structure:

Louise Bourgeois designed an eternal living flame. Zumthor designed its structure whose glass reflects the landscape and whose blackness are inspired by welding goggles.

In the middle of the space is Bourgeois' piece, an aluminum chair with gas flames shooting out of the seat. In this rather literal evocation, the burning chair is reflected in seven oval mirrors placed on metal columns in a ring around the fiery seat, like judges circling the condemned.

If you think you'll be too warm standing near the burning chair, don't worry. In this blustery place, temperatures rarely rise above 51 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Interior of the memorial:

Picked up on local indigenous houses which typically have a single candle in the window. Zumthor hung simple pendant fixtures in the windows of the memorial which picked up on this imagery.

Tar painted interior and ribbed roof; like being in the belly of a whale

The oak flooring doesn't touch the fabric membrane, so walls flutter in the wind and its only the visitor that is on firm ground.



Bruder Klaus Field Chapel

2007

Mechernich, Germany

Peter Zumthor, Architect



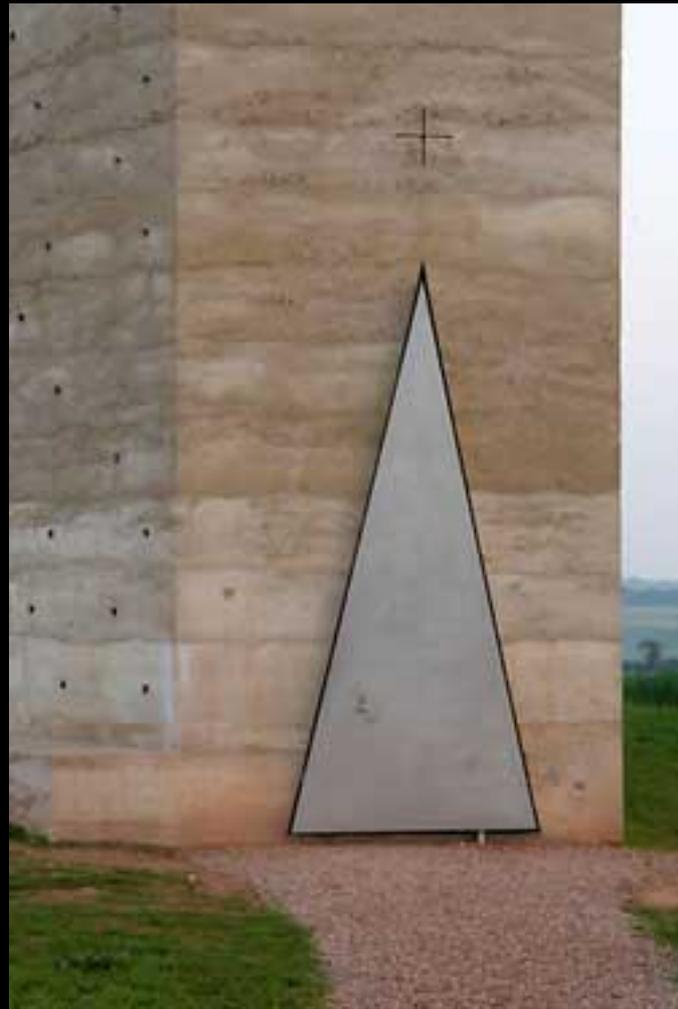
"The field chapel dedicated to Swiss Saint Nicholas von der Flüe (1417-1487), known as Brother Klaus, was commissioned by farmer Hermann- Josef Scheidtweiler and his wife Trudel and largely constructed by them, with the help of friends, acquaintances and craftsmen on one of their fields above the village.



"The interior of the chapel room was formed out of 112 tree trunks, which were configured like a tent. In twentyfour working days, layer after layer of concrete, each layer 50 cm thick, was poured and rammed around the tentlike structure. In the autumn of 2006, a special smouldering fire was kept burning for three weeks inside the log tent, after which time the tree trunks were dry and could easily be removed from the concrete shell. The chapel floor was covered with lead, which was melted on site in a crucible and manually ladled onto the floor. The bronze relief figure in the chapel is by sculptor Hans Josephsohn."



Detail of the floor, weep holes and oculus.



"On a sunny day, this oculus resembles the flare of a star that can be attributed to a reference of Brother Klaus's vision in the womb. The very somber and reflective feelings that become inevitable in one's encounter with the chapel make it one of the most striking pieces of religious architecture to date. With no plumbing, bathrooms, running water, electricity, and with its charred concrete and lead floors, the seemingly uninviting chapel remains an anticipated destination for many." - arch daily blog