Postscript
An embodied memory has an essential role as the basis of remembering a space or a place. We transport all the cities and towns that we have visited, all the places that we have recognized, into the incarnate memory of our body. Our domicile becomes integrated with our self-identity; it becomes part of our own body and being.

Juhani Pallasmaa

When I was studying a light condition in the exhibition hall with a model, I suddenly recalled one scene from two summers ago. I encountered it at Helsinki Institute of Technology by Alvar Aalto in Finland. At the corner of the campus the gymnasium was standing as a forgotten piece from the rest. It was under a refurbishment then. Following a guide I stepped in the gymnasium hall. I found a tiny spot of light hitting on the floor in the thick and heavy darkness. It seemed like the only life in the unused room. That light came through a broken hole on the ceiling. What I found striking was intensity of light that could penetrate the roof and reach all way to the floor. I remember the moment with the resistance of the heavy entry door and the combined smell of mold and sweat of athletes. That scene disappeared as soon as the guide turned on the ceiling light. It was a show that lasted only for a minute or two, but it still remains vivid in my memory after more than two years. This experience told me the atmosphere of a room waiting for events to happen. An expectation was generated in a silence.
At the end of the design process I was wondering what kind of wood was appropriate for the wood panel in the exhibition hall. I chose cedar for its character of controlling room humidity and avoiding insects. It was a proper decision because I already had considered cedar boards for the form of concrete wall in the building. I wanted to see and touch an actual material before finalizing the use. I found a thin piece at the wood shop. As soon as the piece was cut, it gave strong and refreshing fragrance. It suddenly ignited the memory from the childhood in my hometown, Fushiki, Takaoka in Japan. My hometown has 13,000 population and faces the Sea of Japan and is located at the bottom of a river. We used to have many small wood manufacturers because it is location. They produced timber for houses as well as let kids have small leftover pieces from the process. We built our toys with those pieces. The smell of cedar was always around us. This was the moment of realization that fragrance is a significant part of architecture. I wanted the convention center was remembered by the smell as well. I imagined what the exhibition hall was like with the senses. The building became a part of my body through the memory.
This project was to create a meaningful place for a special occasion. I searched for effective strategies for place making. In his essay “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Martin Heidegger wrote, “The relationship of man to places and through places to spaces is based on his dwelling in them.” My interpretation of his notion of dwelling is that the building must provide people with points where they can launch their memorization, so that they can dwell in the building through their memory. It must support people’s orientation and identification. It provides the experience which visitors can construct the place in their mind. They should be able to reflect their body to the place through light, material, and structure. They can not dwell in the building stripping off their tactile senses. Pallasmaa writes, “The body knows and remembers. Architectural meaning derives from archaic responses and reactions remembered by the body and the senses.”

Looking back on the previous projects I have done, most buildings have simple figures. All complexity of space is contained inside of datum line. This time the size of the project let me explore possibility of form. I wanted freedom of expressing forms. During the process of structuring the roof I hesitated to decide the location of columns because I knew the decision narrowed the possibility of form. But once the decision was made, the awareness of gravity as well as smooth exchange of the load into the earth carried the process through. It became clear solution. I realized that determining the limit was essential for designing architecture. Architecture itself has physical limitation as David Chipperfield states: “Considering our position as being outside a strong ideological framework, and accepting that a building must resolve its attitude through its own physical material, we must accept that architectural form must enjoy its potential freedom.” The Sea-Folk Museum by Japanese architect Hiroshi Naito presents a fine example that the limit clarifies the formation. He writes, “Excessive consciousness of space diversifies architectural forms. However, if importance is placed on time, the options for formation would be narrowed and the building outlines become clear.” He carried through it by setting a timeframe as a parameter to generate a form. Fumihiko Maki remarks on importance of time from different point of view in his book A Presence Called Architecture: “It is time that offers the ultimate evaluation of architecture. Time alone judges its usefulness to society and its durability as an object. Moreover, time determines whether or not the architecture has acquired a symbolism which will allow it to serve as a memory device throughout history. Meanwhile, the work of architecture maintains its autonomy as society and architect look on. As long as a work of architecture continues to exist, it questions our present.”
Architecture is a silent backdrop of the scene where everyday life takes place. By igniting the bodily reflection in the experience, it becomes part of man’s memory. Its usefulness is only measured by time. But it can suggest great potential at the completion, which speeds up the recognizing process. This is what a student project can propose. My pursuit has given my eyes a glimpse of the unseen horizon. I will enjoy looking back on what was achieved and what was not achieved in this thesis project as I venture ahead. I want to put my work of architecture to the test of time in the reality. This is the time to move on. I want to run for the constructed reality.
Appendix: Experiential References
In the elements the joint inspires ornament, its celebration. The detail is the adoration of Nature.

Louis Kahn

Scarpa’s details celebrate joints between different materials. There exists space inbetween. His architecture seems to explore possibility of creating space in the every single molecule in the air. It was obvious at the Canova Sculpture Gallery. The corner at the ceiling was not a dead end but a point of departure. Conscious articulation of material becomes an archaeological weapon to reveal a history of the place as well as a history of the material itself. His detail is a part of the whole building, at the same time his whole is a detail of the part. In the words of Frascari, “the details are the minimal unit of signification.”

Canova Sculpture Gallery, Possagno, Italy (1957)
What I want to say is that sense of space is not communicated by a pictorial order but always by physical phenomena, that is by matter, by the sense of mass, the weight of the wall. This is why I assert that it is the apertures, openings and orifices that create spatial relationships.

Carlo Scarpa

(left) Querini Stampalia Foundation, Venezia, Italy (1963)  
(below) Banca Popolare di Verona, Verona, Italy (1973)  
(right) Museo Castelvecchio, Verona, Italy (1964)  
(left) Brion Vega, San Vito d’Altivole, Italy (1972)
Study of Material and Light 2 in Western architecture

There must be a crack somewhere in the construction which allows enough natural light to come in to tell how dark it is.

Louis Kahn

Vision reveals what touch already knows.

Juhani Pallasmaa

(above) Abbaye de Le Thoronet, Provence, France
(left) Stadtbiblioteket, Stockholm, Sweden, Gunnar Asplund (1928)
(right) Ylösnousemuskappeli (Resurrection Chapel), Turku, Finland, Erik Bryggman (1941)
(above left) Le Couver de La Tourette, L’Arboisie, France, Le Corbusier (1960)
(above right) Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, USA, Louis Kahn (1972)
(left) Myymäen Kirkko, Myymälä, Finland, Juha Lääviranta (1984)
(below) D.E. Show & Co. Office and Trading Area, New York, USA, Steven Holl (1992)
Study of Material and Light 3 in Japanese architecture

(above) Church of Light, Ibaraki, Tadao Ando (1989)
(right) Hounen-in, Temple, Kyoto. Gate.
(bottom left) Yoshijima House, Takayama (1905)
(bottom right) Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima.

Shade, too, can be inhabited.
Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*
Such is our way of thinking—we find beauty not in the thing itself but in the pattern of shadows, the light and the darkness, that one thing against another creates.

Jun’ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*
Experience of Sense of Place

We may define the ideal outcome of architecture as being that a building should serve as an instrument which mediates all the positive influences and intercepts all the negative influences affecting man ... a building cannot carry out this task unless it is itself as finely nuances as the surroundings in which it stands.

Alvar Aalto

Säynättsalo Town Hall, Säynättsalo, Finland, Alvar Aalto (1952)

Säynättsalo Town Hall first disappointed me because it hid the courtyard I dreamt of. But once I walked in after several steps, it welcomed me gently. Its choice of material and its organization created an intimate and inhabitable place. The place was enriched by day-to-day use of people. His belief in “the commonplace as a crucial architectural factor” was crystalized there.
I arrived there before the gate opened. After one hour of waiting in the mist and cold weather in June, the gate opened. The long curved walk led to the chapel. That enigmatic asymmetrical building appeared as another form of a spirit of the hill. The grey solid denied any kind of life. As soon as I stepped into the building, it started raining. It was still raining that afternoon. When I was about to give up seeing the light though the opening, they began to reveal their profiles. I can still recall the moment clearly. There existed the strong as well as generous presence of sun. The openings increased the depth in the wall. The cast light through outlined the mystic experience inside. I ran outside. The color returned to the world. Ronchamp changed the expression. It celebrated the vitality as if it were a goddess. The sun dimmed again in half an hour. That was an intense show of the life. Le Corbusier created a special reflector of soul of the hill by its form and its character as well. The chapel was an essential part of the whole landscape: “I am as you see me and I belong here.” in the words of Peter Zumthor.
The ‘feel’ of place is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of place is registered in one’s muscles and bones.

Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place

The simple geometry created a sort of maze around the courtyard. When I was about to get lost, the light led me to the courtyard, the original point. Also the geometry offered various setting of rooms to concentrate on works, to relax, and to eat by the Pacific Ocean. Salk Institute stood as a strong background that would not be disturbed by anything. The background was watching the life of people, which took place in and around it.

Salk Institute of Biological Studies, La Jolla, California, USA, Louis Kahn (1965)
It was standing in silence under the warm sun in December. I visited before a funeral session in the late afternoon. Each room owns varied volume and location. The wholeness of the building was not achieved by an overall system and geometry but by the air orchestrated by material and light. The building held full of potential to be a gentle envelope during the session. The envelope would be formed again in people’s memory. Maki humanized abstract space into a memorable place.
Endnotes

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p.31 right: photocopied from the photo archive at Lloyd House Library, Alexandria, Virginia.
p.35: Carlyle Towers Sales Center, Carlyle Towers (brochure).
p.38 bottom: ibid., 184.

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p.142 top right: ibid., 123.
p.143 top left and middle right: Courtesy of Masaki Fujiishi.
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—Tomomi Hayashi, Alexandria, Virginia, May, 1999
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