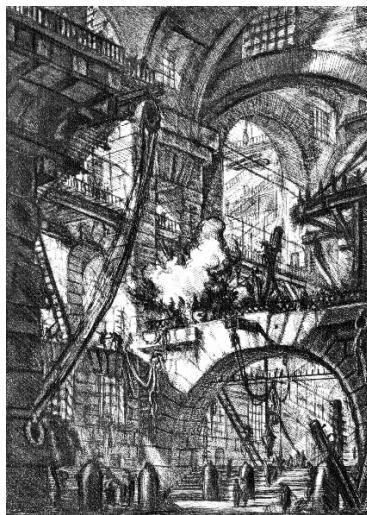
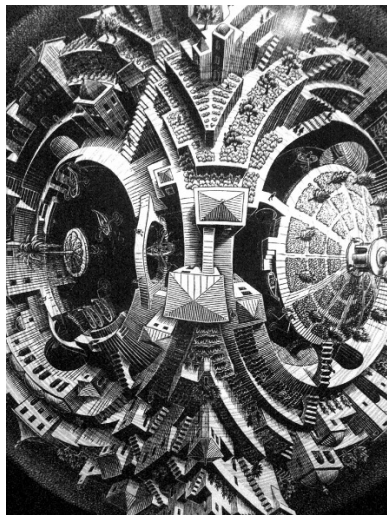


**The Flickering of Perception:
Piranesi and Escher's Visions of Impossible Spaces as a Provocational Framework for Architecture**

Research Framework

Rather than a traditional research agenda, for the 2014 Rotch Competition I would like to propose a provocative framework for architecture which uses a research agenda as a first layer upon which a series of architectural provocations and retroactive narrative readings can be built, to produce a series of investigations which blur the line between observation, research and intervention. This architectural research will extend beyond investigation and reach into catalogued interventions, each of which takes a case study and retroactively reshapes it into a series of futures to support a design agenda. Through this process, research proposal can become radical manifesto.



Spatial paradox and impossibilities are central to the architectural imagery of both Piranesi and Escher. They produce a perceptual flickering, a hesitation in the discernment of spatial impossibility. The nature of the spatial inconsistencies and paradoxes in both are not dissimilar—densely layered spatial convolutions and discontinuities characterize each—it is in their particular gaze that Piranesi and Escher occupy opposite poles of a continuum. Arguably, what characterizes each is not the actual spaces they choose to represent, but the gaze they exert on that space and its effect on perception, affect, and the resulting defamiliarization of space.

While both Piranesi and Escher offer a synthetic vision of spatial aberrance, the Piranesian gaze—as seen in the *Carceri* series of etchings—present impossible spaces stitched together through the composition privileged vantage point. The spatial paradox remains a driver, but its locus is secondary....rather, its affects and spatial complexities are foregrounded—a selective myopia that allows for a shift in the substance of the space. Conversely, Escher's *Tetrahedral Planetoid* reveals an impossible world of geometry. There is no privileged vantage

point, and the system is laid bare and our perception constantly shifts in and out of awareness of the impossibilities of space--*Tetrahedral Planetoid* becomes a generator of possible secondary affects and scenarios.

The seed of architectural interest in this provocational framework lies in the pursuit of a spatial impossibility which provides an impetus for a series of radically defamiliarized architectures.

This provocational framework will be measured against a series of conflicted architectures which have at their core an irreconcilable spatial desire which forces a flickering of perception: a moment of hesitation between the perception of the building's spatial pursuit and the impossibility of its actualization.

Travel Proposal:

01: Form vs Mass

- Eduardo Chillida: Chillida Leku (Guipuzcoa, Spain)
- Eduardo Chillida: Monument to Tolerance (Mount Tindaya, Canary Islands)
- Kailashnath Temple (Maharashtra, India)
- Ranakpur Temple (Rajasthan, India)
- Peter Zumthor: Thermal Baths (Vals, Switzerland)

02: Dissolving Matter

- SANAA: Rolex Learning Center (Lausanne, Switzerland)
- Junya Ishigami: Kanagawa Institute of Technology (Kanagawa, Japan)
- Toyo Ito: Tama Art Library (Tama, Japan)

03: Suspended Reality

- Zaha Hadid: Maxxi Museum (Rome, Italy)
- Alberto Kalach: Vasconcelos Library (Mexico City)

04: Projected Synthesis

- Preston Scott Cohen: Tel Aviv Museum (Tel Aviv, Israel)