

FORM  
BODY  
TECHNIQUE  
SPACE

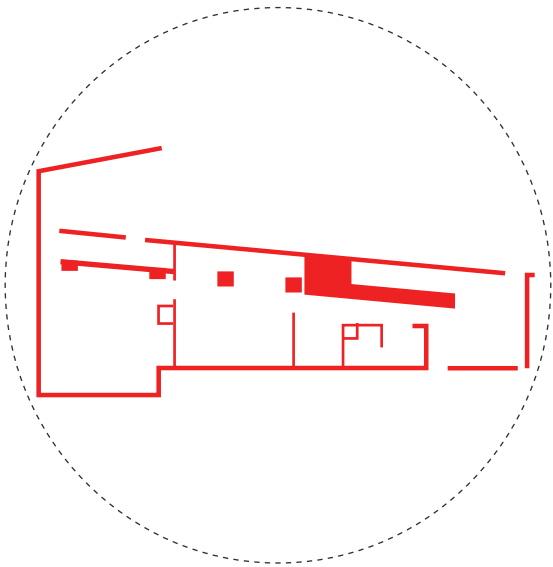
V I L L A   D A L L ' A V A

R E M   K O O L H A A S

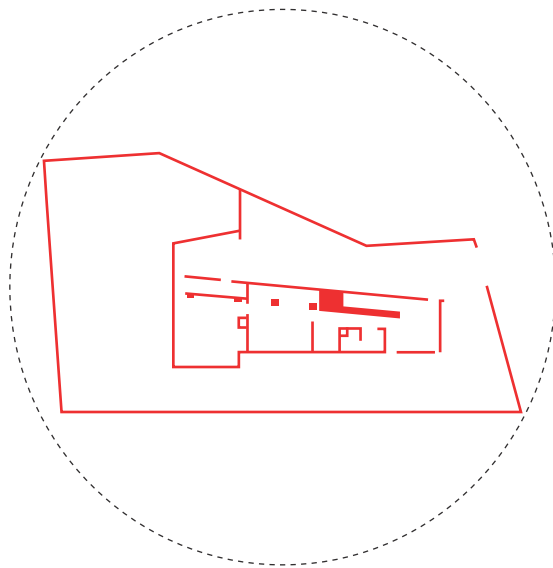
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Part  
1

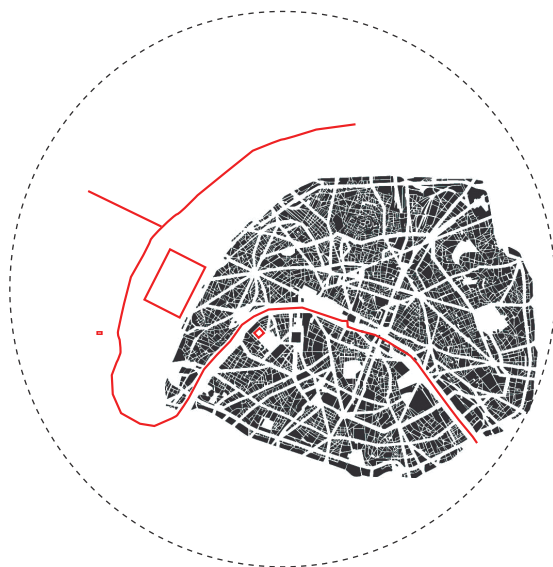




House as a room

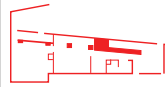


Site as a room

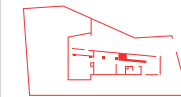


City as a room

— Boundaries  
 - - - Radius of Scale



Villa dall'Ava House Footprint



Villa dall'Ava Lot Extents



La Defense



Seine River



Bois de Boulogne



Eiffel Tower



Villa dall'Ava

C O M P A C T  
 S  
 M  
 L  
 D I S P E R S E D  
 X L

The 1st determinant of form is the relationship of the building to its surroundings.

**Site**

The site was beautiful – a monet. It slopes toward the Seine. Beyond it, the Bois de Boulogne, and beyond that a panoramic view of the city; the Eiffel Tower is straight on axis. La Defense is to the left. (Koolhaas, Mau, 133)

The site is like a big room, with a boundary made of greenery, garden walls and slopes. (OMA)

**Preception of OMA houses:**

The space of the dwelling is interpreted as a secluded place where someone can be alone with him- or herself and a little piece of uninhabitable emptiness or sky, rather than as an element of the city. (Verschaffel, 164)

**City**

Despite the perception described above, Villa dall'Ava is both a refuge and a part of the city through the continuous flow of space from one scale to the other. The house defines boundaries that are less compact as it increases in scale.

“Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context - a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.”

- Eiel Saarinen

and space  
 FORM

## Site

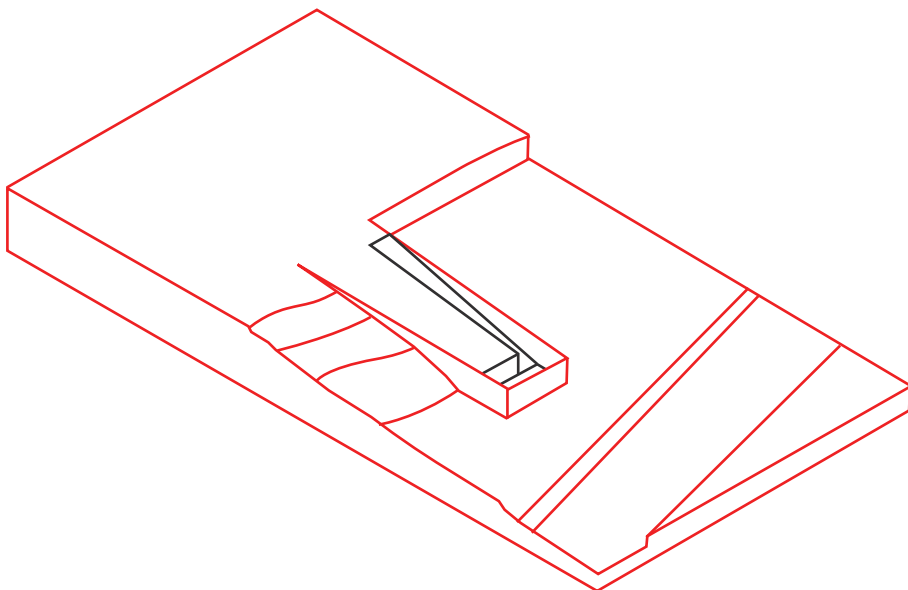
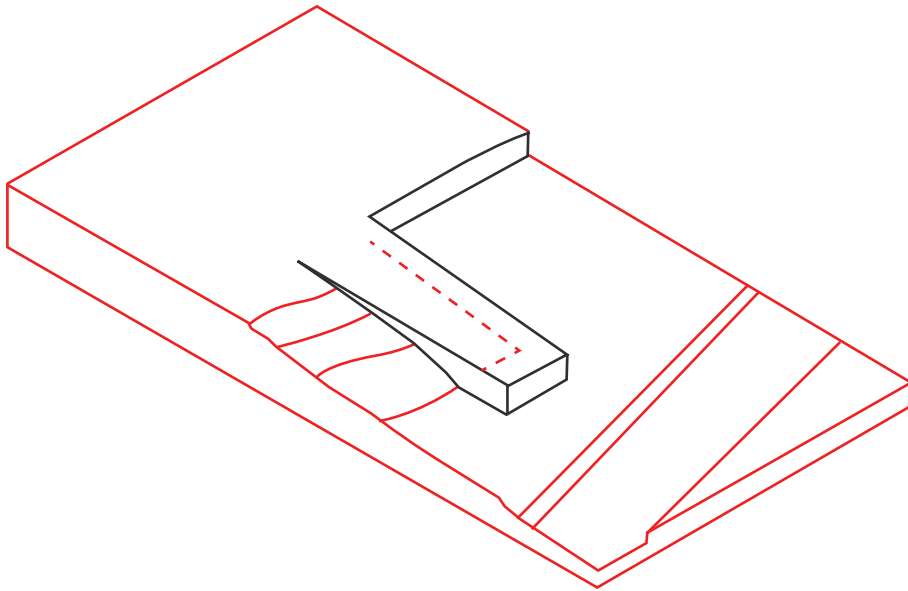
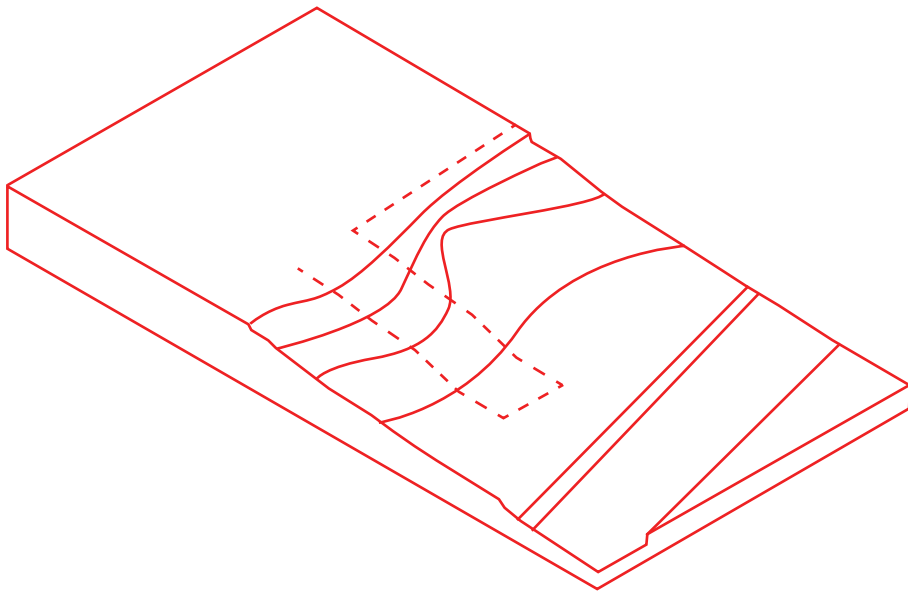
The villa is situated on a hill which slopes steeply toward the Seine. (OMA)

## Strategy

Pliancy sustains complexity through inner flexibility that relies on external forces, instead of repression through fixed points or arrest through contradictions. These external forces join the disparate elements within smooth mixtures, through such strategies of folding... fragmenting... (Lynn)

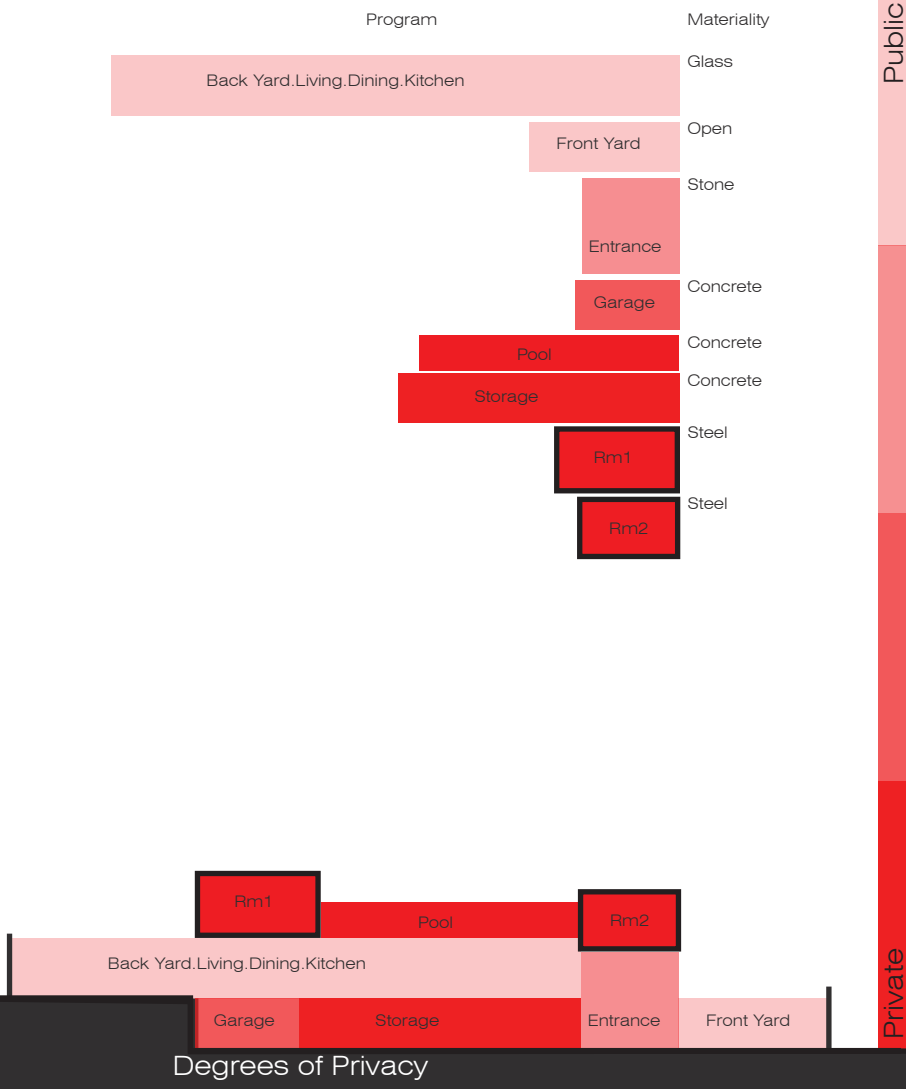
By treating the landscape and architecture as pliant, Koolhaas succeeded in creating both an architecture of Information and Deformation.

One manipulates spaces that operate in the smaller scales of interior rooms, while the other manipulates spaces that operate in the scale of the city, the rooms of the outside. (Kipnis)



— Folds  
- - - Fragments

Terra  
FORM

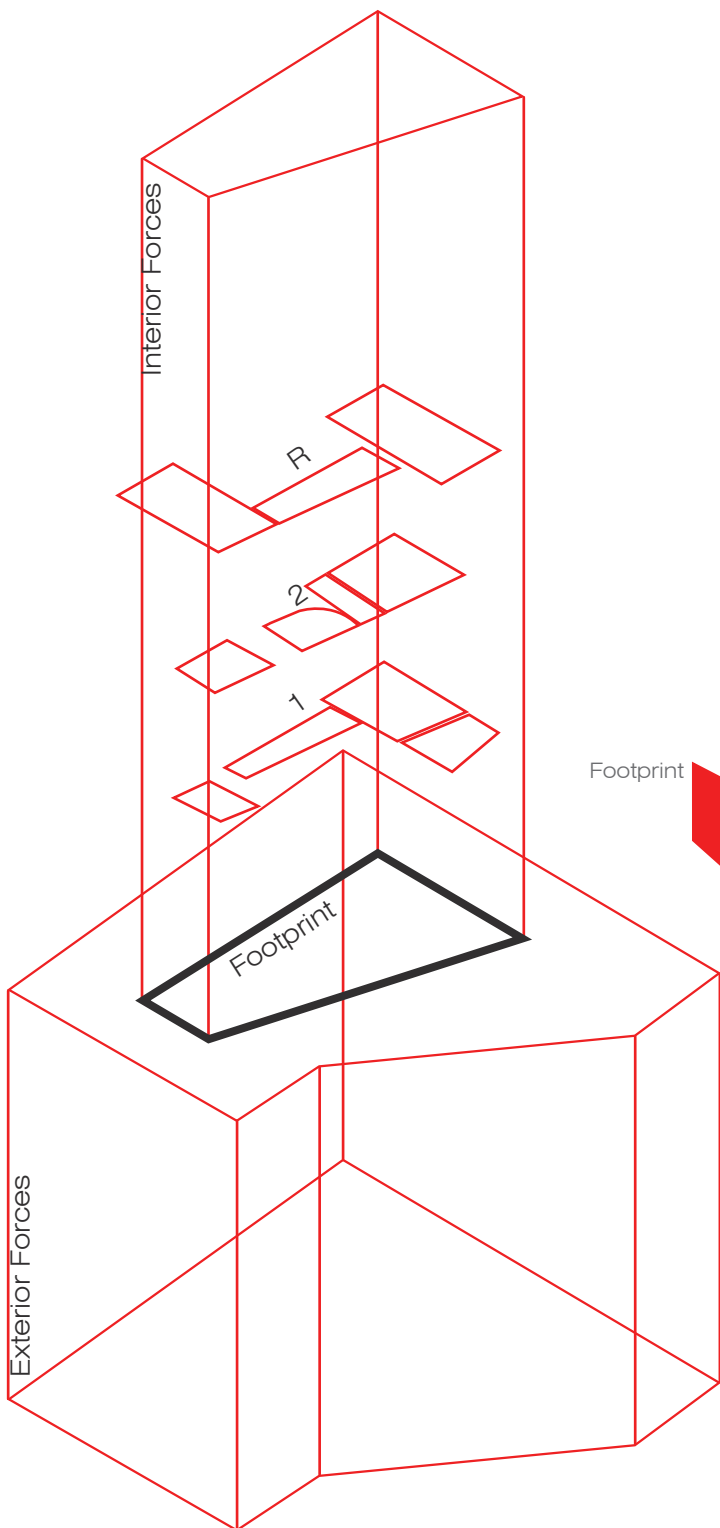


## Materials

The 4th determinant of form is the materials used. (Rudolph)

The rejection of the picturesque aesthetic is shown in Villa dall'Ava's "choice of materials – raw concrete, corrugated aluminum cladding, net fencing on the roof and, in an ironic nod towards next-door villadom, stone crazy-paving cladding – and in the blandly utilitarian way the house's exterior is put together, in total defiance of the cult of the picturesque that characterizes the surrounding buildings." (Ayers, 329)

D'Arcy Thompson states that forms, colors, textures, are diagrams of the forces that have influenced them. The choice of exterior materials reflect aesthetics and functionalities of varying degrees of privacy, from steel boxed walls, translucent etched glass walls, to transparent fishbowl glass walls.



- Bedroom 1
- Pool
- Bedroom 2
- Dining
- Prep
- Kitchen
- Library
- Basement
- Storage
- Garage
- Entrance

“...the house as a frame to describe its environment. It is not an object!”

(Koolhaas, Mau, 181)

D’Arcy Thompson states that forms, colors, textures, are diagrams of the forces that have influenced them.

**Contradiction**

The site was small. The house was big. It had to have the smallest possible footprint.

(Koolhaas, Mau, 134)

**Regulatory Force**

The zoning regulations described a kind of pyramidal pretzel that the house could not violate. The site was surrounded by walls; it was already a kind of interior. The small rectangle of the glass house represents the minimal footprint. It is only a preliminary enclosure; the real house ends at the walls, where the “others” begin.

(Koolhaas, Mau, 134)

The 2nd determinant of form is functionality. (Rudolph)

**Form Follows Function**

Shapes in nature tells us something about its inner workings much like architecture, where the essence of a site is manifested in the form of the building. Sullivan believes that the form of the building always follows its function; a philosophy evident in Villa dall’Ava. (Sullivan)

The client wanted a glass house with a swimming pool on the roof and two separate “apartments” – one for the parents, the other for the daughter. (OMA)

Programmatic Landscape

as frame  
FORM



— Power Path  
■ Power Lost

creedibility of architect

Client's Leverage

Neighbor's Leverage

1 9 9 1 1 9 9 0 1 9 9 9 1 9 9 8 8 1 9 9 8 7 1 9 9 8 6 1 9 9 8 5

### Introduction

Client meets architect

### Permit

The permit process went very fast. That was the last thing that went fast. (Koolhaas, Mau, 135)

### Fight

We got permission to build. When the neighbors learned what was happening, they became very unhappy. There had never been a house on the site. (Koolhaas, Mau, 135)

### Issue

Does etched glass count as a wall? It was debated all the way to the French Supreme Court. (Koolhaas, Mau, 135)

### Deserted

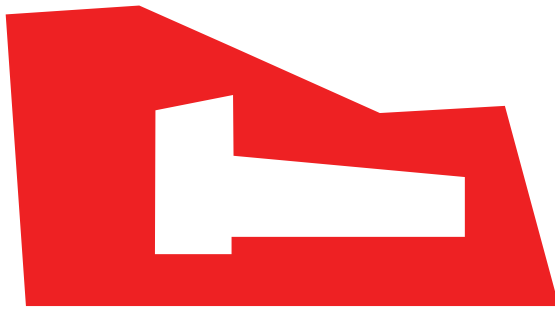
In the end, the lawyers deserted the clients. They had to argue themselves. They won. (Koolhaas, Mau, 135)

### Moved-in

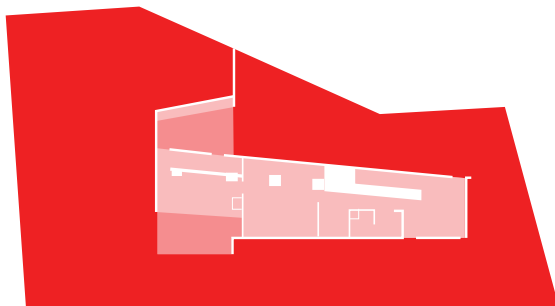
We moved in to finish the house. They moved in because it was still unfinished. (Koolhaas, Mau, 135)

### Built House

Political  
BODY



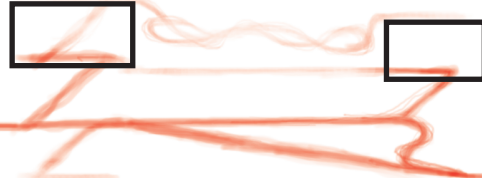
Glass Envelope closed



Glass Envelope open



Flow Plan



Flow Section

## Boundaries

Its glass envelope can in places be slid entirely back allowing the living room and garden to merge as one. (Ayers, 329)

## Fluidity

The program between the two intimate rooms acts as a fluid connection of social spaces. In this house the domestic body becomes a part of the house through the synchronization of domestic habits with experiential moments created by the architecture.

## Metabolism

Metabolism is the processing of energy, which involves the transformation, exchange, excretion, recycling, etc, of matter. Morphology and metabolism are linked through this process. This process will cease without a constant source of energy; namely the habitual processes and flows of domestic life. (Weinstock)



Tensile Stress

Parents Room

Daughter's Room



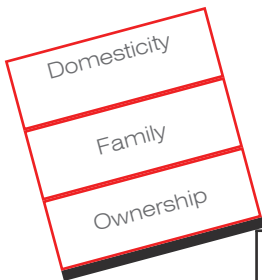
### Structure

“Although one reads these pilotis as traditional load bearing supports, they are in fact in tension, pulling the accommodation box down towards the ground and preventing it from flying upwards under the effect of the heavy cantilever of the parents’ accommodation box at the other end of the building.”  
 (Ayers, 329)

Tension embodied by the structure derives from the dynamics of domestic life within the house, simply between child and parents. As a particular case, Villa dall’Ava is also embodying the tension between itself and its neighbors, which it deliberately seeks to antagonize.

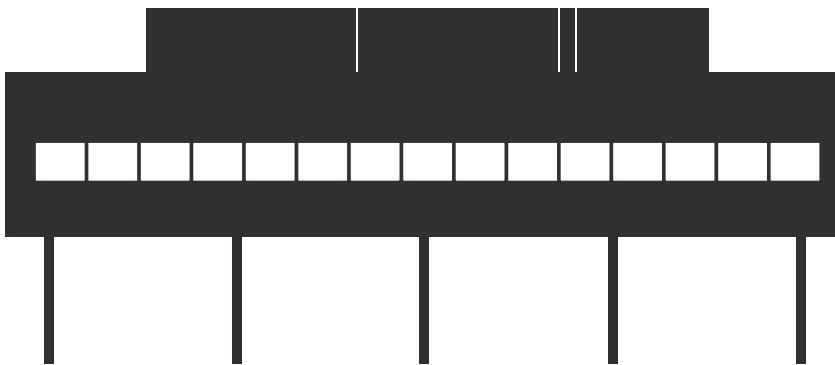
Daughter's Room

Parents Room

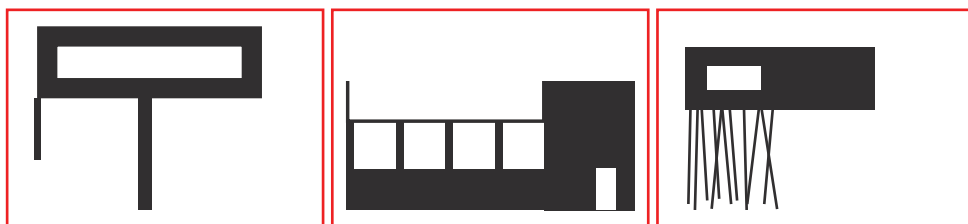
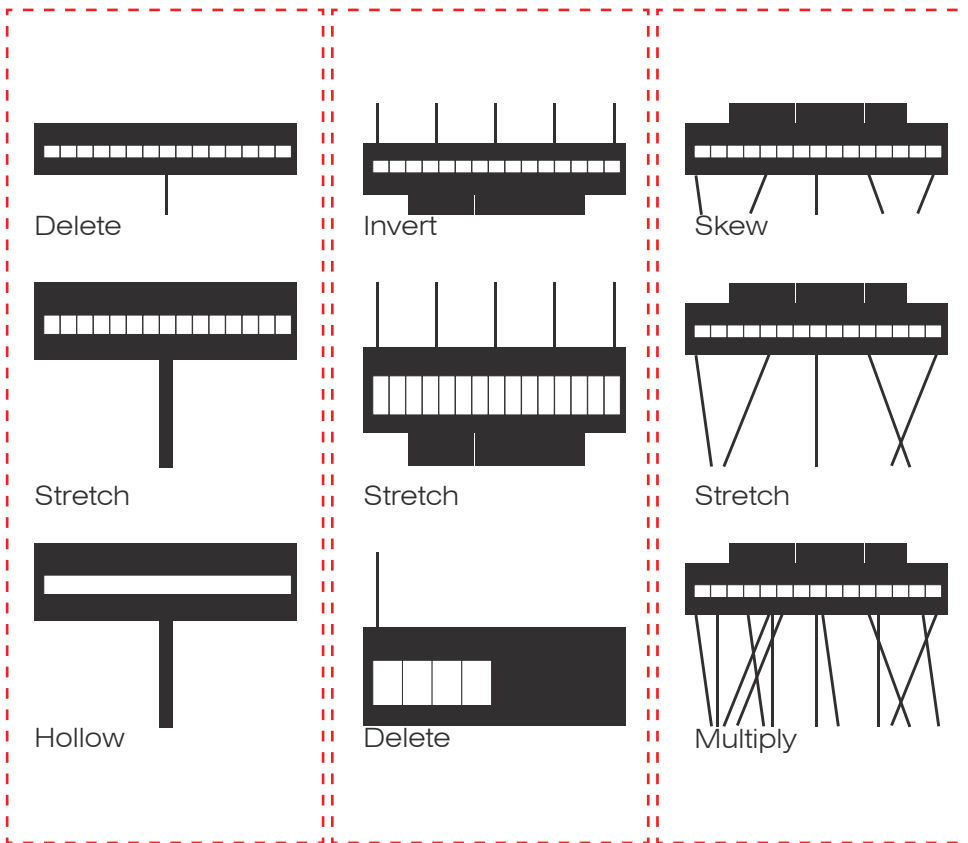


Tension Release

in tension  
 BODY



Source: Villa Savoye



Product: Villa dall'Ava

### The Image

“The imagery of the Villa Savoye’s famous pilotis is here wickedly subverted.” (Ayers, 329)

Villa dall’Ava shows a shift away from rigid modernist theories through the dissection and mutilation of a Modern icon, in service of the search for authentic, original human experiences. (Vilder)

The tortured image of Villa Savoye challenges the perception of home to be replaced by an understanding of the precarious nature of comfort. (Vilder)

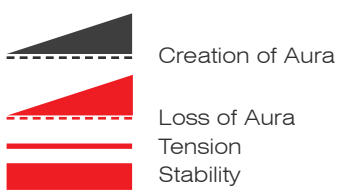
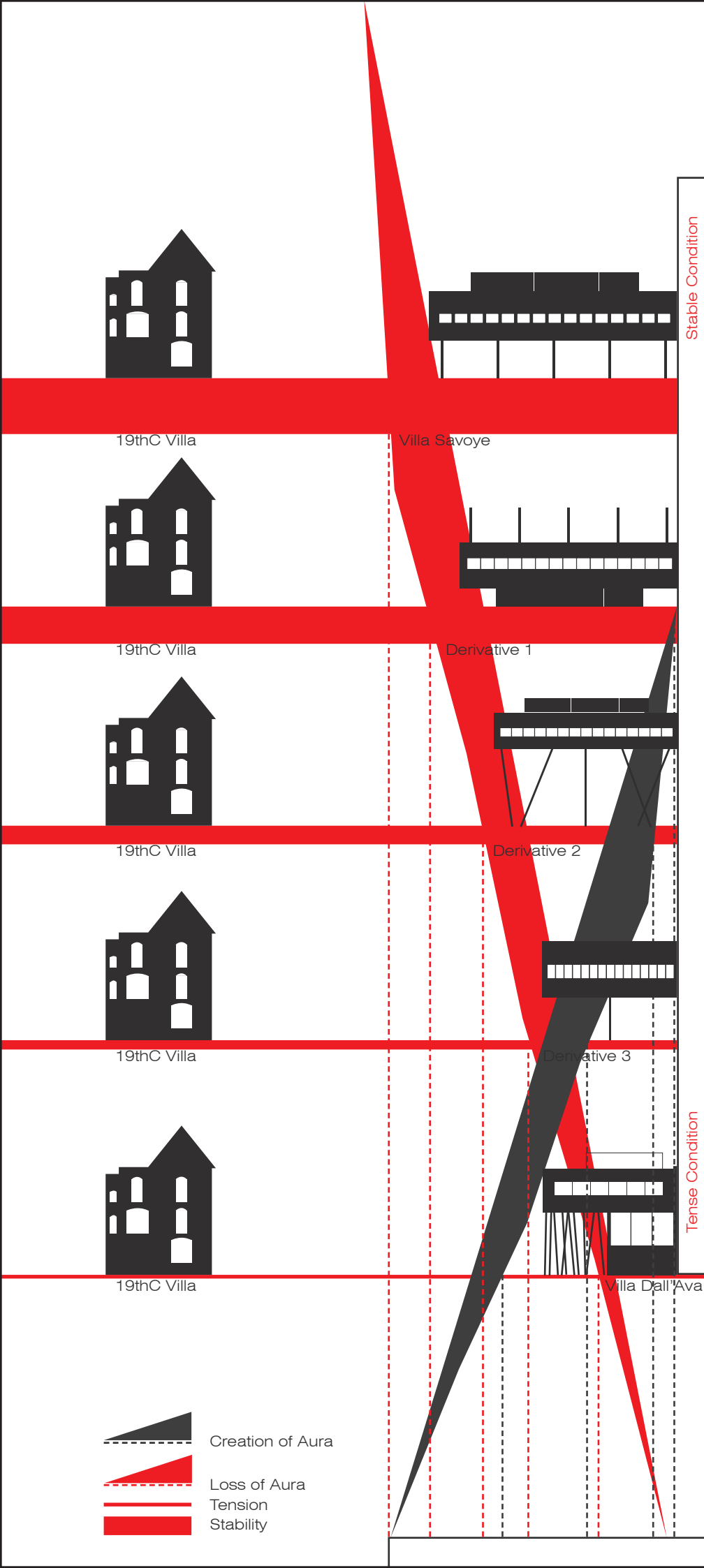
“Even while sharing exactly their programme, the Villa dall’Ava seeks to antagonize its neighbors (and the classic Modernist design alternatives to 19thC villadom - Villa Savoye), reproducing, but at the same time parodying the comfortable, domestic middle-classness they represent.” (Ayers, 329)

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## Sources

Part  
2





Villa Dall'Ava produces a condition of tension by antagonizing the neighboring 19thC villas & a few of Le Corbusier's modern versions of the 19thC villa also found in the neighborhood. Koolhaas craftily does this through the subversion of Villa Savoye, a modern and iconic house that embodies characteristics shared both by 19thC villa and modern villa typologies.

The Villa Dall'Ava is a series of derivative forms and bodies taken from Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye. Le Corbusier's villa is rich in symbolic values and associations of its time (the machine age architecture) according to Banham, thereby making Villa Dall'Ava vicariously reflective of the machine age as well, which reveals that even through Koolhaas' attempts at subversion, the architecture conforms to its site as well.

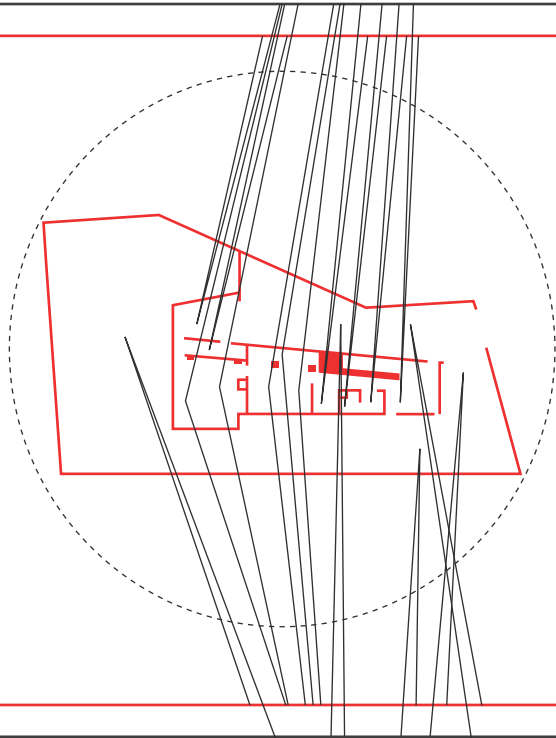
According to Walter Benjamin, this reproduction frees the work, but also starts to lose its aura as it moves away from the original. In the case of Villa Dall'Ava, Koolhaas does not only copy the original, but also re-appropriates it in its free state by using only what is useful to him, thereby losing the aura of the original but creating a new aura that replaces it.

note: condition & technique diagrams are overlaid

Private

Previous Condition

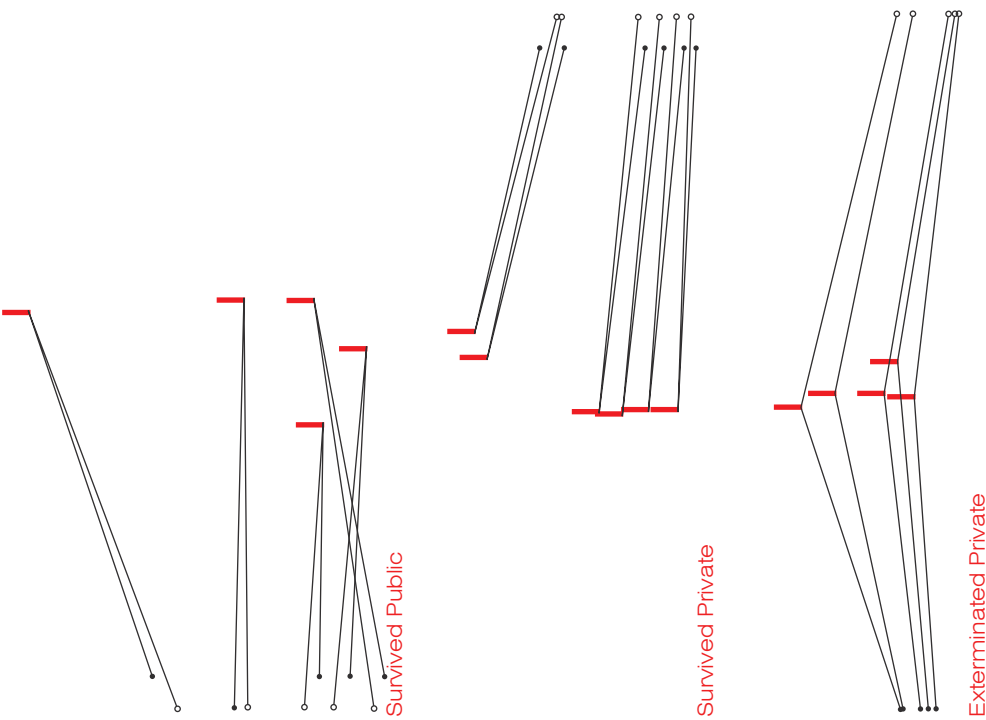
Present Condition



Present Condition

Previous Condition

Public



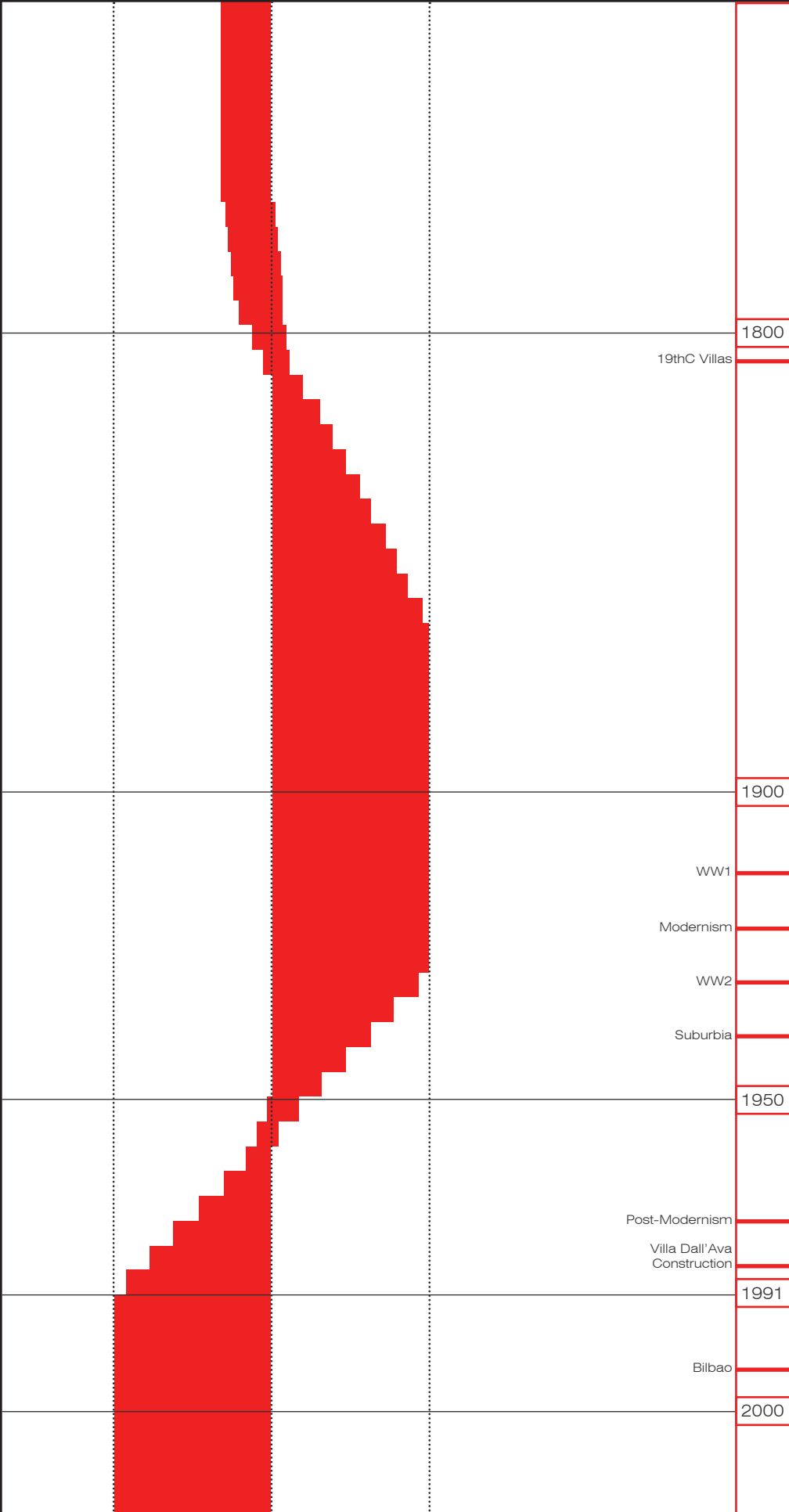
- Starting point
- End point
- Attached Program

For Jean Baudrillard, the idea of the private, accumulated, and silent sexual obscenity of former times, is validly represented by the 19thC villas, where the interior is clad behind fortified stone facades and small windows.

This privacy is now succeeded by an extermination of protective spaces; a forced extroversion of interiority. In Villa Dall'Ava, this idea of forced extroversion is exercised by Koolhaas through the use of transparency, exposing to the outside the perceived private, interior spaces, thereby transforming them into somewhat public spaces.

This process of extermination loosens the perception of domestic spaces for both exterminated and survivors. The dynamics of the dwelling as a whole is affected, even by a few changes.

of extermination  
TECHNIQUE



1800  
1900  
1950  
1991  
2000

19thC Villas  
WW1  
Modernism  
WW2  
Suburbia  
Post-Modernism  
Villa Dall'Ava Construction  
Bilbao

Villa Dall'Ava "Norm" 19thC Villa

Cultural Favor

Historical Influence

Levi Bryant states that the ontic principle is the theory that beings are and become through their differences, and have the status of hypotheses subject to revision and rejection. (Bryant)

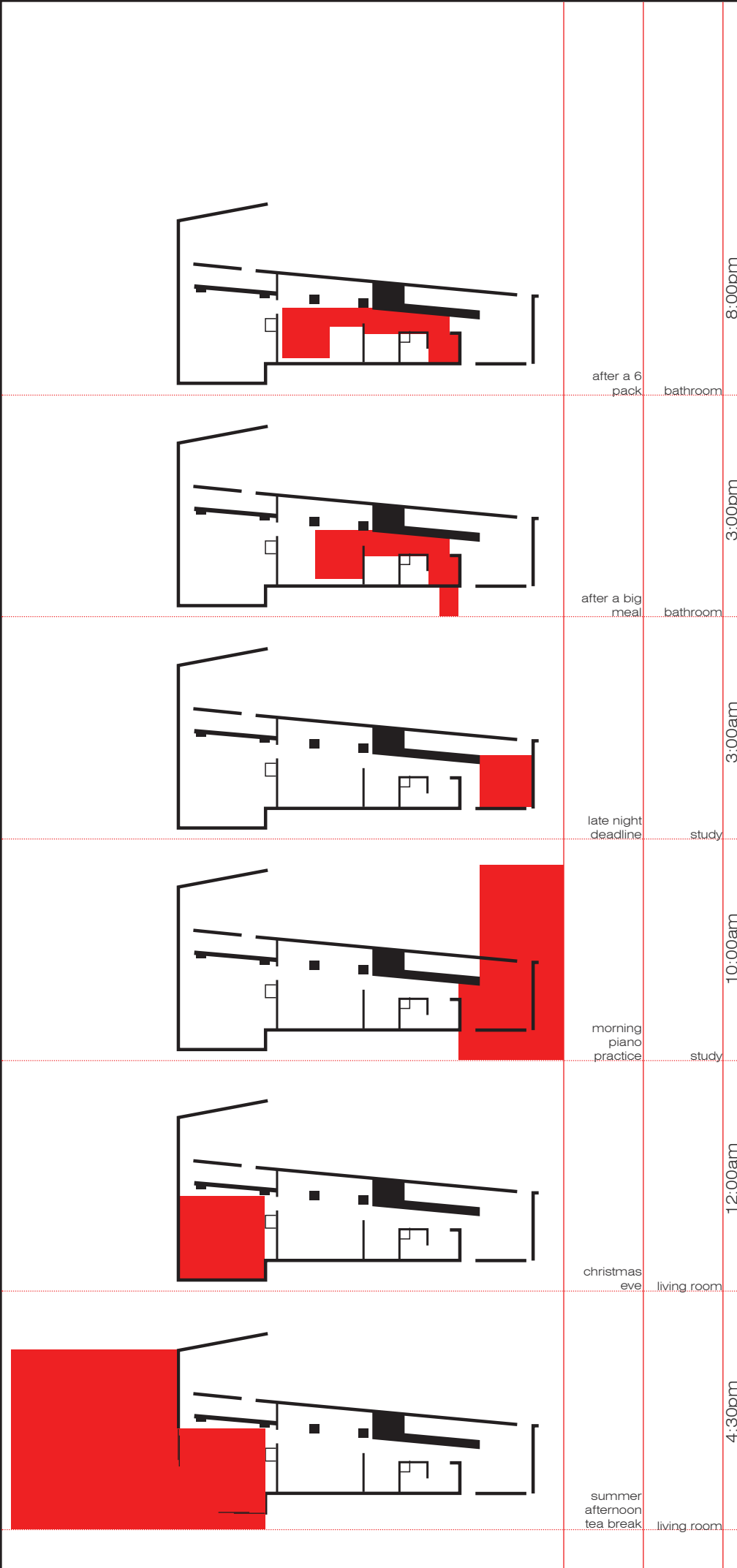
In the case of Villa Dall'Ava and its neighbors, the same applies, where both villa types are subject to revision because of their differences. Since Villa Dall'Ava is a stark contrast to its surroundings, its being there is a difference that affects the existing 19thC villas. This difference affects the cultural perception of the former as daring, exhibitionistic, and antagonizing, and the latter as rustic, secretive, and exclusive.

These differences creates a difference in each villa's characteristics and is ever changing through time, fluctuating across the norm and in between extremes.

note: condition & technique diagrams are overlaid

of Difference  
TECHNIQUE





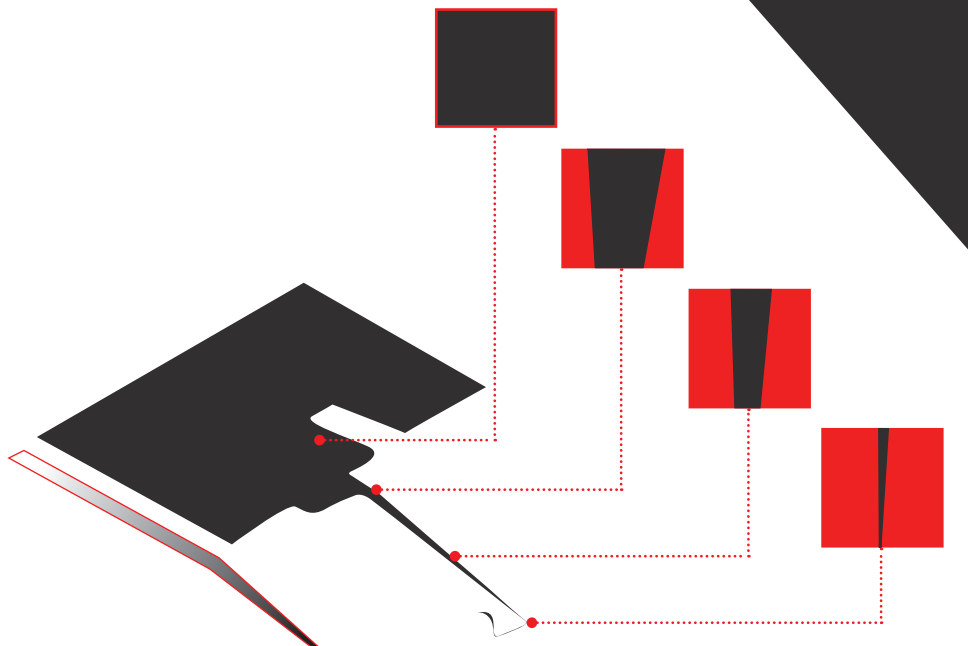
Tom McDonough writes about the Situationists having practiced montage aesthetics and the construction of situations due to their interest in a vocabulary of liquidity and the allowance of the fourth dimension of time to dissolve built form. Villa Dall'Ava's programmatic liquidity relates to this idea of situations.

Through the mechanics of various boundaries, liquidity is achieved and a number of situations arise. This incorporates the aspect of time due to the Villa's flexibility for change. For example, its transparent, floor-to-ceiling glass windows that look onto the back yard may be covered by sliding curtains to create an intimate interior space, or the glass windows may be slid open, extending the interior space onto the yard, thereby creating two situations existing in separate times.

Villa Dall'Ava is revealed as an architecture that is layered with situations, aided by architectural boundaries, existing in separate times but in the same space.

■ Space (extended space)    Situation    Space    Time

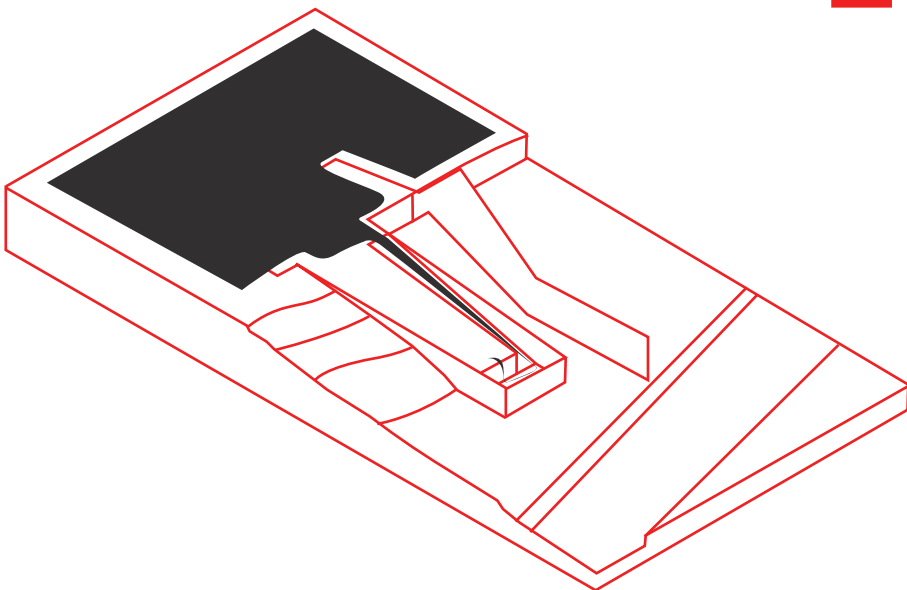
# as Collage SPACE



Compression

Violence

- Body
- Space

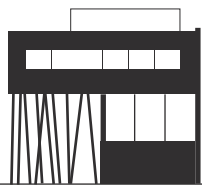


The Villa Dall'Ava embraces Bernard Tschumi's concept that there is no architecture without violence, through a display of violent relationships between body and space.

Koolhaas deliberately allows for the human body, not just to intrude, but to gracefully intrude into the villa's spaces by crafting spaces that reciprocates violation of the human body. This seemingly dysfunctional relationship thereby creates the opposite, a rich and dynamic dance between bodies and space.

Through the careful consideration of ritual, Koolhaas weaves domestic life into the architecture by creating smooth flowing circulation paths that branch into domains. The architecture retorts through the use of compression and release of space. For example, the tall, narrow, labyrinthine, ramped hallway compresses the flow of circulation before it releases and emerges onto the living room looking out into the back yard, in keeping with the dance of tension that Villa Dall'Ava emanates.

# Violent SPACE



Shared Program

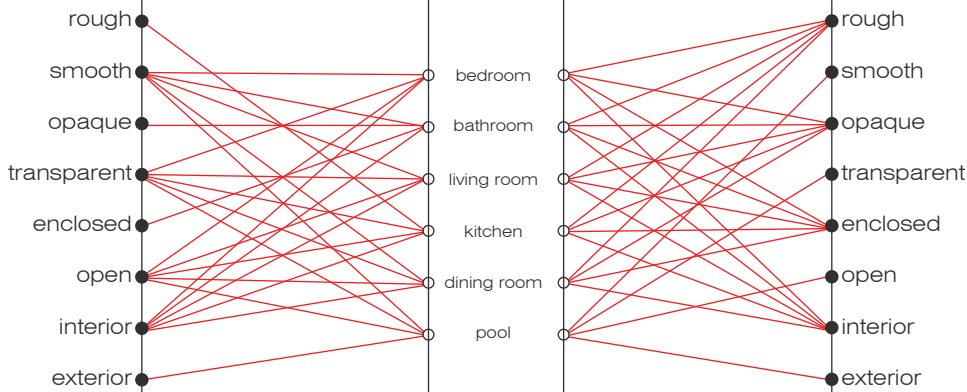


19thC Villas

Spaces

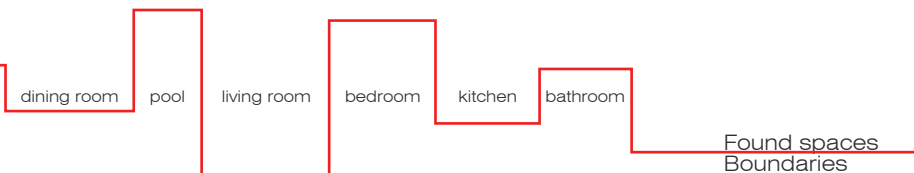
Villa Dall'Ava

Spaces



The villa acts not just as an object but as a frame within its context. It provides a counterpoint by which the surrounding context can be analyzed. For example, Villa Dall'Ava's transparency is a counterpoint to the neighboring 19thC villas' opaqueness, a result of both villa types framing each other. This framing is also a record for the cultural change in Parisian Villadom; a move away from the intense privacy of the past.

According to Martin Heidegger, a locale makes space for a site through a founding and joining of spaces. These spaces are freed within a boundary, where something begins its essential unfolding. As a counterpoint, the Villa sustains its intent of tension and antagonization through various implementation of boundaries. These boundaries not only delineate spaces within and around the Villa, but also delineates the spaces of its neighbors.



as Locale  
SPACE

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## Sources