

The values and desires of a people, of a time, are reflected in the way that they shape their surroundings. At the base of Montreal's Mont Royal mountain, where avenue des Pins and avenue du Parc meet is one such reflection. It is, in stark contrast to the urban living conditions that surround it on three sides, a complicated spaghetti of vehicular and pedestrian traffic crossing over and under each other. Once fuelled by the desire to embrace modernity, it is ruled by efficiency and economy. Today, decaying and overgrown but still operational, it seems to reflect the ideas of yesterday. This is only accentuated by a recently approved city plan that removes the maze and replaces it with simple crossings all at the same grade, suggesting a return to some pre-spaghetti era.

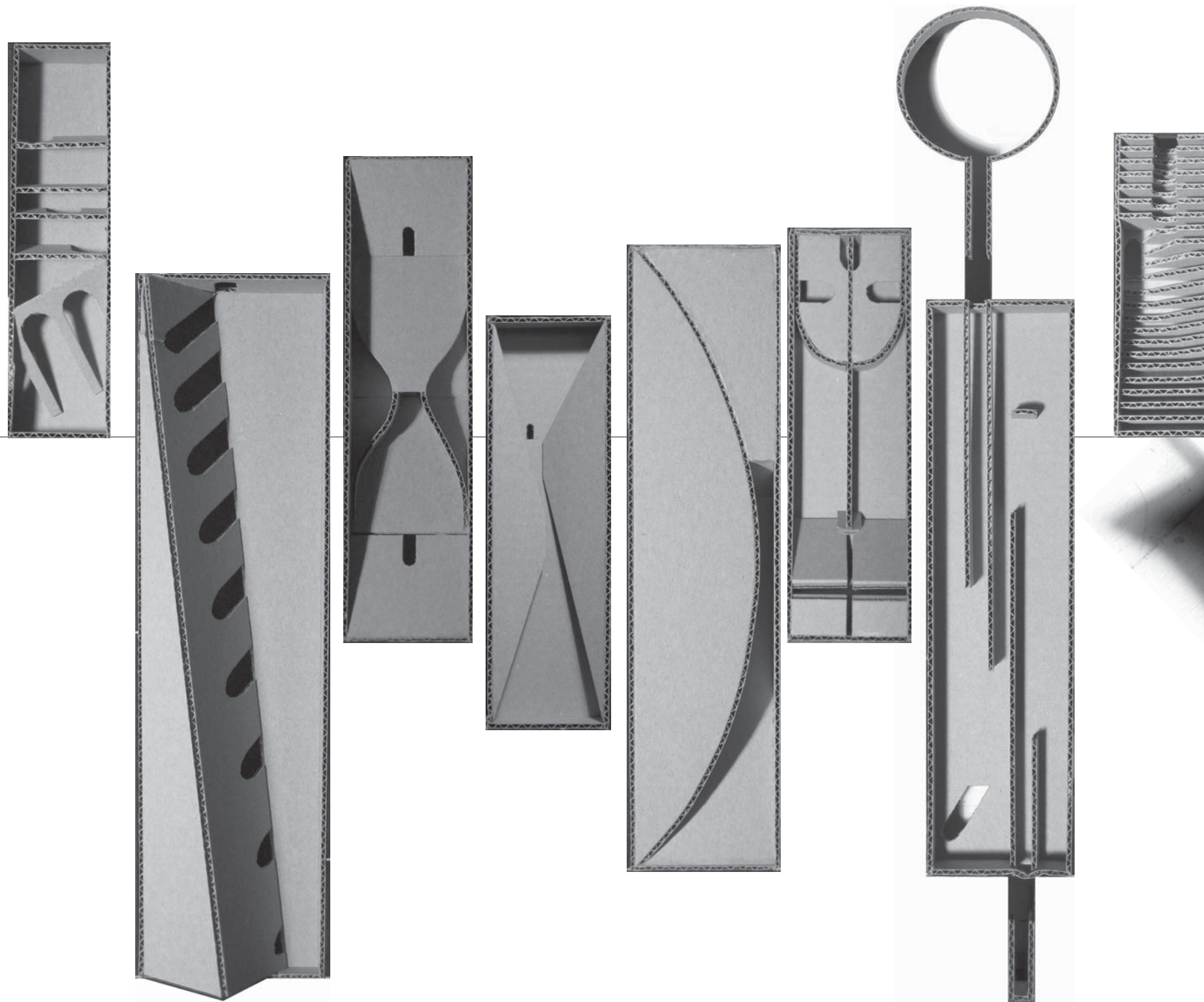
But are we truly returning? Have we not merely changed the criteria and maintained the same approach? The realm, it seems, is still one of problem-solving. Architecture, in this case, is still understood as that which provides a solution to a problem based on revised criteria.

The streets cross through eight and a half tunnels. Through eight flow pedestrians and cars. Through the half one, only faint memories and weak truths. It is here that one starts to see, in this strict rationality, the hints of ambiguity. And it is only through the ambiguous nature of the interchange that one may find inspiration to re-discover some notions of crossing. Here crossing is not only a pragmatic "getting across" but also, perhaps as in migration, an expression of a primeval desire to inhabit the space of the other. A love story. A nostalgic yearning.

In these frozen models we glimpse at moments in a story. The places referred to, such as the monastery, are both of the site and of Montreal, and yet, also not. Their reality is, perhaps not somewhat unlike the nature of the current urban city, somewhat ambiguous. And it is in this way that they enter our story.

In one of these moments, *the meeting in the stairs*, that single moment is then expressed as two monoliths that face each other. With these masks we constantly bring together, and yet hold apart, that meeting.

The historical past is not erased and replaced in an increasingly monotonous manner, but rather intermingles with a pre-historical past.



**half tunnel** an opening in the wall between tunnels one and eight. An incompleteness that defines the repeating rhythm of the story. A nostalgic call perpetuated by some primeval desire.

**tunnel one gates to the monastery** one "enters" the womb of the intersection facing the monastery across.

**tunnel two door to the bedroom** pedestrian only tunnel presents a door to a small and secluded grassy piece of land.

**tunnel three waters of life** a bus stop momentarily stops the flow in an artery. In the still waters, a world reflected.

**tunnel four crux in the city** intersecting lines above do not meet, but pass through. There is no center at the crux.

**tunnel five edge of the city** pedestrians hug the edge of the tunnel as they walk through. The tunnel hugs the edge of the story. Invariably, the edge leads to a center.

**tunnel six altar on the mountain** one enters through tunnel one and leaves through tunnel six. The altar stands at the end.

**tunnel seven bridge to the cemetery** pedestrian only tunnel provides a bridge to a "dead" piece of land.

**eighth tunnel meeting in the stairs** an opening suggests a rhythm of closed, open, closed, that is also one of stairs. Looking through one sees across the half tunnel, returning one to the beginning of the story.