A HOUSE FOR STORIES
Sepideh Bigdeli

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture

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A house can be considered a place made from the stories that make it. In order to design the house I recalled places I experienced during my childhood. Digging back through the memories of those places I became intrigued why those particular memories remained so vivid in my mind. I listened to stories told to me by my parents about the houses where they grew up and the spatial experiences they remembered. The fabrication is a house in northern Iran activating the memories of those collective stories. The fabrication does not necessary follow particular conventions customary to the specific region. In fact most of the qualities incorporated in the project have roots in traditional bazaars and houses across Iran. The project primarily studies the relation between varieties of architectural spaces through photography. Models and analytical drawings were an essential part of the work.

Sepideh Bigdeli
To Gene Egger,
for patients, words of wisdom, enthusiasm
and opening new windows to me.

To Steve Thompson,
for challenging me with precise questions
and keeping me on track.

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To my friends,
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THANK YOU
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TOWARDS THE LIGHT

BAZAARS AND TRADITIONAL HOUSES

GROUP A: TABRIZ, IRAN
TABRIZ’S BAZAAR

GROUP B: TABRIZ, IRAN
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM)
1. BEHNAM’S HOUSE
2. HASHTI (THE INTERSECTION/ WAITING AREA FOR THE THREE HOUSES)
3. FADAKI’S HOUSE
4. GANJYE’S HOUSE
5. NARROW ALLEY TO THE FADAKI’S HOUSE

GROUP C: ISFAHAN, IRAN
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM)
1. SHEIKH LOTFOLLAH MOSQUE
2. ALI-GHOLI-AGHA BATH HOUSE
3. ALI-GHOLI-AGHA BATH HOUSE
4. IMAM MOSQUE
5. IMAM MOSQUE
6. ALI-GHOLI-AGHA BATH HOUSE
7. ALI QAPU PALACE
8. JAME MOSQUE

GROUP D: TEHRAN, IRAN
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)
1. BAB HOMAYOUN’S SMALL BAZAAR
2. GRAND BAZAAR OF TEHRAN
3. KOOCH MARVI’S SMALL OUTDOOR BAZAAR

GROUP E: ISTANBUL, TURKEY
ISTANBUL’S BAZAAR

DIAGRAMMATIC IMPRESSIONS ON TRADITIONAL BAZAARS
LIGHT AND SHADOW
OPENINGS
MOVEMENTS
DIAGRAMMATIC IMPRESSIONS ON CHILDHOOD SPACES

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Group A: Tabriz, Iran

Group C: Isfahan, Iran

Group D: Tehran, Iran

Group E: Istanbul, Turkey
The diagrammatic impressions of traditional bazaars including the grand bazaar of Isfahan, Tabriz, Istanbul, and Tehran.
The diagrammatic impressions on Open, Semi-Open, and Enclosed spaces within the traditional bazaars.
The liberal impression of light and shadow while walking down the Rasteh (the main Alley -typically long and narrow route- in the Traditional Bazaars).
Impression of openings on light and ventilation slits observed in the traditional bazaars. Focus is on the column of light created by the opening on the Gonbad (Dome).
Impression of movement from one Timche (a group of stores in the traditional markets selling a similar type of goods) to another.
Memories of childhood spaces

Most of my memories from places rooted in the spatial experiences I had as a child in my birth city, Tehran. Growing up in the family with two working parents, I had spent a lot of time at my grandmother’s house, and kindergartens. The images of some of these memories are still vivid in my head and the others are pretty vague. Though, I still try to evoke the reminiscence of the feelings I have from these places.
Initial ideas about the plan

Initial ideas about the surroundings

Initial ideas about the pathway
Studies of rooms through colors

- Communal
- In Between
- Private
- Secluded
- Access Paths
The site is located in the small village of Siah-roud (Black-river) in the province of Mazandaran in the north of Iran. The region is uniquely situated between the Caspian Sea and Alborz Mountains. The beauty of the nature along with the nice climate and its proximity to the capital made this region a vacation destination for a lot of middle-class Tehrani residents. My site is looking to the Alborz mountains in its background, rice fields in its middle ground, and Narenj trees (small orange tree, bearing fruits and flowers at the same time) in its foreground.
Relation of the site to the field and the access roads around it

- Pathway around the house
- Pathway around the garden
- Garden
- Car access path

Main road
Movements

- Moving from outside to inside
- Moving from in between spaces to interior spaces
- Interior movements
- Moving from inside to garden
- Movements around the fireplace room
NEW MEMORIES TO REMEMBER
(THROUGH MODEL AND PHOTOGRAPHS)

Memory in the house
Framing in all different levels
Spaces within rooms
Collected Patterns, New Attempts
Study of the spaces through colors

- Formal Rooms
- In between Rooms
- Family Rooms
- Private Rooms
- Service Rooms
Formal rooms
Key Plan, Second Floor

Bedrooms

26a
26b
26c
26d
26e
Looking to the entrance of master bedroom from the library hall
Looking down to the fireplace room from the second floor
Looking up to the fire place ceiling