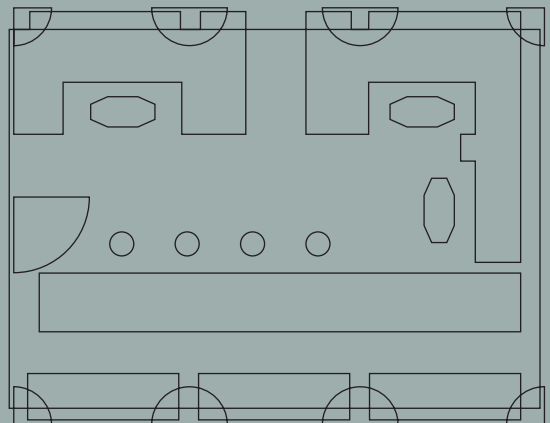
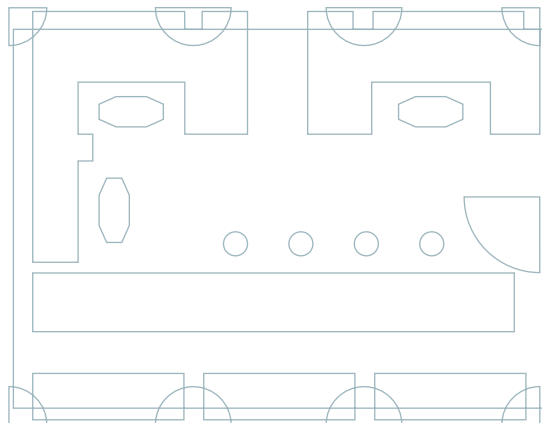


# DOUBLE BAR

" We said: actually, why don't we just copy it? Just like that... "



“ And at the core of the argument of what we wanted to make is that architecture is not a question of style. I think Loos understood that. ”



“ If you look at Loos’ drawing of his own tomb he had a cube of stone that, most importantly, stood on a base. ”





“ And it is a small homage that says to Adolf Loos that he understood what was at the core of all architecture. ”



“ This speaks of the hierarchy of the detail, of the question of balance and support, of the fundamental issue of gravity. ”

Specific places are essential to our memory. Like an archive they can house in detail our remembrances which can be recollected in a mental stroll through these places. Storing and recalling by merely evoking a characteristic place is vital to classic mnemonic techniques. Their intent is to increase our memory capacity by adding imaginary places to the real places of our experience, building up to inner palaces of memory.



But what happens to our memory palace when one of its rooms is suddenly duplicated? During my stay on the Artists' Work Programme at IMMA, I found out that Dublin houses an exact replica of Adolf Loos' famous Kaerntner Bar in the inner city of Vienna, my native town. The Dublin based architects De Blacam & Meagher adopted this icon of classical modernity, dating back to 1907, as a Senior Common Room Bar to crown their careful reconstruction and sociologically inspired adaptation of Trinity College's Dining Hall, after a serious fire on campus had left the building in a ruinous state in the mid-eighties.

" That's not fake. Fake is meaningless. "

SHANE DE BLACAM



I was very intrigued by the fact that - leaving aside the boring question of originality - two optically identical, yet mirrored architectural spaces could exist in such different cities as Dublin and Vienna.

How would these twin sites, this DOUBLE BAR, affect our memory? To what extent would the mere structure of a room choreograph the activity of its users?

To explore this fascinating doppelganger situation, I called my friend Ursula Fuhs, a Vienna based artist, and we both set out on a specific night to photograph in parallel the events at the twin bars at the time - me in Dublin and her in Vienna. Results of this double expedition have been combined here with some of the thoughts on Loos that Shane De Blacam was so kind to share with me.

Adolf Loos was most noted for his radical and controversial view of ornament, notoriously calling it a crime. On the other hand he argued for the free use of functioning, already established architectural topologies, just like De Blacam & Meagher did. Whether the reproduction of his original bar would have seemed to Loos a nightmare of ornamental multiplication or rather a radiant utopia - just play the imaginary game of memory. You can decipher, locate and invent, just like we did.

KATARINA MATIASEK

