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The Fall Through Color

Clemens Finkelstein

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EKPHRASIS: LE CORBUSIER, CARPENTER CENTER PLAN
#5789, 1961

Droning syncopates of reddish hue hover, stacking up to a layered mist, encasing the point of origin and departure of our journey. Transferred, left behind in the landscape of the vellum paper that is our stepping ground, the slippery turf of an adventure through color and materiality, pigments of red pencil agglomerate to fields, clouds of pictorial essence. In darker and lighter shades of red, from gaze-locking signal-quality to insignificantly light breaths that slip from a pink shading into nothingness, cloud plaices stretch in linear rollers across our field of vision as we orient ourselves. Striations provide directionality, pressure points of vehemence, passage and trace of the color pencil as it covers the ground, tinting, emblazoning the white-yellowish tan of the vellum's skin. This immateriality of the chromatic mist is neither desert nor watery sea, neither dry nor wet, hard or soft. It dissipates as it forms and adds while it subtracts.

We begin to realize that our journey has already begun. We have settled at a crossroads, ready to make a deal with the entity that lies in wait for strangers here, willing to appear at any moment. As we sense the plateau-like pass, its ground dark with sanguine intensity, we turn around our axis. Once, twice, thrice we spin vertically and constitute the vastness that lies ahead. Finding our bearings, our gaze wanders along previously walked paths, deep and rough the vaulting and furrow of the folds.

Demarcating a cut, a directionality that unfurls in straight lines and at an increasing speed in front of our eyes, in these four directions, we sense a spatial density forming from the temporal relic that left its imprint.

This quadruple force pulls us apart: up—down—sideways. Our body is swaying under indecision. Which way do we turn?

As we tumble under this feverish trance, dazed and confused we shake hands with the crossroads' demon, making a deal that will enable us to fold time and space. This fictitious force of the oracle, centrifugally expanding from the core, allows us to take control of our prophecy. We get to embark on a simultaneous walkabout in all four directions without having to leave this plateau.

As we let go, unbinding the handshake, we disperse in helical movement: spiraling upwards, from the minute lethargic circulations extending from the tip of our toes, ever increasing through the extension of our limbs and body—spiraling in incremental steps, folding in on each other, expanding further and dragging our innermost core out into the open field of material convulsions so we may dislodge our centered stance. As a wave of cerebral pressure, this essence is unleashed, baiting towards the rectangular demarcations of our world, which themselves seem on the verge of peeling away. The clean cut borders are ripped, creases and tears are temporal witnesses, visualizing and mediating their fragile character and mortality through an onset decay that implies its use. Cracks and fissures become entrances of and to the fabric itself, defining thus a tangent of access to our world—as we fall as fourfold.

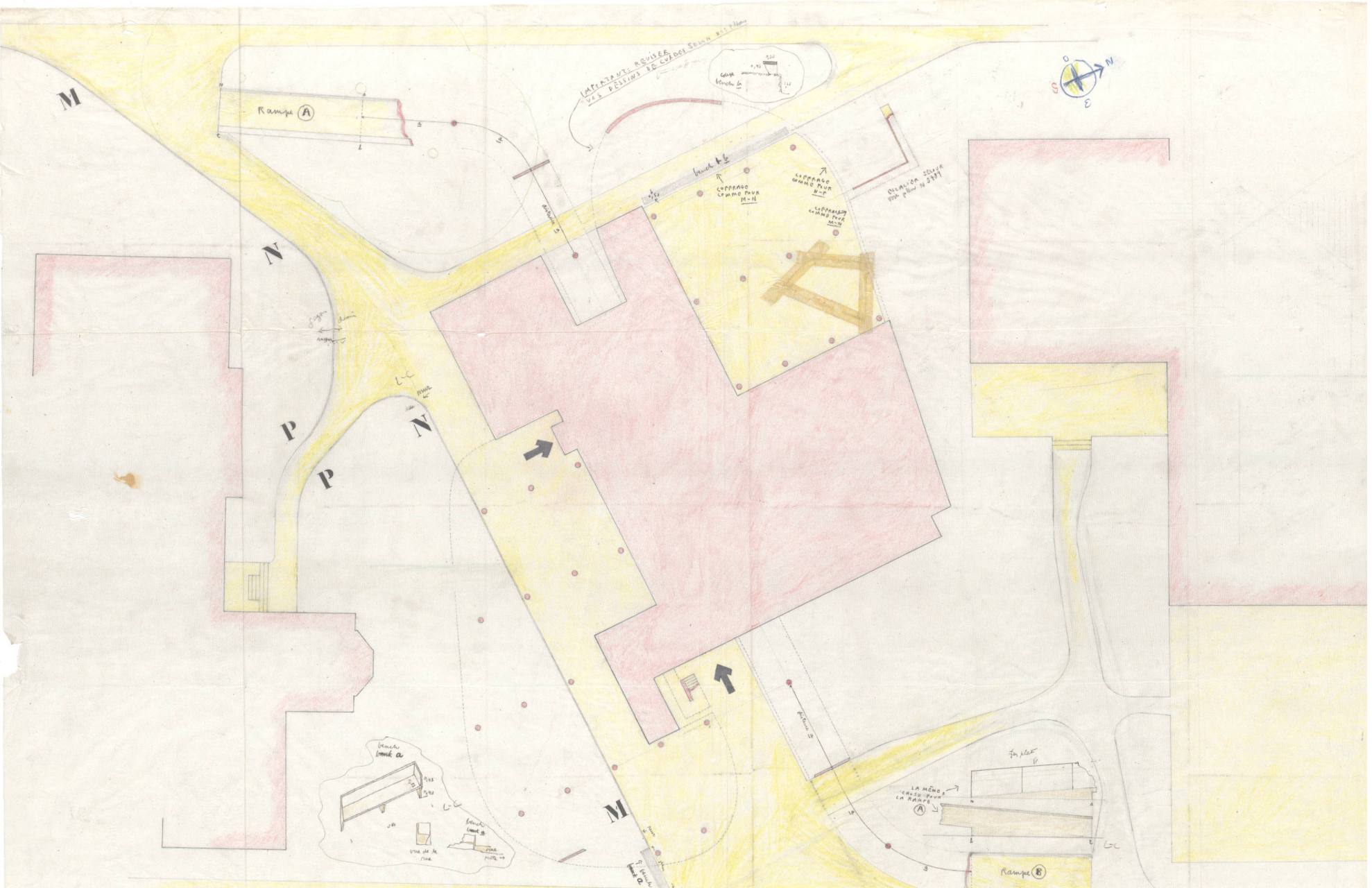
UP. Setting one foot after the other we trip and fall through color. We ascend, defying gravity as we feel a pull towards the edge of our crimson environment. In balancing on the fold, we reach a barrier, two yellow planes emerging from a far out distance converge in a right angle as we pass into the xanthous field of blinding brightness. Expanding alongside the figure of the red mass from which we have departed, the yellowish glow shifts its ephemeral quality as we continue, animating discovery and inciting movement to install a resistance for the density of our growing sensation.

A vibrational efficacy takes hold. Our wish for orientation within this meretricious volume is granted only through the monolithic structures that in a grid-like placement extend vertically in front of us, next to us, and yet again behind us, as we fly past their columnesque appearance. Their pale red core being veiled by a skin of semi-reflective lead-grey materiality suggests openness, yet in its protraction stands utterly removed from its surrounding environment. We try to measure this space while its luminosity puts pressure on our eyes. This stimulation of the optic nerve computes an array of conflicting after-images of the sanguine dimension, interjected with composite emerald green flashes of a false memory. Stereotomy is threaded, lending depth to our proto-conscious acts of orientation. To our right, the enmeshing expansion of color gains frequency and substance in a trapezoid mountainous elevation encasing a virginal essence of the predominant yellow substance we are surrounded by. The plastic shine of this geospatial pedestal alludes to its incandescent remains, blending together weight and weightlessness of this realm.

As engineer of our own fall, we begin to fathom the subtlety and presencing of a countermovement: this coupling of space and time, chromatopia, a topology of time and space in which color is their representative agency. Projection of the fantastic immateriality senses the real of our world in closer proximity than corporeal juxtaposition could, assimilating the first of our fourfold pith.

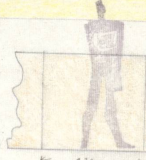
DOWN. Released, thrown through a liquiform window underneath our feet, we are smashing through the chiaroscuro of rubicund hues. Squinting, we face the airstream of these dusty pigments as we approach the bounds of their agglomeration. A fragility of materiality, of corporation and performance presents itself. We are drawn towards the edge, towards the yellowish luminescence opening up underneath. As we scrape the white void that stretches infinitely from the red mass, forming the boundaries of the yellow dimension, we briefly stop on a dense obsidian black object, deeply set in this yellow frame.

Pointing to the mass, which we have emerged from, the object's density slows our fall. From here we gaze into the zone, unfolding like an embroidered dress before our eyes. The pleats of the lambent garment wrinkle under the gravitational pull of the arrowhead black object, while the nothingness of the surrounding void uplifts its edges. It is a performance of sorts, accentuated through the tumbling red pillars shining through



Plan au Niveau "Garden"
 Plan N° 5789
 JULIAN
 Paris le 8 Septembre 1967
 d'après sur le plan d'ant.
 Echelle 1/500

Le Colonne
 21/10/67



COFFRAGE COMME POUR LES MURS "GARDEN" (Murs latéraux des "M" et "N")

POUR LES MURS
 COMME POUR LES
 MURS "GARDEN" (Murs latéraux des "M" et "N")

their penciled peel. With the flow of these embellishments we add to our immaterial members the second of our fourfold thread.

LEFT. A sucking vacuum dislocates us in an immediate rupture. As we are pulled left, we feel the warmth of our spatial origin shift to a blindingly yellow sphere, shooting out rays of obscured redness as we pass. Form and structure trade their function, feigning from telling the truth as we float through the abyssal—white-out—void, only perceivable in its vastness through the previously mentioned offshoots of the roseate columns. Spatial distances are folding into each other and come forth as arabesque collapse of chromatic fields, defined by hard cuts of the pencil and blackened letters of monumental quality. Directed, the weightlessness that ensues is caught by zonal elements, tendrils that originate from the yellow landscape and insipidly lead to a faint amassment of peculiarly shaped walls that are anemically red in color. Too frequent, these rhythmical thresholds have left the impression of an evolving harshness of dissonance, rattled by the cold back draught that is touching our neck gently, yet in repetition slipping into unpleasantness. Fraying out, no clear edges mark the sublation of this organically winding wall. Ornamental contraptions as such have a harmonic order at their very essence, vibrating and emanating sounds that affect our body, our physiological and psychological state.

We absorb this cascade, carrying like the Ovidian Sirens this internal failure, doomed to reproduce the void in anticipation of being reunited with the fourfold.

RIGHT. An obscure drag, indistinct in its intention, carries us away dextrally. Through balmy waters we wander slowly. Calm harmonic fields, these waves of reddish hues produce compounding strands of darker and lighter concentration.

Framed by the force of the chromatic surf, distance becomes misinterpreted, as we so soon approach a zigzag of rectangular zonal screens of white emptiness, cutting into our world's soft fabric. The surface-tension, stacked up at this borderland, is solidified through the strict linearity of the lead grey wall—separating the harmonic field from silence. Distilling the umbrous shine of error, residues of former lines and planes linger as waft of smudgy mist in the nothingness of the milky territory. Trying to touch them as we pass, they decompose as soon as they divine our proximity and motive. Diametrically opposed to the vanishing of bygone marks, organic evanescent motions of drawing and erasing our environment, we see organic cirri emerge out of the palimpsestic detritus. Wrapped by tentative pencil-like shading, these offshoots hold yellow light of varying intensity, fading towards the center of their nodal connection.

Dispelled through the fleeting lightness of laying out those palming multi-hued fields, we dissolve by triturating the chromatic substance, oscillating between reddish tone and yellowish glare. Sensitive in nature, our project of perceptual consumption lacks finality. To seek completion, we drop off the edge and return to the genesis of our roaming: the face of the tetrad force.

EMERGENCE. The total form of our world cannot be recognized through the singular events of the fourfold walkabout, but builds up its weight and immaterial quality through its coming-together. The emergence of substance and structure

from the immaterial spheres that are the visions of each journey, combine to transcend and transgress the borders of the vellum on which they are inscribed.

Lines turn into walls, steps, color-fields make up whole entities, spaces of dwelling and shelter. Further pathways come to connect singular spatial bodies, as evidence of an action, a folding and layering, overlaps and cracks are revealed in the movement of its iteration.

Daytime or nighttime, there is no distinction to be made. By gracing the obscurity of our world, the sun is always setting and rising, impossible to tell which is which at a particular moment in time. The fragments of experience form a spirit of creativity that matures from infantile strokes of the color-pencil to the hieroglyphs of substance that both shelter and encourage this creative smear. Their formation as transformation of the shapes and inscriptions, a visual alphabet that allows us to experience a totality of protuberant connections in translation. Flatness succumbs to the texture of a becoming, deeply rooted in the creases, the cracks and tears of the vellum's materiality. Attempts to fix these revelatory moments by covering their existence with adhesive tape, merely a reminder of this internal force about to break through, anticipating the event of the accident.

A becoming of spatial transmogrification looms. Fibrous, threadlike clouds converge into crystalline reality, building up in front of us. This fourfold reading enframes us, deeply affecting our sensing of the depth that is projected from the two-dimensionality of our fall. We hear the gushing sound of the pencil as it is leaving its mark, the muffled scratch of the eraser, thoughts transferred onto paper and represented through letter-like shapes, more hieroglyphic puzzles along the iconographic inscriptions. We feel the sweaty palm smudging the chromatic plates as we graze them falling. We fall and spin, we disperse and reconstruct, while parts of us stick to its objecthood, we become part, always have been part of this realm that preys on our semblance to the world. We make and we are made by this world—psychically and physically. Standing still, we taste its colors with our falling body.

fig. a Le Corbusier, VAC/BOS (Carpenter Center for Visual Arts) #5789, 1961. Sert Collection. Courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design. © FLC / 2017, ProLitteris, Zurich

Clemens Finkelstein, born 1988, is a historian and theorist of art and architecture from Berlin, Germany. He is a graduate student in the History and Philosophy of Design at Harvard University and has worked extensively as a writer, editor, consultant, researcher, and curator in Europe and North America.

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