



## RITUAL AND SYMBOL

The mythological story of Romulus and Remus describes how the city of Rome was founded and provides a simple example of defining space. When the brothers arrived at the site of what would eventually become the eternal city, Romulus saw seven doves flying over the Capitoline Hill. He took this to be a sign from heaven that they should build their settlement at this location. He began to establish their camp by digging a furrow in the shape of a circle and left it unfinished to suggest a gate to the newly created territory. He stood at the center of the circle in the ground and declared it to be the foundation of Rome. When his brother Remus stepped over the furrow rather than using the suggested gate, Romulus killed him.

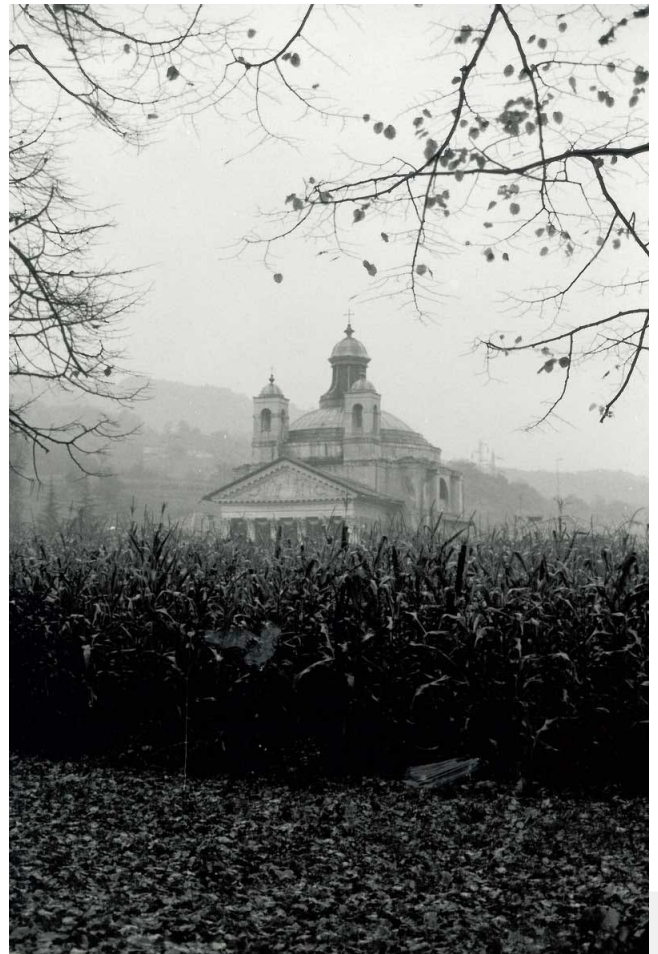
### Understanding “Place” (Site)

One of the most fundamental notions of architecture is creating a sense of place. Often this comes about through ritual or ceremony and incorporates a gesture that is meaningful to the individual or gathering of people. Primitive cultures have for centuries assembled around fires and told tales of heroes and spirits. The North American Indians ventured into the forest and carved totems poles out of the living trees to signify a sacred place.

This profound understanding of place is one of the driving forces behind architecture. When a Crusader planted a cross in the earth or a Muslim lay down a rug to pray, they were marking a place and announcing it to be holy. The site for architecture must be deliberately considered.

Ancient peoples knew that choosing a spot was just as important as building upon it. The first church in Rome dedicated to the Virgin Mary was built just outside the ancient imperial city walls on a site that suddenly began spewing oil. The people in the field found it to be a sign from heaven, and so they erected the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere to commemorate the parable of the lady with the oil lamps. Through architecture, stories materialize and provide anchors to ritual.

Defining space also involves an awareness of space through the placement or discovery of form within that space. The planting of a tree in a courtyard or placing a column in an empty room immediately defines the enclosed space and gives a reference point that helps to establish focus and in turn begins to determine the quality of the space itself. This is the beginning of ritual and ceremony to establish a sense of place.



*Place; David Robert Donatucci*

### Site and Structure

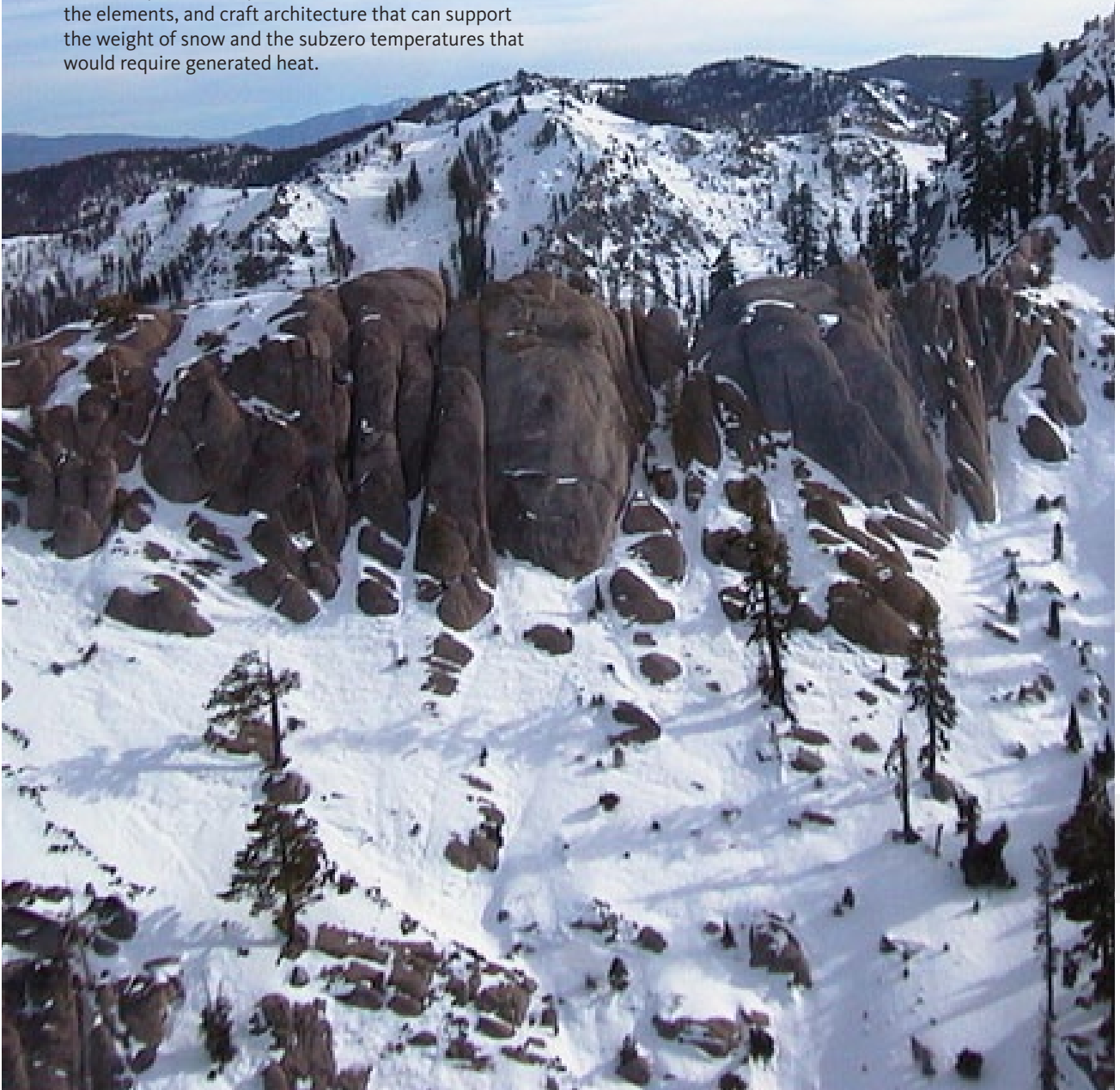
When creating games, often a designer will stage some part of the experience that requires the artist to establish a sense of place. The key to fulfilling this requirement is to craft a space that has meaning and takes into account the terrain in which this architecture is placed. How architecture is integrated into a natural landscape or existing urban fabric is just as vital as recognizing the elements that surround your architecture.

## Terrain

How architecture engages its terrain becomes instrumental in how that architecture emerges. The appearances of structures in the arctic differ from those found in the desert. Getting familiar with the various methods of construction and how they become incorporated into the landscape is a vital tool in crafting a quality of place.

### ○ Arctic

When faced with structures that reside in the cold snowy regions of the planet, it becomes clear that dome-shaped shelter prevails. Consider the weather and the elements, and craft architecture that can support the weight of snow and the subzero temperatures that would require generated heat.



*Snow Mountains; David Robert Donatucci*



## ○ Desert

Although the Egyptians and Moors have provided the world with excellent examples of desert architecture, it is important to examine these for clues as to why they would be so successful. The openness of structure and the subterranean quality of some of these temples help to reinforce the fundamental knowledge these peoples had when considering the vibrant sun and aridness of the land.



Desert; David Robert Donatucci



## ○ Jungle

Architecture in a tropical climate would certainly require an architect to consider factors such as heavy rainfall and the instability of the land itself. This in turn might bring about a structure that is perched among the branches or hanging from vines or perhaps nested in the giant roots of a canopy tree.



*Jungle; David Robert Donatucci*



## ○ Forest

For years, the forest has provided architecture with raw material to build. Fairy tales have countless numbers of cottages and villages deep in the woods. How might the density of a forest compel you to occupy its groves or paths?



Forest; David Robert Donatucci



## ○ Urban

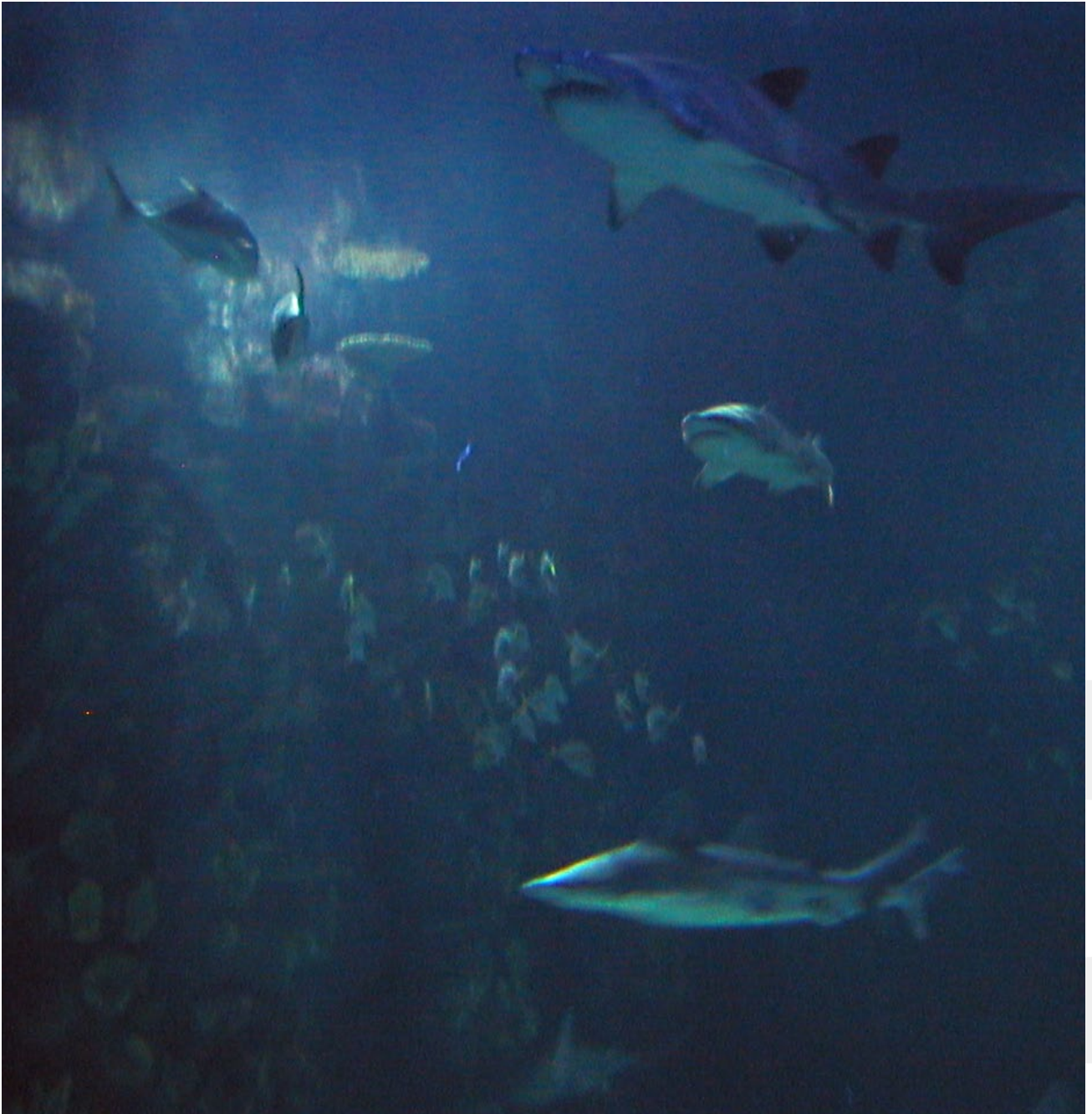
As metropolitan areas grow and neighborhoods expand, it is extremely necessary to understand the urban fabric of the city. Often in games, a metropolis involves anything from streets and sewers to alleys and rooftops. Examine the many structures and the components of which urban centers are made to grasp how this modern sprawl of architecture continues to evolve.



Urban; David Robert Donatucci

○ Underwater

When creating architecture that resides deep below the surface of the ocean, it is imperative to consider the pressures that would be placed upon any structures at such depths. Examining submarines and naval vessels helps to train the eye to see how structures and surfaces are crafted for these unique forces.



*Underwater; David Robert Donatucci*

### ○ Space

Space offers yet another interesting frontier for which to create architecture. Science fiction films and games have provided the world with numerous possibilities for how zero gravity might inform architecture in outer space. Rockets and space capsules offer a wide variety of forms and technological detail to the architect.



*Outer Space; David Robert Donatucci*



## ○ Imaginary

By far the most exciting forms of architecture are those that defy the rules of logic. Supernatural structures in fiction or featured in mythology offer the architect boundless opportunities to craft entire worlds or a complete universe. Cartoons and comics are the prime source for these wonky and oddly proportional buildings and cities.



*Imaginary; David Robert Donatucci*

## Spatial Organizations

After careful consideration has been made about the site and the setting for architecture, it becomes clear what type of spatial organization might best suit the location. Natural plateaus, rocky ridges, or flat earth might help to inform architects regarding the choice of space that best suit their needs. Other factors to consider when exploring arrangements of space include the function and symbolic role of the architecture.

### ○ Centralized Space of Worship

Centralized space is space that has an inward focus. This type of spatial organization lends itself to establishing a central element or heart. The boundaries cradle the participant and reinforce a theme of origin. Places of worship or memorial offer gathering spaces that create a sense of unity.



Piazza San Pietro; David Robert Donatucci



- Linear  
Space of Pilgrimage

Linear space is often a simple thoroughfare, gallery, or hall. The idea behind this type of spatial organization is to connect two points in space or separate two linear forms. This can be as simple as a sunken canal that runs through a field and separates each bank, or it can involve a processional route of passage from one public square to another. The punctuation of each end of a linear space helps to reinforce the path and offers architects the opportunity to explore the notion of pilgrimage.



*Uffizi Gallery; David Robert Donatucci*

○ Radial Space of Intersection

Radial space is space that involves the networking of linear spaces and presents a spatial organization that connects more than two points of interest. The intersections of radial space offer choice in direction and moments for pause at the pivotal spaces. Downtown city streets often craft intersections to allow for a point in space to stop and meet. This type of space also lends itself well to hospitals, prisons, and hotels where a space of service or control is needed with several wings that radiate outward.



Madison Square; David Robert Donatucci



## ○ Grid Space of the Sacred

Grid space is common among modern office buildings, warehouses, or any type of utilitarian place of operation. It offers modular opportunities for creating work space and is economical in allowing for scalability of space in equal proportions. On a grander scale, one could view New York City's Central Park as a space that is also based upon a grid. It represents a claiming of space on the Manhattan grid and offers a superb example of a sacred space that is about recreation rather than utility.

“...one could view New York City's Central Park as a space that is also based upon a grid.”



New York's Central Park; David Robert Donatucci