“One hundred years after Picasso first applied oil cloth and rope to canvas, Collage and Architecture offers extraordinary insight into the multiple ways that early modern and contemporary architects have appropriated and invented new collage practices to advance their aesthetic, experiential, and social goals.”
Judith Kinnard, Professor and Harvey-Wadsworth Chair, Tulane University School of Architecture

“Though often misunderstood, collage has influenced a wide array of architectural practices and design approaches in the last 100 years. This book helps bring some clarity not only to the history of collage, but also to an aesthetic that still resonates in the current world.”
Mark Jarzombek, Professor of History and Theory of Architecture, MIT

“Jennifer Shields has written a book that is an essential contribution to the lexicons of both collage and architecture. Deftly weaving through literary, artistic, and architectural examples, she demonstrates how the history, theory, ideologies, and techniques of collage are in fact part of the firmament of our built environment.”
Samantha Krukowski, Iowa State University

Collage and Architecture is the first book to cover collage as a design technique for architecture, making it a valuable resource for using it in your work. Author Jennifer Shields uses the artworks and built projects of leading practitioners and artists, such as Le Corbusier, Gordon Matta-Clark, and WEISS/MANFREDI to show you what others have successfully done. The six case study projects from Mexico, Sweden, Norway, Germany, the United States, and Japan give you a global perspective of architecture as collage. Collage is an important instrument for analysis and design, and Shields’s presentation of this diverse material draws on decades of relevance in art and architecture from which you may learn.

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Collage and Architecture
Collage and Architecture

Jennifer A. E. Shields
For Bryan
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Foreword

Juhani Pallasmaa, Architect, Professor

The World is a Collage

Collage and montage are quintessential techniques in modern and contemporary art and filmmaking. Collage combines pictorial motifs and fragments from disconnected origins into a new synthetic entity which casts new roles and meanings to the parts. It suggests new narratives, dialogues, juxtapositions and temporal durations. Its elements lead double-lives; the collaged ingredients are suspended between their originary essences and the new roles assigned to them by the poetic ensemble.

The techniques of collage and assemblage are conventionally related to visual arts and cinema, but Joseph Brodsky, the poet, makes the remark: “[It was] poetry that invented the technique of montage, not Eisenstein”. However, every artistic work, be it literary, musical or visual, is bound to be a juxtaposition of images, emotions and ambiances in order to construct an articulated and engaging spatio-temporal experience. Whether the work qualifies as a collage depends on the degree of the apparent “givenness” of its ingredients. We tend to think that our awareness is a coherent and continuous mental state. In fact, human consciousness keeps shifting from one percept and thought to the next, from actuality to dream, association to deduction, and from recollection to imagination. Our very consciousness is an ever-changing collage of mental fragments held together by one’s sense of self.

In its inherent permanence and penetrating, preconceived order, the art form of architecture is conventionally not associated with the notion of collage. Yet, the very role of architecture as frames and settings for human activities turns it into a varying and variously completed entity, an ever-changing collage of activities, furnishings and objects. Because of their longevity, buildings tend to change their functions and be altered as material entities. Most of our historical buildings are assemblies of alterations, materials, textures and colours layered through decades or centuries of use. Often it is this very temporal layering that gives a building its unique atmosphere and charm; the geometric spatial and material configuration of architecture is embraced
and enhanced by use, erosion and time; architecture turns from a spatial abstraction into a lived situation, ambience and metaphor.

The idea of collage has also been a conscious and deliberate artistic method in architecture from Giulio Romano's Palazzo Te in Mantua to Le Corbusier's and Alvar Aalto's fusions of modernist and vernacular images in their architectural assemblages, all the way to Jean Nouvel's collaged walls of the Belfort Theatre and David Chipperfield's renovation of Neues Museum in Berlin. Also many of Frank Gehry's works are collages although even the parts are deliberately designed by the architect; nevertheless, his buildings appear as assemblages of pre-existing units suggestive of differing origins.

Contemporary buildings, such as art museums, often appear strained and severe in their relentless formal logic, whereas the same activities located in recycled buildings – frequently of former industrial use – project a more relaxed and welcoming atmosphere due to their more complex logic, conflicting architectural themes and richer materiality; indeed, their collage-character. Peter Brook, the radical theatre director, deliberately demolished his avant-garde theatre building Bouffes du Nord in Paris in order to create an associative and emotionally responsive space for theatrical performances. "A good space can't be neutral, for an impersonal sterility gives no food to the imagination. The Bouffes has the magic and poetry of a ruin, and anyone who allowed themselves to be invaded by the atmosphere of a ruin knows strongly how the imagination is let loose", Brook argues.²

All collages tend to have a similar capacity to stimulate our imagination, as if the various fragments, torn from their initial settings, would beg the viewer to give them back their lost identity. The superbly executed collages by the Czech poet and artist Jiří Kolář are suspended between a literary and visual expression, and one can almost hear words being whispered by the visual imagery. Leonardo advised artists to stare at a crumbling wall in order to enter the mental state of inspiration,³ and the collage takes similar advantage of the intricacies of our perceptual, imaginative and empathetic processes.

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3 “When you look at a wall spotted with stains, or with a mixture of stones, if you have to devise some scene you may discover a resemblance to various landscapes . . . or, again, you may see battles and figures in action, or strange faces and costumes, or an endless variety of objects, which you could reduce to complete and well-drawn forms. And these appear on such walls promiscuously, like the sound of bells in whose jangle you may find any name or word you choose to imagine.”
First and foremost, I am incredibly thankful for Bryan Shields and his encouragement, continuing dialogue on the topic, and photographic contributions – this book would not have come to fruition without his efforts as both a husband and a colleague. Thanks also to my parents (and sister) for sparking and fostering a passion for art and architecture and their continued support of these pursuits.

In the development of this book, conversations with Greg Snyder and Andrew McLellan were invaluable in giving form and structure to a broad and diverse subject. My research assistants Nicole Rivera and Niki DeSimini were instrumental in the execution of this project, as were my editors at Routledge: Wendy Fuller, Laura Williamson, and Ben Woolhead. I am grateful for the financial support provided by the School of Architecture at the University of North Carolina – Charlotte, as well as Chris Beorkrem and my other colleagues and students at UNCC for discussing and testing these methods while furthering the discourse on the subject of collage and architecture.
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Collage and assemblage are favoured techniques of artistic representation in our time; these media enable an archaeological density and a non-linear narrative through the juxtaposition of fragmented images deriving from irreconcilable origins. Collage invigorates the experience of tactility and time.\(^1\)

Juhani Pallasmaa, “Hapticity and Time: Notes on Fragile Architecture”

One century ago, collage entered the lexicon of the contemporary art world. Pablo Picasso, in May of 1912, first appropriated a found material into a work of art. In his

Pablo Picasso, Still Life With Chair Caning (1912)
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*Still Life with Chair Caning*, Picasso affixed a piece of oil cloth printed with the design of chair-caning to an oil painting. This was the “first deliberately executed collage – the first work of fine art . . . in which material appropriated from everyday life, relatively untransformed by the artist, intruded upon the traditionally privileged domain of painting,” according to Christine Poggi in her book *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage.*[^2] The founders of Cubism – Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris – valued collage as a hybridization of painting and sculpture existing at the threshold of two and three dimensions. As a means of investigating the potentialities of three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional medium, collage facilitated a new conception of space. These first acts of collage-making in the Modernist canon, in their conceptual, material, and technical originality, have profoundly influenced numerous artists and architects throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

Collage, as an art form unique to the modern era, emphasizes process over product. A collage as a work of art consists of the assembly of various fragments of materials, combined in such a way that the composition has a new meaning, not inherent in any of the individual fragments. According to Diane Waldman in *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object,* a collage has several levels of meaning: “the original identity of the fragment or object and all of the history it brings with it; the new meaning it gains in association with other objects or elements; and the meaning it acquires as the result of its metamorphosis into a new entity.”[^3] Simultaneity of spatial, material, and intellectual content is inherent in collage through a synthesis of unrelated fragments, as the process of construction remains evident in the resulting work.

We might understand architectural experience in a similar way. In *Questions of Perception,* Steven Holl illuminates the nature of our perception of the built environment, saying:

> A city is never seen as a totality, but as an aggregate of experiences, animated by use, by overlapping perspectives, changing light, sounds, and smells. Similarly, a single work of architecture is rarely experienced in its totality (except in graphic or model form) but as a series of partial views and synthesized experiences. Questions of meaning and understanding lie between the generating ideas, forms, and the nature and quality of perception.^[4]

Holl proposes that we perceive human artifacts as an amalgam of sensory phenomena understood through personal experience and memory, rather than completely and objectively through a formal analysis. Like a collage, revealing evidence of time and its methods of construction, a work of architecture contains accumulated history as it is lived and engaged rather than observed. Just as a work of architecture is only fully created and comprehended through bodily, sensory engagement, collage can serve as a representational analogue, providing the medium to interrogate spatial and material possibilities. The practice of collage has the capacity to capture spatial and material characteristics of the built environment, acting as an analytical and interpretive

[^2]: Poggi, Christine. *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage.*
[^4]: Holl, Steven. *Questions of Perception.*
mechanism. Through this understanding, we can build a conscious and intentional response to the multivalence extant in sites and cities.

We consider collage in the following ways throughout this book:

1. collage as artifact
2. collage as a tool for analysis and design
3. architecture as collage.

This framework will offer a survey of collage methodologies in art and architecture beginning in 1912 and spanning a century of collage-making. This introduction offers a brief overview of collage as artifact through a chronological history of its artistic evolution – fragments of this history are revealed throughout the book. Part 1: Collage Methodologies in Architectural Analysis + Design investigates collage as an analytical and generative tool in the practice of architecture, organized by collage method. In Part 2: Architecture as Collage, specific works of architecture are analyzed through the lens of collage, as case studies representative of a collage mentality in architecture.

To provide a methodological framework for an understanding of collage, we begin a century ago with Cubism. For the first time in 450 years, the Renaissance
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An approach to representation – privileging visual experience – was rejected. The Cubists instead represented aspects of daily life through abstraction, material juxtapositions, and fragmentation and synthesis of form, cataloguing spatial and material qualities of commonplace subjects. The genealogy of collage and the influences of Cubism on art and architecture as articulated in this book are illustrated in the Collage Genealogy, demonstrating the conceptual or technical affiliations between various artists and architects throughout the past century.

The legacy of Cubism as demonstrated in this genealogy has its foundation in Alfred Barr, Jr.’s chart for Cubism and Abstract Art, the Museum of Modern Art exhibition in 1936, in which he illustrated the movements that influenced Cubism and the movements that were subsequently informed by Cubism. The bold

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geometric forms of the Cubist collage were quickly adopted by artists outside France, while political unrest in Europe leading up to World War I saw the appropriation of collage for political and cultural purposes. The Italian Futurists were the first group of artists to respond to the radical shift in representation initiated by the Cubists. They embraced modern technology, fascinated by the speed, industrialization, and dynamism of modern life. The work of the Russian Avant-Garde (beginning with Futurism and Suprematism and evolving into Constructivism) was also highly politicized, the goal being to direct art towards a social purpose and demonstrate the ideals of a new society. Formally, they emphasized materiality and the dynamic composition of line, surface, and volume. According to Waldman, “From Cubism the Russians evolved an art that emphasized the surface plane and the faceting and fragmentation of forms. From the Futurists the Russians adopted the notion of speed and intersecting lines of force.” Artists of the Russian Avant-Garde were often architects as well, using collage, a two-dimensional medium, as a means of generating concepts for three-dimensional architectural forms.

Dadaism was founded at the outbreak of World War I in Zürich in protest and considered itself ‘anti-art.’ Dadaists conceived of their work as a rejection of...
existing cultural and aesthetic values through their adoption of collage. Like the Russian Avant-Garde, their art was highly politicized, protesting the war and the political and social structures that led to it. Most Dada artists eliminated painting and drawing in their collages, and instead used photos and catalogues almost exclusively. The use of photomontage stemmed from their desire to be seen as engineers or mechanics rather than artists. There is debate over the birth of photomontage, as both the Russian Constructivists and the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann claim to have invented it. The social commentary of the Dadaists was represented formally through changing perspectives, sharp diagonals, and contrasting materials and images, using rich textures and representations of the human body.

Surrealism developed in the period of peace following World War I, an outgrowth of Dadaism in Paris that become more internally focused. The Surrealists opposed the formal and rational order of Cubism, advocating for automatic or intuitive drawings to channel the subconscious. They sought to unify the inner world of the imagination with the outer world of reality, a synthesis termed ‘surreality’ by Surrealism’s founder, André Breton. This dreamlike quality was often achieved through photomontage and the juxtaposition of unrelated objects. The often fluid and indistinguishable boundaries between layers magnifies this effect. At the same time in Germany the Bauhaus design school was founded with the intent of integrating all of the design disciplines, greatly influenced by De Stijl and Constructivism. László Moholy-Nagy, a Bauhaus professor, was in dialogue with Dada and Constructivist artists at the time, and evidence of their influence is found in his use of photomontage. Like the Russian Avant-Garde, the Bauhaus artists often used minimal collage elements, creating and exploiting the deep space of the canvas.

Contemporary art, referring to art movements after World War II, has witnessed the use of collage by numerous artists including the Abstract Expressionists originating in New York and Pop Artists in New York and London. Abstract Expressionism derived directly from Synthetic Cubism as well as Futurism, the Bauhaus, and Surrealism. This movement began in the 1930s in the US, drawing from Surrealism’s concept of automatism, or the power of the subconscious. Artists were motivated by a desire to investigate the role of chance in the creation of a work of art. These artists intended to merge the real and the imaginary by combining the familiar with the unknown, the personal with the universal. The process of collage-making in the manual engagement with the media “reflected both process and product, the same way the Abstract Expressionist paintings simultaneously represented the creative act and the final image,” according to Diane Waldman.

Pop Art was born in the 1950s as a response to Abstract Expressionism, employing found objects (‘ready-mades’) and photographic images like the Dadaists, with a desire to capture the complexities of contemporary culture. A leading figure in the Pop Art movement, British collage artist Richard Hamilton specified Imagery (including cinema, advertising, television, photographic image, and multiple image) and Perception (including color, tactility, light, sound, and memory) as critical issues in the movement. Reflecting on the genealogy of collage, the value and meaning of
collage has transformed throughout the past century as the conception of space has evolved. Materially, the choice of fragments is also distinctive, revealing evidence of the time and place in which the collages were constructed as the artists incorporated readily available materials from everyday life into their collage compositions. The interconnectivity and overlap of collage methodologies in art movements of the twentieth century provide a diversity of ideologies, techniques, and materials from which architects have drawn, and will continue to draw, inspiration.

Part 1 considers the influence of these collage artists on the analytical and generative processes of architects over the past century. Collage Methodologies in Architectural Analysis + Design looks at the range of conceptual and technical collage methodologies in the field of architecture. Though Le Corbusier and other early twentieth century architects made use of collage in their design process to experiment with spatial and material juxtapositions, collage as a theoretical concept only became widely discussed after the publication of Collage City by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter in 1987. In this publication, the authors were interested in collage for its metaphorical value, serving as a means of understanding the potentialities in the rich layering and complexity of the built environment. Architects have since exploited collage for both its conceptual possibilities and its material, formal, and representational potential.
ONDAATJE, bridge. The column was not wound with hieroglyphs or bas-reliefs depicting serpents charming the milky seas of mythology or lines of soldiers marching to battle in haste armed and unarmed. Here was a monument to light and dark—a blank tablet upon which to imagine. This was the tower of the unadorned—purely a product for the observation of light and evanescence shade.

timescape lab,
Cabanon
[Ondaatje] (2011)
Structured by collage-making technique, *Part 1* begins with the Cubist influence of *papier collé* and found materials in collage. Architects including Le Corbusier, Bernhard Hoesli, Eduardo Chillida, and more recently Richard Meier have utilized the collage techniques of the Cubists in their architectural work conceptually tied to the fragmented forms, figure/ground reversal, phenomenal transparency, and multiple perspectives found in Cubist collage and the abstract compositions of Kurt Schwitters.

Collage-drawings, employing line and photographic fragments while exploiting the negative space of the canvas, range from the geometric order, minimalism, and precision of Mies van der Rohe, Daniel Libeskind, Ben Nicholson, and James Corner, to the utopic/dystopic narratives of Superstudio, Archigram, Rem Koolhaas, and time[scape]lab. Collage-drawings often address the relationship of the body to space and materiality, with clear references to the haptic collages of the Dada and Surrealist artists and the spatial dynamism of the Bauhaus and Constructivism.

Photomontages by a variety of designers show correlations to the Constructivist, Bauhaus, and Dada use of photomontage as a means of juxtaposing unrelated fragments and meanings in the larger context of the city. These designers may use found images, like David Wild and Nils-Ole Lund, or they may construct
their own image fragments, like Gordon Matta-Clark, Mary Miss, Miralles Tagliabue [EMBT], and Teddy Cruz. In response to the legacy of influential artists and architects working in collage through analogue means, this book emphasizes the value of the hand in the act of collage-making to offer a multitude of potential interpretations.

This book does, however, recognize the value in digital methods, documenting the work of contemporary artists and architects including Point Supreme, Mathur/da Cunha, and FELD studio. Each of these has demonstrated the potential for digital collages, and hybridizations of analogue and digital collage techniques, to investigate spatial and material futures. These methods utilize collage as a medium to captivate sensory, spatial perception. Collage serves as a tool for analysis, encouraging the evaluation of a built artifact from the perspective of the inhabitant, as well as a tool within a design methodology that pursues a multi-sensory experience in a work of architecture.

Part 2 considers Architecture as Collage, documenting a series of case studies investigating the qualities of collage inherent in built works of architecture and landscape architecture. Six case studies serve to evaluate elements of embodied collage. Luis Barragán’s House and Studio (Mexico City, Mexico, 1948), Le Corbusier’s Casa Curutchet (La Plata, Argentina, 1949–53), and Sigurd Lewerentz’s Markuskyrkan (Stockholm, Sweden, 1956–63), though aesthetically dissimilar, contain an underlying order that has been disrupted and manipulated by conditions of site and perception, a fragmented and synthesized composition illustrating a three-dimensional ambiguity between figure and field. The following projects address similar themes through their interaction with a complex ground condition. Hamar Bispegaard Museum in Hamar, Norway (1973) by Sverre Fehn is a three-dimensional palimpsest, revealing distinctive yet overlapping layers of history and construction. Roberto Ercilla Arquitectura’s Fundación Sancho el Sabio (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 2008) is a reappropriated landscape that has been reactivated by the processes of disassembly, fragmentation, and synthesis for the creation of a dynamic cultural space. The Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, WA (2007) by WEISS/MANFREDI takes the complex infrastructure of Seattle’s waterfront and, through similar processes, constructs a diverse landscape. These six projects address a range of scales of architectural intervention, and are documented and analyzed through the lens of collage, revealing their distinct identities as embodiments of the collage mentality.
Considering collage as an instrument for analysis and design, drawing on decades of relevance in art and architecture, offers a diverse set of material, technical, and conceptual precedents from which to draw inspiration. Diane Waldman claims: “Throughout this century, collage has come to symbolize a revolution in the nature of making art . . . The technique of collage was ideally suited to capture the noise, speed, time, and duration of the twentieth-century urban industrial experience. Collage became the medium of materiality.” Collage, as it has evolved, brings with it a number of dualities including representational/abstract, gestural/precise, field/
figure, surface/depth, and literal/metaphorical, all of which are considered within the methodologies of art and architecture. The variety of methods can be hybridized and tailored to suit the conceptual framework within which a work of architecture (existing or proposed) resides. The multivalence and synthesis of spatial and material conditions inherent in collage-making creates the potential for a multiplicity of interpretations and experiences in the design process and the resultant work of architecture.
Notes

5  Waldman, Collage, 71.
6  Waldman, Collage, 90.
7  Waldman, Collage, 114.
8  Waldman, Collage, 231.
9  Waldman, Collage, 272.
10 Waldman, Collage, 11.