

# Transforming Habit

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The realm of architecture is often bracketed by the typical assumptions that buildings are to be produced on the earth, similar to artwork on a canvas. This assumption often overlooks the importance of human perception or, more specifically, human interaction. Since architecture has the ability to directly affect our lives, why not question its boundaries and focus on personal interaction?

“...buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception—or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception.”

--Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.

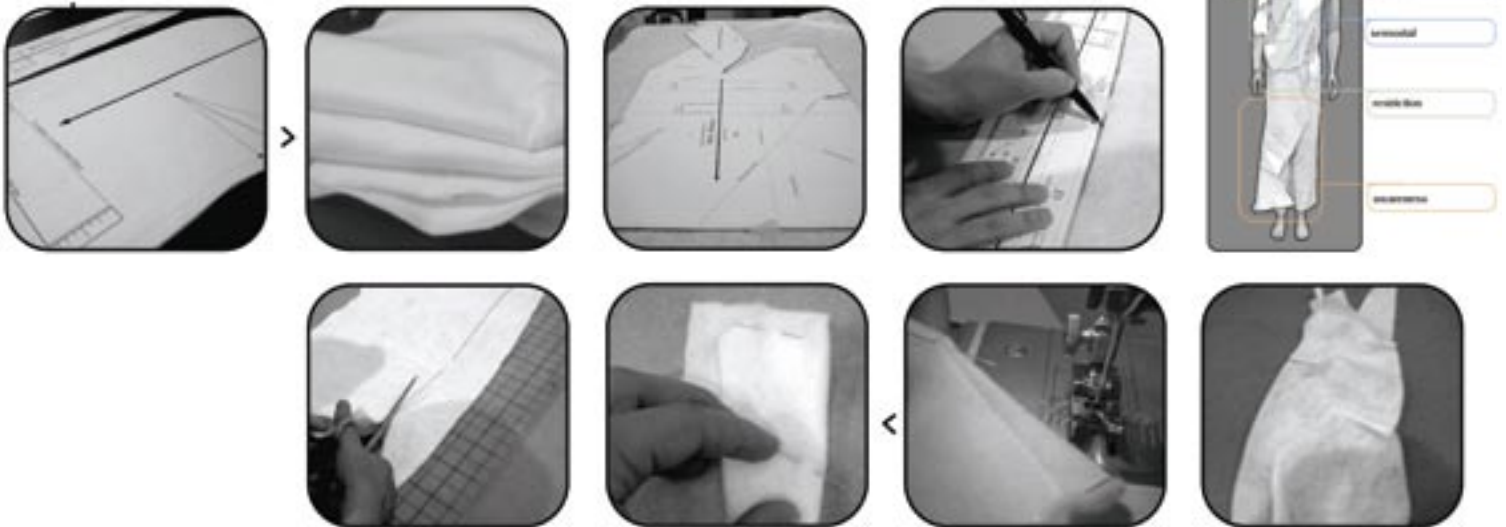
From the readings of Walter Benjamin, one must begin to ask themselves:

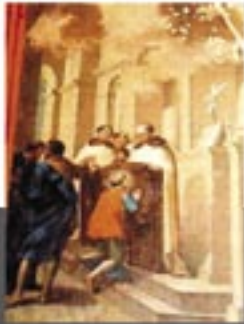
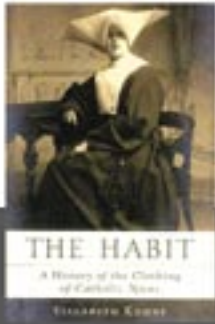
1. To what extent can architecture affect us physically?
2. Have we been trained to use spaces as those who have used them before us?

These two questions become the basis for this project.

Just as architecture is layered in varying possibilities, so is the term habit. The most common conception of the term deals with repetitive activities—for example smoking, excessive eating, biting one’s nails, etc. Habit also has several historical meanings, which relate directly to architecture. For example, according to Webster’s dictionary, habit can be defined as:

1. archaic : CLOTHING
2. a costume characteristic of a calling, rank, or function <a nun’s habit> RELIGION
3. manner of conducting oneself : BEARING
4. bodily appearance or makeup <a man of fleshy habit>
5. the prevailing disposition or character of a person’s thoughts and feelings : mental makeup
6. a settled tendency or usual manner of behavior
7. a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition or physiologic exposure that shows itself in regularity or increased facility of performance b : an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary c : ADDICTION





III. Mental constitution, disposition, custom.

4. Bearing, demeanour, deportment, behaviour; posture. *Obs.*

8. The way in which a person is mentally or morally constituted; the sum of the mental and moral qualities; mental constitution, disposition, character.

9. a. A settled disposition or tendency to act in a certain way, esp. one acquired by frequent repetition of the same act until it becomes almost or quite involuntary; a settled practice, custom, usage; a customary way or manner of acting. (The most usual current sense. Properly said of living beings; in mod. use occasionally of inanimate things.)

d. *in the habit (habit) of doing something*: having a habit or custom of so doing. *So to fall or get into the habit.*

## Habit - Patron Saints Index

*The uniform worn by religious communities. It is designed to bring the religious closer to God through daily obedience, by giving up of the freedom to wear other clothes, and by eliminating the worry and temptation of focusing on clothing. By wearing a habit, religious form a 'habit' of obedience to God that can be used in other parts of their lives, are ever reminded of their association with their order, and of the meaningless of outward form, and become a constant witness to the outside world who are reminded of the religious' vocation by sight of the uniform. Phrases like "taking the habit" or "assuming the habit" are synonyms for joining a religious order.*



In response, this ten week project was an investigation centered on the habitual tendencies of humans manifested in architectural form, fashion, and clothing. Using smoking as a model, an anthropomorphic computer model is formed with the intent that its full-scale physical fabrication will both enable and bring an acute awareness to the habit and its affects on both the body and space.

One of the common characteristics about clothing production is the play between customization and standardization.

By studying habit as clothing, one can discuss principles that parallel architecture. In fact, one of the fundamental aspects of architecture is to enclose or protect—a property very similar to that of clothing. Transforming Habit aims to question the typical perception of architecture, while studying principles that typically parallel it. In addition, the project combines clothing with a study of addiction. In the case of Transforming Habit, this addiction is the habit of the hand-to-mouth action (smoking, excessive eating, etc.) Rather than encouraging extinction of one's habit, the project is intended to create an awareness of habit. By creating awareness, one can begin to address if changes need to be made. Without awareness, the habit will unconsciously continue.

The customization process began by unfolding a NURBS object that had been mapped to a Poser figure, producing a sewing pattern, or template. Then, by applying traditional sewing techniques such as darting, folding, and sizing, the two-dimensional pattern was able to become a three-dimensional object. The darts and sizing information were then incorporated into the template to re-inform the NURBS model, so it became a cyclical process of digital and hand-crafted techniques. The use of NURBS allowed for a highly detailed study of the digital model, which led to the creation of a full-scale physical model. The full-scale model was then created and put into use by several smokers to be tested. The results demonstrated the digital model's accuracy and successfully created habitual awareness by altering the inhabitant's sensorial experiences.



### Community

*One of the major facets to habitual smoking is the byproduct that is the "smoking community". People that often have no other social, ethnic, or moral ties, join together to take part in their habit. The community becomes a social atmosphere that bonds people who only communicate "while having a smoke." Without the smoking community many of the social bonds would be weaker or even nonexistent.*



igle Clark - Camillehondo (Trilling)

