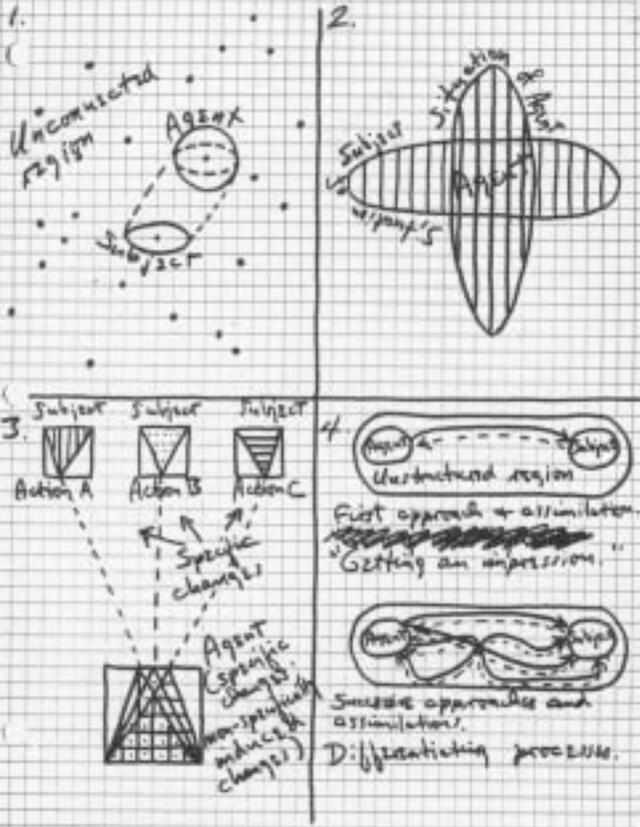


# Vito Acconci's Power Fields

Christine Poggi

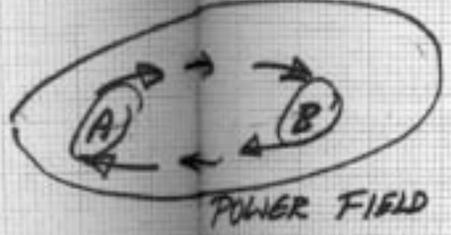
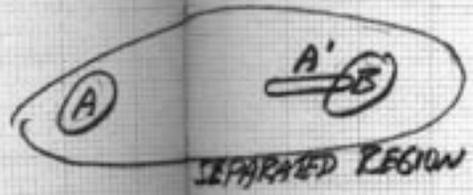
Some schemes for the structure of an imitation piece



IMITATION STUDIES  
New York, July 1970

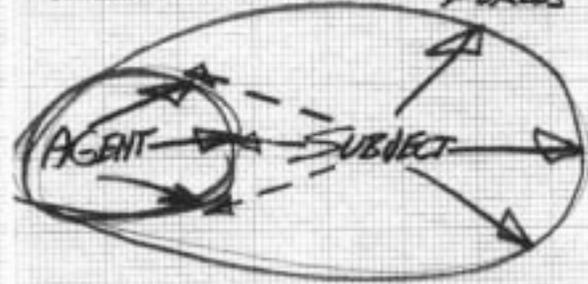
Using my body to resemble a rhododendron, a tree, a bush, a rock, a stump.

3 STRUCTURES ON COMMUNICATION WITH B



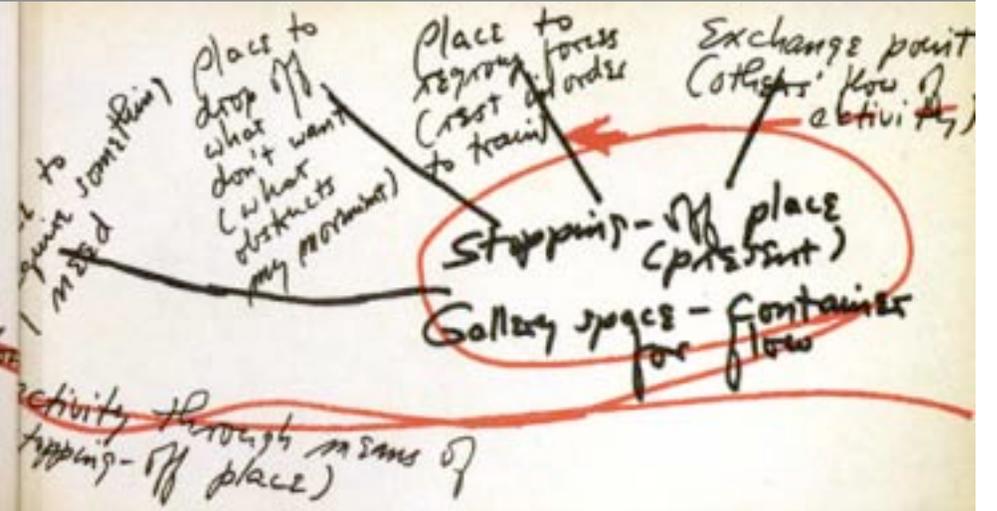
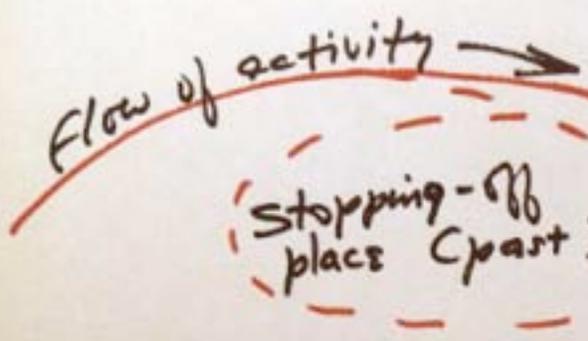
BOUNDARY FORCES:

ARROWS = ACTIVATED FORCES  
 DOTTED ARROWS = POTENTIAL FORCES



MOVING SUBJECT:

SUBJECT DISSOLVES CONNECTION THAT AGENT HAS EFFECTED: SUBJECT REFORMS CONTOURS THAT AGENT HAS DISSOLVED



**A SITUATION USING STREETS, WALKING, GLANCING**

Activity

'Street Works 1,' March 15, 1969

Fifth Ave, East, from 49th St North to 51st St South

Saturday Afternoon, 2PM to 5PM

A continuous walk, for three hours, around the sidewalk of a busy city street: straight line along the curb, cut across the corner, straight line alongside buildings.

In the middle of people going in and out of stores, I'm walking long enough for someone to notice, for someone to think: 'Hey, I've seen this guy before.'



**A SITUATION USING STREETS, WALKING, GLANCING:**

**Notes**

1. A moving point on the boundary of a rectangle that does not exist unless each point at which I was is remembered and connected.
2. Points of view.
3. Point: an instrument used in etching and engraving; a particular narrowly limited part of a surface or of a space that is singled out as occupying a usually precisely indicated spot and that has usually minimum extension or no relevant extension; a particular narrowly limited step, stage, or degree in the condition or development of something that is typically singled out as critical or decisive or as otherwise highly significant or important; a distinguishing trait or feature, individuating mark.
4. Possibility of recognition (A person seeing me, walking by once, as he/she goes into a store; the person seeing me, walking by again, as he/she comes out of the store; the person wondering whether or not he/she has already seen me).
5. Recognize: to take notice of; to make out or perceive to be something previously known; to acknowledge the de facto existence of (as a government in a state); to acknowledge the independence of (as a community or body that has thrown off the sovereignty of a state to which it was subject) and treat as independent or otherwise effective.
6. Separate: to make a distinction between; to disperse in space or time.
7. Pass: to proceed along a specified route; to serve as a substitute; to move or be transferred from one place to another.
8. Place; replace; in place; out of place.
9. Instance; substance.
10. There; thereabouts; therefore; theretofore.
11. Already; all ready.
12. Information: knowledge communicated by others or obtained from investigation, study, or instruction; a numerical quantity that measures the uncertainty in the outcome of an experiment to be performed.
13. Walk: to move along on foot; to accompany on foot; obs.: to circulate, spread.
14. 'A region is called "connected" if every point of it can be connected with every other point of it by a path which lies entirely within the region.' (Kurt Lewin, Principles of Topological Psychology)

**A SITUATION USING STREETS, WALKING, RUNNING**

**Activity**

'Street Works II,' April 18, 1969, 5PM to 6PM, 13th St to 14th St, Fifth Ave to Ave of the Americas

Standing on a corner, and choosing a person who's walking from that corner toward the next.

Noting the time; running from that corner to the next, ahead of the other person; noting the time I reach the next corner; waiting; noting the time the other person reaches that corner (or noting that the other person never showed up, once a certain time had elapsed -- 5 minutes for N/S blocks, 10 minutes for E/W blocks).

**2 Instances:**

**1. 14th St(N) & Ave of Americas.**

Woman in a green coat, walking toward Fifth Ave.

Starting time: 5:24PM.

My arrival at Fifth Ave: 5:25 & 5 seconds PM.

Woman's arrival: 5:28 & 7 seconds PM.

**2. 14th St(S) & Ave of the Americas.**

Man in a blue & white T-shirt, walking toward Fifth Ave.

Starting time: 5:44 & 30 seconds PM.

My arrival at Fifth Ave: 5:45 & 33 seconds PM.

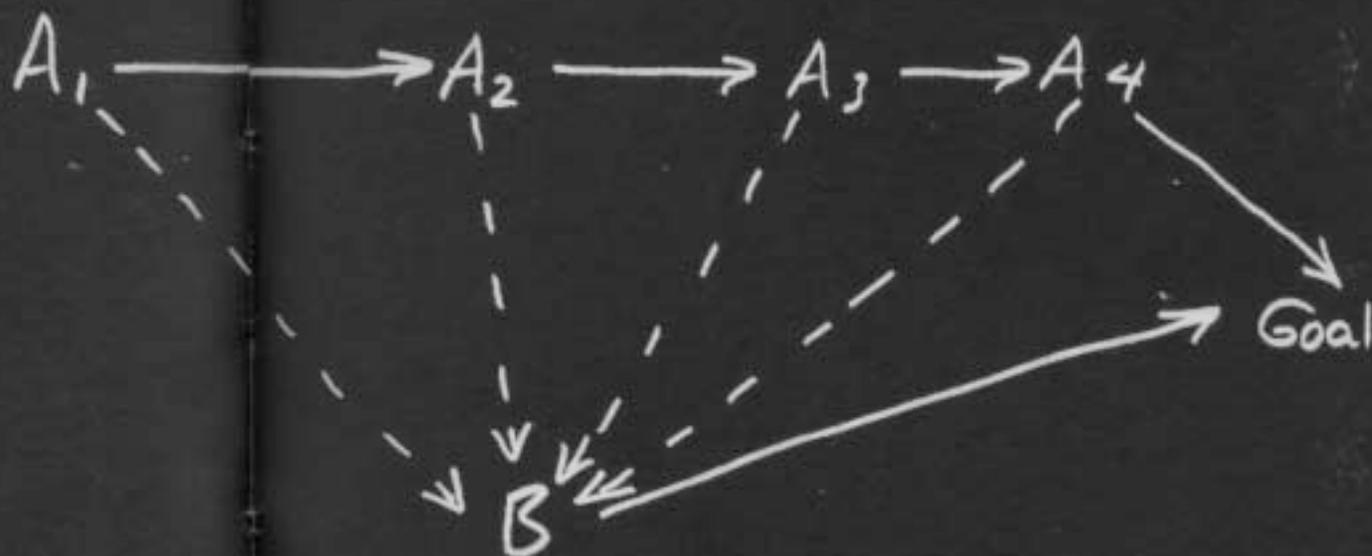
At 5:54 & 30 seconds PM, the man had not yet reached the corner.



A SITUATION USING, STREETS, WALKING, RUNNING:  
Notes

1. When I choose the person walking, and know that I will reach the second corner before that person, 'I am beginning to shift the first corner,' which that person marks, to the second corner; until: when that person moves ahead of me, as I stand in place timing that person, 'he/she is beginning to shift the first corner,' which I mark; until: as I pass alongside, and our lines of moving meet, 'we are repeating the corner'; until: as I start to run ahead, 'I am shifting the shift.'
2. Corner: L gorny horn, end, point. Street: L, fem. of stratus, past sprt. of sternere to spread out, throw down.  
'Corner' as a revised version, a summary, of 'street': the street brought to a point.  
Street too large to be directly perceived: 'street' as the result of a generalizing mental operation.  
Place: specific locality/an indefinite region or expanse.  
to place: to cause to rest or lie.  
'Lying low.'
3. Place: a step in a sequence; an empty or vacated position.
4. 'Watch' is activated as I look at my watch to time the other's starting point; the watch goes on to time each point the other gets to while I am occupied lifting my notebook, writing the number down, etc.  
Time: a point when something occurs; an interval comprising a limited and continuous action, condition, or state of being; a reality that is an absolute flowing apart from the events filling it.
5. When I pull ahead of the person walking, 'I lose touch,' 'he/she loses ground.'
6. Touch: VL toccare to knock, strike, strike a bell, touch.  
Strike: to achieve by or as if by computation or calculation; to succeed in reaching; to come upon in the course of drilling or prospecting.  
No clear signal; no 'clear as a bell.' (No 'point'; nothing is 'driven into a corner.')
7. When I get so far ahead of the person walking that he/she is no longer in sight, that person is walking indeterminately; for all I know, 'he/she may not be walking at all.'  
My running is after the fact of his/her walking.  
Watch: a period of duty; shift; a portion of time during which a part of a ship's company is required to be on deck ready for duty.  
Each of us is 'on his/her own time.'  
'In line of duty': each is on his/her own line. 'Off duty': each is off the other's.  
'Shift for one's self.' 'Shifting gears.'  
'As time goes by': his/her time system falls away from mine.
8. Move: Gk asynain to ward off.  
'It's my move.' My run pushes aside, is pushed aside from, his/her walk. 'Walk-up.' 'Run-down.'  
One event 'evens out' into two.
9. Even: being without a break, indentation, roughness, or other irregularity; being in equilibrium; as likely as not; used as an intensive serving to indicate an extreme, hypothetical, or unlikely case or instance of something; to come up to, match.  
'No moves' (maneuvers).
10. Drift: to wander or stray lightly, gently, effortlessly, offering no resistance as if suspended and floating in the air and usually seeming to leave the choice of direction to the drift of air; to pass without contributory effort or serious resistance or become borne slowly by imperceptible degrees toward or away from an association or into or out of some state; to retain momentum for a time after shutoff of power.  
(Since I overtake the other person immediately, 'there is no reason to keep running.')
11. When I can no longer watch the other person, I have to 'watch for' the next corner, 'watch it,' 'watch my step' (to make sure that I adhere to the scheme decided upon).  
The decision is the subject (reason, active, cause; doer of the action) of the situation. The decision is the object of the situation. (The situation is perceived only after the decisions involved in it are discussed, after the act.)
12. Will: desire; intention. My will to adhere to the scheme keeps my actions on the level of intention, steps to be carried out.  
'Go the distance.' 'Off in the distance.'
13. The marker of this will is the effort required to run the length of an east-west block.  
Exhaust: to draw off or let out wholly; to transfer (a dye) completely from a dyebath onto a fabric.  
(The first corner has been drawn off, transferred to the second corner; the 'place' of running has been drawn away from the 'place' of walking; 'physical action' has been drawn into 'intention'; the boundaries and shape established by the will are threatened with being 'let out' (street: sternere: spread out) )
14. Since I began my action by shifting the location that the other person marked, I reach the second corner as that person's representative. Since I reach the corner before he/she does, 'he/she reaches the corner before he/she reaches the corner'; later, 'now that he/she is at the corner, he/she has already reached the corner'; if he/she does not reach the corner, 'he/she has reached the corner while (even though) he/she has not reached the corner.'





A = person followed

B = follower

(B is adapted to A; as each of A's steps goes to his goal, it goes also to B, who takes it to bring himself to A's goal.)

W

Photograph situation: Private piece for people attending Hannah Weiner's "Open House," Street Works IV ("Hannah Weiner will open the lofts and apartments of participating poets and artists to the public. The first will be Vito Acconci's." 102 Christopher Street, Apartment 6B; Saturday, October 4, 1-3 PM \*):

"Return glance" (views of the viewing location: twelve photographs of my sixth-floor window, taken from the other side of the street, starting at Bleecker Street and ending at Hudson Street, twenty steps between photographs)



\* During the open-house time, I was across the street (standing, walking, talking to friends, etc). Anyone who had gone up to see my house had to -- if he wanted to see me -- look out the window onto the street from which he had come.

BLINDFOLDED CATCHING

June 1970

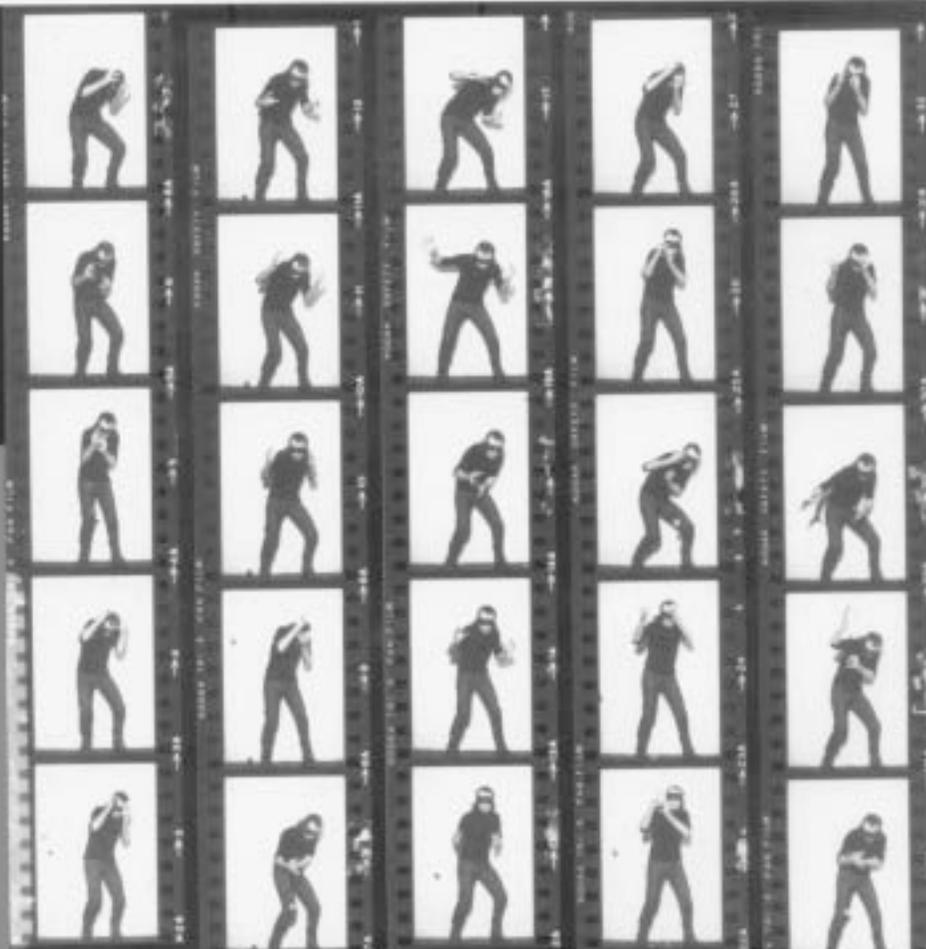
Super 8 Film, b&w

3 minutes

Fixed camera shoots me, full-body, standing blindfolded with my back to the wall: from off-screen, rubber balls are thrown at me, one at a time, over and over again...

I'm trying to catch the ball I can't see ...I'm raising my arms up in front of my face, I've anticipated when the next ball will be thrown, I'm wrong, my notions are wasted...I'm hit by a ball, my body doubles over, it's too late to protect myself...

I have to use my whole body - balls are from many directions, can't concentrate on one part - only when I catch a ball - can't resist a pattern - continuous alarm



Exhaustion - the  
more I do it, the  
worse I get -  
adaptation here can  
only mean that I'd  
have to be able to  
swallow my hand -  
pushing into myself  
results in pulling  
myself apart

I'm closed off from the viewer (I'm taking myself in), the viewer is an outsider—when I choke and cough, break my closed circle, slip into the viewer's region, lose my stance.

HAND & MOUTH  
May 1970  
Super 8 Film, b&w  
3 minutes

Fixed camera shoots me from the waist up:

I'm pushing my hand into my mouth, I'm pushing my hand in so far that I'm choking, I'm coughing, my hand pulls out of my mouth... I'm pushing my hand in again, deeper, again, it gets harder each time, sooner or later I wouldn't be able to do it again...



Adaptation - it's  
all in the eyes  
(spatial concentration) -  
seeing eye to eye  
(my eye directed at  
camera eye) - work  
myself back to this  
(eyes and camera eye  
fixed together)

Seeing eye to eye (my eye is directed at the camera eye) - eyes down (my eyes can't open, can't look) - eyes fixed (my eyes become readjusted, my eye and the camera eye are fixed together).

Looking at looking (I look at the camera, the camera looks at me) - exhaustion of looking (soap blurs my vision, in time I recover, time runs out for the camera).

SOAP & EYES  
June 1970  
Super 8 Film, color  
3 minutes

Fixed camera shoots me from the waist up: there's a bowl of soapy water in front of me, I'm staring into the camera lens.

I lift the bowl up and throw the soapy water onto my face, into my eyes: I'm blinded, I can't see, I can't open my eyes, I can't look into the camera...I'm blinking, I'm working the soap out of my eyes, I don't use my hands, I'm exercising my eyes and my eye-lids...

By the end of the film, I'm staring into the camera again, I've worked myself back to my original position, I'm staring through the soap on my face.



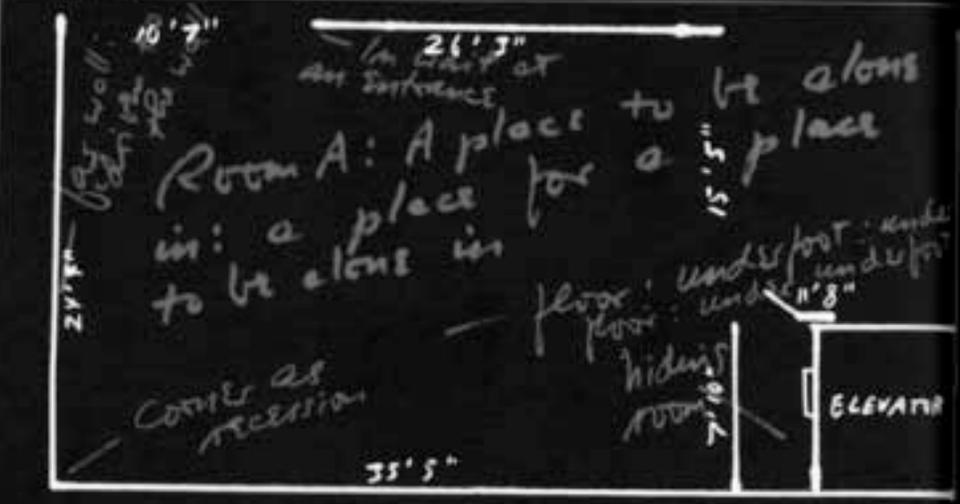
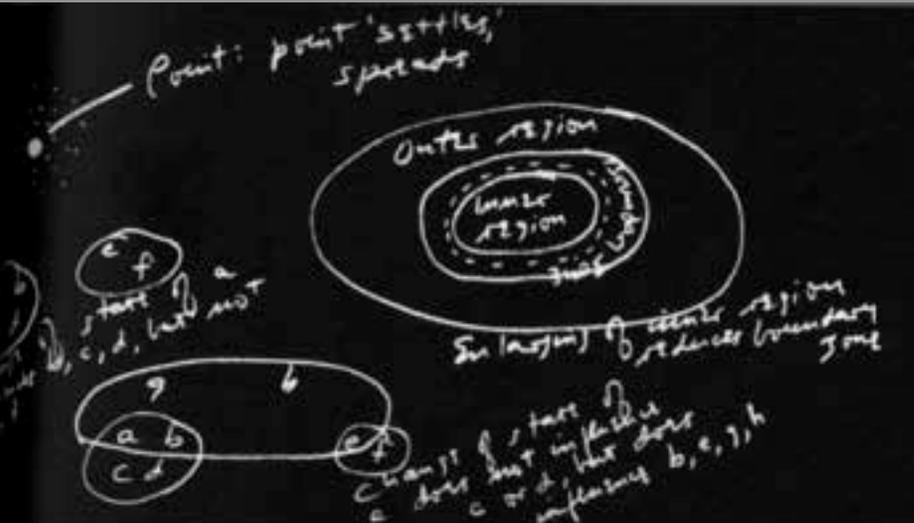
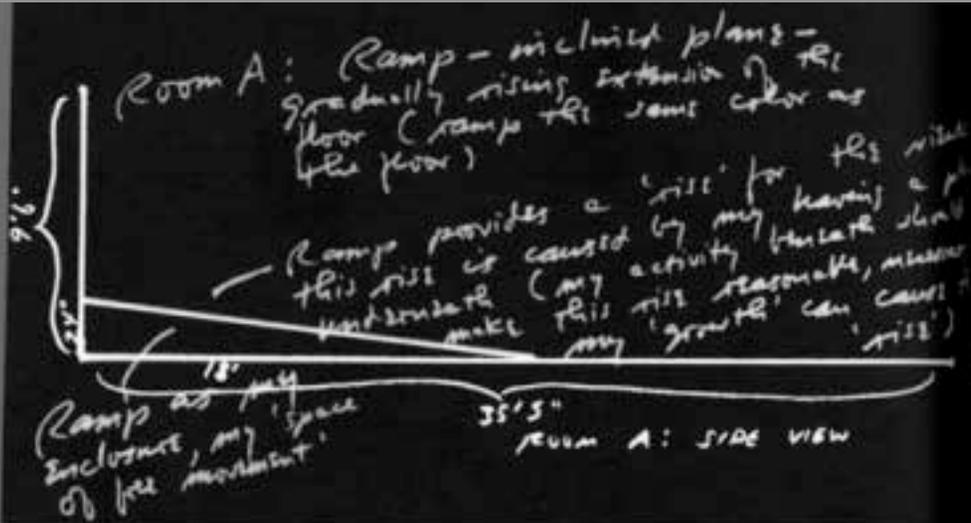












Possible reasons for me to live Room A:

- I am scared - I am tired - I am selfish - I am in concentration - I am finished - I am self-determinative - I am alien - I am ashamed - I am in repression - I am homeless - I am lamerous - I am self-sufficient - I am self-developing - I am not fit to live with - I am 'on strike' - I am in pain -

