
Michigan Central Station, located in Detroit, Michigan, was once a monumental building, grand in proportions, ornament and importance to Detroit. However, since its abandonment in 1988, the building has fallen into ruin, with much of the monumental and human scale elements stolen, defaced or deteriorated. If left untreated, this monumental building will eventually waste away and encounter a fate similar to that of many of the ancient Roman ruins, where monumentality is understood only by a few remaining fragments and a creative imagination.

This thesis sets out to discover what makes Michigan Central Station monumental and proposes a controversial preservation technique, reuse proposal and new design idea that focuses on reestablishing the whole and maintaining the monumental spaces. In this thesis, the new use acts as a springboard to explore the new design strategy. Cesare Brandi’s rigatino technique for the restoration of paintings is used as a method for the reconstruction of the missing elements and prisms are used throughout the new design to bring back the important element of light that was highly influential in the design of Michigan Central Station. The resultant solution connects a new time and culture to one that existed almost a century ago.