

SUBWAY URBANISM:  
PEDAGOGY FOR CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND INTERVENTION

By

JAMES F. ECKLER, JR.

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008

© 2008 James F. Eckler, Jr.

To my students

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my students for their unrelenting enthusiasm, and willingness to explore possibilities. I thank my friends and colleagues for their help and support through every stage of this program. I thank my faculty mentors and co-teachers for their continuing guidance in every aspect of teaching and research.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	4
LIST OF FIGURES .....	8
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	9
ABSTRACT.....	12
CHAPTER	
1 PREFACE: THE INITIAL STAGES OF A JOURNEY.....	14
First, a Question.....	14
An Approach.....	15
2 MAPPING AND POSITIONING .....	17
Context as a Collection of Spatial Operators.....	17
A Matrix Structure.....	17
Inhabitable Quality And The Map Unfolded.....	19
Google® Urbanism.....	21
Assignment One: Outpost.....	25
Folding Research into Curriculum Design.....	25
A Territory and an Outpost.....	26
The 9 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Subway Terminal: Brooklyn, New York.....	26
Intervening in a Territory .....	28
3 UNDERSTANDING PLACE .....	35
Realizing the Extents of Context.....	35
Realizing the Limits of Context.....	37
Assignment 2: Satellite.....	40
The 71 <sup>st</sup> Street Subway Terminal: Brooklyn, New York.....	40
Intervening in a Place.....	42
4 SITE(ING) AND INTERVENING .....	49
Urban Iconography .....	49
Place-Making.....	55
Assignment 3: Graft.....	59
The West 4 <sup>th</sup> Street Subway Terminal: Manhattan, New York.....	59
Intervening in a Structure .....	61

5	METHODOLOGY and THE CONTEXTUAL LENS.....	68
	Imaging Place .....	68
	Pedagogy of Place and Experience.....	70
	Conclusion: Application of Method .....	72
	Results of the “Ribbon Exercise” .....	72
	Introducing the Ribbon’s Role in the Design Process.....	72
	Pedagogy: Source and Goal of the Ribbon.....	73
	Pedagogy: Ribbon As an Extension of the Diagrammatic Process .....	74
	The Ribbon as a Translator between Ways of Thinking .....	74
	The Ribbon as a Translator between Methods of Representation.....	75
	Production of the Ribbon.....	76
	A Resultant Design.....	78
	The Ribbon’s Versatile Applicability to the Design Process .....	78
 APPENDIX		
A	EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: OUTPOST.....	81
	The Remote City Project .....	81
	Context.....	81
	Urban Matrix .....	81
	Submerged Urban Matrix.....	82
	Vertical Plane .....	82
	Intervention: “A Well of Memory” .....	82
B	MID-PROJECT PROGRESS WRITE-UP: REMOTE CITY PROJECT, OUTPOST .....	84
C	POST PROJECT SUMMARY AND PRESENTATION: REMOTE CITY PROJECT, OUTPOST .....	87
	Prelude (The Origins of Space and Story).....	87
	Imaging Place (Context as a Collage of Fragments) .....	89
	A Story of Architecture (A Narrative of Space in Form) .....	94
	Epilogue (Finding the Material from the Immaterial) .....	99
D	EXAMPLE PROJECT: SAVANNAH VERTICAL MARKET, CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS, SATELLITE .....	104
	Prior to Departure for the Site .....	104
	In Savannah and the Day After.....	104
	Upon Returning .....	105
E	EXAMPLE PROJECT: SAVANNAH VERTICAL MARKET, SATELLITE .....	108

F	EXAMPLE PROJECT: GARAGE PROJECT, GRAFT.....	114
	Mass.....	114
	Plane.....	114
	Linear Carve.....	115
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	118
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	120

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
2-1 Subway terminals as spatial operators .....	33
2-2 Subway terminals as Serres' spatial operators .....	34
4-1 Urban Iconography poster.....	67
5-1 Ribbon Exercise student projects.....	80
8-1 Student projects from the Remote City Project .....	103
10-1 Student collaborative analytical map of Savannah .....	112
10-2 Student projects from the Savannah Project .....	113
11-1 Garage Project hybrid drawing .....	117
11-2 Student Projects from the Garage Project.....	117

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Context	Context refers to a set of conditions that surround, bind, and define the site or placement of the architectural intervention. The notion of context takes into consideration aspects of an environment that include physical, formal, and spatial conditions as well as cultural, social, and experiential conditions. These various facets are superimposed upon another in the collective construct of a context. Each facet has an influence over others as they are woven together in the urban fabric. Each facet represents a particular set of information that can be drawn from makeup of the existing in order to influence the creation of the new.
Culture	Culture refers to a collective identity by which an individual defines themselves. It is a level of community that is the foundation of a population. There are many connotations of the word “culture,” but for the interests of this paper it refers to those aspects of human behavior that differentiate one group from another.
Erase	Erase, or erasure, is a process by which a particular condition is destroyed and replaced with a new condition. It represents a strategy for the transformation of a place that opposes evolution in favor of re-invention.
Icon	The icon, or more specifically, the contextual icon, is a moment of the context that is representative of the particular ways in which the various facets of context interact in the establishment of a sense of place. It is representative of inhabitation, interaction, and experience of individuals that occupy a place – it is representative of the narrative of place. The contextual icon is a linguistic device for the communication of information regarding the character of place. A process of analysis can be used to extract information from the contextual icon and translate into the language of space, experience, and form. It is a medium by which context might act as a generator for architecture. Spatially, the icon is typically a moment of direct interaction between inhabitants and the form that contains them – a spatial operator. It differentiates itself from the understanding of icon as exceptional in that it is the point of the commonplace interaction between an inhabitant and their context. It is not a landmark, or an event in itself, but a facilitator of the events of everyday life. It is the subway terminal, not the Empire State Building.
Identity	Identity is a measure by which an individual defines themselves. It describes the role of the individual in the operation of a population, and therefore the way in which the individual inhabits space and contributes to establishment of place. Conceptually, identity is a linkage between the social act of place-making, and the architecture of the physical form. It is tied to the value that is attributed to a place by an individual.

Place	Place is a notion of context that transcends the limits of location through qualities of identity, experience, culture, and behavior. The notion of place is not limited to the physical extents or dimension of the map, but instead refers to those qualities of morphology relative to the perception of an individual or population. Experience, culture, identity, and behavior all become lenses through which an individual perceives context; which is the viewing of place.
Population	A population is a groups of individuals that are linked together through a local commonality. This common bond between individuals could be cultural, social, economic, or proximal. Within the construct of place, there are moments of interaction between the context and the distinct population that inhabits it. The subway terminal is one of those moments of interaction, and could be the foundation of a population formed through proximity to it. Each individual that lives within a certain distance of the terminal, and uses that terminal are bound together in a population that is focused around the subway terminal and its ability to connect the individual with particular distant locations within the city.
Preserve	To preserve, and more specifically to preserve place, is the act by which defining characteristics of a place are valued and maintained through the evolutionary stages of transformation that a context undergoes. The preservation of place occurs when cultural and spatial characteristics of context are used as a generator of the architectural form. It identifies moments that make a context distinct from others around it and uses those moments of distinction as a foundation for the design process of architecture. It is in direct contrast to the concept of erasure as urbanism.
Scale	Scale is a reference of dimension. In this paper it is used to relate various conditions through relative size. Relative scale offers a system of categorization of proportions. The scale of the intervention refers to a condition of comparable size and quality of inhabitation of an individual piece of architecture. It is the built form that houses spaces proportional to the human body. The scale of the site refers to those conditions that house the architectural intervention in a similar way that the architecture houses the body. The scale of the local context refers to the immediate surroundings of site and relates to site in the same way that architecture relates to the body. The scale of the broad context refers to a region or place within which there are various local conditions, and it relates to those conditions in the same way that the architecture relates to the human body. The scale of the territory references an entire urban condition made up of individual patches that denote place, it relates to those component urban systems in the same way that the architecture relates to the human body.
Society	Society or social construct is closely related to a culture of a place as it refers to the interactions between individuals as well as behaviors of those

individuals. It has a direct impact upon the understanding of a contextual condition as it is a measure of the way an individual or population views, uses, and inhabits space. For example, the front stoop as a means of entry versus a gathering point becomes a facilitator of social interaction. It is either a barrier threshold to isolate or a container of a social event. It differs from a culture of place in that it does not define a population as much as it references individual behavior within that population.

#### Spatial Operator

The Spatial Operator is a constructed moment of any inhabitable condition that the occupant directly engages toward a prescribed function or experience. The stair facilitates the operation of a spatial condition by prescribing the nature of movement, experience, and transition from one moment to another within the spatial sequence. There are two references to this level of operation within the paper: the first is its manifestation in the door, window, and stair project administered to a second year design studio, and the other is in reference to the writing of Michel Serres that categorizes components of a contextual condition in terms of the tower, bridge, well, hotel, jail, labyrinth, and death. Each of these becomes a descriptor (a semiotic concept) of function, use and experience. The Spatial Operator is a lens through which layers of contextual information can be understood relative to one another.

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School  
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Architectural Studies

SUBWAY URBANISM:  
PEDAGOGY FOR CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND INTERVENTION

By

James F. Eckler, Jr.

August 2008

Chair: Charles Hailey  
Cochair: John Maze  
Major: Architecture

What is architecture's role in the development of its context? Architecture is both a catalyst for the evolution of place and a vehicle for its preservation. The notion of place is embodied, not just in the formal limitations of the built environment or the proximal limits described by the map, but in the experiential qualities of space and inhabitation. Place, is a construct of culture, identity, and experience, as much as it is a construct of form. Architecture's role in the development of place begins with the narrative – the narrative of intervention, the narrative of approach, and the continuation of the story of the place into the confines of the single structure. This story is told through the moments of interaction between inhabitants and their surroundings. These moments of spatial operation define the ways in which an individual occupies or perceives their environment, and in this way become the linguistic medium that documents the events of inhabitation. Architecture becomes the dialogue between the inhabitant and the context of place; it is a response to the statement of the existing that is posed by a context, as well as a progression toward the deliberate transformation of place.

Within this understanding of architecture's capacity to direct the evolution of a place, its morphological as well as cultural and spatial characteristics, is a question of process. This

question is one that addresses ways in which the contextual condition is viewed; how it is read. Viewing a place, and the subsequent development of a philosophy for an intervention within it, speaks to a process of design as well as curriculum construction. The process of viewing through making and analysis is coupled with instruction and the development of the tools for viewing. Tools of design are honed through the structured curriculum. Curriculum design has the ability to develop the skill sets of students relative to generating architecture from information extracted from a sense of place through viewing and analysis. In so doing, this curriculum instills within the student a cognizance of the implications of architecture, and the narratives that it houses, upon the context of place.

CHAPTER 1  
STOP 1: CONEY ISLAND TERMINAL, BROOKLYN  
PREFACE: THE INITIAL STAGES OF A JOURNEY

**First, a Question**

What is it that context can tell us about architecture? This question is one of language. Every context possesses a linguistic quality that marks it physically and defines it experientially. These qualities are inherent in the layers of surface that present themselves to a passerby, and direct that individual in security... or danger. The way that structures meet the street, or relate to one another along a street, can demarcate their role within the environment they compose. The language of the city is both formal and experiential, as is that of the individual structure. The clues that can be found in the form, composition, or spatial quality of a place, have the capacity to communicate, not just the way that the place might be inhabited, but also the way in which it may be altered, extended, preserved or transformed through the intervention of architecture. Intervention is the addition of a single component, a fragment, of the ever increasing network that is the urban fabric.

This question that asks what information about architecture is presented by context is answered through a process of analysis that identifies communicative moments of a place and translates them into a philosophy of intervention. These communicative moments of a place are those points that: engage an individual, can be read by an individual, and ultimately determine the way in which that individual will inhabit the place. These moments are representative of the qualities of place as the Urban Icon. Architecture's role within this linguistic composition is similarly representational in that it is a response on behalf of the individual; a reactive effort to influence the evolution of that person's environment. The Urban Icon gives voice to the city. It communicates the existential qualities of place that are the secrets, histories, and intentions, of the city and its collective citizenry. Architecture is the will of an individual or population within

that citizenry to direct those qualities of place. And, it is the act of intervention that is a dialogue between the individual and the city.

### **An Approach**

The translation of contextual language into a language of intervention, architecture, assembly, and inhabitation speaks to a methodology for interpretation. Answering the question framed above begins with the derivation of a method for viewing context; a way to identify those communicative moments within the assembly of the urban fabric and interpret them. Viewing is a process of seeing, thinking, and making. Information is extrapolated from the contextual condition through viewing. It is seen through the senses of experience (the visual understanding of space and dimension, the tactile quality of surface, currents of scent that intersect your own movement through space, and the manipulation of sound as it is sculpted by the physical environment). It is filtered through thought as these experiences are interpreted and conceptualized. It is re-made as it is mapped or diagramed with conception as a guide for construction. The information garnered from experience frames a conceptual stance for viewing the place and intervening within it.

Pedagogically, these means of viewing context are folded into the design studio as a possibility for determining architecture's role in the construction of the built environment. Each communicative moment becomes a didactic tool, a tool that defines the potentials and limitations of an investigation or exploration, for the development of knowledge of place. This method, however precise, is not formulaic. There is no definitive or expected result. In this instance the presentation of method to the students of a design studio is not necessarily intended as an instruction on urbanism, but rather an exploration of the possibilities of architecture. It is a catalyst for discovery and invention. As a procedural framework, method is open to manipulation toward universality; a limitless set of applications to varying conditions of site and

place. Method becomes a tool itself; a didactic tool for the facilitation of thinking and awareness of architecture's potential to engage and transform place.

CHAPTER 2  
STOP 2: NINTH AVE TERMINAL\_BROOKLYN  
MAPPING AND POSITIONING

**Context as a Collection of Spatial Operators**

The contextual condition is as much an experiential construct as any of its component pieces of architecture. Context, whether urban, suburban or rural, presents itself as a kind of woven fabric; a matrix possessed of certain inhabitable qualities, within which architecture is placed. The inhabitable quality of a contextual condition (specifically referring to the urban condition) is a product of spatial operators; moments of direct contact between the construct and its occupant (figure 2-1). Contact between the occupant and the construct speaks to a spatial experience created by that construct; a study in the way form is seen and touched illuminates ways in which the space is occupied, as opposed to a study in mapping that illuminates only the nature of position and location. Spatial operation, the experiential and inhabitable quality of place, directs the formal and organizational structure of context (figure 2-2).

**A Matrix Structure**

The contextual fabric refers to a structure or ordering of the forms and events of a place. It is a woven field of experiential itineraries. Each itinerary is punctuated by moments of interaction between the occupants of a place and the formal qualities that compose its physical presence. The conventional map documents this condition in its most rudimentary form through the juxtaposition of mass and space. This figure-ground method for viewing the built environment is manifest in maps detailing the physicality of the grid as a network of streets, positions and sizes of object buildings, and the realities of dimension, scale, and location. However, the realities of place transcend these limited understandings of context. The physical nature of the place speaks to the constructed experience. Physical differences are not limited to an understanding of mass versus void, but are inclusive of a myriad of modalities within both.

Modalities of mass reference program in addition to physical characteristics of scale, transparency, materiality, surface, composition, and the position of various elements in relation to the body. Issues of ownership and the creation of zones within the fabric define modalities as well. Public space versus private space directs inhabitation and defines density of the occupant population. Composition of singular elements can be broken down into systemic sub-components; the street is not merely the line on the map but a means of travel for multiple scales – cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, each with a particular assigned vein in the street system. These notions underscore an experiential view of the contextual condition.

The symbols and conventions of the map become representational of these spatial and experiential conditions. They document the locations of the event without documenting the nature of the event. Mapping is a diagrammatic process, and as such, is a valuable analytical tool. The map provides the foundation of the analysis that will lead into an understanding of context as an experiential construct. Notions of spatiality and experience can be inferred from the map through a process of unfolding. This process establishes the map as the first stage in the relation of one experiential event to another. As these events are understood in juxtaposition to one another, a more focused investigation into the particular nature of each event can be undertaken. These focused investigations extract information from the map that pertains to the potential contribution an intervention may have into the formation of space and experience in its local context. They also study the impact of an intervening architecture upon the relationship between the local and the distant contextual conditions. The map references location, which encompasses qualities of distance, scale, and the structure of the urban fabric, whereas the point references the particularities of space and experience around a given subject (in this case a

subway terminal in New York City). The map relates intervention to the field, where the point relates intervention to the place.

### **Inhabitable Quality And The Map Unfolded**

The extrapolation of experience from the semiotic<sup>1</sup> conventions of the map begins with a study of spatial operation. At the scale of the city there are constructed components that negotiate the relationship between an occupant and the spaces that compose their immediate environment. These spatial operators are the doors, windows, and stairs of the city. They provide critical organizational moments to the contextual condition. Every environment possesses these operational devices that control experience. The door is any threshold that manipulates space while allowing transition from one volume to the next; a transition between the arteries and capillaries of transportation, a traffic signal, or transitions between programmatic zones (i.e. moving from thoroughfare into a park, or from a sidewalk into a plaza). It is the physical frame of transition. The window is the framed view, an event that cultivates awareness of an environment external to that of the occupant; the slivers between structures that grant view, but not access, to the street beyond, the billboard that references an event in another location of the city, or the framing of aligned structures in the matrix of context. The stair is also an element of transition moving the occupant from one place to another while engaging the rest of the context externally, the stair that links a waterfront to the urban matrix, or a vertical gesture that

---

<sup>1</sup> Semiotics as defined by Charles Sanders Peirce is “Anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its *object*) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum*.” According to Peirce, an “intelligent consciousness” is required for the existence of a sign, which is the assignment of a value or condition to which the sign refers. This value or condition is assigned by the reader of the sign and implies a linguistic quality in the interpretation of meaning. The sign becomes representative of condition and is therefore the communicative device that translates spatial information into a separate graphic language. His use of the word “interpretant” reinforces this notion of translation from one intelligible language to another. Peirce also refers to the written word as such a sign in that the word becomes the graphic representation of an independently understood condition. The map uses such a language to demarcate proximal relationships between spatial conditions. Understanding of these spatial conditions comes from the readers recollection of similar conditions already experienced.

splices one formal grid to another across topography<sup>2</sup>. Each of these instances, direct the form of the context through a direct engagement with the occupant.

As operands, these moments of context are the connective tissue between systems. They are the components of the contextual matrix that weave multiple zones together into the singular construct; and they do so through direct experiential contact with the inhabitant of context. They define the use and inhabitation of space by placing both the individual and the event within that space. The operators not only define the spatial characteristics of a place, but also the potential for a place to receive an intervention. The addition of a new architecture into the established contextual matrix infuses the contextual condition with another set of operations and transforms the spatial relationships between existing operations. Each spatial operator tells a story of inhabitation, it defines a small part of a narrative of place and use. These moments, as points of contact between form and occupant, are each signs that communicate information of a small facet of the context of place. They are foundations for an iconography of place.

The semiotic quality of the spatial operators details the connection between the inhabitant and the formal qualities of place. As signs, they bridge the gap between the map and the spatial conditions of a context. They facilitate an unfolding of the map into a perception of space; points of interest denote those moments of operation, the door, the window, or the stair, while the moments of operation denote a particular way in which space is inhabited or used. They become the hallmark of an iconographic urbanism as representative symbols are placed in the map and

---

<sup>2</sup> In a third semester Architectural Design Studio that the author of this paper taught in collaboration with Prof. John Maze at the University of Florida, the “Door, Window, Stair” project was administered to the students. In this project the students were expected to extract spatial information from a contextual condition, in this case a cultural artifact – a film. That spatial information was translated through interpretations based upon mapped relationships between elements of the film. Ultimately, these spatial conditions were re-manifested as the spatial operators of the door, the window, and the stair. As the facilitators of spatial sequence and experience the spatial operators became representative of a programmed narrative, a recollection to the narrative of the film. Similarly, spatial operators as they exist in the built environment are also representative of a narrative as it applies to the characteristics of place and experience.

allow the reader to understand, in a limited way, the spatial or experiential qualities of that moment in the urban fabric.

### **Google® Urbanism**

The software company Google® is the author of both the search engine by the same name and Google Earth®, a downloadable software that seeks to compile aerial photos of the globe in the creation of a virtual earth. It is an interface between an Internet User and the maps of their environment. All of these maps can be viewed simultaneously in conjunction with one another to form a composite, photographic replica of the earth's surface. This interface has become a platform for the development of two tools that enable the user to remotely view or "travel" to locations, previously only accessible through maps and imagination. The first installment of a vicarious inhabitation of the map comes in the form of "3d buildings." The map is transformed into a virtual three-dimensional representation of the formal qualities of place. The second installment of this ability to vicariously "inhabit" these places is through the recent creation of "street view," wherein the map is taken to point of resolution where the photographic montage that composes the surface of the virtual earth is transcended. The montage is instead composed in a way that renders the spatial environment of streets. These creations introduce a new set of possibilities for mapping. Where previously the map was limited to the documentation of systems and structures in plan, it is now capable of documenting space and form; the map becomes an inhabitable construct. The implications these developments have upon the process of design are many. Maps have always played a key role in the understanding of context, but they are now able to project notions of experience upon that context. Through these applications maps are able become the tools of exploration as they document not only the

possibilities for position and orientation of potential intervention, but also the possibilities for formal interactions, spatial influences, and experiential implications of potential intervention<sup>3</sup>.

Both Google Earth® and Google Maps® enable the individual to study the physical aspects of context at all scales. The analog “earth” pictured at the startup of the software is a montage of aerial images spliced together to create an approximation of the earth’s surface three dimensionally. The user can progressively zoom into particular locations and refine the information present within the mapped images by accessing a larger number of higher quality images coming together to form the composite surface at a smaller scale. Through this ability to focus on particular points, a hierarchy of importance is established as some location maps are rendered at a higher resolution than those deemed of less significance, or those that house fewer “points of interest.” This system of viewing aspects of place is merely a reformatting of conventional mapping applications; a repackaging of a conventional urbanism. Planning and mapping are the established methods of urban design, and this is a tool that streamlines this process and perpetuates this perception of the urban environment. The interface allows for layers of information to be present or discarded based upon relevance<sup>4</sup>. As a tool it precisely measures and locates moments within the organization of the built environment.

---

<sup>3</sup> In his book *“Points and Lines: Projects and Diagrams for the City”*, Stan Allen presents the act of mapping as synonymous with the construction of a diagram. It is an investigatory tool used to frame the existing qualities of a contextual condition and define the impact that an intervening structure might have upon those qualities. The map documents the systems, spaces, forms, and inhabitation of a place, as well as producing an understanding of the possibilities that that place presents for the design of architecture. Contrary to this methodology is that of the figure ground or object and field mapping of location and form. Traditionally, this method has been used as a means of establishing urban archetypes and used as models for the construction of space. Camillo Sitte uses mapping as a means of constructing geometries of known proportions and relations relative to the occupation and perception of an occupant. In this technique of considering space through mapping the shape and form of buildings and open spaces speak to ways in which an individual might perceive their surroundings as opposed to the diagrammatic mapping of function and behavior.

<sup>4</sup> Modern Urbanism relies upon the marking of locations of events rather than the events themselves. The symbols that are woven into the map serve to represent those events through a common understanding or experience on

However, it is through the unfolding of these points into a map that reference qualities of space and volume that has potential as a tool for the development of an urbanism of experience. The “3d Buildings” option in Google Earth® presents a composite urban fabric composed of three-dimensional volumes. The conventional map governs the relationships of these volumes to one another, but the ability to manipulate view and position of view relative to the volumes gives a perception of space and scale. The map is unfolded and transformed into an inhabitable construct. The hierarchy is still present within this model of mapping as volumes that represent certain structures are given more weight than others through the level of clarity involved in the rendering of surface and material. This differential view of surface ranges from the generic white box as a representative of a component of context, to the volume that is articulated and given scale through the presence of materials upon its surface. Despite these variant qualities of modeling this tool initiates a way of thinking of urbanism through space, volume and perception rather than a limited focus of position, location, and distance prescribed by conventional mapping and planning. The design implications for this shift in urban thought are manifest as a set of new possibilities open to inclusion in the process of design. Simultaneously viewing architecture in relation to the volumetric properties of its immediate context, as well as its position relative to its broader context and the systems that make up the structure of the urban fabric, is accessible to a population outside of the disciplines of design or planning. Both Google Earth and Google Street View are lenses for viewing place, and tools that make accessible the

---

behalf those individuals reading the map. This semiotic approach to the understanding of form and experience is carried through the technological advancements of the field. Global Information Systems provide a standard by which mapping and planning might take place through a common set of symbols representing particular aspects of the built environment. However, as denoted in the body of the paper these symbols have begun to reference or “link” a spatial documentation of place. In doing this these symbols have become a means by which the map unfolds into a three dimensional spatial construct. The “intelligent consciousness” prescribed by Peirce becomes programmed and standardized. Through the popular access t these tools via the internet, the ways that individuals perceive their environment is changing to become attuned to spatial conditions rather than formal ones.

ability to place the volumetric, architectural, gesture within the composite, volumetric, context challenges the designer to test its role in the creation of space in the contextual composition. This popular assimilation of a concept of experiential urbanism lays the foundation for a cultural acceptance of a methodology based in the same principles.

Furthering this progression toward an urbanism of experience is the “Street View” option available in Google Maps®, a component of the search engine. This option is a direct extension of the composite earth surface. The photographic montage reduces in scale to a point where it documents a full and navigable view of an urban condition from the vantage of an inhabitant. This brings the analog of place from a collection of representational volumes to a perception of form through materiality and phenomena. This point of view, photographic, contextual construct enables the urban environment to be remotely viewed as if physically occupying it. Movement is possible as the user is able to navigate streets enabled with this option. This ability to remotely view and access multiple points of reference within a place creates possibilities of urban design in the development of experiential paths and investigations in the assembly and scale of surfaces. Architectural intervention can be placed within this virtual construct and tested relative to its contributions to the construction of edges and other limitations. Additionally, this notion of travel or navigation allows for a conception of the urban realm through a notion of path and narrative. These experiential threads stretched through the contextual condition can be generative of design as they unfold into the smaller programs inherent within the single intervening structure.

The development of these means of viewing place implies a change in the conventional urban philosophy of intervention within mapped systems representing existing qualities of form. These developments are the inception of an urbanism that is characterized by the spaces and

experiences inherent within its physical nature. These tools present a way of thinking and conceiving of the urban environment by framing the way that urbanism is understood relative to the experiential events of every-day life. These tools are also a canvas on which architecture can be tested and explored. Just as this process of viewing place is an unfolding of the map into a sense of inhabitation, architectural intervention can be an unfolding of form and program from this sense of inhabitation. The architecture becomes a vignette in the narrative of place rather than an object placed within the field by the virtues of its dimension and the field's capacity to hold it.

### **Assignment One: Outpost**

#### **Folding Research into Curriculum Design**

The methodology that is developed as a result of the research regarding architecture's role in the development of the urban context becomes a structure for the design of studio curricula. Investigating spatial and experiential qualities of a contextual condition through the lens of an architectural intervention takes place at three distinct scales: that of the territory, that of the place, and that of the site. The information filtered through these scales of perception consolidate into a singular approach to viewing context. The studio environment becomes a testing ground of research, investigation, discovery, and application of fragments of the methods proposed in this urbanism of experience.

Subway Urbanism is a collection of projects programmed to guide students through a contextual analysis of experience. Each addresses a different approach to engaging the notion of place with architecture. The narrative of a place, patterns of use and inhabitation, culture, and identity are manifest in a single iconic structure that is representative of these principles of experience and identity. This structure is the foundation of a philosophy intervention that

considers the spatial and experiential qualities of place in the construction of an architecture that is an extension of and a contributor to a sense of place.

### **A Territory and an Outpost**

The Outpost assignment is designed to give students an opportunity to explore the impact of architecture upon a territory, as well as address the spatial implications of engaging context at the scale of the territory in both context and intervention. This assignment has its foundation in a narrative of isolation. It is based in a focus on an anomalous event within the urban fabric that influences a region around it. In this instance, it is focusing upon the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Subway Terminal in Brooklyn, which is separated from its surroundings by an insulating layer of trees and debris. Despite this, it is a point of meeting and congregation as a linkage to the rest of the city beyond its immediate influence. The Outpost is an architectural idea that derives its relationship to a particular contextual focus through distance. It is the first exercise in a manifold of three contextual design projects and it is primarily based in mapping and the broad scale systems of the region. It will be the responsibility of the student to extract information from these broader notions of mapping and urban form to create a singular architectural gesture that is relevant to its surroundings through its relationship to the distant Contextual Icon<sup>5</sup>.

### **The 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Subway Terminal: Brooklyn, New York**

This stop occurs after many others have passed in your route from Coney Island, through Manhattan, and eventually into the Bronx. You have been through this place before, but have

---

<sup>5</sup> Charles Sanders Peirce defines three categories of sign: the “icon”, the “index”, and the “symbol”. The “icon” is representative of something that is insubstantial; an ideal, or concept. To illustrate this type of sign Peirce uses the example of “a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line.” The “index” is a signifier of a thing or an event that possess certain characteristics of its own that are independent of its object. The “symbol” is a sign that represents an idea, thing, or event and has no characteristics of its own outside of the understood meaning of its representation. Using this categorization of semiotic principles as a guide, the moments within a contextual condition that are commonly engaged by a particular population become iconic of the conditions of place that contain that population. The contextual icon is an icon in that it is a signifier of a culture as it relates to experience, inhabitation, and space. It becomes the link between culture, context, and place.

not had any reason to stop. It seems odd, and with time to spare, investigation is called for. The track curves sharply and brings the train to a stop in a terminal located in that fold of the subway line. You step onto the platform and momentarily exit the confines of New York City.

Looking around, you see that the terminal is composed of two platforms and three tracks, two tracks on either side for local trains and one set between platforms for express trains. The entirety of the terminal is shrouded in vegetation. No hint of the environment of the city is visible. You begin to make the comparison of this place to one of the many parks in the city but discard the idea; this vegetation lacks the control and intention in the creation of the city's parks. It is wild and seemingly not limited by the influence of man. Instead there are man-made incursions into this realm, and those incursions (of which the terminal is one) transform the environment, but they do not sculpt it or direct it in the rigorous and intentional way that the parks are controlled.

The one building that is visible, ahead and to your left, seems to be a remnant of a much older Brooklyn. You are not sure of its specific purpose or even if it is still operational but it seems to be a kind of industrial building that you'd expect to find in a rural setting. It has a short tower that, presumably, was used for storing some kind of loose material, and a stout windowless concrete base structure that disappears into the foliage around it.

Between the terminal and this building of mysterious purpose there is a tractor. The piece of machinery has been overturned. With its wheels held in the air it is assaulted by rust, graffiti, and time. You wonder how much longer it will resist the plague that is afflicting it, or if it will mercifully be taken away and recycled.

Turning your gaze to the right you peer beneath the terminal house, which is the only portion of this terminal that is suspended; unlike all of the previous terminals (which were

elevated) the tracks are on the ground. Beyond this terminal there is a labyrinth of entwined tracks and structures, the purposes of which are baffling from this position. Little can be told of them except that they too seem to be isolated from the city at large by the thick wall of vegetation.

You hear the squeal of scraping metal and turn to see the next “D” train rounding the corner. It is not the one that brought you here, but it is the same line. You board and continue as a traveler. Your brief visit to this place has afforded you little experience with the area around the terminal due to its isolation. Your most direct connection to the place and its people are through the riders that share the platform, the train, and the wait with you. For them, this isolation is a typical comfort; an acquired tradition in their daily commute.

### **Intervening in a Territory**

Using this narrative as a guide, the student will have the task of creating an architectural gesture to introduce both residential and commercial programs into the region defined by this focal moment. This exercise is focused upon placement and orientation of the intervention relative to the systemic composition of the urban fabric. The extent of research and making will encompass a thoughtful progression from analytical mapping, to the development of experience and space local to the site of intervention, and finally into the conception of a programmed, reactive insertion into this set of spatial attributes. The site, program, and relative size are all assigned to the student prior to beginning the project.

Particularities of site and place begin to be understood through the investigation of the territory to which the site lends itself. Boundaries, edges, zones, systems, scales, programs, and other attributes of the territory should be strictly defined relative to one another. The proximity and relationship of the site to the rest of these broader contextual conditions should also be established. To accomplish this, the students will engage in an analytical mapping exercise. The

map will be a layered construct of extrapolated information drawn at the scale of the territory (1"=500'-0" is generally acceptable, but should be modified according to the specific nature of the territory. For most territorial investigations in New York City it is optimal). The first layer defines the limits of the investigation and places the site relative to those boundaries. These limits should be derived from a system of measurements from the focus (the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Subway Terminal) to regions dedicated to other terminals. This system of measure establishes a reasonable zone of influence of this particular terminal relative to its usage and occupation. The second layer of the map documents the organizational structure of the city within the limits established in layer one, that, not only focuses upon the physical network of the grid, but also investigates movement and directionality as they are created by that grid. These issues of organization and direction renegotiate the relationship between the focus and the site by producing a set of possible itinerant paths between the two points in the field. Proximity becomes a product of direction and movement rather than strictly distance. The third layer is a mapping of scalar shifts and programmatic zones. Mass and program of structures fluctuate across the urban field; the mapping of these typological and morphological zones will produce an understanding of space and edge at the scale of individual blocks within the urban fabric. This layer of mapping also serves to categorize individual paths within the set of possibilities established in the previous layer. This system of categorization will determine the narrative sequence of each path as it moves through sectors of large scale, residential structures, office towers, low-rise industrial sectors, or other zones established in this mapping. These zones will also serve as a means of extrapolating densities of inhabitation and means of transit from one point to another. The fourth layer is a figure ground composition that maps the position of individual structures, juxtaposed against open spaces of varying types. Public open space,

private open space, as well as streets and paths are each demarcated to produce a mapping of scale and program at the level of the site itself. Systems of structure and inhabitation are rendered at the scale of the site, thereby establishing the relationship of site to the rest of the urban network surrounding it. This layer also presents a set of typologies for the structure of street edges. These street edges define scale, space, experience, and inhabitation of the contextual environment and can be translated into a volumetric study of inhabitation; and experiential approach to urban study.

From this map a digital context can be constructed as an analog for inhabitation. The creation of the digital model is an unfolding of the systems established in the map into a three dimensional, spatial, and inhabitable construct. It is a testing ground for the application of architectural principles and logics used in the creation of the proposed intervention. In this virtual realm issues of experience, form, and space can be explored as they relate to the generative context. This virtual constructed context should not be considered as a collection of boxes used to represent the basic physicality of the place, but rather a singular reactive form. It is a component of the design process where the existing qualities of context can be challenged or manipulated by the insertion of an intervening architecture. Critical to this digital investigation of context is its capacity to illustrate the joint between new and existing. It is a tool to develop an understanding of the way the intervention is to be received, and its impact upon the site, rather than a strict study of context or intervention.

Using the compiled analytical map and the digital analog, the exercise asks the students to define a path that maps through the context and incorporates both the focal icon and the site of the intervention. This path is to be an experiential understanding of progression and sequence through the context. The constructed path should not be conceived as an itinerary between two

points, but as a larger sequence of events. Both the site and the focal icon are one of the series of events used to comprise the path. Using the analytical map, identify critical points along the path mapped through the territory. These points are to have inhabitation significance through notions of scale shift, experiential quality, program, or any other issue that establishes them as a marker. Each path marker is to become a vignette or scene composed through sketching and drawing. Each scene should focus on its particular spatial characteristics that identify it as a critical point. Manually assemble each scene into a singular path. In this act of making, you are to consider both physical and experiential implications of intervention. As the site vignette becomes woven into the inclusive network that is the path, consider the ways in which those qualities of scene and narrative might fold into the development of an architectural insertion. Use the assembled path as a contextual diagram that can be modified to extend, interrupt, transform, or otherwise manipulate elements of the existing toward the creation of a tectonic and programmatic possibility of architecture.

These stages of analysis will ultimately culminate in the creation of an architectural gesture, a rudimentary possibility of form and space, to be woven into the fabric of the city relative to the focal icon that defines the territory. Using the mapping, the digital analog, the constructed experiential path you are to assemble a series of responsive volumes within the confines of the site. These volumes must have a direct correlation to the forms and spaces that comprise the immediate context of site, as well as a spatial reference to the experiential qualities of the path and the contextual icon. The assigned program should play a role in the assembly of volumes relative to one another, and to the programmatic nature of the context. Through the construction of this cohesive architectural gesture explore the potential for the manipulation of site by the intervention. Eventually these contextual generators of form and space would figure

into the development of the individual volumes and spatial structures of the intervention, but this exercise focuses primarily on the context's capacity to receive architecture.

Through this exercise the students become the beneficiaries of a process of viewing the site and context of an intervention at the scale of the territory. Its focus is on the extrapolation of information pertaining to the physical nature of form and space in the conception of place. This exercise represents an initial process of conception of an urbanism of experience wherein the city becomes an architectural gesture possessed of all the same qualities of experience and inhabitation as any individual structure. This initial stage is characterized by a movement beyond the limitations of the map, grid, structure, orientation, or graining of the urban environment and translates those qualities into a spatial understanding of the urban environment. The steps laid out in this assignment are not a prescribed process of design, but a possibility of design that accomplishes this progression beyond the limitations of the map.



Figure 2-1. Subway terminals as spatial operators. A) The Door, B) The Window, C) The Stair. These images refer to the subway terminals as spatial operators as presented in the Door Window Stair Project presented to a second year design studio.



A



B



C



D



E



F

Figure 2-2. Subway terminals as Serres' spatial operators. A)The Bridge, B) The Tower, C) The Well, D)The Hotel, E) The Jail, F) The Labyrinth. These notions of spatial operation reference writings by Michel Serres and speak to the function of space in the construction of a contextual condition relative to use and experience.

CHAPTER 3  
STOP 3: 71ST STREET TERMINAL: BROOKLYN  
UNDERSTANDING PLACE

**Realizing the Extents of Context**

The extents of any contextual condition are defined in the terms of identity, culture, experience, and event relative to its physical structure. Context is a construct of informational layers that resembles a palimpsest in its continual addition of those layers toward the evolution of place. These layers or facets of understanding of a place are interwoven; they occur simultaneously with one another; they intersect one another; they are reliant upon one another to shape the experiences of their inhabitants. An intervening architecture engages and contributes to each of these facets of context that collectively compose the sense of place. Through a method of viewing and making that considers each of these contextual implications the intervening architecture can be a reaction to the contextual qualities of perception, rather than strictly a reaction the physical qualities of form or material.

The notion of context is not limited to placement and location; its extents encompass an understanding that transcends the physical and pertain directly to the experiences of its inhabitants. The sense of place is an understanding of context that moves beyond location and references notions of identity, culture, experience, and community. These attributes are both socially injected into a contextual condition and a result of its physical characteristics. Each of these attributes represents a layer in the construct of place. The evolution of a place as it adapts over time to the changing needs of its population is characterized by the transformation of these individual layers of information, the adding of layers that become superimposed over those that already exist, and the indelible memory of a pre-existing state. The transformation of time is sometimes manifest or exemplified in the surfaces that compose the structured context. Walls show layers of information that have been laminated together to form the palimpsest. Cracked

and chipped stucco reveals graffiti of a generation before; the peeled layers of paint in the graffiti reveal masonry from a time when the wall was younger; a patch of newer bricks in the masonry reveals a moment in time when the building was something else. The contextual field as a whole is composed of layers assembled in a similar fashion. New structures that are juxtaposed against the old; buildings are removed to form parks with an imprint of an ancient foundation at their center; parks are filled in create buildings; programs change and the structures that once held them are transformed to accommodate a new function, a new event in the context of place. Each of these layers is a linguistic connection to a population. They are a written dialogue between a place and its people, and between a people and an intention to intervene within the matrix of the existing. The layers speak to an existential quality of place. And the act of intervention is a continuation of that dialogue -- a response.

Dispersed through the construct of place are critical points of intersection between layers of information that are the moments of the physical context that reference or are the embodiment of the cultural or social landscape of identity. These moments that define cohesion amongst a group of people that are a collective community are contextual icons. These icons are signs, semiotics<sup>1</sup>. They are the page on which the dialogue of place is written. The peeled wall from before may be this iconic moment of the landscape that comes to tell a story about the peoples, cultures, and events of a place, or perhaps it is only an example of deterioration. This depends on the object's capacity to inform and direct the evolution of the contextual condition. The subway terminal speaks to a history of a place and its people in addition to being a moment of

---

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the contextual icon as it is defined in this paper is one that is commonplace, a source of constant interaction with a population. In contrast to this there are iconic structures that are iconic only through their conspicuous nature. They are the icons of the exceptional; the anomalies of the urban fabric. For instance the Empire State Building is often the first consideration of New York City. In this way it is more of an index than an icon according to the categorization outlined by Peirce. It representative of the city as a whole through its uniqueness, as opposed to those often overlooked moments of the city that are inhabited and experienced daily as integral components of their surroundings, not for a distinction from them.

structure and organization of the physical qualities of the field around it. It is a moment that engages the lives of its passengers every day and defines their relationship to what they call “home.” Any architecture that is inserted into the contextual condition defined by this terminal will necessarily be a reaction to it. As a reaction to these representative moments of place, architecture is able to be conceived as a construct that is responsive to both the physical and metaphysical qualities of the contextual condition.

### **Realizing the Limits of Context**

The limits of any contextual condition are defined in the terms of space, form, and organization relative to the edge that bounds it. Varying populations of inhabitants, as well as varying urban programs, denote the binding edge, the immaterial line in the urban fabric that demarcates the boundary between one place and another. Each of these individual contextual conditions represents an area of influence that is governed by a specific mitigating factor that differentiates one place from another. Over time, the distinction of these areas, relative those that surround them, give way to the evolution of varying forms and patterns within the structure of the urban fabric.

Population and program are the chief defining characteristics of the formation of the boundaries of a place. Population refers to groups of people that are related through commonality. They share a trait, social structure, or need that if fulfilled by the characteristics of a place; these attributes distinguish them from other groups of individuals. Ethnicity is often used to define population as it relates to the structure of the urban environment, and although it is a common delineation between groups it does not speak to use or inhabitation. The way a population utilizes space and program determines the structure of the urban fabric relative to communities, and establishes zones of identity in the creation of individual places. The culture of a place as determined by the interaction between individuals can be facilitated by the

construction of the environment. The social street corner becomes a focus of community and a common meeting place between individuals, or a park allows individuals to remain in relative isolation until a moment of desired interaction propels them into the public arena. Consider also the population that routinely utilizes a particular subway terminal in its travels around the city. These people are not necessarily united by race, but are instead united by the physical terminal structure. The population comprised of riders of this subway terminal is formed by a proximity to this particular station, and the programmed route and connections that this station has with others in the subway network. As populations congregate, whether through a sense of community, social structure, or through a common activity regions are defined within the urban fabric. The primary characteristic that differentiates one population from another, maps the influence of the population over the structure of the urban fabric. This area of influence determines the point of division between one population and another -- between one place and another -- between organizational patches of the urban fabric.

The area of influence is also defined by the events or programs of a place. Commonalities of function within the urban fabric determine the ways and times that people inhabit these different sectors. Programs that characterize zones by use are common in the formation of various patches around monikers like “central business district” or “theatre district”. Smaller-scaled programmed events can determine the containment or distinction of individual patches of the urban environment. Festivals, outdoor markets, or even something as seemingly insubstantial as a tendency for eating outside or in, can have an impact on the definition of these regions.

Influences that define a place and its distinction from other places can be a product of culture, or placement. This tendency speaks to a dichotomy of thought in the conception of

context. The cultural instinct to congregate with other individuals with whom one can identify with is a powerful force in the shaping of the urban fabric. The other conception of the area of influence is more closely tied with the physical nature of the contextual condition. The placement of individuals or programs relative to other focal points determines a physical area. Often this is determined by how far individuals are willing to locate themselves from whatever this focal condition may be; how far an individual is willing to walk to get to the subway, or the decision of whether or not to commute to work. Whatever the foundations for the formation of a particular influence, it relates groups of people with specific commonalities. The range of this influence over the formation of the urban environment determines the outermost reaches of a place; a patch of the broader urban fabric.

As time passes and the distinctions of various places become more defined or developed, slight differences in the evolution of urban forms and physical archetypes for the construction of context will emerge. These variances in the way different populations inhabit and perceive of place dictate an evolution of urban form that is disparate from that of other regions of the urban fabric. Over time as these places evolve they will more closely resemble the natural inclination of their respective populations to interact with and inhabit their environment. In this way the place becomes representative of a collective identity. Place, as defined by an interlock between cultural and physical manifestations of a community, is integrated into that community's collective identity. Moments within the place that signify this representation - the terminal for that population defined by proximity to it, a cultural archetype for construction, or a particular approach to programming and inhabiting a place, are the contextual icons that tell the story of the place and its people. The context of place is a composite construction of aspects of space,

experience, cultural and social interaction, and narrative, coupled with the physical qualities of the constructed urban condition.

### **Assignment 2: Satellite**

The Satellite assignment is designed to give students an opportunity to explore the impact of architecture upon a localized field and to address the spatial implications of engaging context at the scale of that field in both context and intervention. This assignment is focused on developing an understanding of place and the role architecture plays in its evolution. Place is a construct composed, not only of a morphological structure of an immediate surrounding, but also the cultures, traditions, and events that characterize a people and their use of that local surrounding<sup>2</sup>. An analysis of place is the first stage of experiential study, where a sense of space and inhabitation is taken into consideration and studied relative to the events that are housed within the context, as well as architecture's capacity to be received by that context. Intervention is no longer represented as a symbol upon a map, but as a product of an experiential environment. The foundation of this assignment is a narrative of integration and the nesting of a moment within the field. The elevated subway terminal at 71<sup>st</sup> Street in Brooklyn is the contextual icon of a place, and the way that place reacts to the insertion of an intervention.

#### **The 71<sup>st</sup> Street Subway Terminal: Brooklyn, New York**

In the 71<sup>st</sup> street stop you see a certain resolution in the interaction between the terminal and its surroundings. The terminals along the "D Line" to the south are very similar to this one, but seem to be less enmeshed in their local surroundings. Here the terminal is incorporated into

---

<sup>2</sup> In *Delirious New York* Rem Koolhaas discusses the formal evolution of the city relative to shifts in cultural and social priorities. This provides a chronicle or history of the city as a whole through referencing of individual places in their transformation over time. Similarly, in *Conquering Gotham* Jill Jonnes documents social, cultural, and political change as it was brought about by the introduction of subways to Manhattan, as well as trains connecting the island to the mainland. These documents intrinsically tie the development and evolution of the form of the city with the same transformation in the way its citizens perceive and occupy that city. Both works outline the coincidental narratives of culture and place relative to architecture.

its surrounding context. Residences and businesses alike interact with the tracks as well as the terminal, or more specifically the space beneath them. A carefully structured open space has been developed beneath and around the terminal. This open space is a planned and programmed component of the urban context as opposed to the preceding models where it was the residue left over from the repelling of the context by the terminal. This open space is charged with community recreation, in fact as you are observing, you notice a group of teenagers from the community playing basketball, along with an older man exercising in the park, and a family watching as their small child plays on the playground. There is an organized sensibility to the way that the context is structured by this communal open space; it is obvious that this place is engaged spatially by a large area. This open community space is a focal point to the construction of its surrounding context. And, anything inserted within this context would have to accommodate the park as a component of the physical structure of the place.

You are distracted from your observations for a moment by a question: why is the white corrugated wall eliminating visual access to the other side of the terminal? As another train passes you catch a glimpse of isolated houses that compose a completely different contextual condition from the brownstone and apartment residential model on this side of the terminal. The identical nature and dramatic increase in scale (relative to individual occupancy) answers the question; class shift. An opulent fragment of the place rejects the terminal, and treats it as an infiltrator. The other edge of the elevated tracks engages an urban fragment composed of a greater diversity of programs and forms. This fragment has accepted and assimilated the terminal as a component of the place. In this instance the terminal is a threshold and a barrier between zones in the urban field.

The density of structures and population is increasing gradually the further north you travel along the “D Line”. The buildings have grown in scale and proximity to one another. This is also characterized by the steadily increasing population on the train itself; people vie for an ever decreasing number of free seats. At every stop the train car becomes slightly more occupied by travelers like you.

### **Intervening in a Place**

Using this narrative as a guide, the student will be tasked with the creation of an architectural gesture to introduce both residential and commercial programs into the region defined by this focal moment. This exercise will focus upon the analysis of experience, spatial operation, and program of a contextual condition. The analysis can then become the generator of an architecture integral to its surroundings. The extent of research and making will be a thoughtful progression from a study of form, space, and experience, characterized by mapped zones of a particular place, into the development of a programmed spatial construct, and finally into a conception for the assembly of materials and components to create critical links between the intervention and its immediate context. The intervention will be a study of space and experience as they fold from the context into the architecture. The contextual icon (the 71<sup>st</sup> Street Terminal) is tool for understanding existing relationships, both morphologically and culturally. The site, scale, and program of this intervention are assigned to the student prior to the beginning of the project.

The first component of the project is the production of an analytical map of the place. This is to be constructed in a series of informational layers, similar in nature to the map generated in the “outpost” assignment. Additionally, the map will include a photographic collage of critical intersections between informational layers. This photographic construct will seek to document particular spatial and experiential phenomena in the relationship between the proposed site and

the iconic subway terminal. The weaving together of photographs in the development of the collage will establish scenes in the narrative of the place. Each photographic moment (or set of moments) becomes a vignette contributing to a contextual understanding of, not only a morphological understanding of place, but of its spatial operation, and the way in which it is inhabited by its citizens. The map should be at a scale of 1"=200'-0". The site that will house the intervention should be placed within the map along with the subway terminal. Using the relationship that the terminal has with the structures that immediately surround it (and the site should be within a reasonable proximity to the terminal), the student is to document certain spatial or experiential connections between site and icon. In this instance (the assignment is not limited to this particular place, but is instead applicable to the viewing of any contextual condition), there is a large open public space that brackets the terminal and provides for a critical physical and social link between the terminal and its surroundings. The site being within certain proximity of this open space will be subject to the physical and social constraints imposed by the precedent of its surrounding structures. The map places both the site of intervention and the focus of study within the framework of the existing.

From this map the student is to create a hybrid section drawing at 1"=50'-0" scale. The section is to be a document that shifts through the site to intersect each photographic vignette of the previous map and move through both the focal icon and the assigned site. This section is a linear documentation of the spatial narrative of the place, and as such should consider spatial qualities and experiences of the context. The section itself will initially be digitally constructed through 3d modeling software. The morphological conditions of the place, limited to the local scope of study, are to be generated in this three-dimensional model. Particular attention should be paid not only to the mass and position of structures, but to the composition of surfaces and the

materiality of those surfaces. This tool will provide a measured documentation, based in the analytical map, of the physical structure and organization of the urban fabric, as well as the properties of the individual objects that weave together to form that fabric. The digital model should then be “cut” along a path directed by the photographic vignettes established in the analytical map, rendered, scaled, and printed as a section cut through the contextual condition.

This section document is then subject to manual manipulation. Using ink and graphite further articulate surfaces, materials, and joinery of the context as they relate to the ways than an occupant might perceive an environment. This exercise is not intended to show the realities of form and structure, but rather the impact that form and structure have upon experience; the ways that context is seen, touched, and heard by an occupant. These articulations also call into question notions of enclosure and spatial definition. All of these issues should be addressed through the articulation of surfaces and materials, with a hierarchy of importance based upon proximity to, or influence over the characteristics of the site of intervention. At this juncture, the inclusion of plan and perspective moments that speak to the shifting of spaces from one to the next is important to define a sequence of events and establish a graphic language that denotes relationships between spaces. The insertion of different graphic techniques can be drawn, or collaged into the section, but must develop the connection between the site and the rest of the context of place. Through these moments woven into the constructed section codification of relationships between the site and other moments exterior to it will begin to emerge. Through this codification, there will also be an understanding of the role of the site in the composition of the place relative to the contextual icon; the subway terminal. As these relationships are understood more fully, the drawing should be cut, folded, and have new constructed elements built into it. The tectonic language of these modeled components should be derived from the

tectonics of the context as investigated at the inception of this drawing. This latter additive process will serve to reinforce the relations between moments established in the rest of the section.

The student should create a sectional gesture of an architectural intervention in ink as well as digitally composed and printed materials using the spatial and tectonic systems discovered in the section. The gesture is a framework for space, form, and program; it is a hypothetical and unresolved possibility of architecture and experience. The gesture should be a product of scale, proportion, and programmed events that the architecture is to house. It will imply both space and volume as they relate to program. The gesture should position program and volume in the site as they relate to spatial realities of the local context of the site. The implications of placement, orientation, and position on the architecture's contribution to the development of the contextual condition should be addressed and considered. The narrative of the place should be woven into the constructed site and the gesture inhabiting the site. The proposed architecture is an additive extension to the existing qualities of place.

The next analytical stage is the progression of the digital site model. The spatial and tectonic languages developed in the section should become conventions for the evolution of this study. This study occurs simultaneously in two directions. First, it is an investigation into the nesting of the icon into the place, and second, it is a study of the way that the place might receive an intervention into the site.

The first stage should begin with a detailed and articulate construction of the joint between the icon and its surrounding context. This is not a focus upon the formal qualities of either the terminal or its surrounding structures, but is instead a study of contact between the two. Spaces and connections are created as the terminal is woven into the network of systems that compose

the context and should be articulated in this digital model. Material, surface, tectonics, all produce a space that is the result of the collision between these two conditions. Additionally, ways in which the terminal intervention was molded to be placed within the context matrix as well as ways in which the matrix was altered to accommodate it should be investigated using photographs, and considered in the construction of this digital model. Look for moments of registration and alignment between elements of the terminal and its surroundings as clues to the reciprocal impact of intervention in the case of the terminal.

The other vein for the digital investigation is the site itself, and determining ways that it might receive an intervention. The investigation of manipulating and forming the terminal can be applied to the marking of the surfaces that contain the site. In the virtual model, the students should carve, articulate, and shape those surfaces that define the limitations and the parameters of the site to prepare the place for the addition of another component. The process of modifying the components of site will inform the generation of a gesture of site intervention. This gesture should recall that of the section and use the guiding principles of that insertion to shape and progress the scheme in the digital environment. The implications of volume, form, and space that were present in the gesture inserted into the section drawing can now be investigated three dimensionally. Implications become defined in this stage of the process as notions of space and form become contributing components of the experiential narrative of the place, the site, and the architecture.

This narrative of space and experience as it extends from the context, through the site, and culminates in the development of architecture should be explored through a hand-crafted model. Joinery and assembly of materials and components to pull contextual spatial instances through the construction of the architectural gesture can be more thoroughly investigated manually. This

exercise focuses upon these spatial continuities that exist through various scales of the built environment; the scale of the context, that of the site, and that of the intervention. The Model should be developed at 1/8"=1'-0" scale with a scope that encompasses only the most local components of context that directly contributes to the containment of the site. The material palette should be limited to one primary and one secondary material, both of which are your choice as the designer. There should be a careful consideration to the development of formal and spatial hierarchies within this construction, and the way that those hierarchies are translated through form. Materiality can be implied through the way that components relate to one another, but there should not be as much a focus on the material logic of the construction as there is on the assembly of parts to engage and interlock the architecture into the systems of its surroundings. With this as a focus, the physical model should recall the digital modeling analytical exercise of the insertion of the terminal into the place. Space and tectonics should be developed as they enmesh the architecture with its surroundings. The spatial resolution of both the intervention and the context are considered in as much as they contribute to the study of the intersection between the two. This model is an investigation of overlap, and the shift in narrative and experience as it passes through this zone of interconnectivity between a context and a hypothetical, singular, fragment that contributes to it. The tectonic language established in previous portions of this project should be advanced through this exercise.

The discoveries made in the various stages of this project can be revisited in previous exercises. Each exercise represents a tool for viewing and understanding the contextual condition. As discoveries are made they should be reviewed through the lens of previous tools. The process outlined and stimulated in this project is not linear but woven. At the end of this project the student is responsible for presenting the results of these exercises in a way that shows

their influence upon one another. The section should continue to evolve as the project develops with the other exercises, as should every other document in the process of inventing the intervention to the place dedicated to the 71<sup>st</sup> Street Terminal. The initial map should be updated to reflect evolutions of the conception of place, context, site, and intervention. These reflections are not directed or prescribed however. They should not be undertaken in a way that provides the student with redundant information. There should be a logical progression of thought from one moment in the process to the next which should not be erased by subsequent iterations. The suggestion here is to use preceding iterative stages to advance the development of the project. As previous stages are revisited, there should be a clear understanding of the evolution of the document, as opposed to the erasure of its initial characteristics in favor of the discoveries of later exercises.

CHAPTER 4  
STOP 4: WEST 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET TERMINAL\_MANHATTAN  
SITE(ING) AND INTERVENING

**Urban Iconography**

The Urban Icon is a way of viewing place – it is a window, not just to the physicality of location, but to the operational and experiential qualities of inhabitation of a particular urban form. The Urban Icon is representative of a certain identity of a place as it is defined by community and perception. Necessarily, an Urban Icon must be a point of intersection between multiple layers of context, both physical and experiential in order for it to be representative of place; it is a moment of contact between form and body - between structure and experience. As an analytical tool, Urban Iconography establishes an intelligible language, in reading it one realizes that it speaks, not simply *about* the city, but the ways in which people live in it and perceive it.

The city is a terrain. The subway terminal answers questions of use, event, history and identity as components in the construct of place local to it, just as a tree in a field answers questions of: soils, seasons, wildlife, and the story of the tree's operation relative to all of these things as the components of the construct of field. As such, it becomes a measure by which social, cultural, and experiential reaction toward intervention may be determined. It is a tool for the analysis of place through a lens of experience.

By using the relationship that a subway terminal has with its surroundings as a lens through which one might understand the structure of community, the terminal becomes an icon representative of that community. Understanding this point as a component in the compositional quality of urban form, as well as the intangible aspects of urbanity, facilitates the development of a means by which the physical and intangible may be simultaneously engaged. It is the operant quality of the icon within the varying urban systems that compose its territory that determines its

relationship to the individual. The interaction between the inhabitants of a place and the subway determines the terminal's representation of the identity of the place.

The subway terminal establishes multiple modalities of occupation of the city, and it represents the shift from one modality to the next. As individuals occupy a particular region of an urban field those individuals position themselves relative to their immediate surroundings. Upon entering the subway terminal this perception is broadened from the immediate to the territorial. No longer is the individual measured against the form and place in the terms of inhabitation, but form and place are measured against the composition of multiple places that compose the entirety of the urban fabric. The map shifts scale and the individual becomes place. This phenomenon is characterized by the presence of maps intended to orient a passenger to the surroundings of the terminal. Typically this map is encountered upon emerging from the terminal. It details the surroundings with a point labeled "you are here" which demarcates the specific location of the map (and consequently the individual studying it) within this fragment of the urban landscape. Upon re-entering the subway the same map has expanded to encompass the entire urban fabric, but now the "you are here" no longer references your position but references position of the entire fragment of the city above relative to the myriad other possible fragments that the subway stitches together.

The establishment of the terminal as an icon representative of place is not through the terminal's function within the urban fabric. It is, instead, the way that function mitigates the relationship between the individual and the inhabited form.

The symbiosis that exists between form and place is the foundations for community and the interactions of the individual with their environment. In the simplest of terms, it is the icon that defines the difference between "a neighborhood" and "*your* neighborhood." Representative

of these interactions and relationships, the urban icon becomes a reference by which one measures belonging, familiarity, and identity. As a design tool, the urban icon may be used as a means to generate an understanding of the context of place by virtue of it being a moment of common relation amongst a collection of urban forms within a complex composition; a systemic point within a network of intertwined systems that we collectively refer to as context. Understanding the intricacies of place enables an architectural response to it.

The way in which a terminal is positioned within the urban form determines the spatial and experiential relationship between that terminal and the place that it serves. This spatial relationship between the terminal as an object and the containing urban form determines an inhabitant's response to, or perception of, the terminal itself. In many ways the influence a subway terminal has over the understanding of place is through proximity. The domineering quality of the terminal that emerges from the ground, casting the entire streetscape in shadow, repels its resulting territory. This urban form is one of extension. Urban form and program exist almost subordinately to the subway. In contrast, the subway terminal that is embedded within a structure exists as a gravitational focus for its resulting territory, thus creating a compression of program and form that is one of centrality. In a way, proximity to the subway terminal determines the microcosmic urban form at the scale of the community. The resultants of this shift in urban form are the varying perceptions of place within its inhabitants. This variance in urban form, as well as the variance in individuals' reaction to it, provides the foundation for architectural response or intervention.

9<sup>th</sup> Avenue possesses a terminal that has been wholly rejected by its surroundings. It is an invisible place – a world apart. Set against the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn this station is shrouded in trees and silence. Through the green veil of leaves the buildings on the opposite side

can still be seen, but only a glimpse – the city has turned its back upon this moment. Refuse is piled along edges of the hidden subway station to such a degree that a dilapidated and overturned tractor goes unnoticed. Perhaps this disconnect with the surrounding context eliminates the possibility that this anomalous moment of the urban environment could be representative of an established place. However, the relationship that this has with, not only the physicality of the place, but with the inhabitants that are either isolated within the confines of the station or outside it, enables the objective observer to study the response of context to this unique environment. This station, as a component of the edge of the cemetery, becomes indicative of the relationship that exists between regions on either side of that barrier. It implies a kind of directionality or orientation to the experiences constructed through the establishment of place. Furthermore, it underscores a predominant attitude in the collective mindset of the people that reside there. In this way, it is possible that this point in the urban fabric can intersect the requisite layers of contextual information to become representative of place, and can therefore be analyzed in the conception of a philosophy of intervention.

The philosophy of intervention is a constructed set of limitations imposed upon the designer, the student, or the educator as a means of preserving the identity of place through an intervention. The iconic moment of context becomes a conceptual analog for the intervention; it is a template for connections between the structure and its context, both physical and experiential. This tool for the defining of limits is prescribed to the student by the educator as a catalyst for invention. It is adopted as a model by the designer, both as a limiting factor, and an example, a precedent, for the communication of architectural principles. It is a guide for the development of curriculum; a structure or ordering device for the presentation of material or information by the educator to the student.

In contrast, the “D” Line Terminal at 71<sup>st</sup> street is iconic of its local context, both physical and metaphysical, through its interaction with the events of place as they are orchestrated by the individuals residing there, as well as the spatial, organizational, and formal aspects of the physical environment. There is a park built beneath the elevated subway line. The park is the dimension of a regular city block around which there are a series of apartment buildings and small scale retail. Beyond that there are organized blocks of single family brownstones. Parking is periodically dispersed throughout. From the vantage of the elevated platform it is obvious that the park is well used by the residents of the area. The combination of the park and the subway terminal create a public node around which the local context is organized. The nature of the public node is an urban volume to contain the events of the place, while the other structures and programs that form its periphery facilitate the event. The terminal engages the events of the place as a gateway and is coupled with the park which acts as a gathering point; both are opportunities for impromptu meetings and circumstantial interactions. This quality is unlike many other terminals in the area despite being formally very similar. Along the Brooklyn D line the terminals are predominantly elevated, and formally nearly identical. However, the ways that they are woven into their respective contexts and received by the people that inhabit those contexts vary greatly. Some are hidden by large scale structures; others repel all notions of community and become a kind of urban wasteland. This terminal then becomes representative of place through its connection with all facets of it. Virtually every structure and every inhabitant interact with the terminal, in one way or another, daily. As such, its relationships with its surrounding provide for a critical analytical tool for the development of a philosophy of intervention within this place.

The “D” Line Terminal at West 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan is an underground station. It is characterized by its disassociation from its surroundings. Between it and its perceived context is ground and noise. However, this confined, isolated, space becomes a testing ground where instances of surface culture and behavior are condensed and projected down into the realm below. Musicians take advantage of acoustic characteristics of the terminal and in so doing become a tangible link between the cautious riders below and hurried pedestrians above. This precise interconnectivity, coupled with a study of the entrance to the terminal, the bridge that spans between the regions of the upper and lower, can facilitate the generation of a philosophy of intervention. It is representative of the surface condition’s attitude toward the lower, as well as a window into the collective surface culture as provided by its compression and extension into the subterranean terminal and the surrounding people’s reaction to that condensed surface culture. For some the extension of the surface into the subterranean is nothing more than a recollection of the surface, but to those that have become apart of the surface community it is a marker. It marks a point where the city has changed to become something that is familiar, recognized. It becomes more than an extension of one into the other; it becomes a murgence between the two. The surface is indistinguishable from the submerged.

People identify with, and recognize as familiar, those urban compositions that are, in part, directed by the positioning of the point of contact between multiple compositions; the subway. By virtue of the subway terminal being an organizational device for the urban forms that hold and sustain it, it is also an organizational device for the interaction between the individual and the urban form that is inhabited. In this way it is a moment that determines, to a degree, the identity of place.

The ubiquitous city is a myth when considered from the vantage point of a single inhabitant. In seeking to understand the city, or architecture's role within it, designers and planners have engaged in an act of naming as a way of characterizing the form or operation of the ever-present and increasingly generic "City". This act of naming has become a kind of linguistic diagram of a global urbanism – the perpetuation of an understanding of the urban condition as being singular and uniform was preceded by a decision to place the word "The" in front of "city" to create a global, universal, and homogenous conception; "The City". Within this newfound understanding of our collective constructed habitat is a loss of consideration of the role of the individual in the development of urban form; the foundations of a city's character, its sense of place. Determining a moment within a context that is representative of the identity of a place and its inhabitants makes possible an architectural reaction to that identity, which presents the possibility of an urbanism of place rather than form. The terminal becomes the perceived property of a place, a community, and the individuals residing there. Therefore, it is a piece of the foundations of a communal and personal identity. This sense of identity is manifest in a kind of perceived ownership. Beginning with the subway terminal, all of the elements of the urban condition that are directly interacted with by the inhabitants of a place become the physical structure of the community, and by extension, become the inhabitant's own.

### **Place-Making**

Place-making is a decision as much as it is an act. The decision is a guide for the act. Two opposing options for intervention in the consideration of place are erasure and preservation. Both of these broad philosophies speak to a particular ideology considering the evolution of the contextual condition. Erasure references an ideology of replacement and re-invention in a quest for improvement. Preservation is an ideology that cherishes those moments of a place that distinguish it from others; it is an evolution of a single condition. The contextual icon, whether it

is urban, suburban, or rural, is a tangible link between the forms of a place and the cultures, traditions, secrets, or experiences of a place. The subway terminal is an urban icon; a contextual icon of a city fabric (specifically the boroughs of New York City referenced in this paper). This moment within the terrain is a semiotic. It is a sign that indicates present use, and the markings of a particular history. And, depending upon the philosophy of intervention, is either an infrastructure to be a foundation for the new (in some cases it is a spirit to be exorcized in order to make way for the new), or it is a catalyst for an evolution of place.

Erasure is the hallmark of recent urbanism<sup>1</sup>. It has been the response to context in the urban, suburban, and rural environments for several decades. This method for engaging context is one in which forms that are seen as “archaic” are removed, the terrain on which they sat scoured, and a new form seen as being more applicable to the needs of a modern society takes its place in the contextual matrix. This process elicits a loss of identity of place and further disassociates the individual from their place of residence. Architecture becomes a function of utility at the expense of tradition and culture. The master plan for the development of context, as it was used for the inception of cities, is now a tool for their re-invention. The built environment is a tabula rasa to be restructured to suit the needs of immediacy. The result is a kind of theme park. Without the traditions and histories of place, form becomes only an emulation of a condition lost.

---

<sup>1</sup> This notion of erasure in modern urbanism is manifest in several recent urban philosophies. In his *Conversations with Students* Rem Koolhaas discusses the continual reinvention of the city through the replacement of existing components with newer ones. In this he postulates that the American City is completely re-invented every ten years. This promotes the concept of the global, ubiquitous city; a homogeneous urbanism without differentiation that exists solely for the efficiency of existence. Likewise, New Urbanism seeks to replace conditions that it qualifies as bad with a model patterned after the concept of a 1950’s “Main Street.” Within this philosophy there are formal archetypes that promote particular functions and social interactions without consideration of the particularities of the existing cultural construct. More generic instances of gated communities, urban sprawl, and the social developments that Mario Gandelsonas describes as “X-urbanism” also contribute to the development of an urbanism of erasure, replacement, or re-invention for the sake of personal ownership.

The notion of preservation takes on the mantle of mimicry. In an effort to recapture the possibilities of the lost conditions, their replacements adopt formal qualities that replicate or duplicate their predecessors. But this type of formalism lacks the layers of history, evolution, intentions, and functions of its predecessor. This doppelganger city is a typology that exists as a memorial to a previous urban form, as well as a way of life that that form has come to symbolize. These conditions are static, and therefore lack the capacity to progress and adapt over time.

Places where “Main Street” is built from the ground up in a matter of months, and are complete with patterned and worn stucco or “old world brick” become a destination rather than a place. Upon closer inspection the artificially aged materials reveal themselves to be a veneer. The people who sell the food and the show tickets live elsewhere and where a costume as their work uniform. The people that inhabit this “main street” do so for only a short time before returning to some other place; a journey back to reality. It is similar in places where the notion of the modern metropolis is imposed upon established urban conditions. The novelty of the city replaces its authenticity. Lights and hyper intensive signage create an artificial vibrancy in an effort to replicate Times Square. A haven for tourists is created and the native populace is displaced.

There are places where both “Main Street” or the vibrant modern metropolis are the results of a continuously evolving place, but there are more instances where they are fabricated responses to a perceived need. In antithesis to this model of erasure, this paper presents a method for viewing and analyzing existing contextual characteristics toward the creation of intervening architecture rather than replacement architecture. Preservation, in this instance, is of the qualities of place rather than its morphological characteristics. The subway terminals used in the presentation of this methodology are a possibility for viewing the contextual condition, and

could be manifest in any number of different semiotic instances in the matrix of context. These representational landmarks are the link between the culture of the place and its physical composition, and as a point of intersection between these two aspects of context, are critical subjects of analysis.

The existing contextual matrix is not a barrier to progress, but rather a set of limitations that frame and give direction to that progress. Interventions within a place should not be bound by precedent but generated by it. There are places that have existed for hundreds of years and within those places architecture intervenes and brings a new layer of spatial resolution. Operation is preserved through deference to existing systems by the intervening architecture. The injection of new forms into an established place reinforces existing systems of use and experience or otherwise transforms them. The contextual condition is a palimpsest of information constantly re-written, but within that structure there is always a memory of the past.

These are the possibilities of an architecture that is responsive to its contextual condition. It becomes an extension of systems of the pre-existing, and benefits from the cultures, traditions, and identity of that condition. Architecture is a vehicle of change and evolution through its relationships with the place that it inhabits. This urbanism of place and experience is the result of a process of design, analysis, and viewing. These three principles combine to form a methodology for making and thinking of architecture. The result is an architecture that is responsive to a populace and reactive to space and experience. Space and inhabitation are the keystones of the conceptualized contextual condition as well as the prospective architectural intervention in this urbanism. It is an urbanism that speaks to a process of constructing an environment ... (figure 4-1).

### **Assignment 3: Graft**

The Graft Assignment is designed to give students an opportunity to explore the impact of architecture upon a single moment of an existing condition, as well as address the spatial implications of altering the contextual field by engaging a component of it. This assignment is focused on developing an understanding of the existential qualities of site, the ways in which the realities of that site contribute to the contextual qualities of a place, and the ways that the sense of place might be engaged or manipulated through the use of an existing fragment as a vehicle for intervention. Foundational to this project is the narrative of overlap, interaction, gravity, and collection. Here boundaries that define programmatic conditions of the place are breached and become blurred as systems, typically foreign to one another, intertwine. The West 4<sup>th</sup> Street terminal is underground, but is a repository for a number of different events. It is a place where density of population and use has dictated a merging of programs, structures, and activities into multivalent architectural structures. This narrative will focus the student's investigation into the shaping of space and experience within a singular encapsulated volume, as well as ways that that shaping might be a reference to context or a catalyst for its transformation. Assembly and materiality play a crucial role in the formation of this intervention as well as a study of the role of individual components in the composition of the local contextual condition. This study will lead into the development of a philosophy of intervention and later into the invention of an intervention that is a reactive, architectural, spatial, and experiential response to its surroundings. The grafted intervention is not parasitic as much as it is symbiotic, which establishes a possibility of architectural thought in which the single construct and its context are co-dependent.

#### **The West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Subway Terminal: Manhattan, New York**

At West 4<sup>th</sup> Street the terminal is the most expansive you have yet encountered on this journey. You travel up several flights of stairs and through several platforms before reaching the

turnstile level. Here you encounter music. The sound reverberates off the walls and you are unsure of their source so you continue on. They get louder until you encounter the barbershop quartet practicing in the tunnels of the subway terminal; a small as yet unencumbered facet of the subterranean subway culture.

You emerge from the terminal entrance on 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. The terminal entrance is framed on all sides by advertisements and a magazine stand. It is shrouded by these pedestrian oriented structures to the point of being hidden from view. It is almost a process of discovery as you walk down the sidewalk and encounter the terminal tucked behind this system of events.

This is no longer a neighborhood, despite being composed of residences. It is not a commercial district but does have a large commercial street edge. It is also a place for offices, but not to the degree of the stops further south in Manhattan. This place is a hybrid place that caters to tourists while simultaneously constructing its own sense of place and identity independent of the tourist incursion. Against this fabric the 4<sup>th</sup> Street terminal sits as a node for the structuring of pedestrian devices. It is the center of a cluster of small scale temporary interventions into the fabric of this place. In this way it epitomizes the duality of occupation. The tourist component engages the pedestrian devices and street edge shops while being denied admission into other realms of this place, while residents are allowed access to the place in its entirety. The terminal acts as meeting point between the two. It accommodates and structures both the tourist and resident occupation of place.

You continue into Midtown Manhattan. As you descend the barbershop quartet is still performing as you begin your long walk underground. The train arrives and you board, once again there is standing room only.

## **Intervening in a Structure**

Using this narrative as a guide, the student will be tasked with the creation of an architectural gesture to inject both residential and commercial programs into and attached to the physical structure of this focal moment. The focus of this project is on the spatial composition of the intervention itself. The scope of the project is in the development of the narrative of inhabitation through the architectural intervention which has specific references to the contextual conditions of both the surrounding field as well as the host structure (the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal). In the consideration of site and placement the student is responsible for considering the spatial implications of intervening with both a context of place as well as a context of an existing object architecture that is a component of that place. Notions of assembly, materiality, spatial composition and the sculpted experience will be developed through a series of exercises that progress from an understanding of the role of the existing building within its context and the events and uses of the context immediately surrounding it, to an invention of an architecture symbiotically grafted into the existing physical and spatial systems (building as site), and finally into a study of ramifications on context of the insertion of this new architecture (ways that site, place, and use are changed by the presence of a new variable in the composition of place and program).

The first exercise is the construction of a narrative collage. The student is to create an architectural collage that investigates the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal in terms of its physical interface with the other components of its context, as well as its influence over space and event. It should be a perspective composed of both photographs and drawing. Photographs of the site should be digitally manipulated and composed as a framework for the spatial investigation of the interface between the contextual icon and its surroundings. Materials, and composition of surfaces as well as their relation to the occupant should be considered in the construction of the

collage. Drawing should take place through layers of added material. It should move back and forth between the definitive hard lined and measured drawing of form relative to scale, proportion, or organization, and the loose hand of experimentation. Sketching in charcoal or ink should augment the rigid hard line drawing of form as a means of investigating experience and phenomena relative to the formal characteristics of the contextual icon. Drawing becomes a means of documenting the existing qualities of the physical environment as well as the interaction between those realities of form and the individual that sees, touches, or inhabits them. Surface can be investigated through a documentation of its reaction to light and view. Use and event can be chronicled as a product of these phenomena; their changes, their ability to control the perception of mass and space. This perspectival analysis of contextual space and experience will result in the development of a tectonic language for the documentation of site and place. This same language can be adopted in the generation of the architectural graft.

The collage represents an analog for the contextual condition. It is a thing to be manipulated to receive intervention just as the urban fabric would be altered to receive a new structure. The tectonic language that emerged from the construction of the collage should be adapted to alter it. The student should cut, fold, articulate, and construct an architectural gesture into the collage as a woven component of it. Study the ways that the existing material character of the host structure might influence the construction of the graft. As the paper construct emerges from the surface of the drawing allow it to effect the composition of the initial elements and media of the collage which is an investigation of the spatial, material, and experiential implications of the insertion on the contextual condition. Extensions, connections, transformations, and other manipulations are indicative of an evolving interface between the graft and its surroundings.

At a point in the design process, the investigation of space and inhabitation will narrow and become more self-referential. The weaving of the construct into the surface of the collage develops a more resolved tectonic language for the presentation of space, and as a result becomes more insular; the narrative of the place and the site folds into the construction of the intervention. At this point the narrative is wholly contained within the spaces of the grafted intervention. The assembly of elements in the woven insertion into the collage should start to speak to the construction of individual spaces and volumes relative to the assigned program. Each space will contain a specific and prescribed programmatic event and should be molded to accommodate this event while referencing the external contextual condition. Each space is a product of the external environment by virtue of: the spatial limitations defined by that environment, the relation of the external narrative sequence to that being developed internally, and the precise control of awareness beyond the limitation of the space (through the framed view, admittance of sound, or a tactile material recollection of the external environment).

This process will lead into the construction of a hand crafted model. This model should retain all of the notions of spatial integration with both the contextual icon and the immediate surroundings. In this model the student will explore space from the vantage of the occupant. Contextual connections are no longer studied through the composition of reactive forms, but through perception and experience. It is the responsibility of the student to position and proportion space guided by the assigned program. Spaces of the graft not only relate to one another in a precise way relative to the programmed events they are to hold, but they also have a necessary relationship to the existing spaces and volumes of the contextual icon to which the intervention is attached. The interface between the host structure and the grafted intervention is explored experientially as existing spaces re-invented, transformed, re-programmed, or otherwise

engaged by the infiltration of the new architecture. The new architecture becomes a tool that physically transforms the structure of the existing to accommodate a new function. Functioning as this tool, the new architecture weaves the programming narrative through the spaces of the existing structure as well as the new spaces created in the grafted structure. The program narrative becomes an entirely insular moment; a self contained series of events that guide the creation of form. However, the form that contains both space and event in the graft and the existing structure should be considered, necessarily, as responsive to their immediate surroundings. The assembly of components that house space and use is defined by its manipulation of external phenomena to a specific and prescribed effect upon the creation of space. Tectonic skins filter light and control the levels and instances of contact between interior and exterior. Apertures control view. And, moments of entry and egress control the narrative joint between the context and the spaces of the graft. These moments of connection provide constraints for the positioning and shaping of form and space. They also lay the foundations for the creation of form and space as a product and fragment of the contextual condition. The duality of this project is that it is at once a product of its function and spatial sequence, as well as the constraints of its surroundings. The architecture is a compromise between these two generative conditions.

To further explore the dual contextual interfaces of host structure and surrounding contextual field, and the way those generators impact the program and spatial sequencing of the intervention, the student is to construct a digital model that details the contact between the intervention and its two conceptions of context. The same tectonic language that has emerged from the previous exercises should be used in the virtual landscape to communicate ideas about the physical and spatial interface between the graft and its host. In this exercise the spatial

sequences should be further resolved through an understanding of their relationship with exterior spatial conditions. Through this exercise, the scope of incursion by the graft into the contextual icon can be defined. Spatial joints and transitions are to be explored as an occupant might be able to move from exterior to interior. These spatial continuities between the intervention and the context are to be explored in their capacity to hold the programmed event and experience as well as their physical structure and composition. The way in which these transitions are rendered in the physical construct will determine experience and means of inhabitation. The architecture should be able to provide a constructed transition between what is around it and what is within it.

The culmination of these various exercises, and their collective influence over one another as they are re-visited or re-considered, results in the production of a definitive architecture. This architecture is possessed with philosophies of space, experience, movement, and connection to its environment. This production has an intention to the way it engages its context and the way it shapes space and program to conform to the limitations imposed upon it by the realities of place. These impositions are cultural and behavioral as well as morphological. This exercise is a chronicle of impact. The student is to study the implications of function, inhabitation, and event of placing this architecture into its chosen site. How is the generative contextual icon transformed through the attached architecture? What is the impact of this architectural gesture upon the contextual field around the icon? This investigation can be a drawing or a film. It is a document of transformation. The student is to record critical moments of event and inhabitation in a collection of serial vignettes. These moments focus on the way in which a contextual event is transformed or created, removed or assimilated. It is a study that predicts the way an individual might occupy the place, the way the new structure has preserved or transformed that notion of inhabitation. This filmic document (a set of perspectival drawing vignettes, story

board, or film sequence) chronicles the place, the intervention to the place, and the memory of elements removed or transformed by that intervention. Ultimately, this chronicle is an experiential understanding of these things; a study of the way that they are recognized, perceived, or understood.

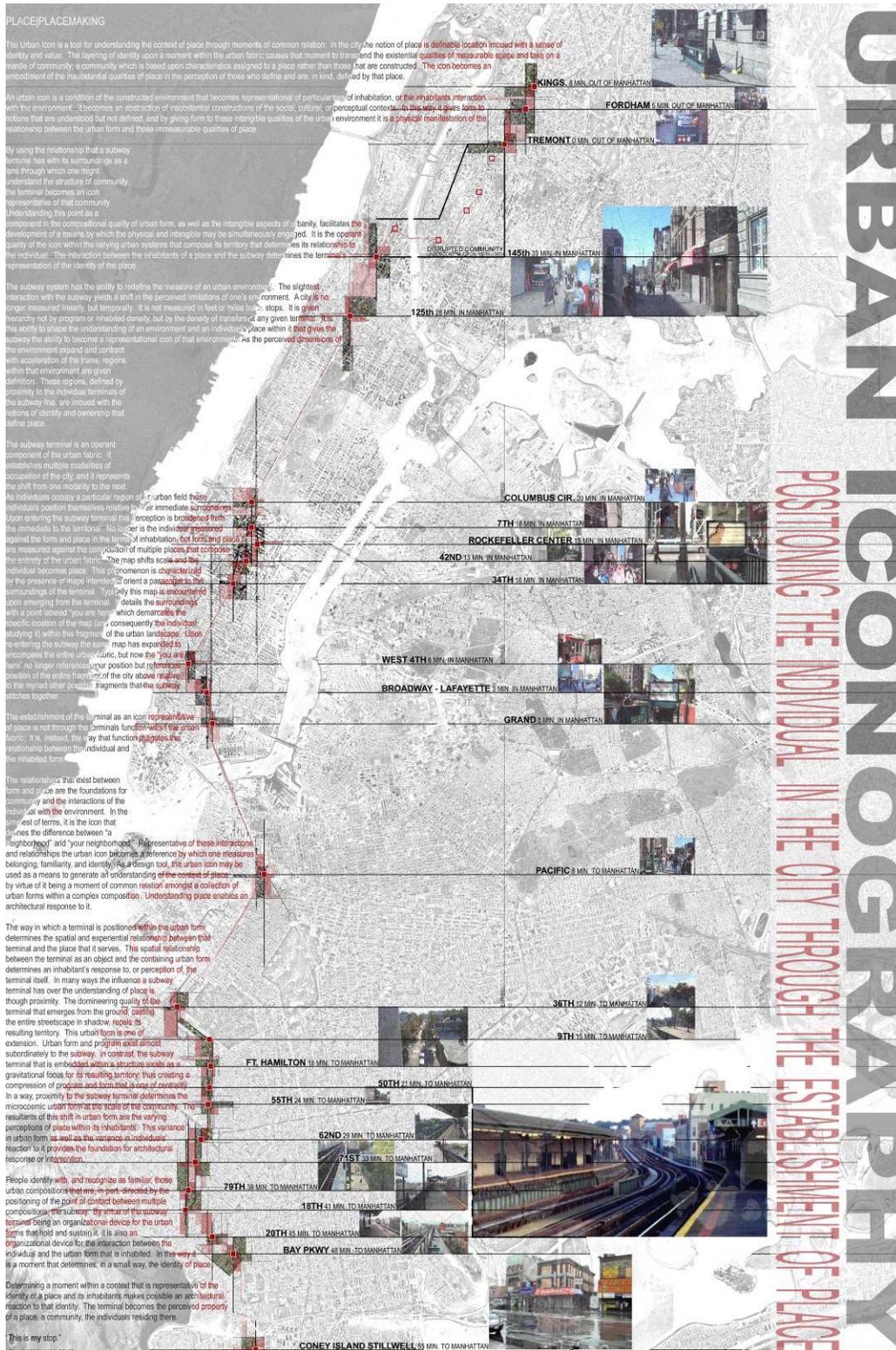


Figure 4-1. Urban Iconography poster. This poster was constructed as a means of illustrating the variance of character in places along the “D” Line, and the manifestation of that variance in the relationship between the subway terminal and its context.

CHAPTER 5  
STOP 5: TREMONT AVENUE TERMINAL: THE BRONX & A DEPARTURE FROM THE  
“D” LINE  
METHODOLOGY AND THE CONTEXTUAL LENS

**Imaging Place**

Viewing can parallel thinking. It speaks to a linguistic process of reading and interpretation toward an ultimate goal of understanding, and the capability of response. The response to the information presented by the contextual condition is the architectural intervention. The process of design is a series of explorations that result in the development of a contextually responsive architecture. Each of these explorations is a lens through which the realities of place are discovered through thinking and making. The lenses for viewing context and the possibilities for architecture are the application of design tools that shift the focus and vantage of sight and thought toward a complete understanding of the existing and the potential for the proposed. The image becomes more resolved with each stage in the process of design. A process that moves back and forth through media and ways of making facilitates this emerging resolution.

Each stage of a design process focuses on discovering, investigating, and illustrating a particular set of issues relevant to the construction of the architecture or an analysis of its generators. The scope and nature of issues being investigated in any single stage of process is limited by the media and technique utilized in the act of making. Each tool will expose certain sets of information; each tool is a unique analytical lens. As individual stages of the process of design are characterized by a method of production, they are also characterized by a certain and predictable set of information being studied. The combination of multiple lenses – stages of design – yields a constructed knowledge of place and architecture. Every stage of the design process, every tool and methodology employed by the designer, the student, will present

information that not only propels the process into the next stage but will further resolve information of previous stages. Knowledge is constructed as a woven fabric that addresses critical issues from multiple analyses. The analysis of place progresses through this process of viewing through multiple means of making and conception. With each lens the image of place, its realities and its possibilities, becomes clearer.

Shifting tools, the lenses of analysis, transforms the perspective of the designer. Each stage in the progressive acts of making brings the designer closer to an understanding of experience and inhabitation. As the process overcomes boundaries between drawing and modeling, manual and digital, the designer is able vicariously inhabit the place through the 3d camera in a digital model, or the pencil point as it touches the paper. The image of place is a conception of experience, and inhabitation. Each shift between methods of thinking and making further refines the conceptual analog of place that is the collective set investigations and documentations.

Any one technique or tool will yield information regarding the subject of analysis that is defined by the limits of material and methods of construction. The image of place gains clarity and resolution as tools combine, information discovered is revisited upon previous understandings, progress is made. Imaging place is the foundation for the development of a philosophy of intervention. Analysis and understanding of place precipitates the conception of an intervening architecture. The image of place directs the act of intervention through a precise understanding of relationships between moments that compose the contextual condition. The responsive architecture reacts to the realities of place as defined in the image. The image is an understanding of reality and possibility, and as such, determines the way context is viewed and

the way that view might evolve in response to an intervention. The image is understanding and control.

### **Pedagogy of Place and Experience**

Contextual Iconography is a method for viewing the contextual condition through an analysis of place; imaging place -- a way of thinking and making that frames the stages of design. This methodology frames architecture as the building blocks of an urbanism of experience. It folds the research of experience and inhabitation as components of place into the application of a process of design that expands the conceptualization of an architecture – its program, narrative, experiential intent, and contextual relationship. Imaging as a tool or method of design is a guide to process -- an intellectual scaffold that structures the stages of a design process, relates them to one another, and progresses them through successive investigations and discoveries of information. The investigations of procedure, methods, and modes of thought define a process for design, the stages of which are collapsed or abbreviated into an intuitive response. This is not only a method for the analysis of a contextual condition, it is also a structure for curriculum design and the administration of projects in an architecture studio.

Research and analysis are the predecessors of design as it is structured through this method of contextualization. There is a duality to this dynamic between research and production: academic research into the nature of architecture's role in the production of the built environment folds into the design of a studio curriculum, and analysis of the existential qualities of context and place fold into the design of an architectural intervention to that place. As a method of viewing the built environment this set of procedures is a link between the theory of academia and the application of that theory to curriculum. It provides for a transition between the research of the instructor and the discoveries and investigations of the student. The development of this method of viewing is an academic endeavor in itself and the subject of research toward an

urbanism of experience. The invention of the method, the tool, for contextual analysis is the foundation for a re-interpretation of urbanism. Simultaneously this tool developed toward the research of the built environment is tested, considered, and rethought in the studio atmosphere and through its application by students to a designed project. Students are provided with the means of analysis through a prescribed set of stages that guide their investigations. Successes and failures are analyzed toward a refinement of the method, which is then a catalyst for the reinterpretation of the nature of urbanism and the experiences intrinsic to it. Both of these facets of application result in the conception of architecture, in terms of its insertion into the contextual condition, as well as its own individual, spatial narrative that guides the experiences of inhabitation.

Developing a method for analysis, that is universally applicable to the process of design regardless of the nature of the project, requires an accompanying mode of thought that directs all aspects of process. This method for contextual viewing and analysis toward the insertion of architecture frames a way of thinking about the implications of architecture on use and space of its surroundings. It is a structuring scaffold for the implementation of multiple procedures in the invention of architecture. As opposed to prescribing a particular method of construction or spatial thinking, it is instead a method for relating various stages of process in the culmination of information and the resolution of architectural space relative to a context. This structure invents a sequence of related procedures; at critical moments in the process of design it prescribes the subjects of investigation based upon the realization attained in previous stages.

Stages of process directed by the structuring methodology of contextual viewing are eventually condensed into fewer stages and intuitive responses. As the application of this method to the process of design addresses the linguistic qualities of context and the responsive

architecture, a personal language of space and construction will emerge on the part of the designer. This individual design aesthetic is the manifestation of intuition. The thought and method for viewing, thinking, and making become ingrained in the process of design; they become a subliminal voice of guidance and direction. This underscores an intention of curricular scaffolding that guides a student's development toward independent thought. This method is a tool for the design of the curriculum that propels the student toward individual discovery, and later becomes a tool to facilitate that discovery.

### **Conclusion: Application of Method**

Viewing and making as a means of thinking (and structuring thought or conceptualization) is an analytical tool with many applications. It is a method for analyzing a generative construct and translating it into architecture. Any generator of concept is a contextual condition for the design of a resultant architecture. Spatial situations implicit or explicit are categorized and transformed into a format for architectural response. The responding architecture references its initial generator and becomes a component of a dialogue in form, space and experience. The connection between the generative construct and the resulting architecture is the process that relates one to the other. Process establishes a common communicative structure between the generator and the architectural intervention that is the result. The formal and tectonic languages used to represent the architecture have their foundations in the generative construct, be it the urban fabric of a metropolitan landscape, or a cultural artifact used as a catalyst for the conception of spatial operation.

### **Results of the “Ribbon Exercise”**

#### **Introducing the Ribbon's Role in the Design Process**

Representation is a linguistic act. It is, in itself, a narrative detailing the specific nature of something, or the nature of the way that something is perceived. A film is a representation of an

event in that it replaces the actual experience of the event with imagery and dialogue to develop an understanding of that event by the viewer. The film constructs its own graphic language for the presentation of its subject. Literature uses the assembly of language as a way of imparting the most specific perception of its subject that the method of assembly can be construed as the basis for an invented language, unique from every other, as it utilizes not only precise meaning of words but connotations and inferences implied in the juxtaposition of words. Similarly, architecture is a linguistic pursuit in that it describes for its occupants a particular way of viewing their surroundings and the events that transpire within that immediate frame of reference. It is not only a constructed environment but a lens to view that environment. The architectural form and the way that the individual engages it are synonymous with dialogue. Inhabitation is an act with intention on the part of the inhabitant just as dialogue is an act with intention on the part of those conversing. Architecture exists to house program; an intention to its occupation. Its composition, therefore, becomes a narrative of sequence and experience that describes to its inhabitants the ways in which they are to perform whatever act that is prescribed by that program.

### **Pedagogy: Source and Goal of the Ribbon**

Just as the possibility exists to translate meaning imparted by one verbal language into a similar meaning in another verbal language, it is possible to translate through different perceptive languages. This is to say that the basis of an architectural narrative may be found in a source that represents a particular condition in a different perceptive medium. The ability to “read” ideas of experience and spatial operation in whatever graphic format used to represent them is a critical skill for architects to acquire. To this end, an exercise was fashioned that would allow the students of a second year design studio to study a cultural artifact (in this case a film) and extrapolate from it notions of space, event, experience, sequence, spatial operation, and

structured organization. The film became the subject of analysis and diagramming the means by which a conceptual map was laid out to document these notions of experience and inhabitation.

### **Pedagogy: Ribbon As an Extension of the Diagrammatic Process**

Diagramming is the first stage of this process of translation. Diagrammatic markings are semiotic in that they become representational positional references for ideas not yet understood. A character, event, or phenomenal condition is distilled down to a singular graphic gesture, a line or shape, and held within an intellectually prescribed proximity to another gesture. The decision made through the act of making to hold one gesture in particular juxtaposition to another begins the process of translation from a filmic sequence into an architectural construct. However, the diagram is not yet a generative document; it is a map – a recording. Within the semiotic code held in the diagrammatic composition lies information regarding structure, form, volume, and space. These elements will, in the end, manifest themselves into a built form composed of spatial sequences that become the ordering device for programmed events, interrupted by three spatial operators (the door, the window, and the stair) that ground the program in experience. However, there is a moment in the design process when the conceptual mapping of the diagram must give rise to a spatial, tectonic, and volumetric gesture. This stage is the point of translation between the languages of film and space.

### **The Ribbon as a Translator between Ways of Thinking**

As a way of developing the student's ability to understand this language shift, "The Ribbon Model" is a tool to facilitate the artifact's conceptual generation of architecture. "The Ribbon Model" is constructed of fragments of the initial diagram, reproduced at different scales. The assignment calls for the student to deconstruct the diagram and re-assemble it volumetrically. The mapping of systems is translated into spatial sequences. Moments representing filmic conditions are reconceived as experiential qualities of space. The narrative structure of the film

is preserved in the weaving of programmatic strands about one another to create volume and space. In constructing “The Ribbon” the student must establish the architectural intent of the non-spatial through the diagram, and through “The Ribbon” establish that intent in a spatial construct. “The Ribbon” extracts information from the conceptual map and uses that information to generate principles of space, experience, and inhabitation.

### **The Ribbon as a Translator between Methods of Representation**

As an extension of the diagrammatic process “The Ribbon” is neither a catalyst of design nor its end goal. It is a mediator; an analytical tool that exists simultaneously as both a product of the existing and a self-referential architectural design. Its operative role in the process of design and as a linguistic translator is two fold: first as a means of bridging the gap between the graphic and the spatial, and second, as a means of connecting disparate ways of making and thinking on the part of the student. “The Ribbon’s” first operative characteristic is that of the translator between different languages of representation which is manifest in the act of folding the two dimensional diagram into the third dimension of form and space. The diagram provides a contextual foundation for the generation of the architectural gesture; “The Ribbon”. As this process takes place the student develops a conceptual framework for the various operative qualities of space and experience in the project. The act of making facilitates the conceptual development of architectural principles inherent to the design. Moving from one representation of the narrative to another draws the student into a process of moving from one way of making to another. The diagram is an intellectual construct; a semiotic map of narrative events which is made through marking and thinking which develops a direct interface between the student and the work. Reproducing and altering this diagram through digital tools makes the interface between the maker and the made more distant. The act of cutting, folding, and molding re-introduces the tactile qualities of the map to the student in a different way as he/she makes what

was once symbolic tangible. Integrating toolsets that alter the students' perceptions of their projects, and allowing them to move back and forth between ways of making, gives them a stronger ability to conceptualize the event of occupation and the space that holds it.

### **Production of the Ribbon**

The 2nd year design students used this project as a way to discover spatial characteristics in the film that they could then use as a way of understanding, manipulating and reacting to the interaction between the individual and space that encloses them. The students used the opportunity presented to them through this process of discovery to invent the tectonic language needed to unite the various disparate ideas pulled from the film into a cohesive spatial composition. For most of the students this tectonic language was the result of extrapolating information of structure and organization from the initial diagram and from the intersection of the multiply scaled diagram reproductions. In this way the tectonic language became an integral, multivalent system of structure and space making in the overall scheme of the design. Additionally this tectonic language became the foundation for the spatial evolution of the project from this moment until its final iteration. The increasingly resolved narrative structure being held by the tectonic assembly took on several forms in the class: the spatial replication of character traits to embody systemic organization, the reinterpretation of narrative to provide for a "place" for each of the three main character types, and the use of particular narrative moments as symbols for spatial operation and ultimately the composition of spatial operators to address issues of program drawn from the film. For those students who used the three main characters (or character types) in the film as a basis around which three distinct spatial sequences were constructed, the characters themselves became components of the narrative that had spatial characteristics. The characters were distilled down to traits, and the traits into identifiable phenomena or experiential qualities through the process of diagramming. The re-invention of

these, now architectural principles, into a volumetric construction became a way that the construct would be able to, in some way, house a program extracted from the film. The approach of using the construct as a way of constructing a place for each character was interesting in that it operated at two simultaneous scales in the way it was conceived and the way that it was made. The gestalt scheme was an exercise in composing programmatic elements using the three assigned spatial operators. The composition itself was drawn from the film and the diagram to determine specific relational characteristics between programmatic elements and spatial sequences. However, the construction of the moment within these sequences that was meant to house a character was constructed through a process not dissimilar from the first. Character traits and interactions were distilled into spatial understandings or operations which could then be articulated through the construction of a space. These distilled character traits dictated the scale, morphology, orientation, placement, and a host of other characteristics that defined the specific presence of each condition. The programmed sequences that formed “The Ribbon” at the larger scale acted as the connective tissue between each moment. The third project type that surfaced in the studio was one where the student distanced the design process from the narrative as a whole and instead focused upon specific moments within it to generate the spatial and experiential facets of their project. Details in the construction of the filmic sequence became translated into architectural moments that operate in the same manner within a three dimensional format. This focus had a broad range of subjects, from one project where the position of the body relative to light and mass became the driving force for the generation of volume, to another where the construction of the film itself -- the way scenes were framed, shifts in color and saturation, sound, and proportions of objects placed within the field of view – became the subject of analysis and the catalyst for the construction of operative space.

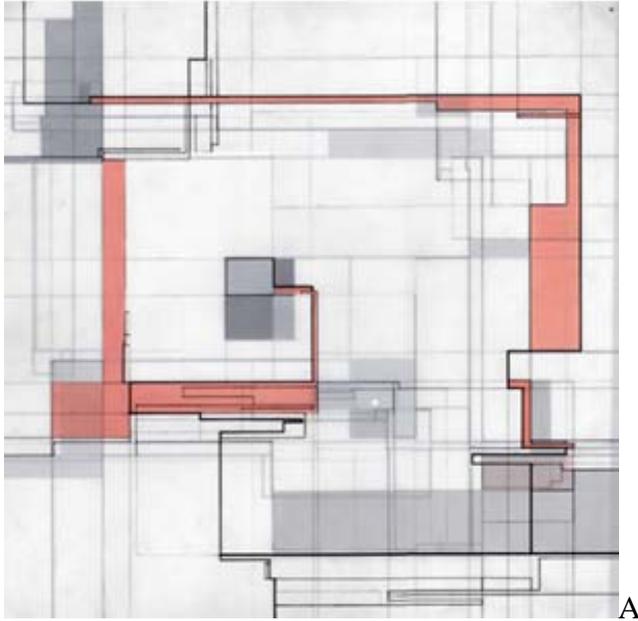
## **A Resultant Design**

In all instances the process of making “The Ribbon” model proved to be a successful transition from analysis to generation. It provided not only a conceptual foundation for architectural invention, but it also prefigured the form and structure of a resolved architecture. Results for “The Ribbon” itself varied from student to student, however in all cases it enabled the student to better conceive of spatial qualities for their designs. In the less successful “Ribbons” the later stages of design abandoned the spatial logics of the diagrammatic process and instead used them as a conceptual stepping stone that directed the student’s understanding of connections, relationships, and spatial operations in the later portions of the design process. The “Ribbon Models” that proved to be more successful actually became formal studies for the later design. There was a direct spatial and visual connection from one stage to the next. In either case, this moment of translation in the design process firmly grounded the final production into the initial stages of conception, which strengthened the final project’s ability to communicate ideas that the student injected into them regarding: spatial configuration, experience, program, and phenomena.

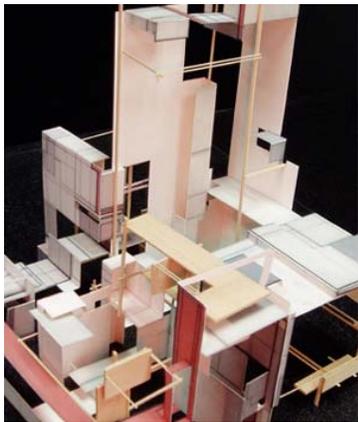
## **The Ribbon’s Versatile Applicability to the Design Process**

Ultimately this exercise is versatile in its ability to be applied to different projects, with different characteristics and intentions. For second year students it was presented as an assigned portion of their studio project. However, its role in the development of a responsive architectural gesture has given them a tool for the conception of architecture that will be a permanent and completely assimilated component of their process. Although not a formal step in the design process, the act of translation takes place with every shift in format, media, and method of representation. In these instances “The Ribbon” exercise is a tool in the collective skill sets of these students to better equip them to transition from one language to the next. It will, perhaps,

never again be a formal exercise that the student embraces, but it does present them with a methodology that will filter into the way they develop the conceptual stages that mark the inception of the design process. It is as much a tool for the conception of space as it is a tool for its construction, and this mode of thought will present itself in the way that the student diagrams, sketches, and views representations of space and experience in any format. The thought evoked by “The Ribbon Exercise” gives the student something that can be incorporated in a broad range of architectural studies or investigations as a strategy for analyzing, viewing, and reinterpreting notions of inhabitation and experience (figure 5-1).



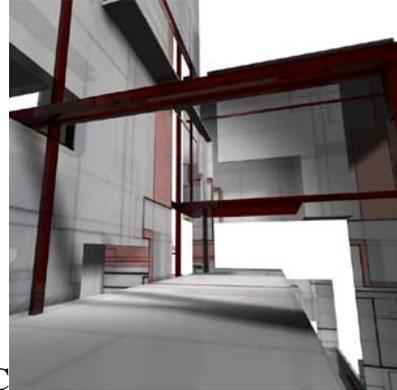
A



B



C



D

Figure 5-1. Ribbon Exercise student projects. A) The initial diagram that establishes systems, tectonic language, sequencing, and spatial relationships. B-C) Volumetric “Ribbon” unfolded from the diagram. D) Digital manipulation of the spatial quality of the Ribbon.

## APPENDIX A EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: OUTPOST

This project (which is inclusive of Appendices II, III, and IV) was administered to a fourth semester design studio in the University of Florida School of Architecture by Prof. Nancy Sanders in collaboration with the author of this paper. It is an example of an “Outpost” project. It was administered under the name of “The Remote City Project” and focused upon the invention of an architectural intervention to a dual contextual condition. A town submerged beneath a lake by a dam, and the new towns formed above the surface.

### **The Remote City Project**

The Remote City Project is conceived as a connection between the existential qualities of the present that is a mirror to a memory of what used to be. The drowned city is a condition that speaks simultaneously to the concepts of removal and replication, exile and memory, and the edge between these different states of context. Water is a threshold between twin urban environments, each a simulacrum of the other, that denies access in any physical way. Instead, access is granted only through the “mind’s eye” as people who once lived at the bottom of the lake face a reminder, such as a grave that was once at the bottom and was transported to higher ground – a memory marker as much as a marker for the dead, and through its inspiration seek out the life they previously knew only through their imaginings and dreams.

### **Context**

#### **Urban Matrix**

This is a construct detailing the spatial and relational urban organization of Keowee, Six mile, and Seneca. Within this component of the model there is a compression of elements that will allow the matrix to become representative of the connection between principle moments within the towns and the shore of Lake Jocassee. It is a layered plane that is generated from the

juxtaposition of scales that make up the towns, as well as natural or topographic features that compose its immediate context. Special attention should be paid to focal points within these three places and the relationships between those points. Varying densities that exist within each one, as well as connections and barriers that exist between them will be vital to the composition of this layered plane.

### **Submerged Urban Matrix**

The submerged urban matrix is a version of the layered plane from above, except that it is constructed through a filter of submersion, abandonment, decay, and the distortion of memory. Allow this to be a dream that is constructed through the inspiration of the videos and stories of this lost place. It can be an imagining of a city, but it also must be a mirror to the existing urban condition of the present.

### **Vertical Plane**

The vertical plane is to be of one or two materials only, and it will represent that connection that exists between the city above and the city below. Within this vertical plane, which will become a construct of both matrices, You are to intervene with your wayfarer's station – The Well of Memory. To accomplish this, the plane will be excavated and carved to accommodate the existence of a construction which engages both urban environments. It will be a mapping of relationships, ephemeral and permanent, perceptive and physical, that exists between the two cities.

### **Intervention: “A Well of Memory”**

The well of Memory is a memorial to the lost city. It is an occupiable construct that allows for the momentary breach of the water barrier to glimpse what has become. It is also there to reinforce notions of the lost city in the minds of those that come to visit it. Perhaps it holds and displays artifacts pulled from the lake floor. Perhaps it holds the names and biographies of those

that lived there and have now re-defined the urban landscape above the valley. Perhaps it is a map that demarcates the past and present location of structures, programs, graves, and people that were re-located as a result of the flood. Regardless of the memory that it stimulates, the well is to be a vertical spatial gesture that defies the water barrier and stitches the two realms together becoming an inextricable component of both.

APPENDIX B  
MID-PROJECT PROGRESS WRITE-UP: REMOTE CITY PROJECT, OUTPOST

In the Remote City Project the notion of verticality has transcended the typical understanding of a gesture to the sky and has instead taken on the mantles of experience and inhabitation. Verticality has become a strategy for programmed events within a structure as opposed to a strictly formal descriptor. It marks the ways in which people are able to interact with each other and with the environment that they are immersed within. For some, verticality is an orientation and direction of inhabitation, for others it defines the more ephemeral structure of the sculpted phenomenon. Within the parameters of this project there is also the consideration of the impact has upon the nature of structure and occupancy as differences in elevation breed dramatic changes in the surroundings and topography.

The suspended tower delves into Lake Jocassee as it strives to recall that that was lost; The Lodge, the cemetery, the old river beds, the forests, and the other structures that once populated the valley. This vertical structure is programmed for the reaction, in some manner, to the loss of these things. The specific reaction, as it has been conceived by you through the process of making and research, is facilitated by a program of your own creation. Recollection is the predominant operative quality of the projects being developed in the studio. For some this has translated into a kind of programmatic map that has generated a sense of the vertical. This map is made evident in the physical structure by the composition of spaces and the narrative sequence that drives an occupant from moment to the next; from one experience to the next. For these projects the narrative is explicit in structure of the project – what was once the diagram now has a direct formal link to the final iteration of the inverted tower.

The sense of containment has become the primary issue being grappled by some projects. The question of what is repelled and what is allowed in has become a strategy for the placement

of edge, the composition of edge, the shaping of space and experience, and the construction of volumetric space. The nature of edges used to create precise interactions between occupants, define modes of occupation, and prescribe the specific levels of sensual access across boundaries. The tower has become a collection of suspended territories, each unique in its character, and each inhabited and experienced differently. For some there is a simultaneous inhabitation of breathable air within and the water without. This simultaneity has driven a system of selective moments of visual access across the edge that demarcates the two zones of inside and outside. There are also those who have structures the placement of volume and edge relative to the lost in order to facilitate the conceived reaction of the intervention to the place that it discovers. These edges vary, in through this variance consider the entire spectrum of sensual access between territories. Sound – do I hear the movement of water, the bubbles from divers equipment, the groan of metal resisting the forces of a current? Sight – where does the light fall and what does it illuminate, what do the transparent surfaces want me to see, what do the opaque surfaces hide from me? Touch – Can I feel the water outside, condensing on the surfaces inside, in the air, in my feet as maintain balance in what could be a shifting structure? Taste – Can I taste the water in the air as I would before a rain? Smell – upon entering the air of the structure my sense of smell is once again returned to me what does the water smell like, the algae, the muck from below, the materials used to keep the deep water at bay? All of these can be structured by the positioning of edges, membranes, barriers, and the territories that they define.

The tower is not always a place for people. The tower can also be a system of delivering an event from above to below. The tower can be a shaft of light held within a structure and coming to rest on a moment of discovery. What was once submerged is now brought to the light. The tower keeps the darkness at bay just as it does the water, and in so doing, reveals a past. The

drive behind the production of program is the light, does it land on the old or provide for the possibility of the new? Does illuminate the lost and present it for all who are willing to see, or does it provide for a glimpse into the existence of a now dead place.

The ramifications of delving into the water are severe. The tower shifts in reaction to environmental changes – it becomes a mapping of external forces as opposed to program. Program is then woven into reactive form. The tower is a measure of the human capacity to inhabit the vertical condition. Pressure impacts the health of the individual, and necessitates the strengthening of the built form. Time places the individual within the staged verticality. The tower becomes the construct that acclimates the individual to conditions not natural to them, and in this act there is laid the foundations for discovery.

APPENDIX C  
POST PROJECT SUMMARY AND PRESENTATION: REMOTE CITY PROJECT,  
OUTPOST

**Prelude (The Origins of Space and Story)**

The narrative of architecture is the foundation of experience; it is experience's structure and its generator just as site is to a building. To architecture, narrative is an immaterial component of the architectural construct, the generator of the architectural form, and it gives intention and purpose to inhabitation. Narrative is perceived as a series of vignettes linked by a common thread. Literature and film project a set of scenes (snapshots of a greater experience) strung together through a common path, interactive character, or some other device that relates events into a singular constructed story. For architecture, scene is space, and space is a construct of experience and volume that is given purpose by the narrative that links it (as a scene, vignette, snapshot) to the other moments that comprise the architecture. The narrative is at once immaterial and substantial. It is immaterial in that it is a pure product of the intellect in the same way that dreams and imaginings are products of a mind that seeks to invent experiences that it would like to believe possible. On the other hand, the narrative is substantial in that it is also a stringent limiting factor for the creation of form and space. Architecture without a well composed narrative, despite being perfectly built or adequately attuned to its program or any other convention that determines the success of buildings, will fail in the same way that failure will be the result of a perfectly accurate, well composed story that is without an element with which the reader might identify. The quality of narrative in a story that allows a reader to project themselves into the event that is being portrayed is that same quality that architecture exhibits when one stops seeing a building and begins to see the possibilities of events in space.

The narrative of a place is the immaterial cousin of its form, and it defines the way an individual is to inhabit and engage architecture. Architecture is a scripted event driven by the

narrative of inhabitation; program. The architectural narrative acts as a tool for the generation of form and space. Narrative outlines two components of the architectural gesture. First, the notion of narrative provides a conceptual structure to the sequencing of space and program. It is the planned ordering of events, and in this way defines formal and spatial relationships. Second, the narrative prescribes specific experiential qualities of space and inhabitation, which provides guidance for the design of specific spaces as well as the means by which those spaces are contained, interact with other moments of the architectural whole, or interact with the individual occupant. These two modalities of influence over the creation of architecture come together to outline the material construction of form and space both at the level of the individual and that of the entire construct. The immaterial aspect of narrative becomes a reflection of the material aspect of the architectural form.

It is the narrative's existence as a reflection of the physical that establishes it as an integral component of the architecture itself. As a generator of architecture it can be perceived by an occupant through the experiences and choreographed events that it inspires. As one moves from space to space in the architecture, and simultaneously affects and is affected by the experience of those spaces and the activities they contain, one becomes a character in the narrative that prescribed (through the precise positioning of spaces and events that compose the single experiential vignette) that exact itinerary. Through the course of this sequence an occupant is engaged in a choreographed set movements, actions, and discoveries; a character in the narrative of place. As an individual engages the architecture, the proportions of space, the texture of surfaces as they are touched, the admittance of light, or shadows cast within joints between materials, that individual is simultaneously immersed in the experience of the construction and in the narrative that is a reflection of it.

Fundamentally, narrative is the intangible quality of architecture that defines its purpose; in terms of its existence as well as the assembly of elements that define its variable components. Narrative gives purpose to a form; it defines the function that is the driving force of the inception of architecture. As a choreography of sensations that direct, guide, or motivate an occupant in their inhabitation of space, the narrative stages not only the event that the space is to house, but the way in which that event is discovered, perceived, or interacted with by the inhabitant. Essentially, narrative is the immaterial joint between program and space; between the event and the structure that houses it. Architecture that is limited to the simple novelties of form and experience will lack the capacity to engage an occupant in a way that establishes that individual as a participant in the event or program of a space. It is the program that gives incentive to occupation as it provides a sense of destination, and it is the narrative that orders the components of program and couples them with sculpted experiences toward the ultimate creation of architecture. By prescribing events that are to take place, and subsequently an architecture to facilitate the event, the narrative brings purpose to inhabitation.

### **Imaging Place (Context as a Collage of Fragments)**

The architectural narrative is generative in nature, but it is not an origin of design. The narrative is a designed construct that couples a perception of place with a conception of program. The narrative has its generator in the existential qualities of place: formal qualities of location, cultures of a surrounding populace, traditions, secrets, and memories. From these things the narrative is extrapolated as a means of conceptualizing a method or strategy of intervention that is the beginning of a process that weaves an architectural gesture into an established condition. In a project for an advanced second year design studio, the students were asked to generate a narrative that would be the foundation of an architectural construction. This narrative was to be derived from contextual issues of culture, location, place, and memory. The specific context that

was to be investigated was that of Jocassee Lake in South Carolina. This lake holds beneath its depths (which are substantial, 300ft in some places) houses, civic, and community buildings; ruins of a nearly forgotten place. Additionally, the lake is surrounded by small settlements, presumably the recipients of an influx in population as a result of the diaspora created by the flooding of the valley.

In 1972 Jocassee Valley was a forested valley in the Appalachian Mountains. The river flowed south through the valley, and homesteads were dispersed along it. The roads that granted access to these places of the valley were not much more than dirt trails that cut through the forest. It was a place where people lived. On any given day in 1972, one would be able to navigate from homestead to homestead interacting with the people that lived there. Along the way small bridges would be encountered that spanned the river and negotiated the rough terrain. Parts of the valley were forested densely enough to hide the marks of settlement until they were discovered by the passerby. There was no real organized urban structure, but the place did rely upon, and orient itself toward the river that ran through its center. Houses, a hotel, a quarry, stores, a girls' camp, and other signs of settlement all relate to this central datum. As a marker of the events and history of the valley there was a graveyard. The cemetery held within it the remains of the inhabitants of this valley through generations, and, in this way, was a record of the history and events of the valley and its people. Debbie Fletcher describes life in Jocassee prior to the flood in *Whippoorwill Farewell: Jocassee Remembered*, "We rarely traveled that extra mile or so past the lodge. Other than the spectacular view, I guess there was no reason to. It would always be there." Jocassee Valley existed in this way for a very long time, having been inherited from the Native American population that lived there prior to white settlement. A few years

before this day, Duke Power Company purchased the land of the valley and set into motion a plan to flood it.

In 1973, the structures that marked the lives of the people who had lived in the valley are hidden. The valley was lost. The Dam would provide power to people all across this area. Now, the mountains no longer disappear down into the dense forest pockmarked by houses, bridges, and other signs of inhabitation, but rather emerge from an immense lake as islands rise from the water. In his poem *Deep Water*, Ron Rash describes the lake: “Soon that squared pool of water flickers as if a mirror, surfaces memory of when this deep water was a sky.” The structures still stood at the bottom of this body of water; perfectly preserved remnants of a society that no longer exists. The settlements under the lake are inaccessible aside from a momentary recollection of what they used to be. The place exists only in memory which is the window through which one can see this place; a series of windows, a series of snapshot images. The forests that stretched in a dense blanket across the whole of the valley were logged prior to the flood, and what trees were left stand at the bottom of the lake in a mockery of the forest that used to blanket the valley. The structures still stand as they did before the flood, but are now home to nothing but fish and algae. The graveyard that was a chronicle of the place is now only a field of tombstones submerged under many feet of water. At the base of each marker a depression, sometimes large and unmistakable other times subtle, can be seen where the remains of the dead were exhumed and transported above the line of the rising waters. All of these things can still be experienced, but instead of walking along the dirt roads from place to place, viewing everything in the light of the sun except that which was hidden by the forest, the limit of view is a one foot diameter circle of light projected by a diver at the depths of the lake. This circle of light illuminates what used to be, but only brief images of small parts of a larger whole that is

completely lost. The light fuels the memory of the place, but does little to allow a complete understanding of it.

The towns dispersed over the higher surfaces of the mountains are each isolated variants of one another. Each are the recipients of a populace displaced, but each are their own microcosmic human ecosystem. These towns, despite being intrinsically tied to the valley and its history, bear little resemblance to the community that resided at the bottom of the valley. Each has its own unique urban structure, but it is a structure that is imposed upon the landscape that it inhabits rather than one that is a result of that landscape. They are each of different sizes and densities, but all of them are more populated and dense than the settlements of the valley. As it is, the social, and communal characteristics of the valley have been suffused into those more organized structures of a more urban culture, and have been utterly lost as a result. The lone monument to this existence stands, preserved, hundreds feet below the surface of a nearly impenetrable barrier; Lake Jocassee.

Recollections of the lost communities occur in snapshots; images recorded in the mind's eye of people who happened to live or travel through that valley before the waters slowly engulfed it. The hidden memorial of what was lost is now only accessible through the frame of a pinpoint disc of light from a diver's perspective. The diver swims through the ruins as if flying over rooftops or along roads, and shines a light on miniscule fragments of the place in an effort to piece enough together to mentally form a composite of the whole. The towns around the edges of the lake represent a corruption of what was there before them. Hidden beneath the planned rigor of the grid there might be found some small vestige of a tradition of the place as it existed before the flood. Each town is a snapshot recollection of the lost as each town is representative of a different facet of the communities drowned. And so, context is assembled

rather than documented. Context is built from the images gathered from the recollections of the past, from what has become of the past through the simultaneous events of displacement and distortion, and from those images gathered of the ruined memorial of what used to be. There is an upper and a lower; each is a kind of record of what was lost.

In his book *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino writes:

Isaura, city of the thousand wells, is said to rise over a deep subterranean lake. On all sides, wherever the inhabitants dig long vertical holes in the ground, they succeed in drawing up water... The city's gods, according to some people, live in the depths...

Through this statement Isaura became an analogue for Jocassee; another snapshot to be woven into the fabric of context with all the others. Jocassee's gods were the memories that dwelt with the ruins of the bottom, except that Jocassee had no wells with which to access them. A well that would stitch together the realms of the surface and the submerged would be a narrative architecture of memory, viewing, and the discovery of the secrets of a place.

The students layered all of these issues into the analysis of the valley. Studying Isaura, they were able to place themselves into the condition of the Jocassee Valley and imagine what it would be to breach the threshold of water and touch the ruins below. The ruins below were imagined and assembled as a series of vignettes stitched together. Layed atop this study were other studies of the surrounding towns again, each representing a snapshot glimpse of the place that they were a part of. All of these studies and investigations were positioned relative to one another and related through a proximity to the water that divided them all. Each scene had its own relationship to the Lake and the river, and consequently with the ruined settlements below the water. This process of study and position culminated in the construction of a contextual model of layered structures and systems indicating the different relationships between the lost and the various towns around its perimeter. Within this densely assembled matrix of events and form extrapolated from those events, coincidental points of overlap emerged between the

contextual layers, and it was these points that determined site and relationship for a vertical gesture of connection.

### **A Story of Architecture (A Narrative of Space in Form)**

This vertical architectural gesture was a well not unlike those of Isaura. It was a well of memory; a tool for the recollection of the past. The gesture is that of tower suspended from foundations held at the surface of the lake diving into its depths and meeting another foundation locked into the forgotten Jocassee. The program of this tower was derived by the student from the contextual qualities of the context that they had assembled; a program mapped through the memory of the place. Where the narrative of memory was the generator of a contextual understanding, the architecture became a narrative of the individual as it guides them through a reintroduction to the ruins of the past. The narrative of the architecture was something that directed experience and discovery in the shaping of the events that would re-engage an individual with a place previously barred to them. This engagement would be mirrored by the tower's interlock with the context of the world above; the current condition projected into the condition of the past.

The inherent verticality of the suspended tower draws the inhabitants downward into the depths of the lake. It is the vehicle that enables the boundary created by the surface of the water to be defeated. The surface of the water demarcates a very specific line upon the project dividing inhabitable space into measured zones. This stratification of the vertical tower continues as one descends. First, the water line that stretches across the surface is more complex than that of a single line, there are in fact multiple positions of the water against the tower as the depth of the lake fluctuates. Then the occupant realizes the gradual loss of natural light as they venture progressively further downward until there is a moment where no perceptible light is able to penetrate the mass of water embracing the construct. Beyond this point there is a moment where

the zone of the ruins is reached, which changes the character and mode of inhabitation for the space. It is not an environmentally imposed demarcation of the tower or its spaces but a programmatic demarcation of space based upon an intended interaction between the ruin and the intervention. Lastly, there is the terminal moment of the tower where its supports jut through the silt and muck at the bottom to grasp the earth with the strength to anchor it to that point at the bottom of the lake. These strata alter the configuration of space and movement; they structure it and give it a cadence. Additionally, as external forces upon the architecture define them, they define zones of interaction between the occupant and the awareness of conditions external to the architecture. The perceptions of context change from one zone to the next on the journey downward. In this way verticality becomes more than the formal gesture and instead functions as a measure of the form and the events housed with it.

The tower is the vehicle of discovery. It is a tangible link between modes of the existential qualities of place. It is at once apart of the realm above and of that below and allows its occupants move across the threshold between the two. The subtle shifts in spatial quality and experience as one descends ultimately culminate in a single moment of revelation. The form of the tower becomes a tool for the perception of what used to be lost; its formal and spatial character have been, at this moment, completely dedicated to the context of the lake bed. The vertical gesture is a measure for the transformation of form from a component of one condition into a component of the other. The inhabitant is aware that this moment of transformation is the foundation of the program, the experience, the narrative, and the forms that join these immaterial constructs of architecture to the inhabitant.

The interconnectedness of the tower with dual context structure is one that references moments spread over a great distance. This place is characterized by dispersal, and as a result, this intervention is a construct that redefines proximity to place. Through it, distance and removal are perceived directly by the inhabitant. There is a duality to this perception of distance which reflects the nature of the context itself. The dispersal of the population establishes the tower as a kind of gravitational focus for the people that once resided in the valley and wish to return to it. The travel to this tower, the distance overcome, is a kind of pilgrimage. The level of removal or displacement is perceived through the movement from a terminus to an origin. Additionally, through its relationship with the current context that exists above the plane of water, the tower references the dispersal of population that have come to inhabit that spread condition. The tower frames the memory of the lost place in juxtaposition to the existing qualities of place. The foundation of that juxtaposition is distance. The creation of space acknowledges the disparate ways in which culture and society have evolved from one point to another of the current context composed of isolated, scattered towns. The varying ways that different spaces interlock recalls the varying community structures inherent in the composition of the new urban grids. The information presented in the events of space recall the evolution of different places intrinsically tied to the one single moment of commonality; Jocassee Valley. Each inhabitant is made aware of not only their own relationship to this origin, but also other relationships with other towns and other groups of people that share this single ancestor.

Space, in this well of memory, is structured and organized to facilitate a flow of information. The architecture is a narrative document used to record the memory of the valley and the dispersed progeny of the flood. Space is sequenced in a precise order; a script. The occupant is drawn deeper into the well and at each new threshold makes a discovery that ties that

person to the place either through knowledge or recollection. It is not merely a memorial to of the lost meant to fight forgetfulness, but rather a memorial to change. It is a mark that illustrates a place and its evolution. With each space an occupant comes to a new revelation regarding the change, and moral judgments are left in the hands of that person. This place is meant only to document an event and allow the individual to engage that event through the experiences shaped by the tower. Each space is a vignette; an independent story of a single event. This story defines the character of space and the experience that it creates. A narrative of the whole is composed of the sequence of vignettes; the scripting of spaces and experiences with the intention of imparting knowledge of place.

Along this sequential itinerary there is a constant awareness of the exterior. The skin of the tower is composed as a means of connecting the interior with the exterior. Changes in the environment external to the tower determine the placement and type of space within the tower. Awareness occurs through the ability of an occupant to see that environment outside of the tower and the way that it changes from one space to another in the constant movement downward. Awareness occurs through changes in pressure within the spaces of the tower as they are held in opposition to the mass of water pressing in upon them. Awareness occurs through the smell of water as it condenses on surfaces and the way it feels when those surfaces are touched and a droplet remains on the tips of the fingers. The manipulation of these elements and the senses that perceive them are the tools of the architecture in its endeavor to present the realities of the condition beyond the limits of the walls. All of these manipulations serve to reinforce an understanding of separation between the lost structures of the valley and the towns above the water. The changes of experience evoked by the increasing mass of water along the sequence of the tower define degrees of separation and measure distance. As one approaches the construct,

its immensity is hidden below the surface of the lake. What does come above that surface and make itself apparent is that component that plays a role in the development of the context above the surface. It is integrated into the network of towns above the water through the path of approach, and the way it is viewed across the surface of the water. Entering into the construct and passing below the water, one is gradually pulled from the existential qualities of the surface environment and projected into a context that is the foundation of what is above. The terminus of the tower is an integral component of the structures of the lake bed; it intervenes into that system of ruins and incorporates those ruins into the systems of the new architecture.

Naturally, the nature of the terminus is controlled by those elements that shape it. The structures of the lake bed are a contextual reality that the tower must react to. There are three possibilities for the fusion of the new architecture with its ruined context: enveloping, framing, or interlocking. Envelopment is the collection fragments of the context and placing them within the structure, creating a kind of memorial gallery. Framing is the passive cohabitation with the ruins and allowing selective views of them from within the confines of the tower. The other possibility is that the intervention might interlock itself with the ruins to create pockets where the ruins themselves could once again be occupied. The way in which the rest of the narrative is being presented through the architecture would determine the way that the ruins are engaged at the terminus of the tower. Additionally it is this endpoint of the vertical tower that must provide structure for the mass above. A kind of anchor thrusts into the muck and locks the tower in position, and it is this anchor that is the inevitable result of re-engaging the past as it stands below several hundred feet of water. Regardless of method the issue of constructing something relative to a group of structures that have already been marked by years of decay underwater has to be addressed. The weathering of objects is a contextual reality and is therefore something that

can be reacted to. The act of weathering creates particular patterns over surfaces and marks materials of different kinds in different ways. Essentially each existing structure, artifact, or fragment that is of the lake bed context is a found object that must be accepted as it is. Students study this phenomenon and develop strategies for embracing it through the incorporation of weathered, found objects into the architecture. The weathering is incorporated into the material and surface quality of space.

Each of these notions: verticality, vehicle, distance, sequencing, perceptions of the exterior, and engaging the past are all addressed through development of the tower's program. Each becomes manifest within a singular construct. Each is a facet of the narrative; a snapshot of experience assembled in architecture. Each, as a programmatic element is represented by a specific event in space that the architecture is intended to hold and facilitate. Each student embraced each notion and molded into the programmed event based upon cultural implications of place and an intention for the role that this tower was to play in the context that was to hold it. This role is defined by an intention of the narrative, whether it is to celebrate the evolution of the place and the sacrifices necessary for that change or a memorial to a lost place, it this singular intention that drives the makeup of the individual programmatic components and their relationship to one another.

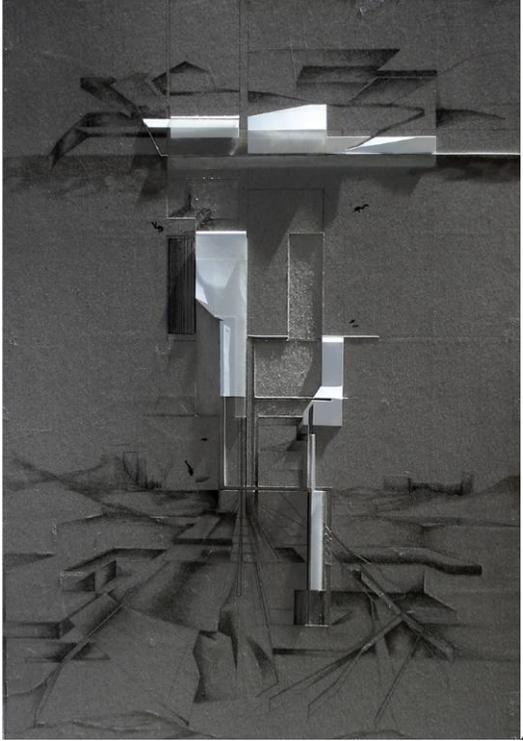
### **Epilogue (Finding the Material from the Immaterial)**

In this exercise students were tasked to construct the intangible event, and use this conception of inhabitation, program, and function as the foundational generator of space. From the immaterial construct the student was able to draw implications of material and form that would manifest themselves as an architectural gesture; complete in its consideration of the population of place, and its own single inhabitant. In the modernist mantra coined by Louis Sullivan, "Form ever follows Function," function and purpose are driving force behind the

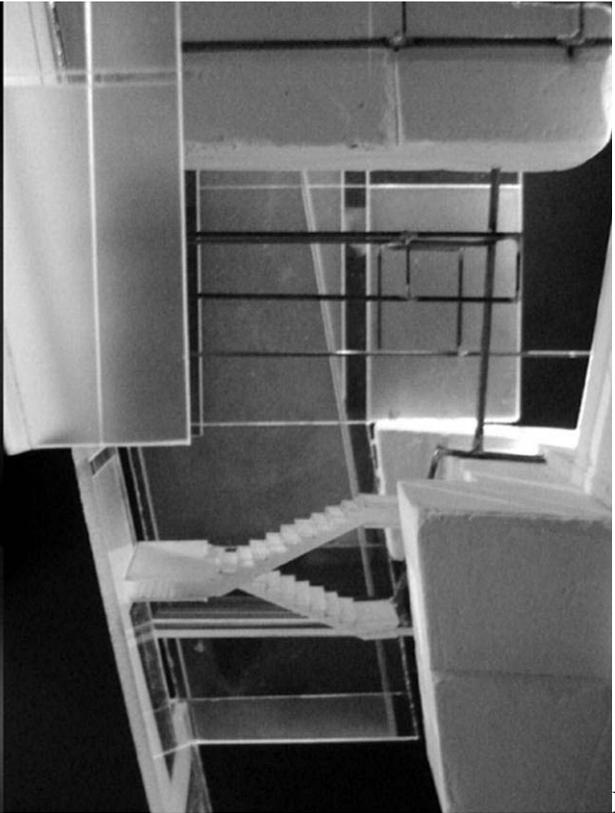
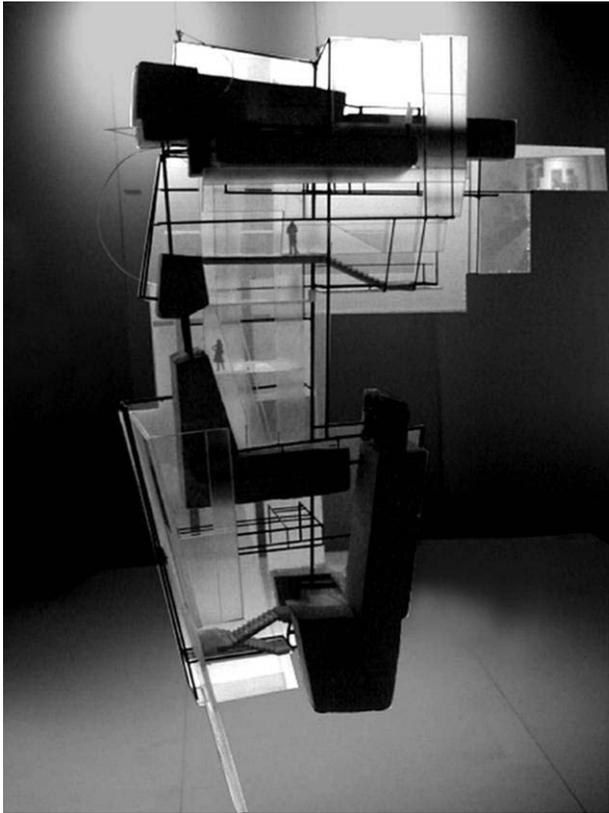
development of architecture. Narrative defines function. In this exercise the narrative was the singular determinate factor of program and event. Within the narrative there are descriptive implications of experience that drive the formation of the physical form. In this exercise it is the role of the architectural construct to sculpt the spaces and experiences that are necessitated by the narrative, thereby making the architecture a tangible reflection of the immaterial. In this process the narrative drove the invention of program as a critical notion in the choreography of experience that was molded into a specific event. The experience itself was precisely constructed through the assembly of forms and materials to sculpt space and phenomena. As a result, the narrative remains as a constant aspect of the physical construct. Form remains as a final document of that narrative, to be read and experienced through inhabitation, where the inhabitant will always be subliminally aware of the narrative of which they have become an intrinsic part.

Through this exercise of research, analysis, and making students were able to create an architecture of immateriality. The process of making was guided by an intention for space and event. As a result the students became the beneficiaries of a process of design that was expanded beyond the act of making and into a consideration of program. The possibilities of programming becoming a generator of architecture were explored through the narrative tool. The students' design process was not only expanded by an increased capacity to conceptualize specific notions of space and inhabitation, but was also augmented through methodologies of research and analysis. Foundational to this exercise is the students' discovery of architectural possibilities that range from its role within its context to the inhabitant's role within the architecture. Structure and design were looked at as being directly influenced by notions of place and culture as well as architecture's ability to re-shape those conceptions into an entirely new condition. Decisions

made regarding form, material, or space were considered for the implications they might have on an architectural scheme inclusive of these physical traits as well as the notions of narrative and event. Through these considerations the rigid design process of a second year student was made more malleable in its ability to consider the spatial implications of the design of both the material and immaterial (figure 8-1).



A



B

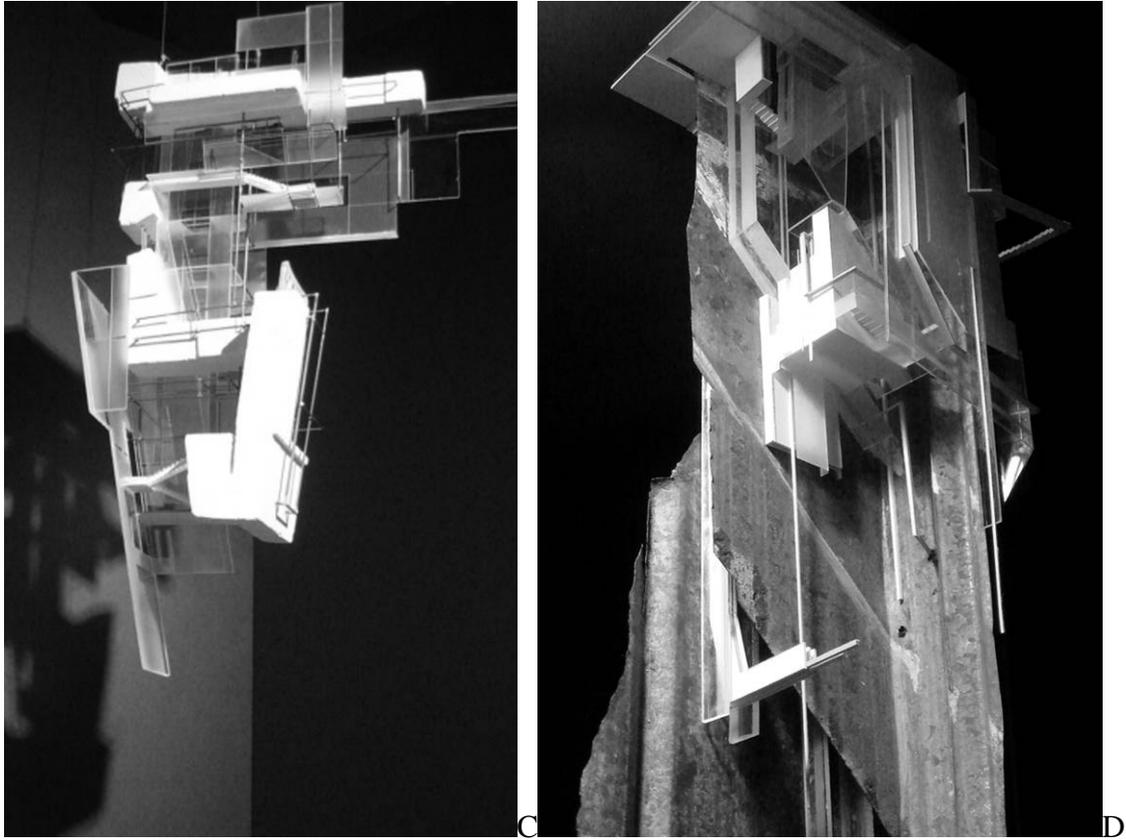


Figure 8-1. Student projects from the Remote City Project. A) Analytical section of the intervention and two contexts. B) Model image showing spatial sequence and narrative. C-D) Model Image showing complete project.

APPENDIX D  
EXAMPLE PROJECT: SAVANNAH VERTICAL MARKET, CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS,  
SATELLITE

This project (which is inclusive of Appendices V and VI) was administered to a fourth semester design studio in the University of Florida School of Architecture by Prof. John Maze in collaboration with the author of this paper. It is an example of an “Satellite” project. It was administered under the name of “The Savannah Vertical Market” and focused upon the invention of an architectural intervention to the city, lifestyle, and phenomenal experience of Savannah Georgia.

**Prior to Departure for the Site**

As a group the class should construct a map at 1:100 scale during the week before the trip (The same scale as the maps and aerials that they will be given.) This should be an overlaid drawing on single matte Mylar. Each layer should be assigned to a group in the class. When all layers are placed together they read as a single map of the city.

The layers are in order from base to top.

- First group/layer: The city grid with an emphasis on proportion and difference between street sizes, types, and functions
- Second group/layer: Open space versus filled space – the figure ground (grey chartpak).
- Third group/layer: Scale shifts within the city – both at the level of the fabric and within individual wards or blocks – a series of profile lines demarcating edges between modalities of the urban fabric
- Fourth group/layer: Programs and street edges – extrapolating possible program shifts from the aerial photo (colored chartpak to denote differences in program) and documenting different ways in which the street edge is constructed by the architecture

**In Savannah and the Day After**

Itinerant contour sketching. This should be a wandering contour that extends through their movement through the city. It will be at times very intricate and focused upon the smaller scale

spatial situations and at others be very gesture capturing contextual connections between the smaller spatial situations.

This will allow them to differentiate between the physical structure of the city (which they have exhaustively studied already at this point) and the experiential qualities of it. It will be the conceptual bridge between an understanding of the fabric and an understanding of the place(s).

Take intelligent, documentary photographs of the city and the site (as well as the cotton exchange). On Sunday, compile and arrange photos on 3 sheets of 36"x60" paper: one for the city, one for the cotton exchange, and one for the site. I see the photos being hung on the wall by the door and used as inspiration and documentation through the course of the project. I also see them being arranged in a pragmatic grid; each photo being 6"x8" and arranged 4 across by 8 down. However, I can also see an interesting collage coming out of this exercise, but don't know what information it would yield as yet.

### **Upon Returning**

Generate diagrams of the cotton exchange building. The diagrams are similar in nature to the diagrams pulled from suspect zero, but should analyze the spatial arrangement of the cotton exchange within its factor's walk/riverfront context. There should be a focus upon spatial joints that happen as it is suspended above factors walk – the way that it acts as a linkage between three spatial attitudes (riverfront – factor's walk – city fabric) – how it engages each of those attitudes etc.

The site should be a block or so away from factors walk in a little spatial niche that I have seen. This will allow them to use the cotton exchange as a way of generating a strategy for insertion without giving them the opportunity to replicate it or extend it into their own construction.

Moments from the diagram should be cast out of plaster or concrete as a way of pulling a formal language out of the invented diagrammatic language. Casting gives the opportunity to translate the diagram onto surfaces of the mass. Wax may be used as a way of articulating or augmenting certain masses cast out of other materials, but only selectively and not on its own.

These massive fragments as forms based upon a spatial situation should then be arranged to as a means of creating space with the program of a market. The market should use the mass pieces as the foundations for the spaces that comprise it and a tectonic structure to hold, frame or suspend those pieces. This is somewhat the opposite approach that was used in the DWS.

The market is to be a structure that acts as a nodal linkage between the three spatial attitudes of the riverfront/factor's walk/city fabric. The section shift creates the opportunity for this to be a vertical market with special attention paid to the temporal occupation of it. Vendors come and go within this vertical programmatic splice within the city of savannah. There is also the notion of mitigating the relationship between merchant and customer (at what point is their a place of access for each type, or is there specific moments dedicated to one or the other within the structure, or what is the nature of the seam as one moment touches or interacts with another, etc.)

Possibility of a satellite pavilion entrenched within the city fabric. It may have an itinerant connection with the focal riverfront market. That itinerary could shift and change to accommodate the shifts in the structure of the city. The constructed itinerary is a means of tying the disparate programs into the urban structure.

Understanding of the urban fabric should come from the synthesis of the experiential itinerant sketch and the class group drawing.

Understanding of the local site condition should come from a synthesis of the rendering of place within the itinerant sketch and the diagram of spatial operations within the cotton exchange.

Eventually the project will culminate in the process sketches and drawings fused into an itinerant section moving through the urban fabric and developing the relationship between the intervention and its context. I see this drawing as being a single very long scroll drawing that engages both digital and manual techniques for its completion (developing measure, sequence, and structure, in cad – regions, territories, and modalities in Photoshop – manipulation of experience and occupation/inhabitation in ink or graphite). There is also the opportunity in this to fold plan and perspective moments from the section creating a single amazing synthetic drawing. The primary parts of this project will be this drawing and the model that will be produced to speak about the contextual space local to the market as well as the spatial and programmatic conditions of the market itself.

APPENDIX E  
EXAMPLE PROJECT: SAVANNAH VERTICAL MARKET, SATELLITE

This project was administered to a third semester design studio in the University of Florida School of Architecture by Prof. John Maze in collaboration with the author of this paper. It is an example of a “Satellite” project. It was administered under the name of “The Savannah Vertical Market Project” and focused upon the invention of an architectural intervention to the existing conditions of Savannah Georgia, and specifically upon an intervention within Factor’s Walk that connects the riverfront to the downtown area.

A building is not in itself architecture. A building is a building. Architecture by various definitions and postulates requires humankind, as a singular user, and a collective culture. Architecture is the outward phenomenological experience of the user [i.e. humankind] and the enriched or enhanced perception of self, place, culture, and the cosmos that is filtered by the passage of Time associated with the architecture. Humankind as a species has an innate need to locate itself, on the Land [i.e. where one is, which way is north, for example], in Society and Culture [i.e. one’s place within one’s culture...one’s roots], within the Cosmos, [i.e. what is one’s sign, are we alone, what time is it, etc..] A successful architectural experience ties one with one’s Place in Space and Time [i.e. the Fourth dimension]

The project is an Urban Market and Instrument. The market is to be a structure that acts as a nodal linkage between the three spatial attitudes of the riverfront/factor’s walk/city fabric. The section shift creates the opportunity for this to be a vertical market with special attention paid to the temporal occupation of it. Vendors come and go within this vertical programmatic splice within the city of savannah. There is also the notion of mitigating the relationship between merchant and customer (at what point is their a place of access for each type, or is there specific

moments dedicated to one or the other within the structure, or what is the nature of the seam as one moment touches or interacts with another, etc.

Possibility of a satellite pavilion entrenched within the city fabric. It may have an itinerant connection with the focal riverfront market. That itinerary could shift and change to accommodate the shifts in the structure of the city. The constructed itinerary is a means of tying the disparate programs into the urban structure.

These massive fragments as forms based upon a spatial situation should then be arranged to as a means of creating space with the program of a market. The market should use the mass pieces as the foundations for the spaces that comprise it and a tectonic structure to hold, frame or suspend those pieces. This is somewhat the opposite approach that was used in the DWS.

Starting an architectural design is in essence no different that either of the first two projects on which we embarked. First, we understand the problem, or use of the site, whether it be a city, block, or vacant lot. Then, we understand the site, again - city, block, or lot...what are the constituent layers of existence ...What makes up the site? What makes up the program? What makes up the users? This knowledge then in turn leads to an understanding of what makes up the project's physical manifestation. But let's not forget...

We think of architecture as a collection of experiences, some designed, some not. Some anticipated, some quite surprising. In the creation of a design project, nothing on the site, nothing found within the design process, whether intentional or not, is arbitrary. A design project is a complex, multi-faceted organism. It will have a skeleton [i.e. a structural system], it will have muscle and organs [i.e. functional, inhabitable rooms], skin [i.e. windows, openings, and exterior walls to mediate the environment - some transparent, some translucent, some

opaque]. As we are an amalgamation of our genetics and environment/s, so is an architectural design.

For the remainder of the semester we will speculate about how one specific person can exist [DWELL] in the city, specifically Savannah (i.e. vendor, performer, butcher, baker, candlestick maker, etc.). Their instruments will both mediate between their workspace and the public realm of the city and connect them to the public realm of the city. Each vendor needs his/her own space in which to function within the market.

The possible sites are such that the interior instruments (the room) will occur along a path (alley) through a city block. The “rooms” are to be seen as nodes along this designed passage, with a series of thresholds or events that connect your craftsman to the public realm of the city (i.e. public squares, smaller gardens, Broughton, Factors Walk, the Cotton Exchange, etc.). The exterior gathering space is also seen as a node along this public passage (procession), perhaps as a threshold to a room, or perhaps set off by the room from the passage.

Our room will serve to inform the inhabitant with an understanding of what Savannah is, was, and perhaps will be as a settlement on the river in the hills in Georgia in the United States of America. Our room will express our individual understanding as an architect of what it means to dwell between the earth and sky. We now must formulate for ourselves what it will mean to make a mark upon the land.

The program of this “urban instrument” is simple: a market operating at the level of the city and the waterfront. It is a place for different types of vendors, growers, craftspeople, and performers to come together as a community. Within the site you will contemplate the notion of connecting space (i.e. itinerary) also known as an Architectural Procession and Path of Removal

(one exciting series of events leading from the city down to the waterfront and visa versa) and through site.

All additions to the site will be orthogonal to the site boundaries. There must be a minimum of two roof planes/heights within the room, and there must be at least two changes in floor heights encountered along the procession or room.

The procession from the public realm of the market should be an educational or communicative experience, the raison d'être of the room, and the reason those from the outside come into the inside. This is the experience of arrival, of understanding, the "oh!?!". By virtue of the views you allow, the direction of movement, the shape and size of the processed space, the interiority and/or exteriority, structural meter and materiality, the visitor coming to the instrument maker's room will better understand Savannah, their own role as a member of a Savannah community, the profession or art of instrument making and/or playing music.

We will within the collection of spaces and experiences carefully orchestrate a passage of time through the building...what is the procession through our building? What textures, materials, [i.e. what are the smells in the air from room to room, how does the handrail feel?] How high are the spaces, and what kind of light does each space feel like it should have throughout the day, month, year? It is now time to daydream. Before we speak today, spend your time ALONE, with soothing music, with your EYES CLOSED, minds open, and walk through your city marketplace...Move through your site, before and after your building, your architecture grows up from it. Think and feel...feel the air, the light, the space (figure 10-1 and 10-2).

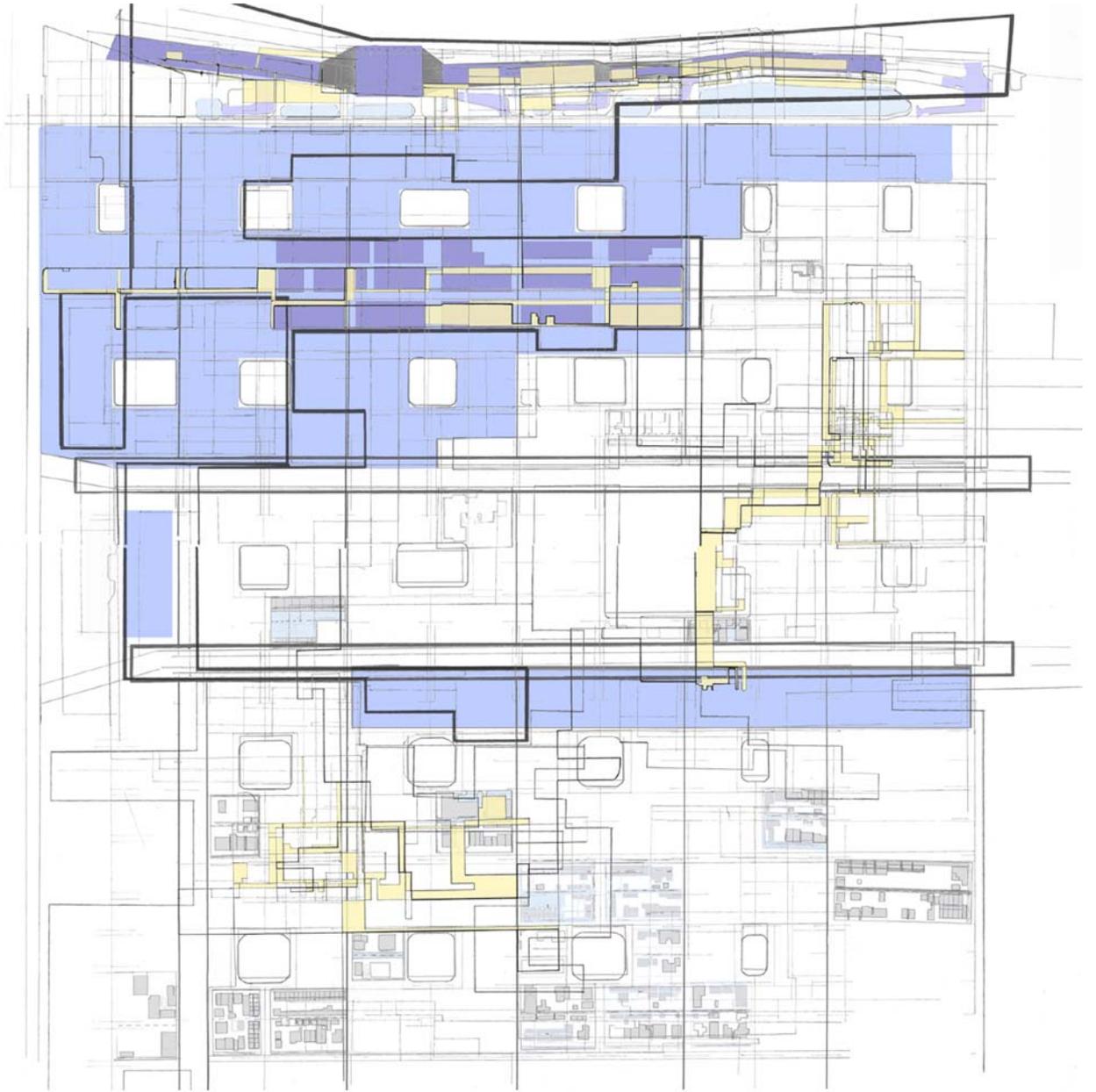
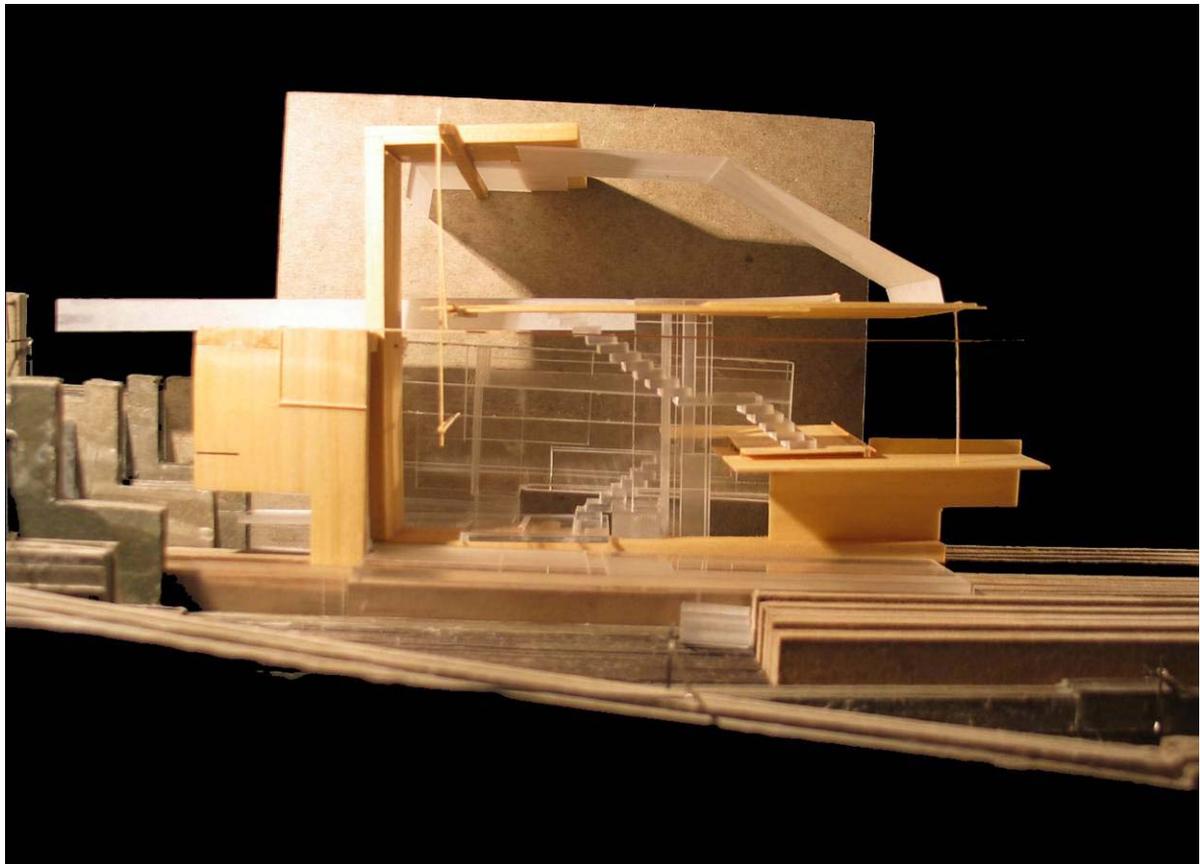


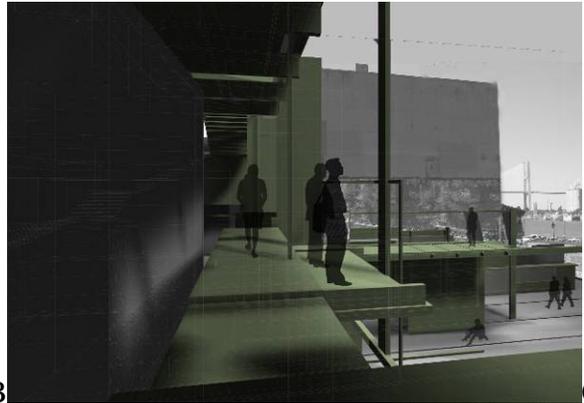
Figure 10-1. Student collaborative analytical map of Savannah. This map was constructed as a series of informative layers as a means of analyzing and documenting a site in Savannah Georgia, as well as the structural, operational, and experiential qualities that make up the city around the site.



A



B



C

Figure 10-2. Student projects from the Savannah Project. A) In the section of the model the interplay between the spatial sequencing and phenomenal qualities of the space of the architecture and the context around it are made apparent. B) The unfolding of the physical qualities of context into the construction of the space of an architectural component. C) Using the Digital tool as a means of understanding scale, proportion, and inhabitation.

APPENDIX F  
EXAMPLE PROJECT: GARAGE PROJECT, GRAFT

This project was administered to a fourth semester design studio in the University of Florida School of Architecture by Prof. Nancy Sanders in collaboration with the author of this paper. It is an example of a “Graft” project. It was administered under the name of “The Garage Project” and focused upon the invention of an architectural intervention to an existing parking garage in order to engage the program of parking with additional possibilities centered on the collection of water.

Students are to construct an intervention to the existing vertical parking garage. This intervention will be composed of three elements: the cistern, the porous plane, and the channel. These three elements will be a part of the physical structure used to house space, program, events, and experiences. The spatial narrative of the project will be determined by the role that each of these play in the construction of space and volume to hold program.

**Mass**

The Cistern: The containment of water. Consider the ways in which this containment might hold space or structure volume. Is it a massive component that becomes an edge to spaces that bracket it? Is water instead contained in an expansive network of containers arranged to hold space and shape experience? Is it massive and opaque or is it ephemeral and transparent? How does light react to the space as a result of this container being either opaque or transparent?

**Plane**

The Porous Plane: The collector/absorber of water harvested from the surfaces of the garage and the rain from the sky. This plane has the capacity to hold, enclose, or define space. The necessary exposure of this plane will cause it to behave much like the skin of a structure; within are the multitude of programs that give purpose to the structure’s inhabitation. Consider

the nature of the porous plane and the impact of that nature upon space and the experiential quality of program that is housed within that space. How does the plane change through its different modalities; dry and engorged? Does this change affect the volume that it contains? Is it an overhead, a laminate, a wall, or transforming element woven through the project? What are the spatial implications of each?

### **Linear Carve**

The Channel: The transporter of water. This creates a dynamic system of transference with the capacity to shape or sculpt space and program as it cuts and divides volume. Is this system a network of moving devices for carrying water, or is it a single spatial gesture cutting through the construct and establishing a sequence of events along its path? What are the spatial implications of water beginning to move, stopping, or passing within or through a space? What impact do these implications have upon experience and program? Does it move water toward or away? Are there multiple occurrences to do both? Does it define volume or affect it?

Through the construction of these elements a clear spatial volume must be constructed to house the following programmatic elements.

- Bath room with showers, lockers and adjoining lap pool to be operated through the collection and reclamation of water
- two self service car wash bays and two full service car wash bays
- Compact electric car charging station (rows of delineated parking or smaller isolated bays)
- A Gathering space delineated for public and private use. Possibly including an office/cashier, lounge with reading and computer niches, vending area
- The existing garage stair must be incorporated as a component of the circulation of the intervention

All of this must be contained within the grafted structure by a structured skin. The cistern, channel, and porous plane must hold space and position each of these programmatic elements

relative to one another. Three spatial operators are the predominant composition of the structure. The existing garage stair must be used to access this structure and cars must be able to move from the garage at any level to access the car queue extension. A separate stair must be built for egress.

The car queue is an element of extension into the context. As such it will not impede or replace any component of context, but rather weave itself through it. It must be accessed from both the exterior and the interior garage. It can carve and manipulate the garage but no other building (figures 11-1 and 11-2).

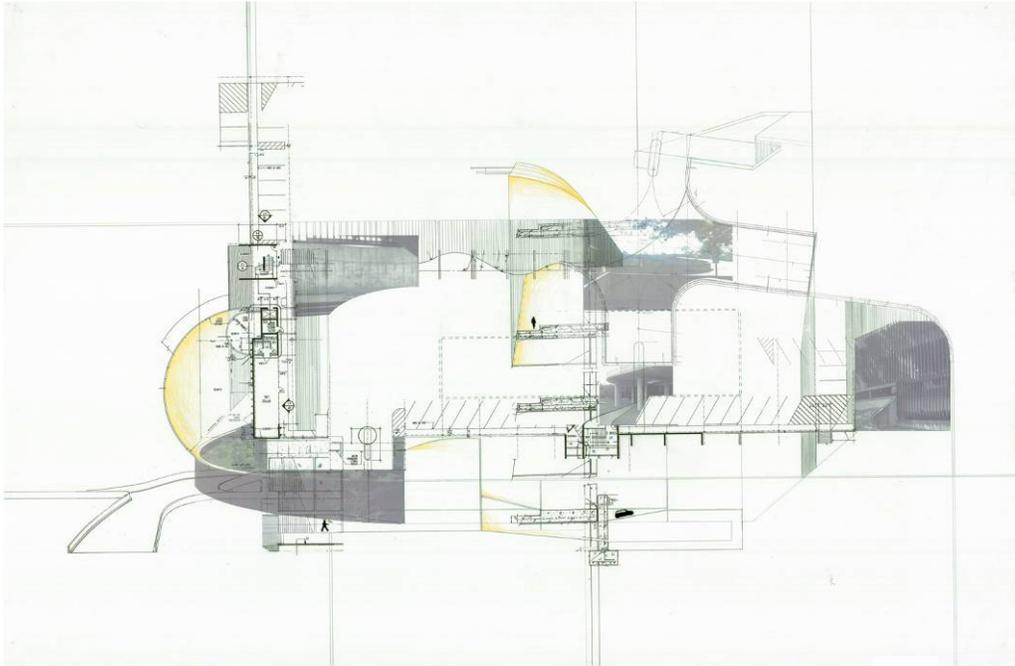


Figure 11-1. Garage Project hybrid drawing. Characteristics of site and context are taken apart, reconsidered, recombined, and woven together into a spatial diagram of a grafted architecture.

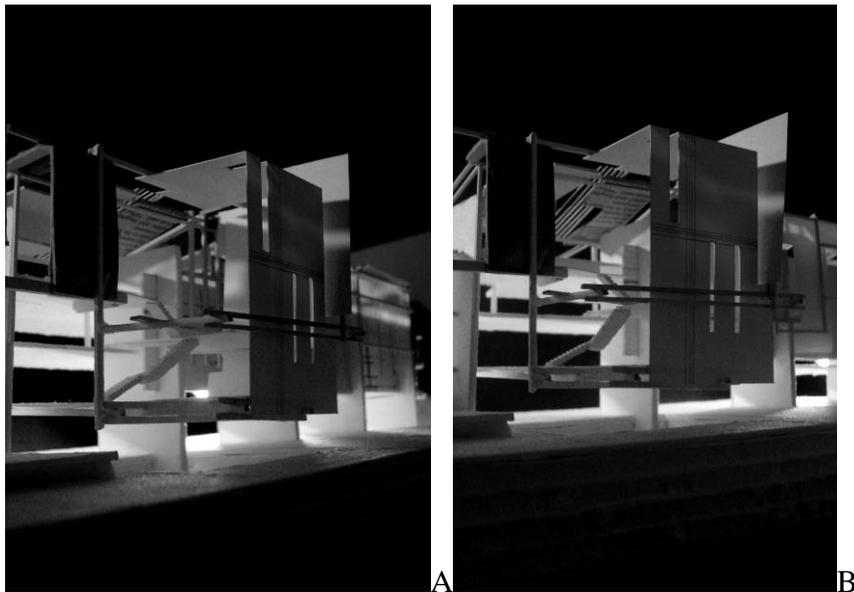


Figure 11-2. Student Projects from the Garage Project. A-B) the intervening architecture becomes a grafted structure upon the existing garage. The garage holds contextual qualities of site a place.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Alexander, Christopher. *A City is not a Tree*, In *Design After Modernism: Beyond the Object*, edited by Thackara, J., Thames and Hudson, pp. 67-84, London, 1988
2. Allen, Stan. *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1999
3. Augé, Marc. *In the Metro*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2002
4. Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, Verso, New York, 1995
5. Berger, Alan. *Drosscape*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2006
6. Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*, Harcourt, New York, 1972
7. Cangro, Jacquelin. *The Subway Chronicles: Scenes from Life in New York*, Plume, New York, 2006
8. Conrads, Ulrich. *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1964
9. Fletcher, Debbie. *Whippoorwill Farewell: Jocassee Remembered*, Debbie Fletcher, 2003
10. Gandelsonas, Mario. *X-Urbanism: Architecture and the American City*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1999
11. Google Earth, *New York City Aerial Photography and Mapping*, 2008
12. Google, [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), *New York City Map*, 2008
13. Holl, Steven. *Pamphlet Architecture 13: Edge of a City*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1991
14. Jonnes, Jill. *Conquering Gotham, A Gilded Age Epic: The Construction of Penn Station and its Tunnels*, Viking, New York, 2007
15. Kahn, Louis I. *Louis I. Kahn: Conversations with Students*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1998
16. Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York*, Monacelli Press, New York, 1994
17. Koolhaas, Rem. *Rem Koolhaas: Conversations with Students*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1996
18. La Biennale di Venezia. *Cities: Architecture and Society Vols.1&2*, Marsilio, Verona, 2006

19. Le Corbusier. *The City of To-Morrow and its Planning*, Dover Publications, New York, 1987
20. Lefebvre, Henri. *The Urban Revolution*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2003
21. Lynch, Kevin. *Good City Form*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1981
22. Mau, Bruce and the Institute without Boundaries. *Massive Change*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 2004
23. Peirce, Charles Sanders. *Peirce on Signs*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1991
24. Rash, Ron. *Raising the Dead*, Ron Rash, 2002
25. Rowe, Colin & Koetter, Fred. *Collage City*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1978
26. Rusk, David. *Cities without Suburbs: A Census 2000 Update*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, 2003
27. Serres, Michel. *Language and Space: From Oedipus to Zola*, in Serres' *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, edited by Josue Harari and David F. Bell, 39 -53, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1982
28. Sitte, Camillo. *The Birth of Modern City Planning*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986
29. Sorkin, Michael. *Local Code: The Construction of a City at 42° N Latitude*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1993
30. Sorkin, Michael. *Local Code: The Construction of a City at 42° N Latitude*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1993
31. Sorkin, Michael. *Variations on a Theme Park*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1992
32. Sullivan, Louis H. *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered*, in Lippincott's Magazine, March 1896
33. Vidler, Anthony. *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 2005
34. Woods, Lebbeus. *Pamphlet Architecture 15: War and Architecture*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1993

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I grew up in a failing neighborhood. It was not impoverished, crime ridden, or drug infested, but it was rotting. What it was was a seemingly never-ending expanse of nearly identical houses. It was, and still is, a place where people haven't spoken to one another in years, and it is the norm to meet your next door neighbor for the first time on the day that they move away; after having been your next door neighbor for a decade. It is an image of what Mario Gandelsonas describes as X-urbia. This past is the inspiration for my research and the source of my design ethic. I write this paper as a single document in process with a goal to discover ways that we, as designers and citizens, might improve our urban environments.

While living in this failing neighborhood, I became an Eagle Scout which provided a foundation for my ambitions as a student of architecture. I also attended Atlantic Community High School where I graduated with honors in the top 10% of my class. My undergraduate degree in Design was attained at The University of Florida where I continued through graduate school, attaining my Master's Degree in Architecture. While in the Graduate program of the College of Design, Construction, and Planning, I had the opportunity to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant all four semesters of my graduate career. I also had the opportunity to attend the Vicenza Institute of Architecture (and act as the administrative assistant to the director) in Vicenza Italy. During graduate school I got married, and without the support of my wife my studies would not have been able to progress to the resolution that they have.