

Alex Porter
B. ARCH University Of Oregon
work samples

23porter@gmail.com
971.645.7117



Stockholm, Sweden | Alvar Aalto

Alvar Aalto home studio

July, 2010

Alex Porter

Healthy and sustainable growth in our built environment is not an option it is a necessity. Creating the places our cities and communities need is not an individual effort; these problems demand the commitment of a collaborative and innovative design team who will work in tandem with clients and the community to develop new solutions. With a background in design theory, and a keen eye for detail, I seek to establish and reinforce these partnerships, and look for ways to communicate the value of a carefully considered design. At the University of Oregon I excelled in a collaborative and inter-disciplinary studio environment, and found a particular home in the student-run design/build enterprise designBridge.

designBridge is a student led and managed design/build program offering community-based design services to non-profit clients. Students take the initiative to identify clients, develop and solve design problems, and manage construction schedules. In 2009 I assisted with the production of several grants the program and helped the organization secure funding for its operating costs through 2011. I was the first undergraduate to be elected by my peers to a project management position in 2010 and became directly responsible for client contact and a \$10,000 budget. Concurrently with our other studio work, and on a volunteer basis, my team and I organized community charettes, produced Permit and CD sets, and built the project over a period of 2 years. My experience with the program is difficult to communicate in a visual portfolio; this work has greatly influenced my outlook on the profession and has provided me with a critical perspective on how design work is pursued and developed. These are lessons that go well beyond those learned in a traditional studio environment.

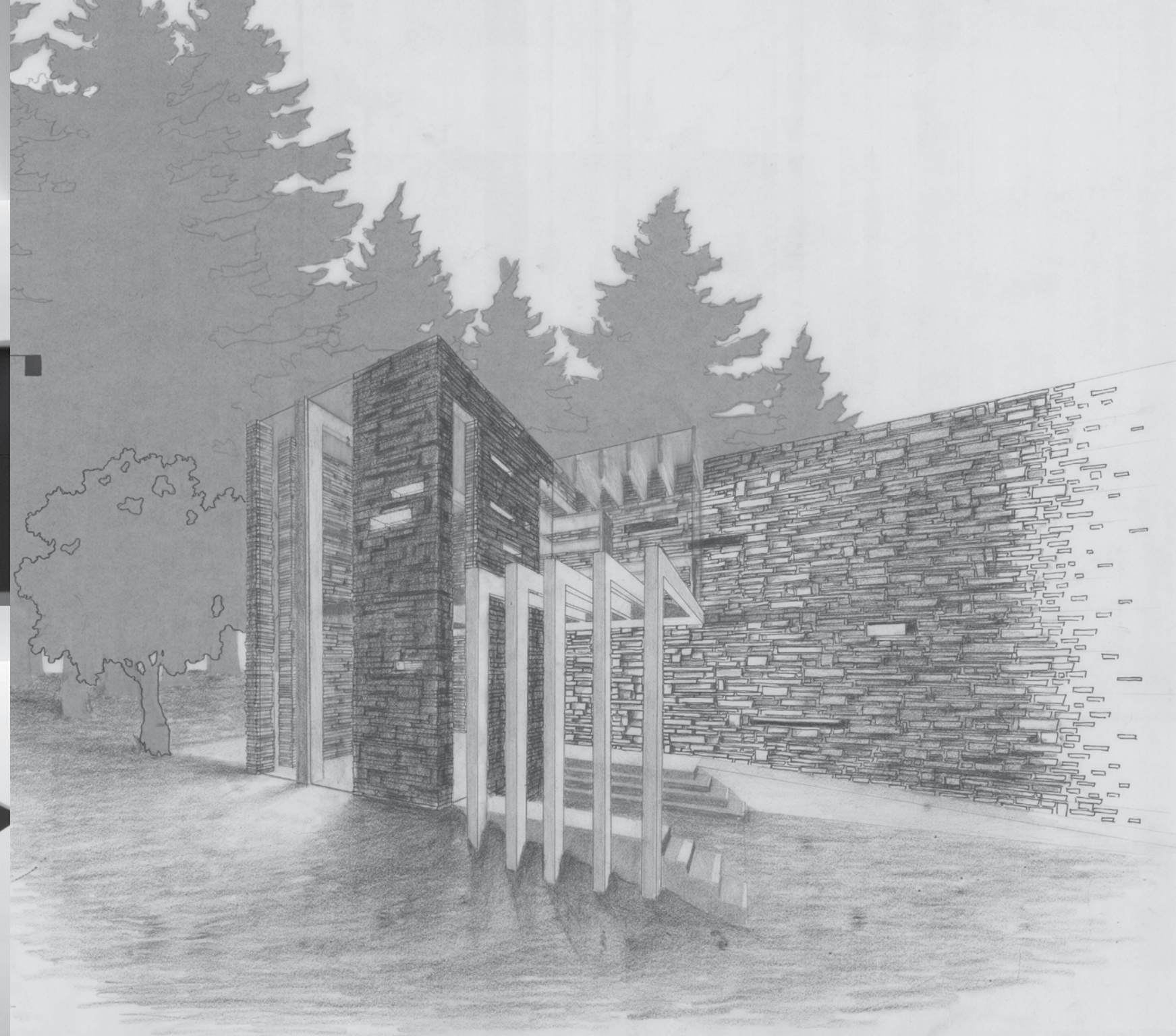
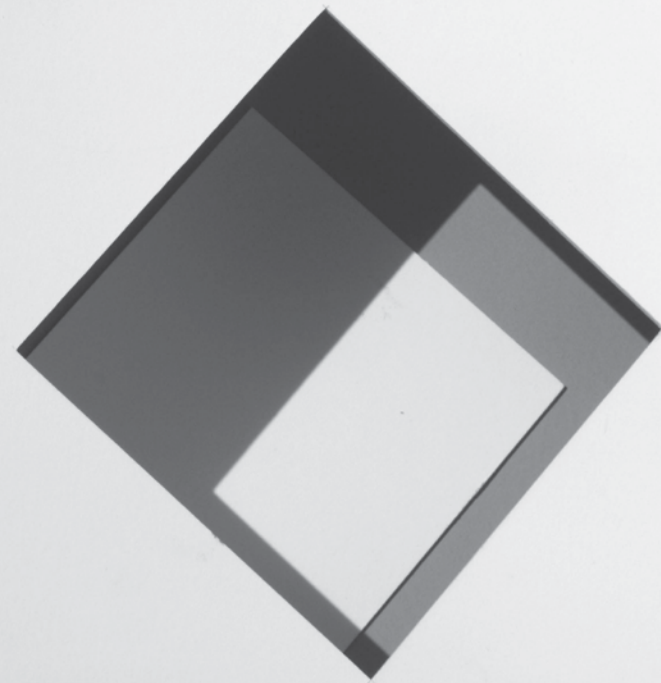
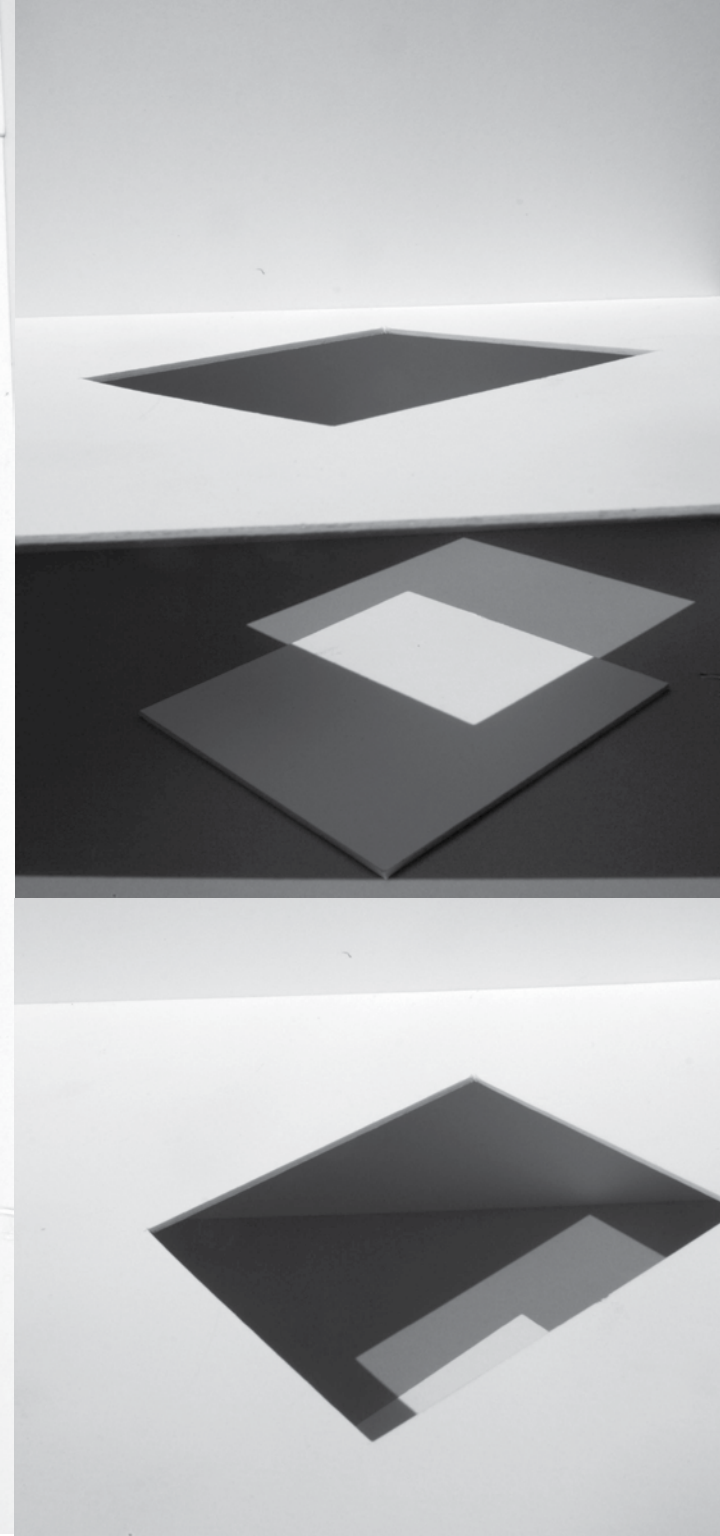
In addition to my efforts with designBridge I have worked for the University of Oregon as a CAD Drafter, completed contract design work for Architecture W and BOORA Architects, worked as an intern for Soderstrom Architects, fought wildfires in Oregon, and travelled abroad in Vietnam and Scandinavia. My love for the complex beauty of our environment stems from these experiences and is reflected in all of my work.

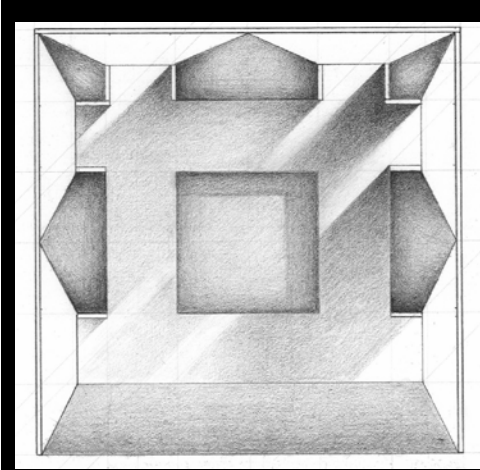
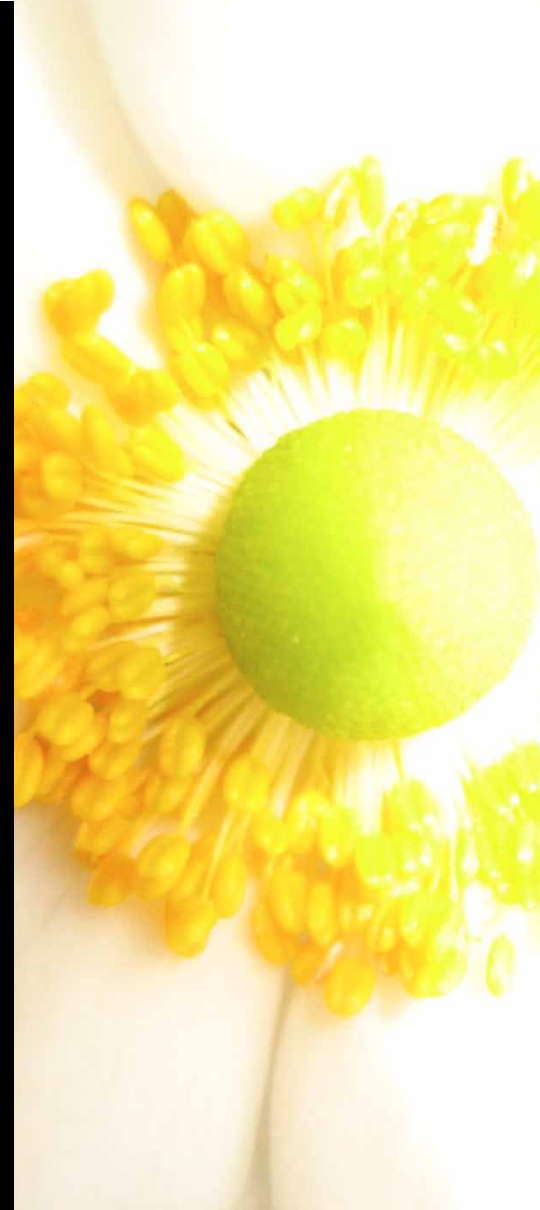
The following pages are the visual and verbal culmination of these experiences, the body of work I have produced while pursuing my Bachelors degree.

Light and shadow are the qualities through which our environment gains a sense of place and time. In my early work at North Carolina State's Design School I pursued an understanding and mastery of how these qualities interacted with form and material.

Left: Light Cube, communicating a volume through boundary and light

Right: Writer's Retreat, hand drafted and rendered, pencil and ink on vellum

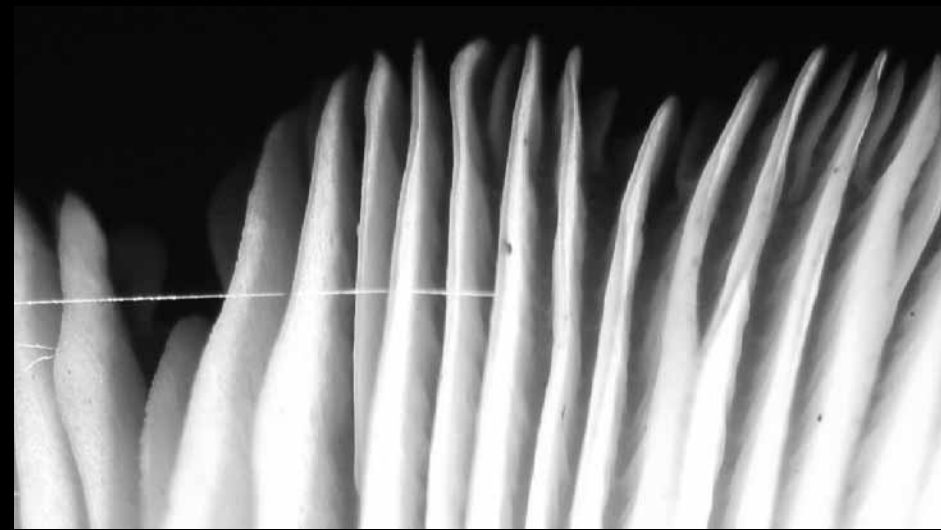


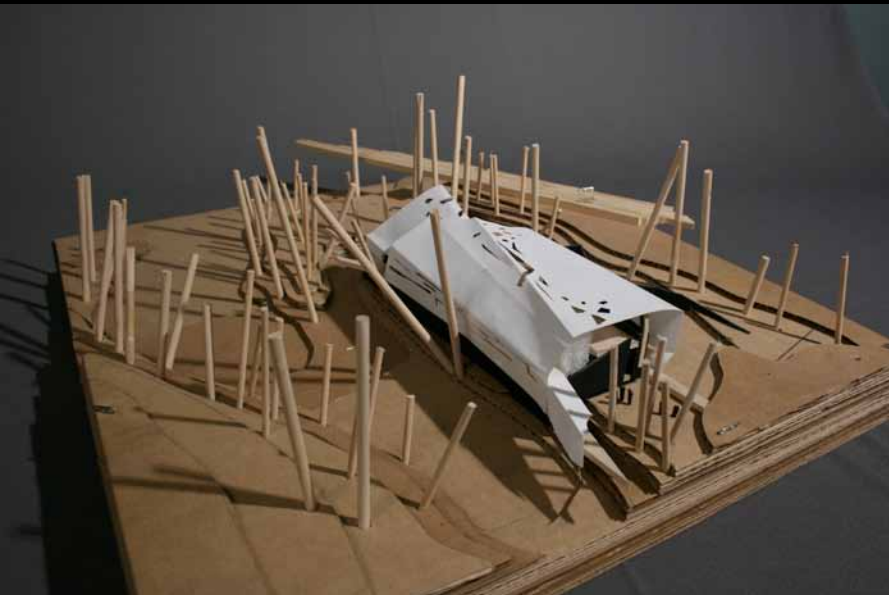


Photography

Photography is the primary medium through which I observe and document the environment.

I began shooting a Minolta film camera in 2006 and quickly became fixated on the subject of detail through macro photography. Film showed me the incredible depth of information that is inherent in the built and natural environment, and taught me to be diligent in composing my views. In 2007 my macro investigation moved to digital and became a yearlong project producing nearly 5,000 photos. These works have served as the genesis for several of my studio projects, and have been exhibited in the student gallery "The Fish Market" at North Carolina State University.





The Outdoor Recreation and Education Center, OREC, is a facility that caters to underserved and at-risk youth in the Eugene/Springfield area.

The facility contains a staff and intern office; two lecture halls, a meeting/flex space, trip storage facility, rock climbing gym, and support services. Sited on the Willamette River adjacent to an historic millrace, major thoroughfare, and a boat launch the building is in a prime location to receive the community and introduce them to an outdoor living lifestyle.

The design was derived from the site's topography and the need to shut out road noise while welcoming views of the millrace. The form of the building rises strongly against the road and folds gently over the program down to the creek. At the creek's edge windows that recall the form of the skylights above provide occupied niches for a single person or small groups. The folded form creates a narrow floorplate that maximize cross ventilation, increases programmatic interaction, and links all spaces visually to the most active part of the building's program, the rock wall.



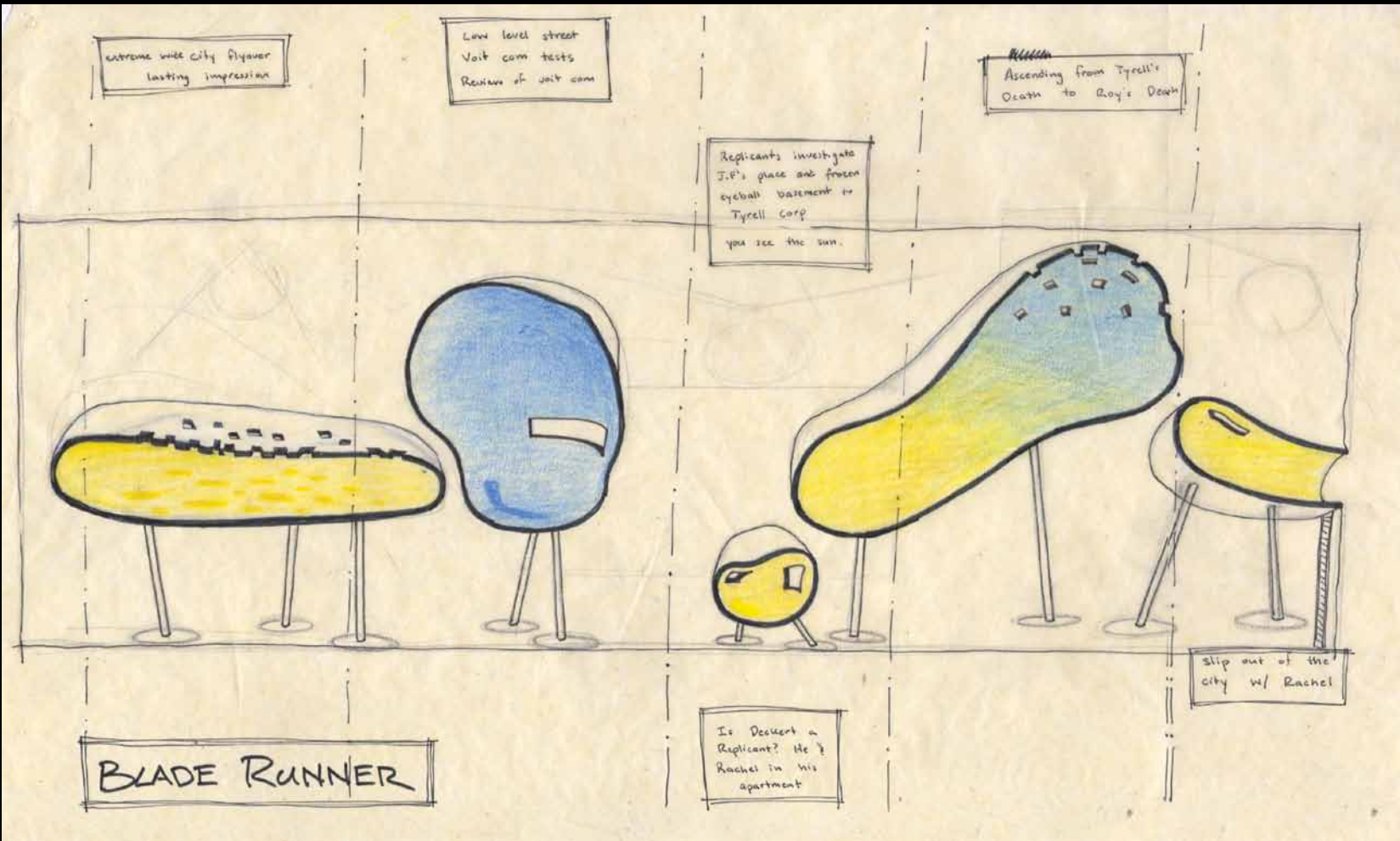


The rock wall, seen at the far end of the rendering to the left, anchors the building at the West end and spans all three floorplates in a single vertical line. To represent this element on the exterior the space receives its own roof, fading back into the building and reappearing on the East side to break the fold of the main roof. This formally continues the line of the rock gym's roof and provides a smaller scale space on the first floor to direct user's views down into the creek towards a small waterfall.

The shared meeting/flex space seen in the rendering

to the left is visually accessible from every part of the second and third stories, and is located at the intersection of all circulation modes in the building. The materiality of the building is chosen to balance the wide range of programs. A "Northwest" mix of glass, concrete, plaster and cedar is employed to blend with the site and provide a durable platform for the outdoor activities and education taking place in and around the facility. Lecture halls are outfitted with sound insulating panels to reduce noise from the basement, and a large stone wall anchors the North face of the offices to further reduce road noise.

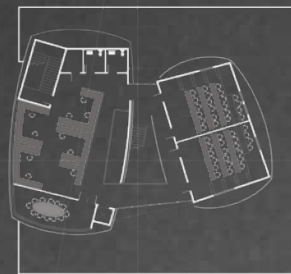
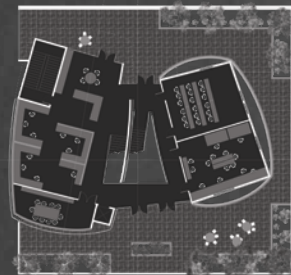
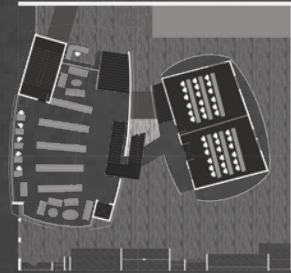
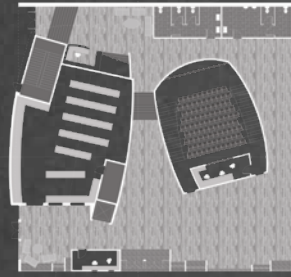




The Northwest Film Center expansion project is an exercise in conceptual design. The project investigates film as a genesis for architectural form, looking at methods of transition, storyboarding, character development, framing, light, and time as engineered qualities within the fictional space of film.

The conceptual model for the building blends my interests in architectural and ceramic form-making. The model is a literal representation of the storyboard of *Blade Runner*, my chosen film for the project, and provides a theatre for light. The sketch on the left is the initial formal development of the pieces. I was struck by how, in film noir, the quality of light is an extremely powerful tool for directing the viewer's perception of the film's space. However, unlike film, architectural space cannot be infinitely expansive, it must exist in a physical world. The ceramic vessels that represent the storyboard are set flush into a black background so that when lit from behind they achieve a floating quality. A moving backlight slowly reveals the form of the piece, unveiling the story by previewing, highlighting, and then reflecting upon each scene. To see a video demonstrating the powerful qualities of this model please visit <http://vimeo.com/22548151>





Formally the building that houses the Film Center's expansion takes cues from the ceramic vessels. The film center wanted an icon building, something that would engage the public from the exterior and increase enrolment in the center's film classes. Two volumes within a glass double facade divide the program based on light needs.

Administration, library, reception and gallery are contained within the light volume, which acts as a marquee for upcoming events when lit at night. Film editing, classrooms, screening rooms and a 100-person theater are contained within the black box. The formal play of the rounded volumes against the rectilinear enclosure divide the first floor spaces and provide unique opportunities for students to screen film and media on surfaces in non-conventional ways.





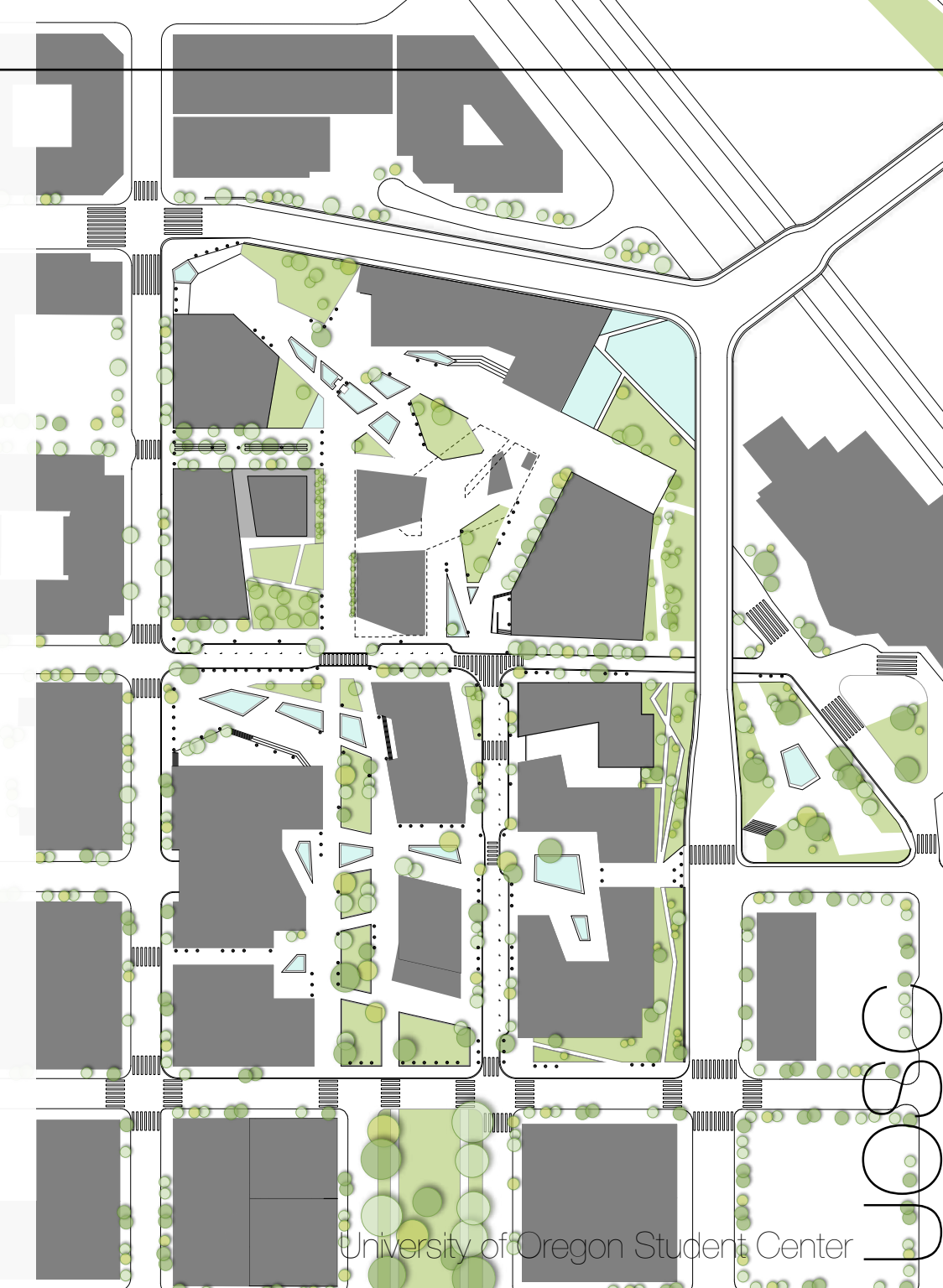
The urban redevelopment of the central Post Office site in Portland Oregon has been the focus of several community and city studies over the past 20 years. The site sits prominently at the culmination of the North Park Blocks, and could provide a critical link in the city's efforts to reconnect downtown with the waterfront. Our final project, "The Generative Design of a New University of Oregon Campus in Portland" sought to compile these recommendations and studies into a single campus vision:

"The University of Oregon's Urban Campus will evolve with its city and come to define the River District as a vital part of the City Center. Viewing Portland as both a home and a classroom the University will foster interdisciplinary research and study through city-specific curriculum. As an extension of its learning environment the campus will serve as a model for the highly regarded principals of urban design and development that make Portland one of the most liveable cities in the world."

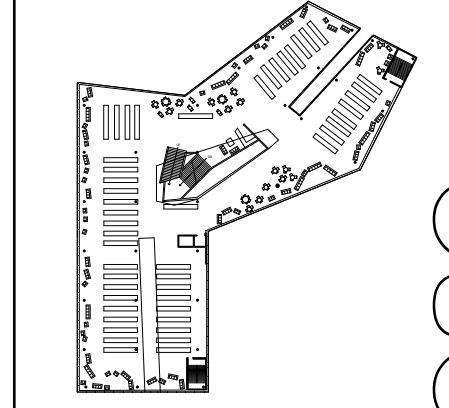
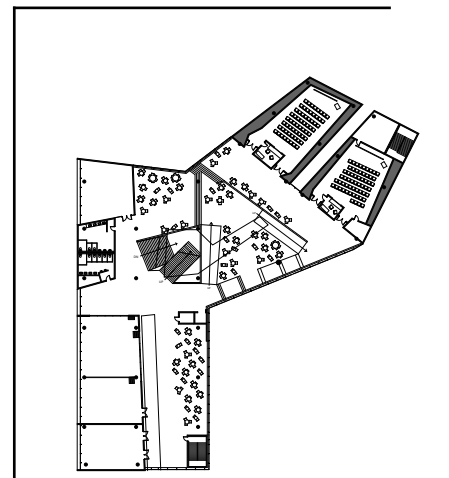
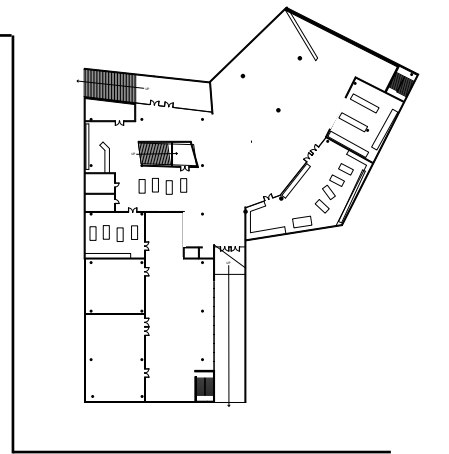
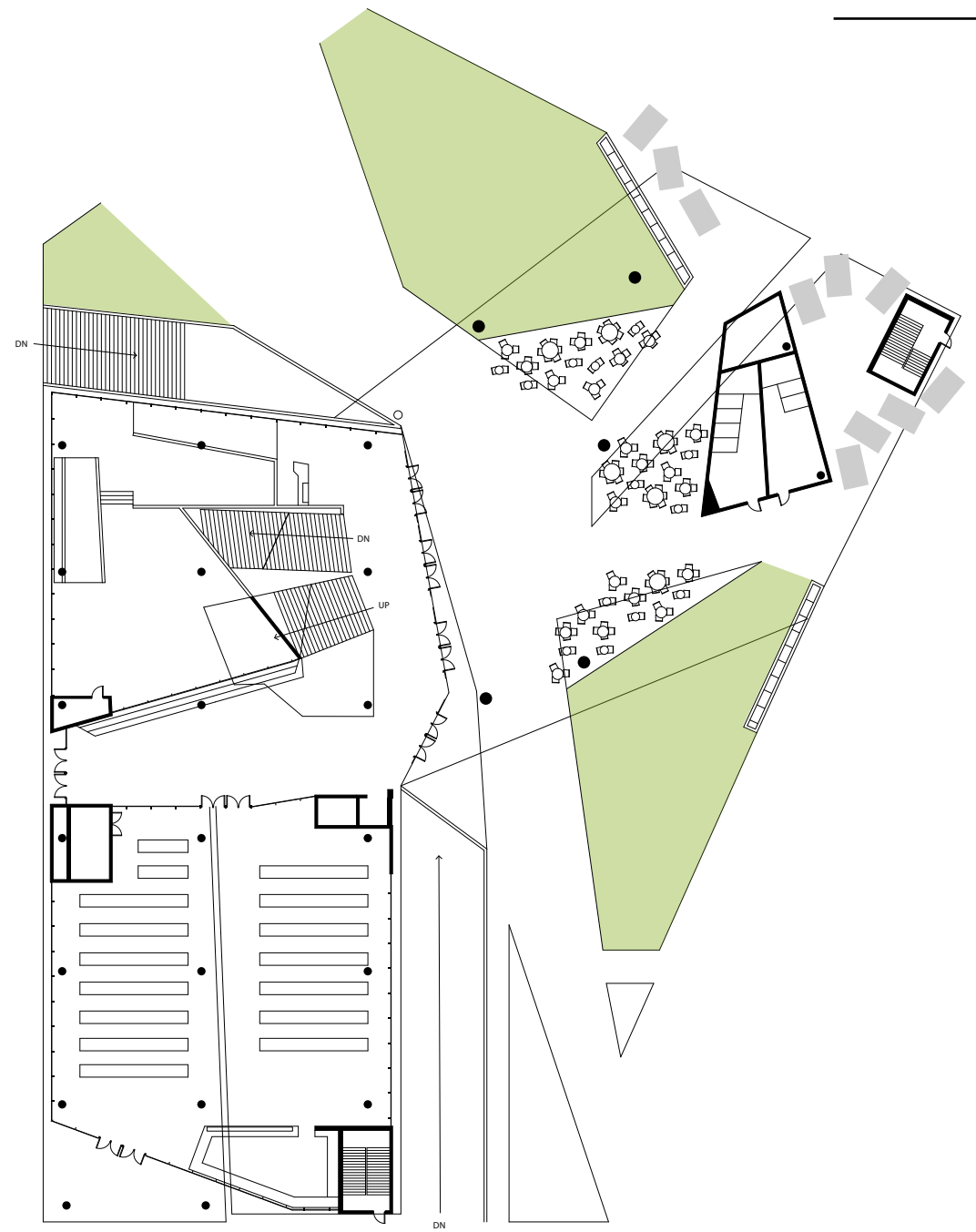
-Alex Porter, Henry Malmberg, Wendy Oh

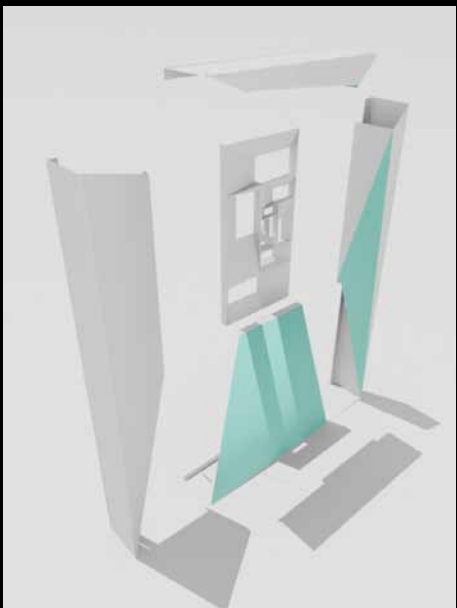
The campus evolved as a group effort, with each of our buildings responding to the design moves of the other in an organic and fluid process. This generative method of urban development produced a level of complexity in the campus that is not often exemplified in master planned super blocks such as this one. To the right it is clear that although some aspects of the surrounding grid have been maintained on campus there is an effort to create the fine grain needed to foster a neighborhood that upholds the principals laid out in our vision statement.

The central building on campus, The University's of Oregon Student Center, UOSC, was my undertaking. The building is seen in plan on the right as 4 individual masses just to the North of the central road crossing campus. The UOSC maintains an open plan on its first story, where pathways and larger moves in the urban design dictate the design. Overhead floors create the kind of covered hardscape spaces that are shown to be lacking in the vibrant Pearl District community, the campus' adjacent neighborhood.



Following the group's vision statement the UOSC is a resource for the students of the University and the community at large. It is a place where collaboration and interdisciplinary education are realized in the form of research and production. In the basement there is a large facility for "making" that houses traditional shop tools as well as advanced computer fabrication and digital production equipment. This shop space is available to anyone in the community that approaches the University with a project or research idea. The knowledge gained here can be displayed on the public floor above, where a bookstore, gallery and outside flex/meeting/eating space is made available to the general public. This work is then discussed and analyzed in the lecture halls and event spaces above, finally becoming part of the body of knowledge in the research library on the top floor. In keeping with the University and City's shared goal of creating a new Eco-District on the site the rooftop has been transformed into a park offering students and faculty views of their campus and the surrounding neighborhood.







Earth Fired Vessel | 8" tall | 2005

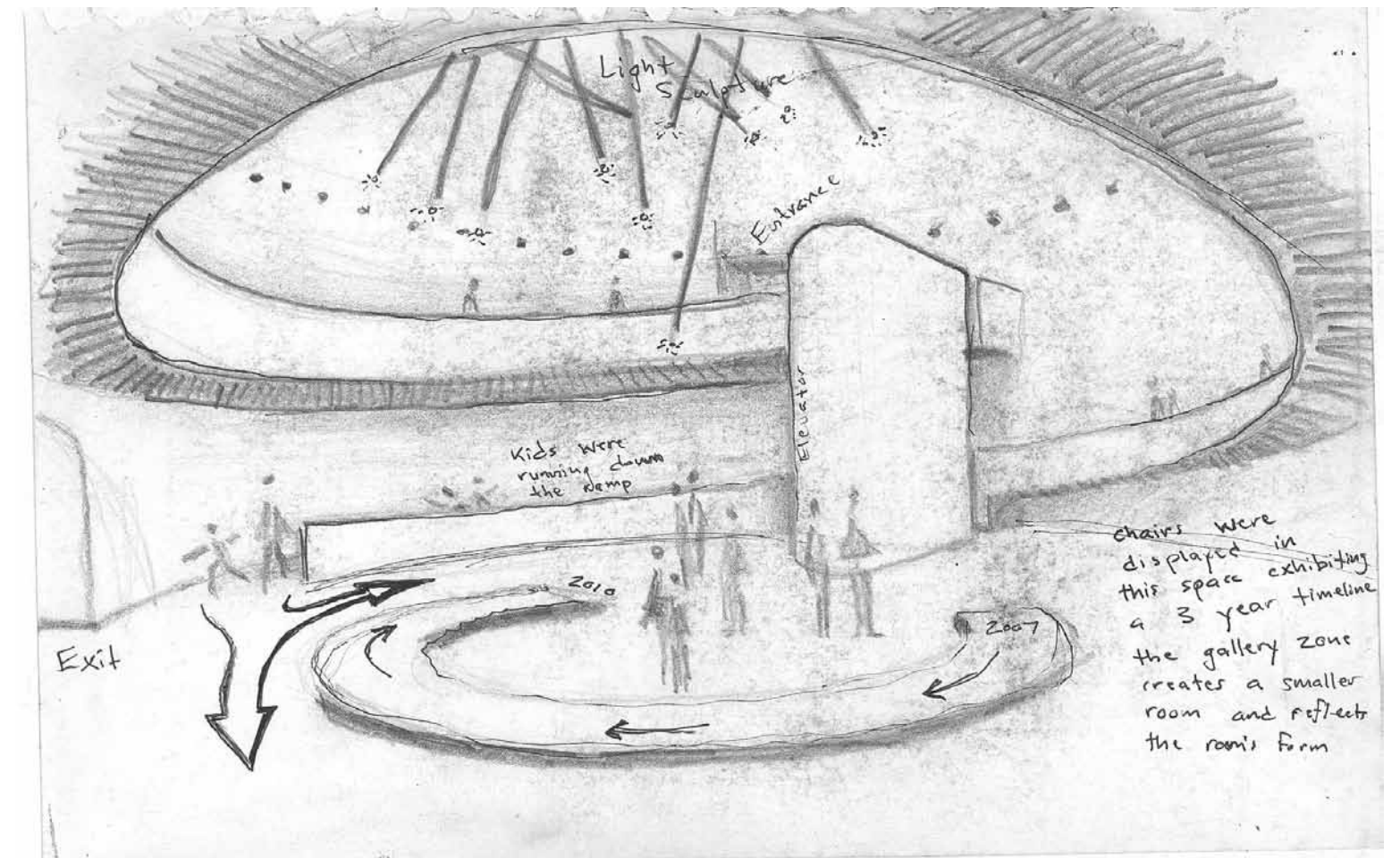
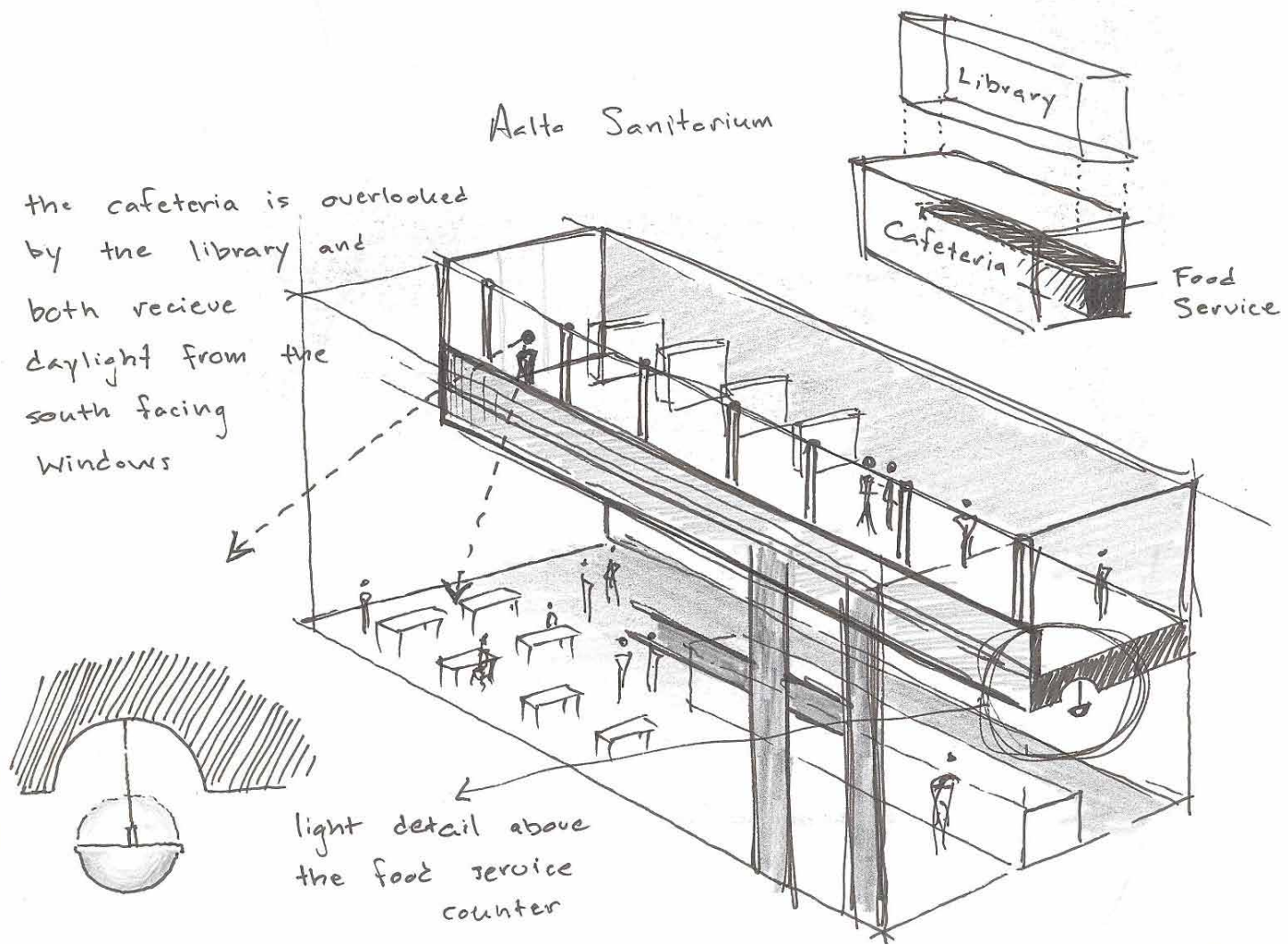


Natural processes work in our environment to create a level of complexity that far exceeds an initial design intent. The physically varied and forever moving books on Asplund's shelves to the right make that place what it is and recall the turbulence of a Yellowstone hotspot I once photographed. Both exhibit constant change simultaneously with a sense of permanence and become compelling places through change.

I first learned of the beauty in natural process through earth and raku fired ceramic vessels. The bisque ware pieces created at the outset were unremarkable in form, but through a partially controlled natural process they became imbued with detail and beauty.

The ability to receive and exhibit change over time is a healthy aspect of a successful and lasting design. Bearing this in mind shapes how I perceive, evaluate, and design space and is an integral part of my design process.





Left: A spatial study of Paimio Sanitorium by Alvar Aalto, drawn from within the space of the cafeteria. I was particularly interested in how the library and cafeteria shared a view, with the library being tucked away and having a significantly more private feel. The light fixtures were also designed to give indirect light and have an integrated design with the ceiling.

Right: An as-seen view of the rotunda space at the Danish Museum of Contemporary Furniture. The space had two separate installations, both of which enhanced the design of the space itself. The light installation protruding from the ceiling extended down towards the display space, allowing users to observe it from various angles as they proceeded down the ramp. The display space on the floor mimicked the design of the ramp and created a choice of path at the ramp terminus where the floor space was otherwise ambiguous.



Studio art and small side projects figure prominently in my design work, allowing me the chance to create spontaneously without programmatic or formal restrictions. Often these projects are unplanned, coming about only when materials and time present themselves.

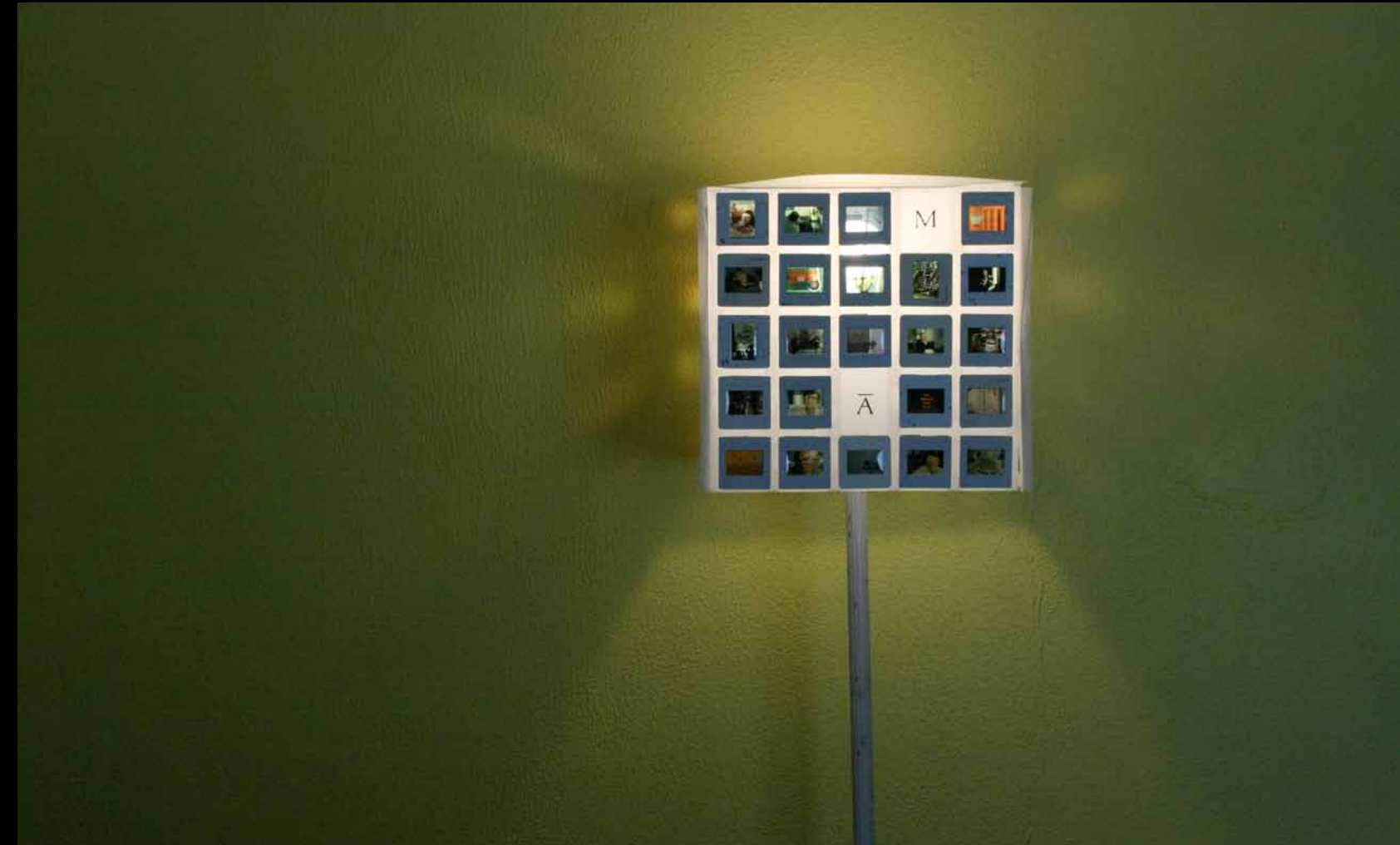


Far Left: Self Portrait - repurposed 1x2, house paint, staples, pen, India ink - 19"x24"

Middle: 2 lino-cut prints - India ink, watercolor, oil pastel, pen - 5"x7"



Far Right: Slide Lamp - repurposed healthcare slides, glue, polypropylene, salvaged 1930's wrought iron lamp, repurposed lampshade structure, transfer lettering. - 5' tall



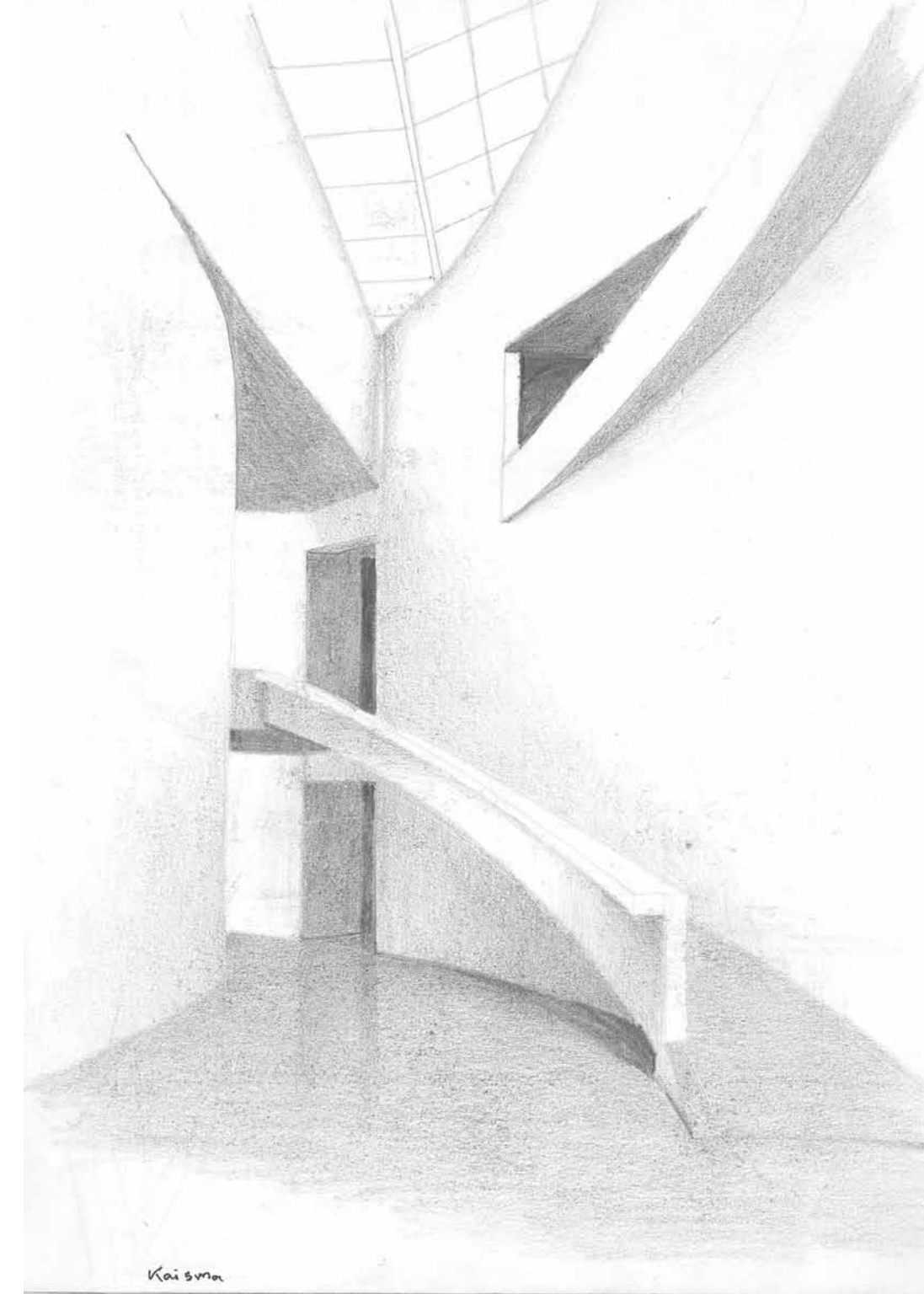
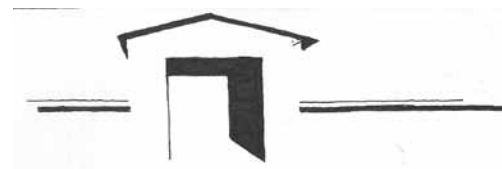


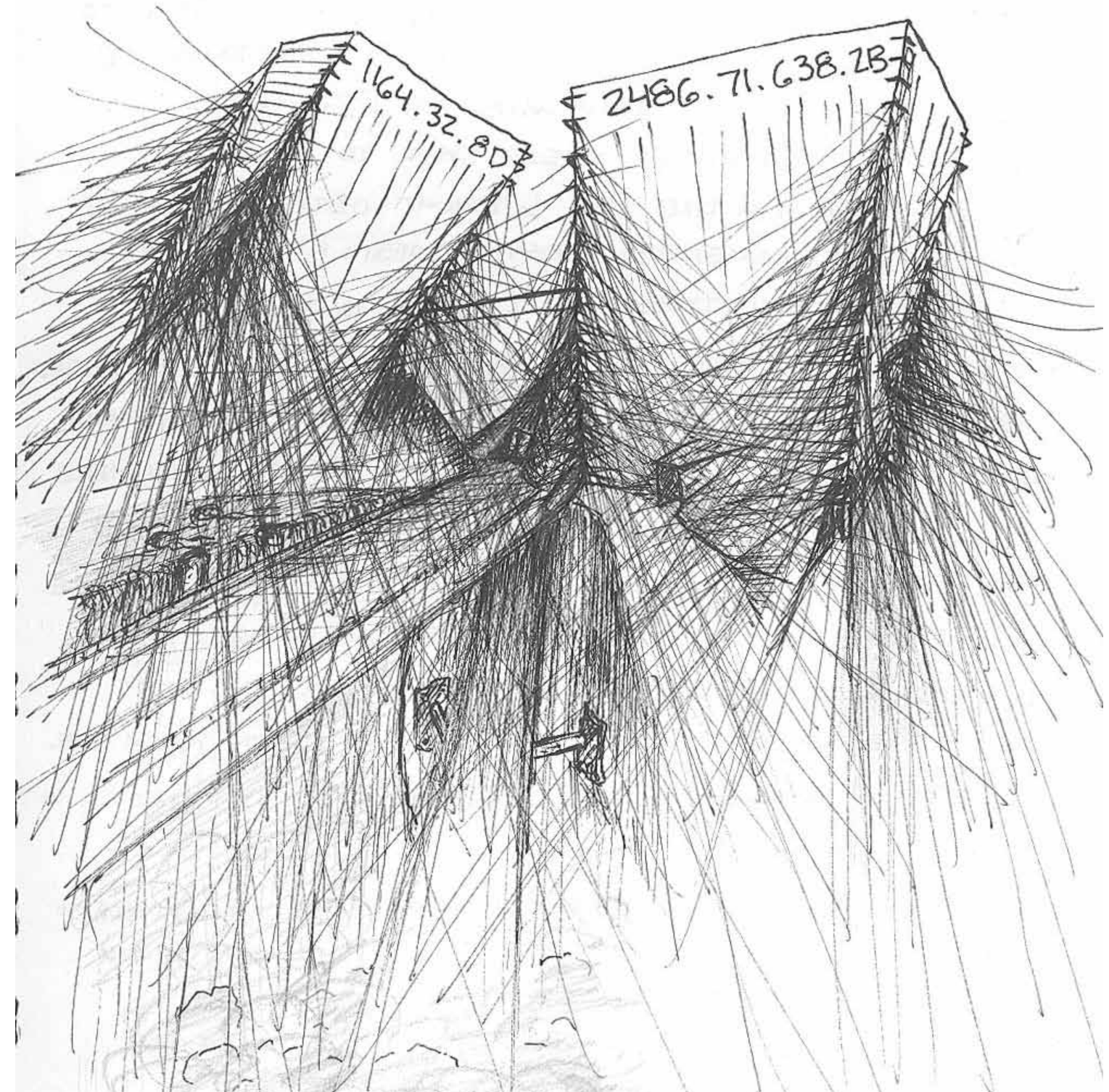
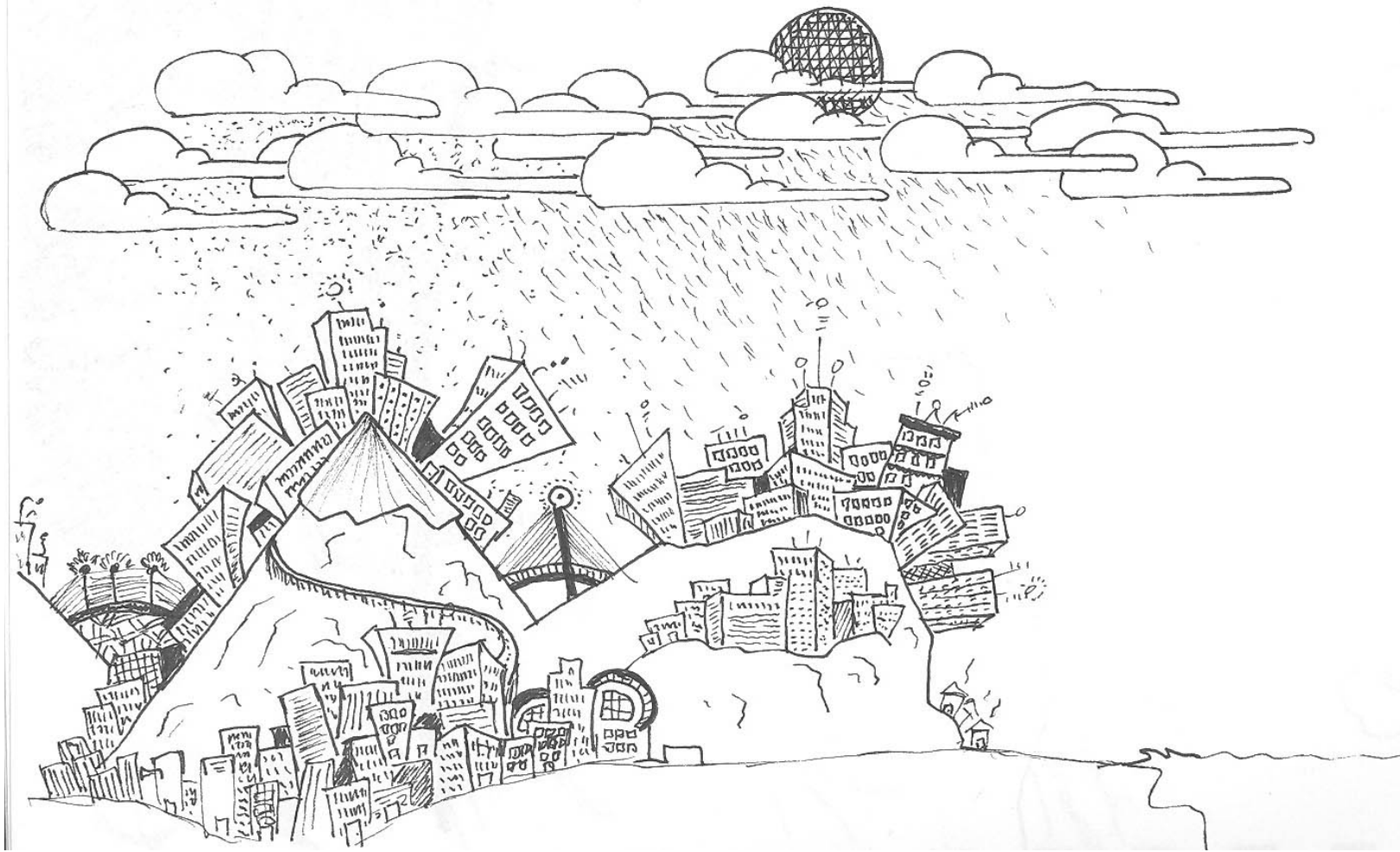
Similar to the field sketches exhibited earlier, and the studio art exhibited on the previous page I enjoy sketching for fun. When I have the time sketching is a more informative and personal way to investigate the surrounding environment when compared to photography. Throughout the course of my Bachelor's degree I have experimented with the several styles of drawing, exhibited here.

Left: Dock in Lake Oswego Oregon

Thumbnails (top to bottom): Pearl District Patio in Portland OR, Open Air Museum in Helsinki Finland, Eric Gunnar Asplund's Mortuary Temple entrance outside of Stockholm Sweden

Right: Stephen Holl's Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki Finland. I have been strongly influenced by Holl's work. The use of strong lines paired with soft surfaces is an especially recognizable and successful quality in his work, and this sketch attempts to capture that quality.





These free sketches are the products of down time, simply fun drawings for the sake of being fun. Cartoons have had a significant influence on my work, their simplicity and clear com-

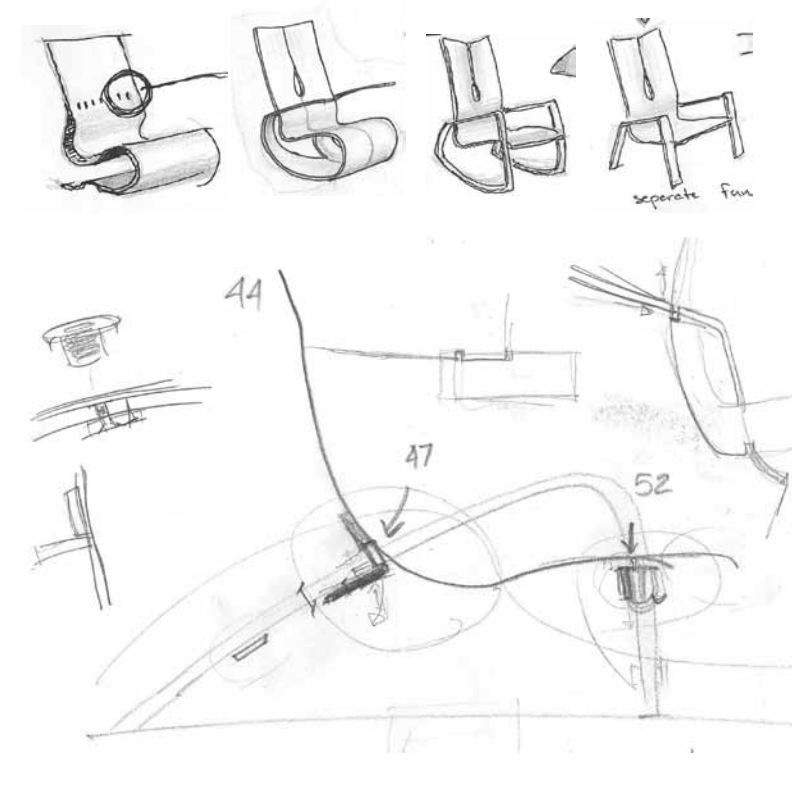
munication of an idea is similar to what a good Parti should do, and I am constantly looking for ways to communicate clearly through drawing. Many of these sketches have later

become proofs for larger works, but most often they are just my way to practice drawing a pure thought. They are drawings based not on what I see but what I think.



This chair was developed and built over a period of 4 weeks in Copenhagen Denmark at the facilities of the Danish Design School. We were given 5 days to compose full-scale drawings and the rest of the time was ours to compose molds, cut and layer veneer, vacuum seal our projects and conduct final assembly. As a truly immersive education the majority of our time outside of the shop was spent on study tours across Denmark, Sweden and Finland to companies such as Fritz Hansen, Hay, and Ikea's workshops.

This chair itself is a direct interpretation of Arne Jacobsen's Oxford Chair, blended with an Adirondack style to create a low-slung lounge. In the true sense of a design/build project the support structure was developed on the go. The mold used to vacuum-form the seat was repurposed and redesigned to create the vacuum-form for the support structure, resulting in a mirrored line. The seat itself does not rest on this support piece directly, instead veneer springs mediate the two and allow the seat to float and move independently above the support. The arms were constructed from a single vacuum-formed piece, split in half with a table saw and affixed to the support with pegs and wood glue. With the exception of 16 pegs the entire project is constructed of Beachwood veneer.



Copenhagen, Denmark | Jean Nouvel

Concert House Danish Radio

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Copenhagen, Denmark | BIG

VM Houses

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23porter@gmail.com

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