

**JEREMY MAGNER
THESIS STUDIO
PROSPECTUS**

RADICAL – HUMANE

(LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, MAKING A MESS)

ARCH 481-492
2019-20

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'TROUBLE'
Studio Thesis Show, May 2019

*Studio 107 was completely moved into
the stair court where we performed
our work for a day.*



*The empty studio was turned
into a gallery for the display of
final models and piles of process
artifacts*

WHAT A THESIS ISN'T...

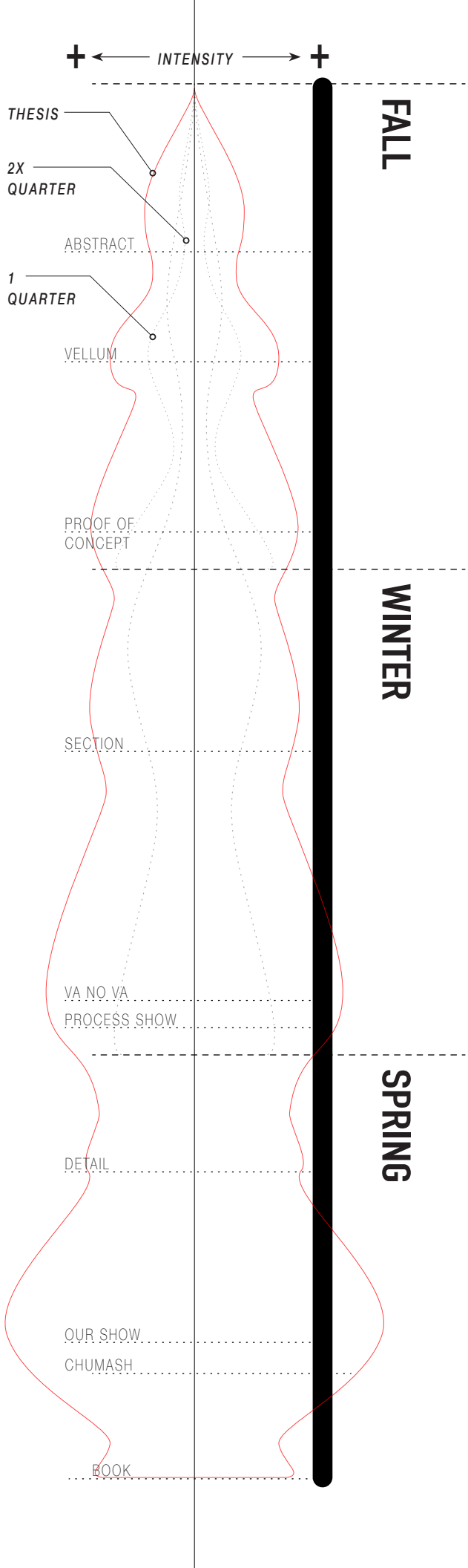
5TH YEAR IS NOT SIMPLY AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THAT YOU ARE A FULLY FORMED, AUTONOMOUS DESIGNER (THOUGH YOUR AUTONOMY WILL BE PUT TO THE TEST). IT IS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN WHAT IT TAKES TO DEVELOP NEW LEVELS OF DEPTH, COMPLEXITY, AND MEANING IN YOUR WORK BEYOND THOSE AFFORDED TO YOU THUS FAR

There is a lot left to learn. You aren't totally prepared for this, and the best thesis students are those that are hungry to learn more and push the limits of their own abilities. 10 week studios and even double-quarter have allowed you to scratch the surface of your creativity and the development of layered complexity that define the architectural act. Thesis is not a drawn out 10 or 20 week project. Thesis asks you to expland on all of the things you have learned so far into uncharted territory and I am here to guide you. If you are interested in this studio, it is because you are interested in learning by exploring this uncharted territory of development.

At its core, your thesis will be judged by your ability to make connections between research, theory and architectural acts communicated primarily through models as well as drawings. Perhaps you have done a bit of research in order to write a critical essay, or have been introduced to the lineage of theory in architectural discourse. Certainly you have designed a building to a certain schematic level and argued for the decisions that it embodies via drawing and models. Thesis demands that you dive deeper into these arenas and propose more substantial connections between them.

Beyond patience and endurance I will introduce techniques and processes for breaking through schematic design into equally speculative design development. Our year will be structured by 3 distinct quarters that will define 3 stages of design allowing you a stable path through the unknown producing collections of artifacts along the way. I hope this will liberate you to explore further, to take more risks knowing that the process will guide experimentation towards a coherent result in the spring.

It is my ultimate goal to expose you to these higher level relationships in order for you to become your own teacher. To allow you to think and make with fluidity and confidence while minimizing doubt and anxiety. To empower you to evaluate your own work and make decisions more urgently, to work with an urgency and poise. To communicate your speculative positions in a compelling, credible way. To argue better and stronger about the work and through the work. To make arguments with models as much as words...



WHAT A THESIS CAN BE

You may not have guessed it, but the adjacent quote was uttered during a lecture in 1992. I was 8 years old and most/all of you hadn't been born. This difficult era that Mack is alluding to has certainly not come to pass, but is hardly recognizable today. With limited context you might imagine that things are more complex and troubling than they have ever been, but clearly this notion is relative. We as architects operate in a consistent state of flux - diagnosis and reorientation remain elusive. Progress seems to be continually buffered by surprising new challenges. How can we sync up with this erratic messiness of progress?

The first position that we must share is that we as architects are in a continual state of negotiation for the value of our work with the world that we serve. There is nothing sacred or fixed about the value of architecture and clearly there never has been. Scroll back 40, 60, 100 years and you will find similar exasperations like this. Mack is not the first or last to make these claims. As a professional you will be confronted at every turn with challenges to the value of your work by colleagues, clients, markets, communities, etc. Architects must fight for their value with every project. Every building, even the most mundane, is in some way a prototype, an experiment and we have an incredible opportunity to tackle these challenges through the power of imagination.

Imagination is your most valuable asset in this negotiation. Imagining things yet to exist, new ways forward, new worlds, new prototypes for reconciling differences between materials, cultures, cities, climates, etc. The architectural thesis at its core must be an argument for new value for the discipline - new relevance, new ways to connect history with bold, positive visions for the future. Anything less is just rehashing the status quo and weakening our collective position in the face of rapid change.

Thesis is an opportunity to cultivate new ways for architecture to matter. Don't take for granted that architecture matters. It has been and continues to be in crisis. I ask that you be bold enough to accept this crisis not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity for self-revolutionizing struggle. We will seek out crisis and throw ourselves into it.

We will look to this instability as a freeing, liberating force that allows us to make radical claims for our future because who else will? We will confront crisis with imagination and optimism for the continued improvement of the human condition.

"We live in a difficult era. Every architect must believe that he or she practices and lives in the most impossible circumstances. We can only be as good as our talents in the times in which we live..."

Some forces that frustrate contemporary architects:

- The dogs of commerce nip at our heels denying us time for speculation and scholarship
- The difficulties and complexities of a democratic and inclusive system seem unmanageable and ungovernable yet never before have so many had such opportunity for self-realization
- Ethics, as a measured test of personal values and constant re-appraiser of tradition, go for the most part unsubstantiated by the collective

But maybe our greatest frustrations come from the attempt to define architecture achievement only by past standards and criteria. For us the most meaningful moments in architecture seem to be those that best resist and celebrate the circumstances in which they are made.

I am convinced after some years and many encounters that architects are by training and inclination structural thinkers. This places them in a unique position of constantly measuring, evaluating, and testing all around us. It should and does position us as intellectual leaders in our communities and culture. With insight comes responsibility.

For an architect I believe this responsibility is rooted in the realm of imagination. Italo Calvino in his 6 memos for the new millennium was trying to decide between imagination as an instrument of knowledge or as an identification with the 'world soul'. He decided on another definition. Imagination as a repertory of what is potential. What is hypothetical of what does not exist and has never existed and perhaps will never exist but might have existed. He writes that according to Bruno the 'spiritus fantasticus' is a world or gulf never saturable of forms and images. To draw on this gulf a 'potential multiplicity' is indispensable to any form of knowledge."

-Mack Scogin, Lecture at the AA, 1992

THE 4 COMMITMENTS

COMMIT TO BEING:

1.UNCOMFORTABLE

2.AMBITIOUS

3.SPECIFIC

4.PERSONAL

The path to a successful thesis can be fairly straight-forward. As long as you are willing to suffer a bit. But by know you are no stranger to these sacrifices. It means letting yourself be a little uncomfortable, a little anxious as you grapple with big ideas and the struggle to materialize them. But don't worry, we are in this together and I will be a confident guide. The only guarantee is that hard work and commitment will pay off every time. Here are four commitments you will need to make in order to produce a successful thesis:

*1. Uncomfortable
Do not look for purified, ready-made problems to tackle. Do not assume the role of a solver. Speculative projects will always be a little uncomfortable, a little ambiguous. The project (models, drawings) will become the tool through which you make these arguments*

*2. Ambitious/speculative/experimental
There is more at stake with your thesis than any other project you have undertaken here. An ambitious thesis does not necessarily mean a big project, or one that claims to change the world or solve massive problems. Ambition is more relative to how far you are willing to push yourself and take chances as a designer.*

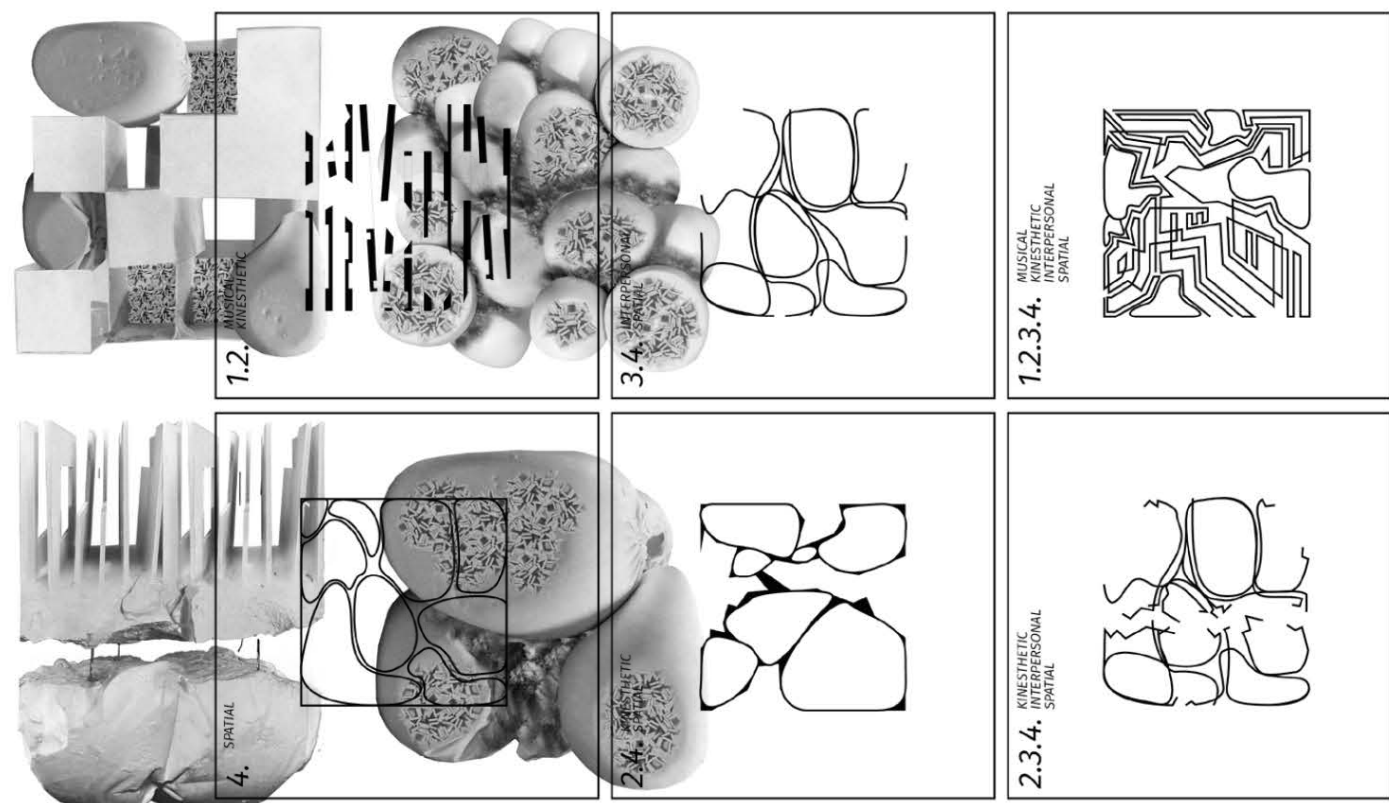
*3. Specific/arguable
The challenge in the fall will be to clearly articulate the problem that your project is demonstrating so that you will be able to effectively evaluate its development. This will allow you to slowly become your own teacher.*

*4. Personal/curious/urgent
A personal endeavor will allow you to attack your thesis with a sense of urgency. This sustained effort and engagement is crucial to remaining productive and inspired over the long haul of 5th year.*

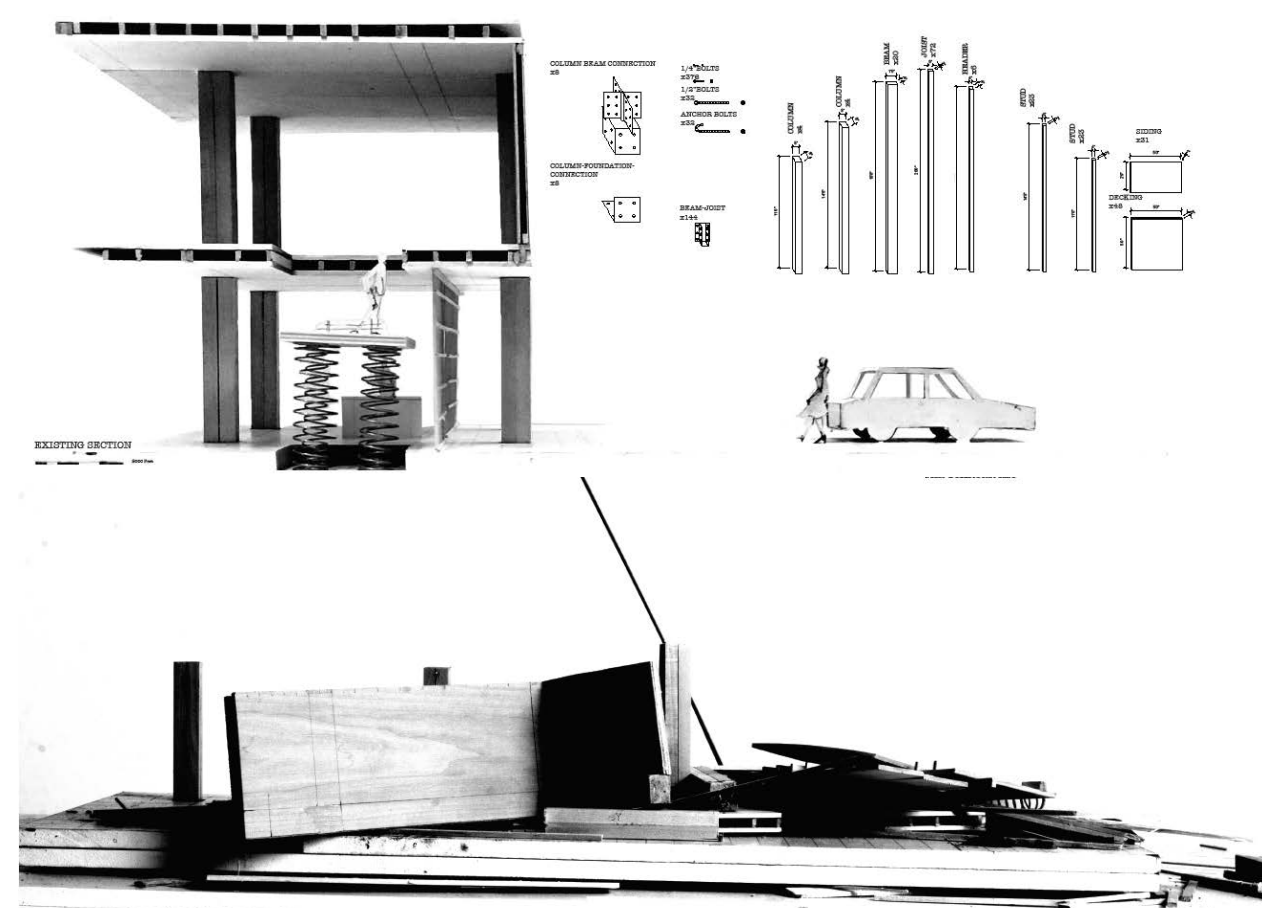
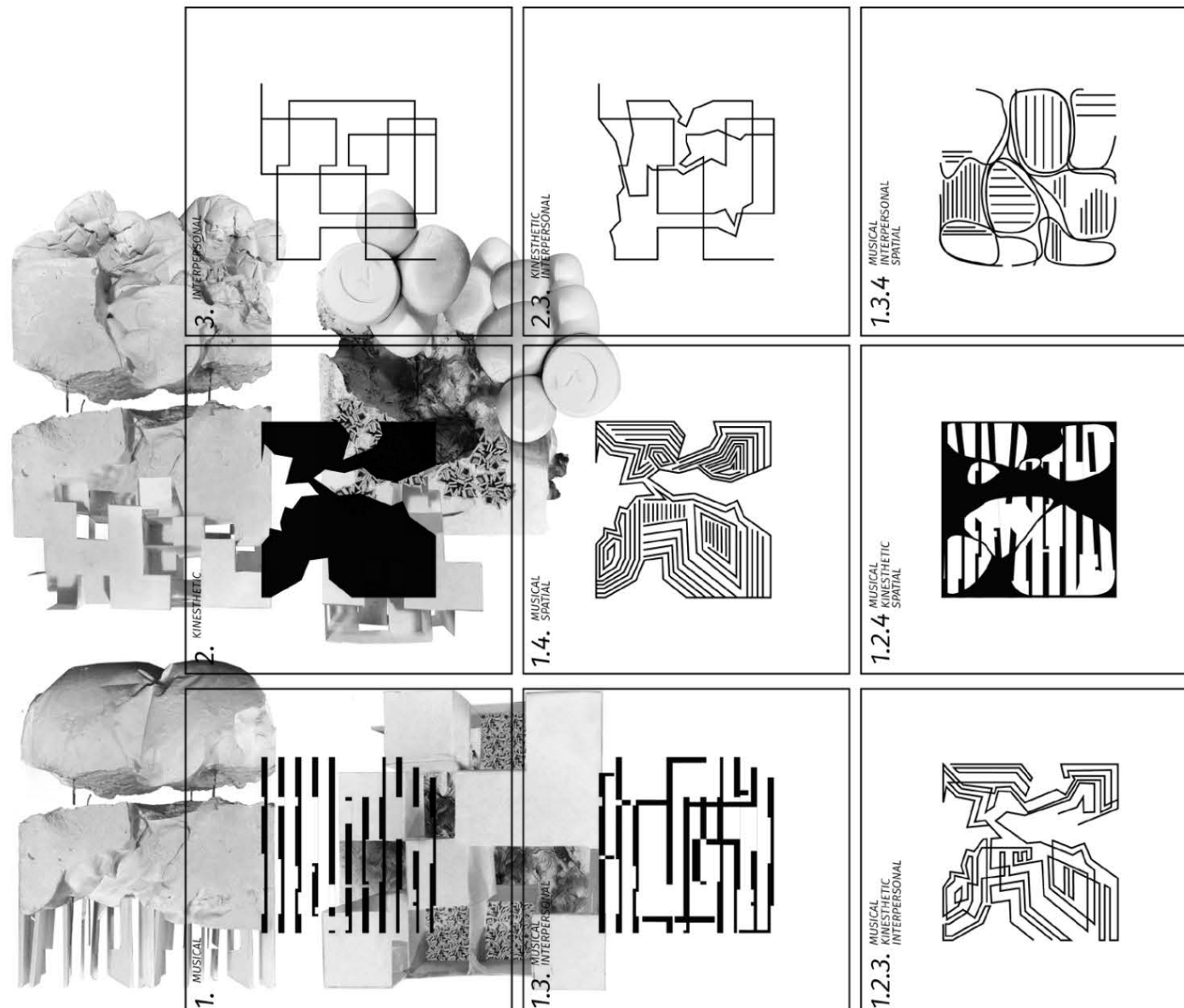
'ANXIOUS & GUESSING'
Studio Process Show, March 2019

Loops of process images were projected onto a layered mass of translucent plastic. Images were crisp at the edges and totally diffused at the center. A flickering fog of collective intelligence

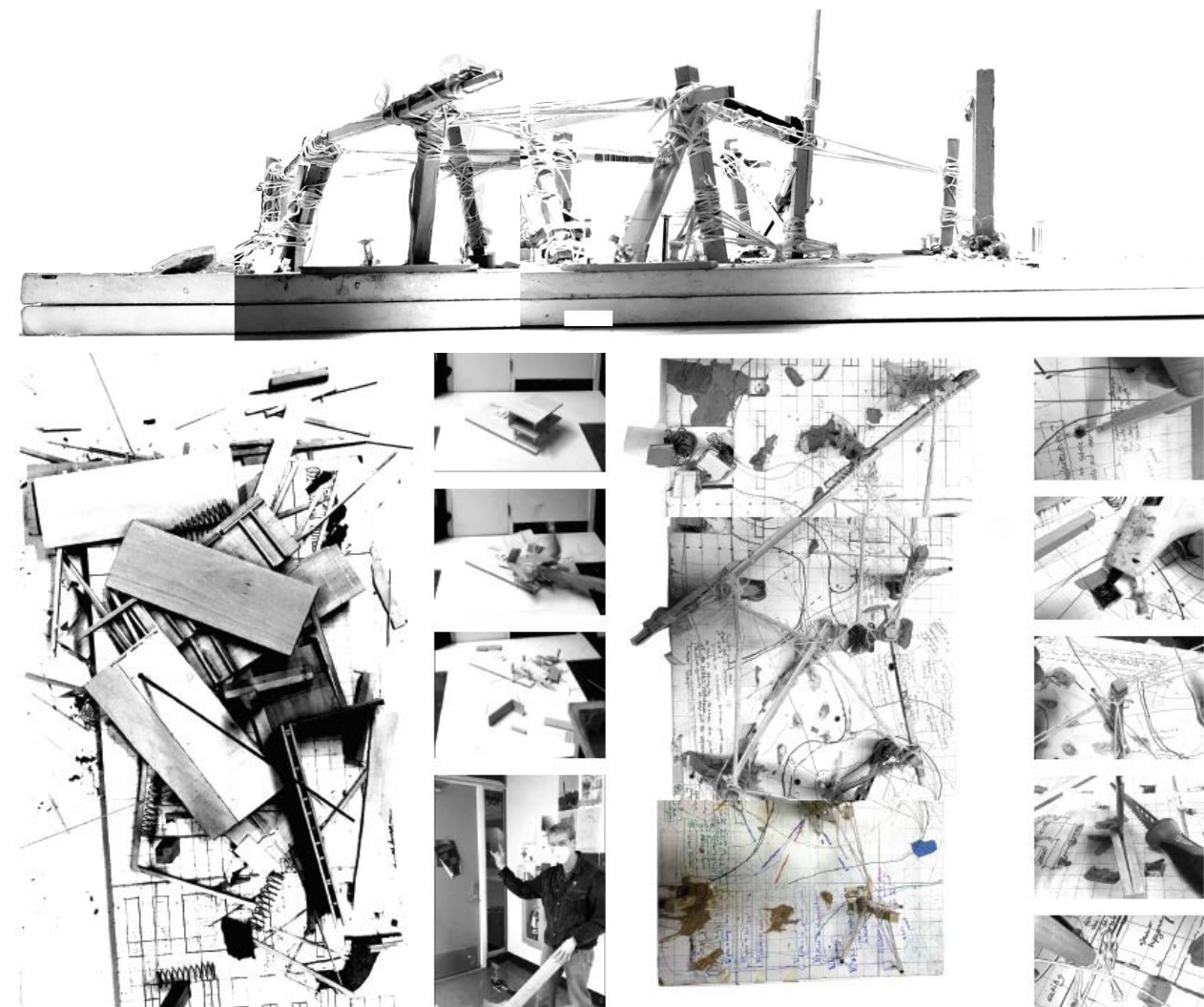




Madison Agnew
Process for 'Altered Intel'



Luis Wiley
Process for 'Punk Rock Architecture'



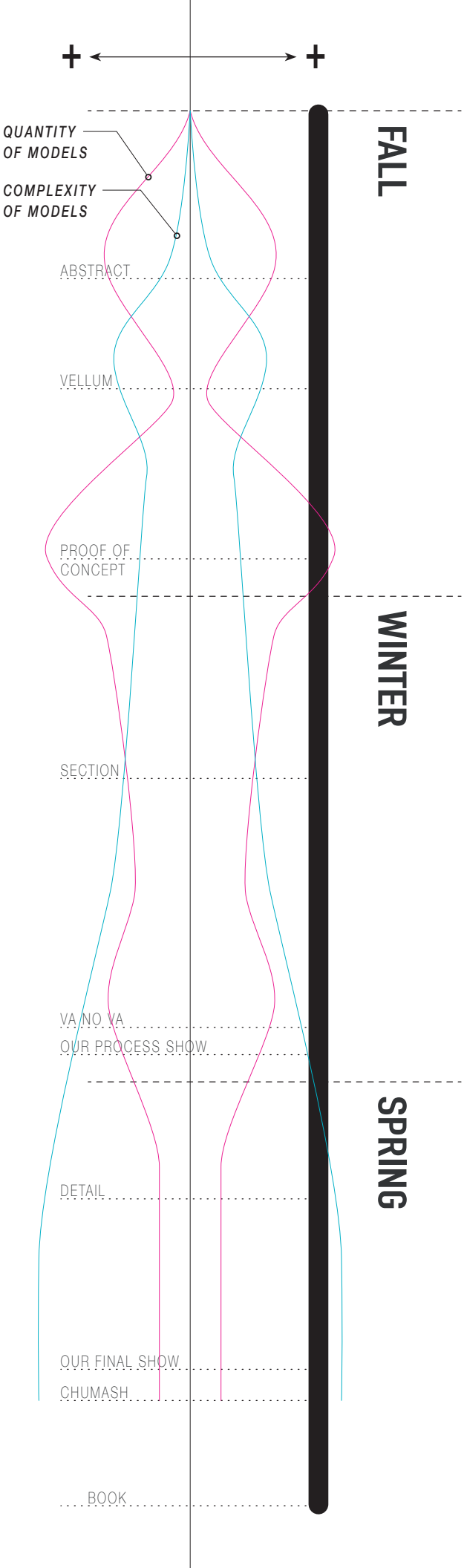
WORK ETHIC – MODELS MODELS MODELS

I HAVE SPENT MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER WORKING DIRECTLY THROUGH THE MODEL, MAKING, FABRICATING, WIELDING THE MODEL AS THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL FOR MAKING ARGUMENTS AND INSPIRING PASSION, CONSENSUS, SOLVING PROBLEMS, DEVELOPING COMPLEXITY AND BEAUTY, CHANNELING INTUITION AND CONFIDENCE. IVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE DEEP UNTAPPED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MODELING AND BUILDING DURING MY TIME AS A DESIGNER , FABRICATOR, AND TEACHER. THIS IS BY FAR THE MOST POWERFUL THING I CAN OFFER YOU.

The work begins by asking questions and questioning the limits of your own skills and knowledge. Seeking problems and developing intuition. Then testing the application of models, as strategies, to problems. A project emerges that specifies a time and place and population. The models then crash down to earth and are radically reconfigured on site - architecture has made its first appearance. This is where you have typically stopped in the past, but we will push on into uncharted territory of complexity and detail - a full immersion into the speculative.

We will begin and end with models. We will use these models to develop technical facility and divergent thinking that will make you an incredibly valuable young designer. Each model will come faster and more full of life than the next. I will introduce to you methods of iteration and production that will facilitate this improvement. From this collection, arguments will be made leading to a selection process, a narrowing of possibility towards a specific project, an appearance of architecture as a demonstration of your thesis. Quickly you will then begin the construction of one or two large models that will capture the development of richness and complexity as a process of addition/accumulation. We will not wait until we are ‘done’ designing to build a model. This is just not how it works. The project grows and evolves from a series of provisional commitments, layers added and integrated at progressively finer scales.

No squeaky clean white models, only models that grow, that are alive, that sing to you their accumulation of intelligence, mistakes, changes in direction. No squeaky clean models that pop directly out of Rhino, only models that challenge you to improvise as you go.



1."I remember that tentacle comes from the latin tentaculum, meaning “feeler”, and tentare, meaning “to feel” and “to try”. (...) The tentacular ones tangle me in SF. Their many appendages make string figures; they entwine me in the poiesis - the making - of speculative fabulation, science fiction, science fact, speculative feminism, soin de ficelle, so far. The tentacular ones make attachments and detachments; they make cuts and knots; they make a difference; they weave paths and consequences but not determinisms; they are both open and knotted in some ways and not others.”

Haraway, Donna. Staying with the Trouble. Duke Univ. Press, 2016. p31.

GETTING STARTED: TENTACULAR THINKING

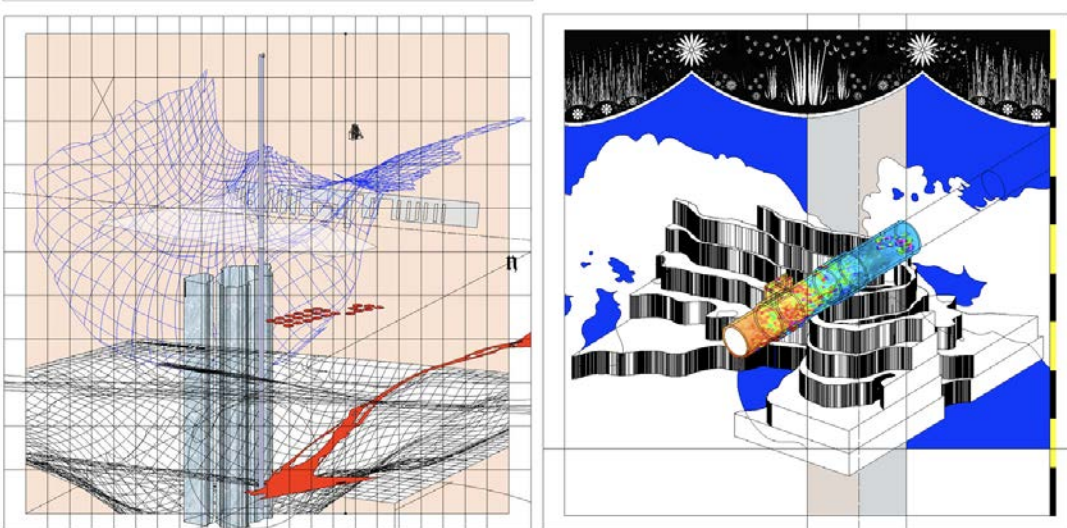
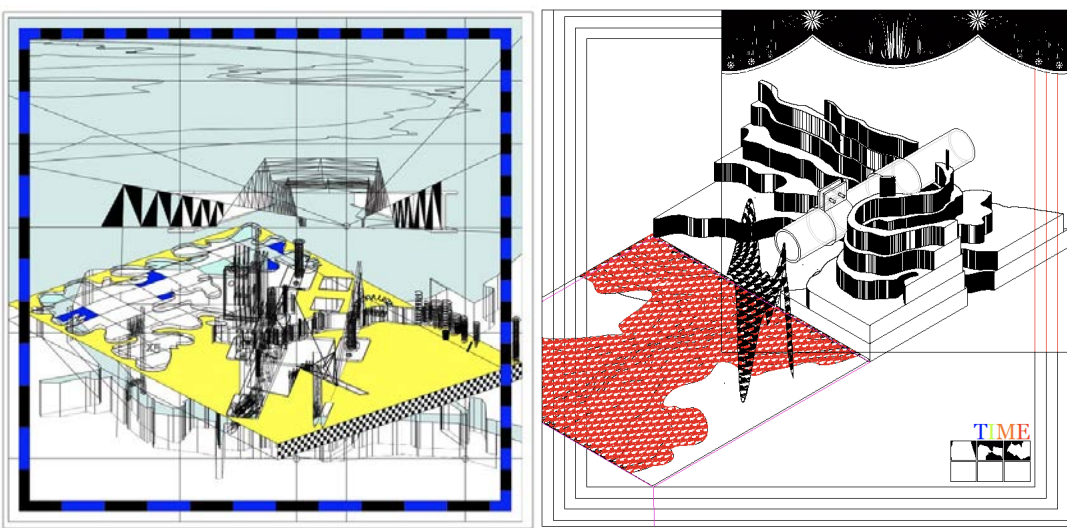
How to begin thinking about a thesis? Tentacles.¹

Tentacles reach out and grab things, bringing them together to make trouble. In our case we will reach a tentacle or two outside of the discipline of architecture and grab a few things that matter to you, or at least spark some personal curiosity. The trouble with these tentacular connections is that, when done well, they almost always produce a paradox or some deep ambiguity. This is a good sign. This is how you know you are on the right track to a substantial thesis and worthy project. Don't run from the trouble, dont fear paradox. This is an ultimate value of design - to give form to the messy complexity of life without needing to purify, or unify/universalize. With these tentacular connection you should aim to make a bit of a mess. To create a new definition of a problem for design to tackle. You should be seeking complexity in the paradox as this will sponsor the most meaningful project in these uncertain times. Architecturehere is not a solution to a problem directly, but as an instrument able to reframe a question into something more pertinent, more urgent, more timely.

We will craft arguments from these tentacular, messy ambiguities via seminar in the fall. We will begin to demonstrate these arguments through design in the fall and winter. But where to start?

How does architecture matter to you? Articulating a response to this question will come first. The answer should not reference any matters of fact about the discipline, but more likely the untapped possibility it offers. Something hinted at, something not yet. Crafting a new argument for value begins with a curiosity about the world that architecture becomes a tool for exploring. This is another commitment I will ask you to make - a commitment to wonder. We will take wonder very seriously. We will wonder about things first. To wonder is to observe things in a way that leads you to question your beliefs, limited knowledge, and the relevance thereof.

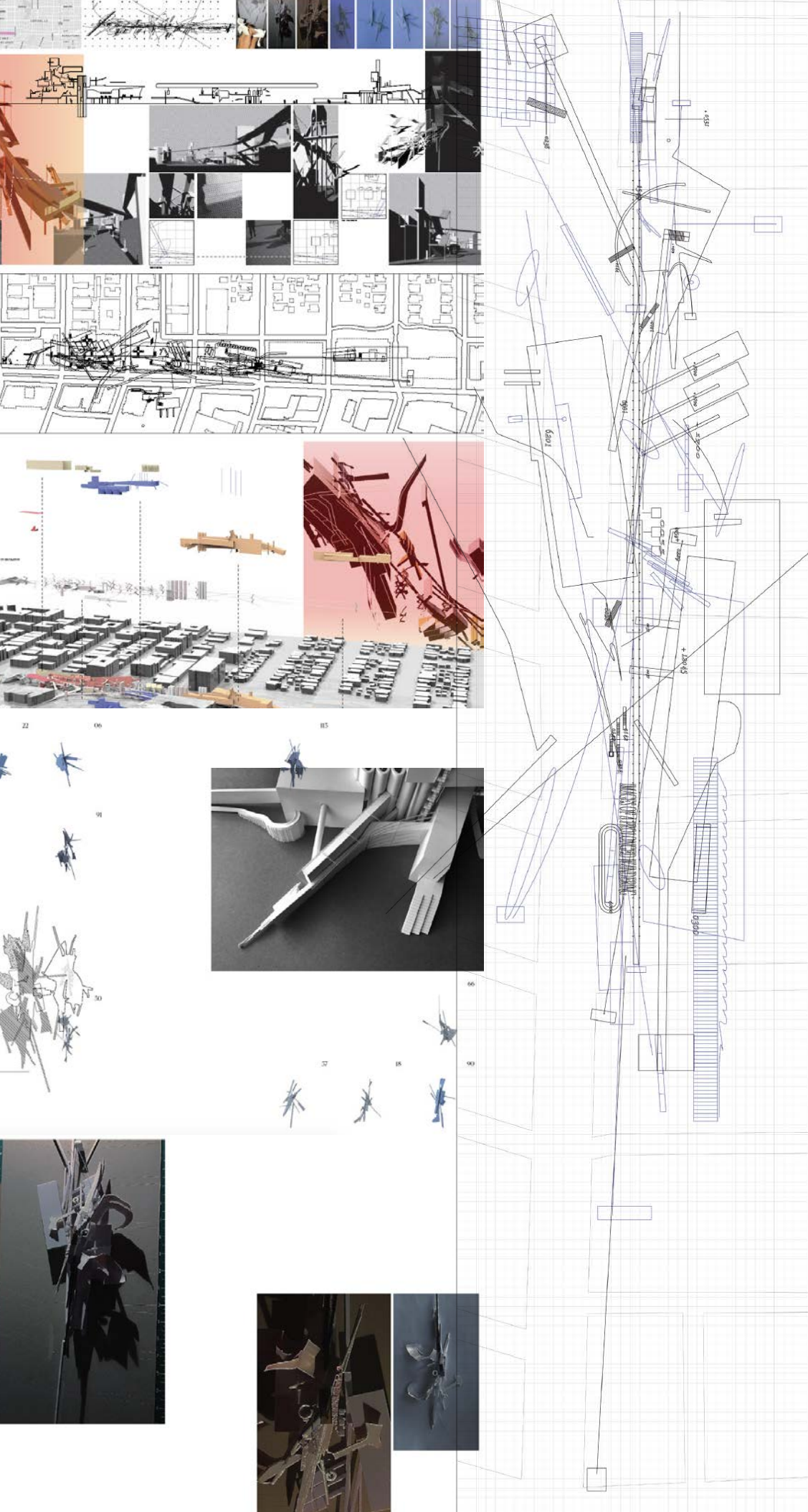
The dogmatist needs to first decide if something is incontrovertibly true or false in order to understand its value. We will suspend this urge to judgment in order to give ourselves the opportunity for making meaningful, optimistic, higher order connections between things. Wonder will allow us to be compassionate to the world in which we operate rather than hostile or reactionary. Wonder allows us to be sympathetic rather than moral. It will allow us the poise to make new connections between things that we may have otherwise brushed aside. In wonder we can be naive and create knowledge through process rather than rely on ready-made structures of value found in ideology.



the beautiful beac...
the forest.
Tabquamenon Falls State Park was
at PEAK for color saturation Friday,
October 12. However, there are still
50% of the leaves remaining on the
trees in the park as of 10-19-2018.
Tuesday, October 16, 2018
South Sts. Marie is nearing the peak
at roughly 70% color saturation.
Point Iroquois Lighthouse is not far
behind South Sts. Marie for color
with 60-70% color saturation. The
lighthouse still has hints of yellowish
green leaves.
Tabquamenon Falls State Park was
at PEAK for color saturation Friday,
October 12.
Friday, October 12, 2018
South Sts. Marie has lots of reds,
orange, where you look. The 50% is at about
60% color saturation.
Point Iroquois Lighthouse is still so
green, but they feel that
it's 60-65%
Tabquamenon Falls State Park is at
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Tuesday, October 12, 2018
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lighted in October and we'll
DON'T WAIT!!!
Point Iroquois Lighthouse wasn't
on an update, but this
image was taken October 7, 2018,
the color is roughly
60%. Watch the video this clip came
from here
The Great Lakes Ship
Museum, north of Tall
Falls, said they are at
predicted that this was
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Friday, October 12, 2018
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Point Iroquois Lighthouse 40-50%
Tabquamenon Falls 50%
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The Soo was just 10%
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Friday, September 21, 2018
The smell of fall might
be in the air
South Sts. Marie is still
mostly green. The Park
Ranger is predicting one
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Friday, September 21, 2018
Fall weather is upon us!

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Haydyn Jones
Process for
'Great Lakes Works'

Amanda Yee
Process for
'Miracle Mile'

ARCH481 – STUDIO

FALL - ABSTRACTION & ORGANIZATION

Research and imersion into theoretical text will happen simultaneously with energetic making of speculative objects. We will first aim to model ideas that are organizational before they can be architecturally formal and rub up against the physicality of materials and tools. By the End of the Quarter you will have conducted various experiements attempting to translate these material strategies in a series of steps to problems you have theoretically defined and present them as preliminary arguments that define your thesis clearly.

You will feel lost, anxious, and a bit insecure. We all will and we will embrace this energy in taking risks and making bold claims, making bold things. We will practice methods that aim to translate this anxious energy into productive continuous output beginning day 1.By the end of fall you will have developed your thesis and defined your project with initial architectural acts of translation from concept to object.

WINTER - VARIATION & FORM

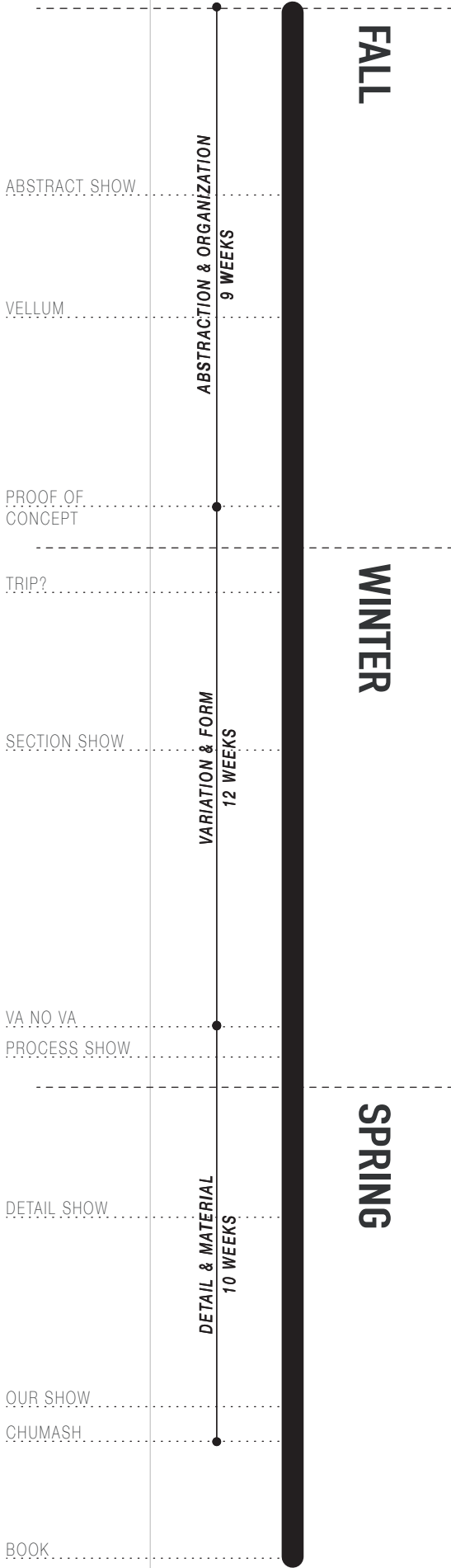
Translating organizational models into formal schemes that rub up against contextual and humane realities of place. Working through increasingly finer scales, development of complexity and expression unfolds as an additive process. We will also take a trip, TBD (last year- New Orleans)

You may feel overwhelmed with the prospect of developing a specific project in light of the immensity and broad range of your research topics. We will embrace this power for a single limited architectural act to make connections with these profound, far ranging issues. By the end of winter you will have substantially completed the development of your project and have begun to experiment with bold new representation techniques.

SPRING - DETAIL & MATERIAL

Spring will focus exclusivly on the development of your project through speculative representation. Models and images will be as experimental and speculative as the project itself.

You may feel odd that there is so much time left ***just*** to build a model or two and make a few compelling images. Could this be because you have never really built a model that does justice to your work? In reality there is never enough time and this will be no different. Design will not stop once you begin making these models and images, it will simply proceed through a different medium. No squeaky clean white models, Just scrappy, precise models as palimpsest, as accumulation of intelligence.



ARCH 492 – SEMINAR

We will use the seminar in the fall as a workshop for crafting your thesis research and text from the ground up. My goal will be to challenge your assumptions and break your habits of thought. The 4 topics will give you the ingredients needed for a thesis that meets the expectations outlined in the preceding pages. They represent a step by step guide for discovering, organizing, and developing the thought that will allow you to hit the ground running with testing in fall and winter studios.

1. HOW TO THESIS (THE STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENT - 2 weeks)

What can a thesis be? How can it be valuable to your practice and the discipline as a whole? What are the modes that a thesis might operate in? What makes for a convincing argument? What can we learn from other disciplines for crafting arguments and narratives in support of my thesis? What literary or rhetorical devices are our there for me to employ?

2. THINKING ABOUT THOUGHT: CONCEPTS OF EXPERIENCE AND EXISTENCE (DESTABILIZATION>GROUNDING - 2 weeks)

Why would an architect need to consider these topics of philosophy/science? How have relationships between art, science and philosophy evolved throughout history and what can we learn from their artifacts? What is the current dominant intellectual paradigm? How have architects taken influence from philosophy/science in the past/currently? How will I begin to use these ideas in my thesis?

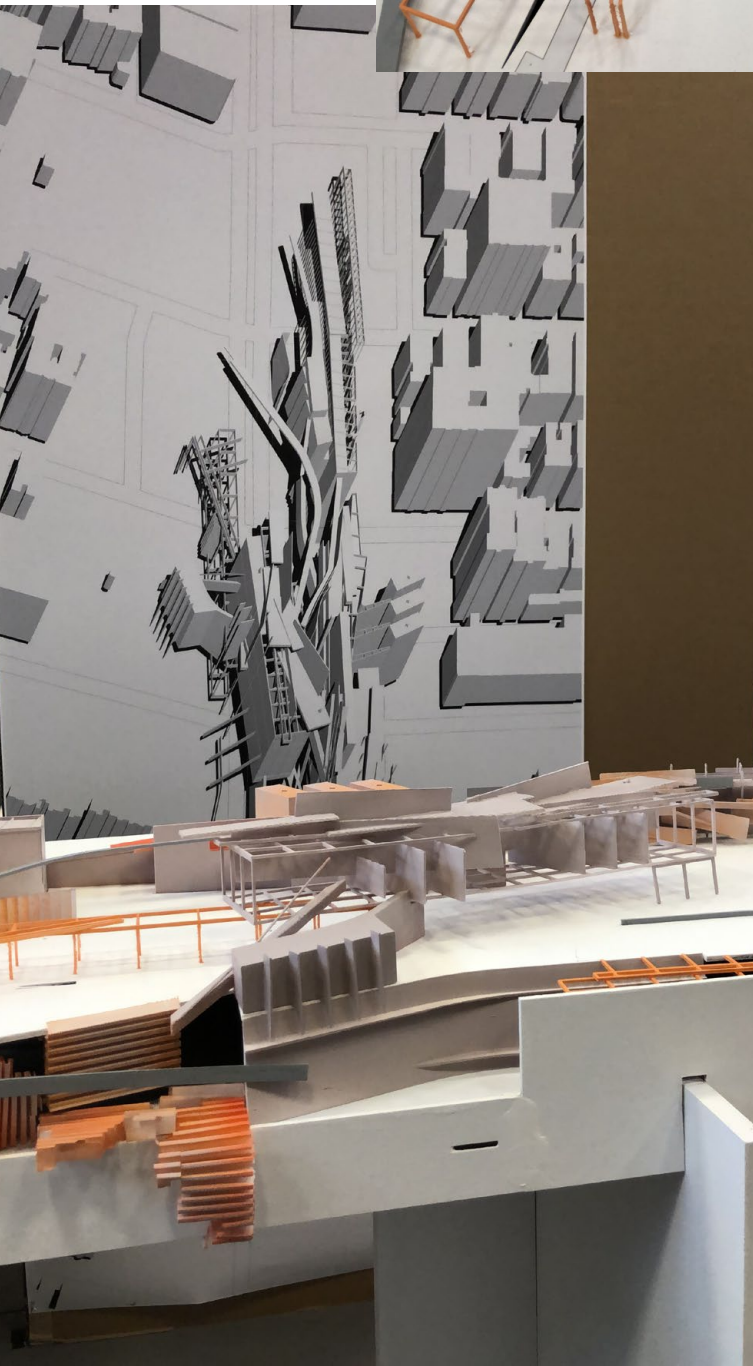
3. PERFORMANCE OF THE ARCHITECT (CURRENT STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE - 2 weeks)

How have architects used theses to define their value throughout history? How have they taken cues from other disciplines (philosophy, sciences, etc.) to argue for value? What can we learn by comparing various architectural theses/ideology? What is the dominant architectural ideology today? How can I begin to position my thesis within this framework?

4. MEANS AND METHODS (CRAFT - 2 weeks)

How will i begin to test my thesis? What modes of architectural craft and representation are relevant to my speculation? What modes of craft and representation outside of architecture are relevant to my speculation? How can technique give rigor and control to an experimental project without limiting possibility?

Amanda Yee
'Miracle Mile'



Haydyn Jones
'Great Lakes Works'



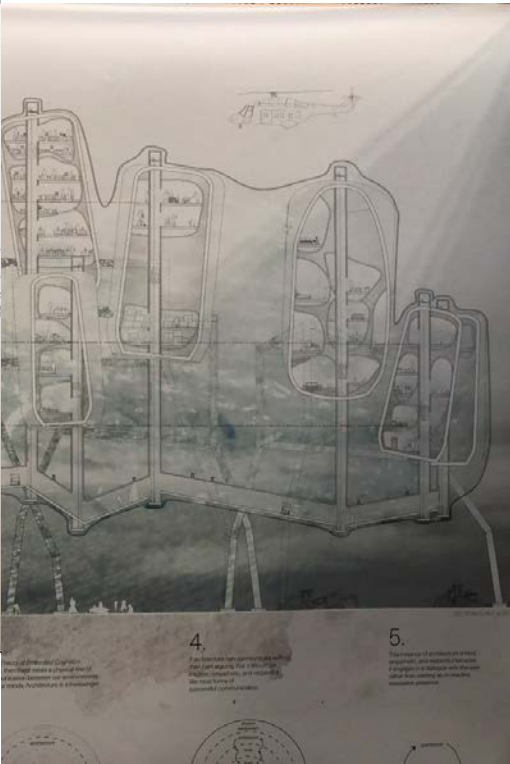
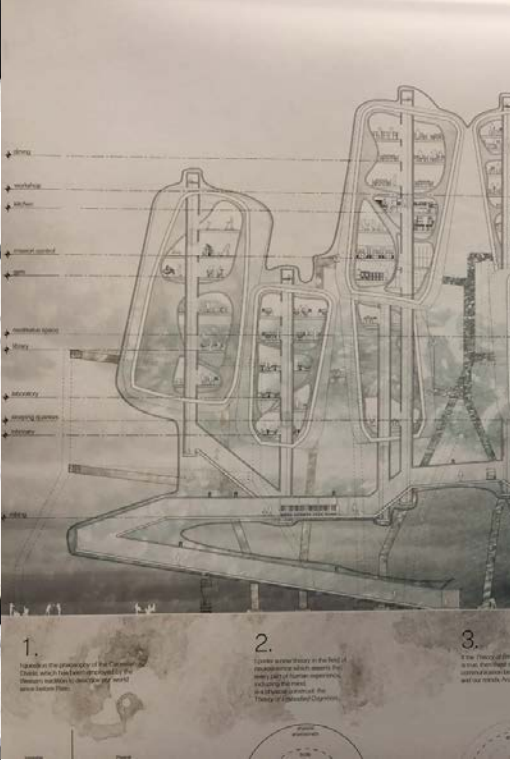
William Monterossa
'Nomadic Infrastructure'



Caroline Dunn
'Where the Walls Know Your Name'



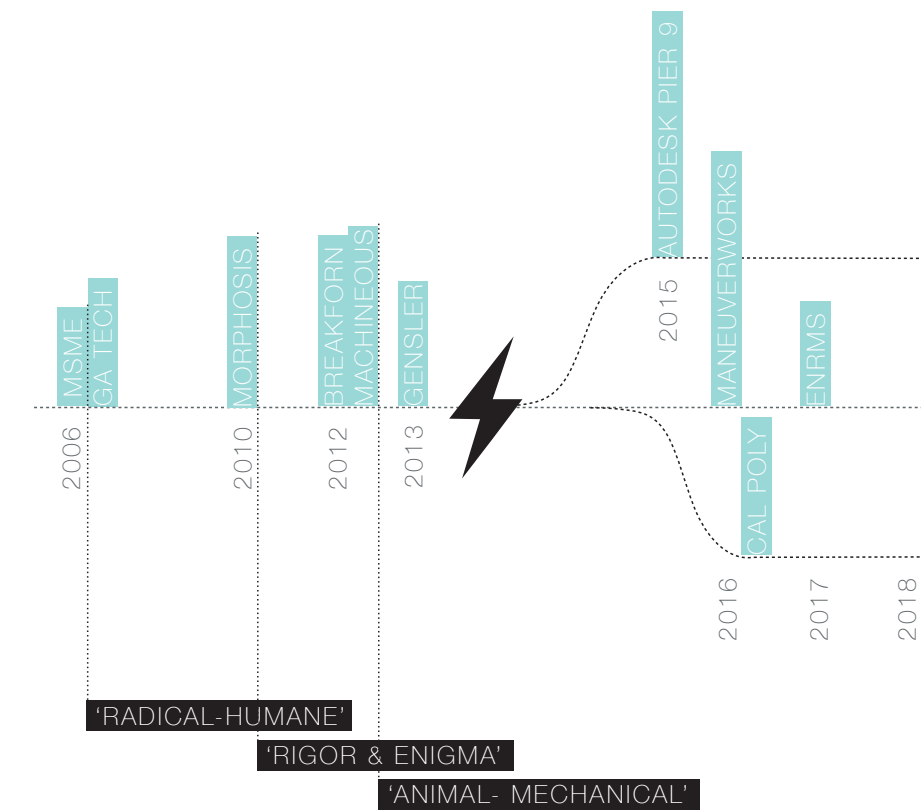
Luis Wiley
'Punk Rock Architecture'



Arielle Bessler
'Barnham Bazar'

ABOUT ME

I have worked in 3 person offices, 300 person offices and several in between. I spent just as much time in fabrication shops and on job sites alongside robots and craftsmen. This wide range of experience has inspired me with more questions than answers, and a desire to connect these worlds in new ways. Below is a timeline exhibiting as much:



Radical-Humane, Rigor & Enigma, and Animal-Mechanical represent 3 'buckets' of thinking and speculation that define my own interests as they have emerged over time. I have been practicing on my own and with partners at small scales since 2015 and began teaching in 2016. I am committed to a radical, joyful interpretation of architecture (thanks, Mack and Merrill). One that is militantly optimistic and progressive (thanks, Thom). I am at peace with the WORK required to champion this point of view in a harsh world oblivious to its unheralded value. This calls into question my viability as a businessperson, but more than anything I hope to honor the generosity of my mentors through my commitment to the cause.

Teaching allows me to test strategies and prototype arguments for value in ways that clients rarely indulge. This has been an incredibly rewarding opportunity to push the limits of my thinking and practice through collaboration with students. I hope to continue to supplement teaching with practice, and practice with teaching as long as these questions remain unanswered (they will). It is now impossible for me to imagine one without the other.

Drawdles
w/ Morphosis



Entangled Joinery
Autodesk Pier 9



Broadway Housing
w/ Machineous & Kevin Daly Architects



