

Teaching Portfolio

Ali Reza Shahbazin
Ph.D. in Architecture



Table of Courses Assisted (TA) and Instructed:

Architectural Fundamentals Studio..... 1

Origins of Modern Architecture..... 8

Global Architectural History from the 19th Century to Present..... 11

Architectural History from the Ancient to the Baroque Era..... 13

Architecture Crits..... 17

Introduction to Architecture Studio..... 18

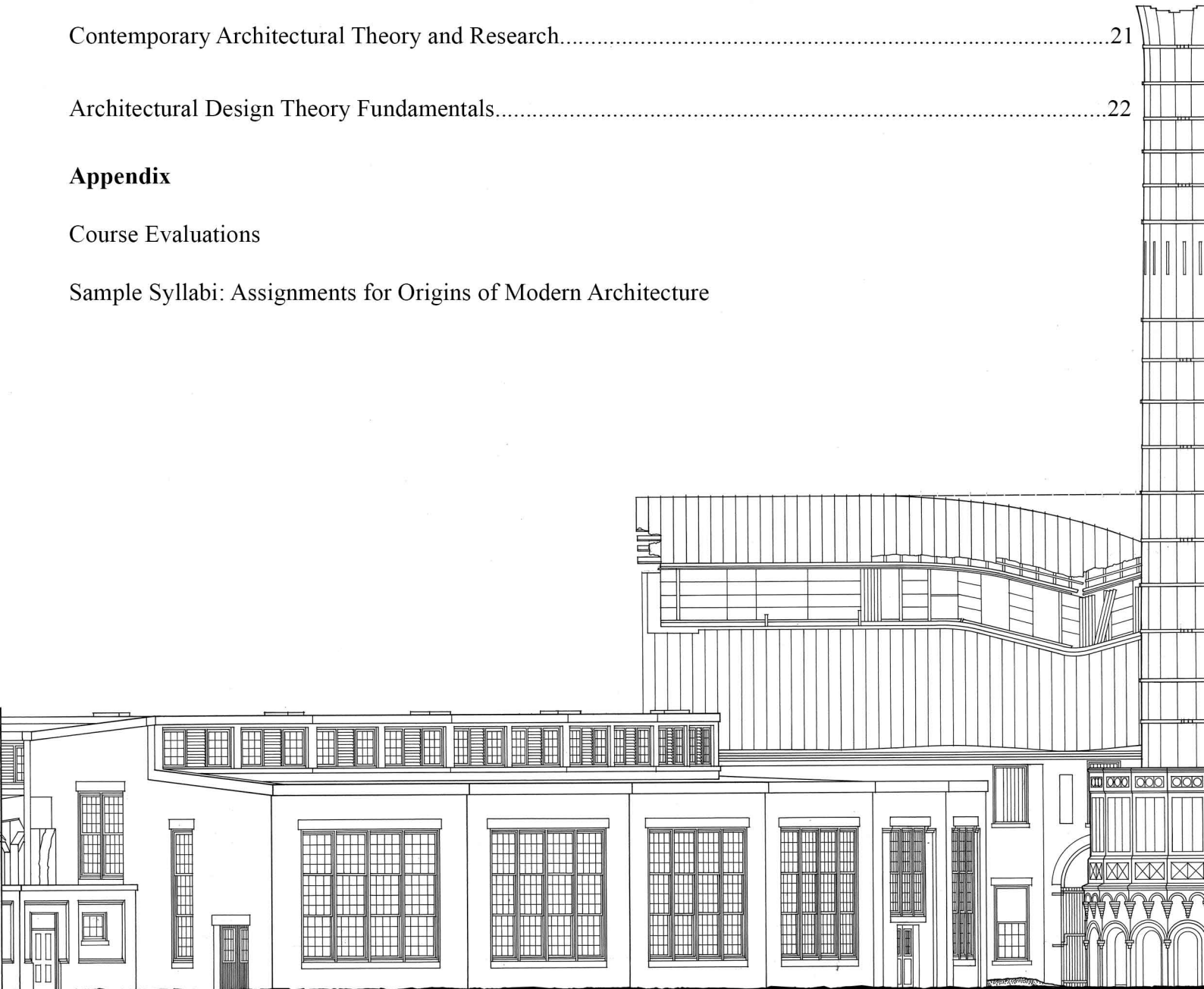
Contemporary Architectural Theory and Research..... 21

Architectural Design Theory Fundamentals..... 22

Appendix

Course Evaluations

Sample Syllabi: Assignments for Origins of Modern Architecture



Architectural Fundamentals Studio: Spatial Relationships and Human Response, 15 Sophomore Students

Spring 2017, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

Savannah, Georgia, USA

Professor: Julie Rogers Varland

Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin

Representative Student Projects by Alberto Thomen, and Ryan Sweat.

Architecture carries historical responsibility. In a project at the Georgia Railroad Museum site in Savannah, students were tasked with designing a gallery, a dwelling, and a studio for an artist. To explore this responsibility, I guided students in selecting from three artists: Robert Irwin, a renowned American installation artist; James Turrell, an American light artist; and Antony Gormley, a British sculptor. My role included assisting students in implementing new spaces that harmonize with the existing historical site, aligning with the artistic essence of the chosen luminary.



Shahbazin, Ali, 1

Peter Dublin, West Elevation
Central of Georgia Railway
Savannah Repair Shops
(1853-1926).



To ignite a passion for relearning how to think with our hands, students began the project by reading Juhani Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin* (1996). They were encouraged to start the project by considering the atmosphere of their design. To practice how the poetry of materials can enrich the built environment, students constructed light and concrete texture study models (Fig. 1).

Alberto Thomen, one of the students, selected Robert Irwin as his artist. I directed Alberto's attention to Irwin's distinctive approach to spatial perception, emphasizing a heightened sense of presence in a space and capturing the ephemeral qualities of the built environment. Acting on my guidance, Alberto designed his light and texture study models to evoke a sensory experience.

Fig. 1

Gallery:

Contrasting with the prevalence of brick materials in the industrial ambiance of the Railroad Museum, Alberto chose to create a more refined space using solid colors and surfaces. To strengthen this concept, I encouraged him to eliminate extraneous elements, embracing a minimalist approach to achieve an abstraction reminiscent of Irwin's installations (Fig. 2).

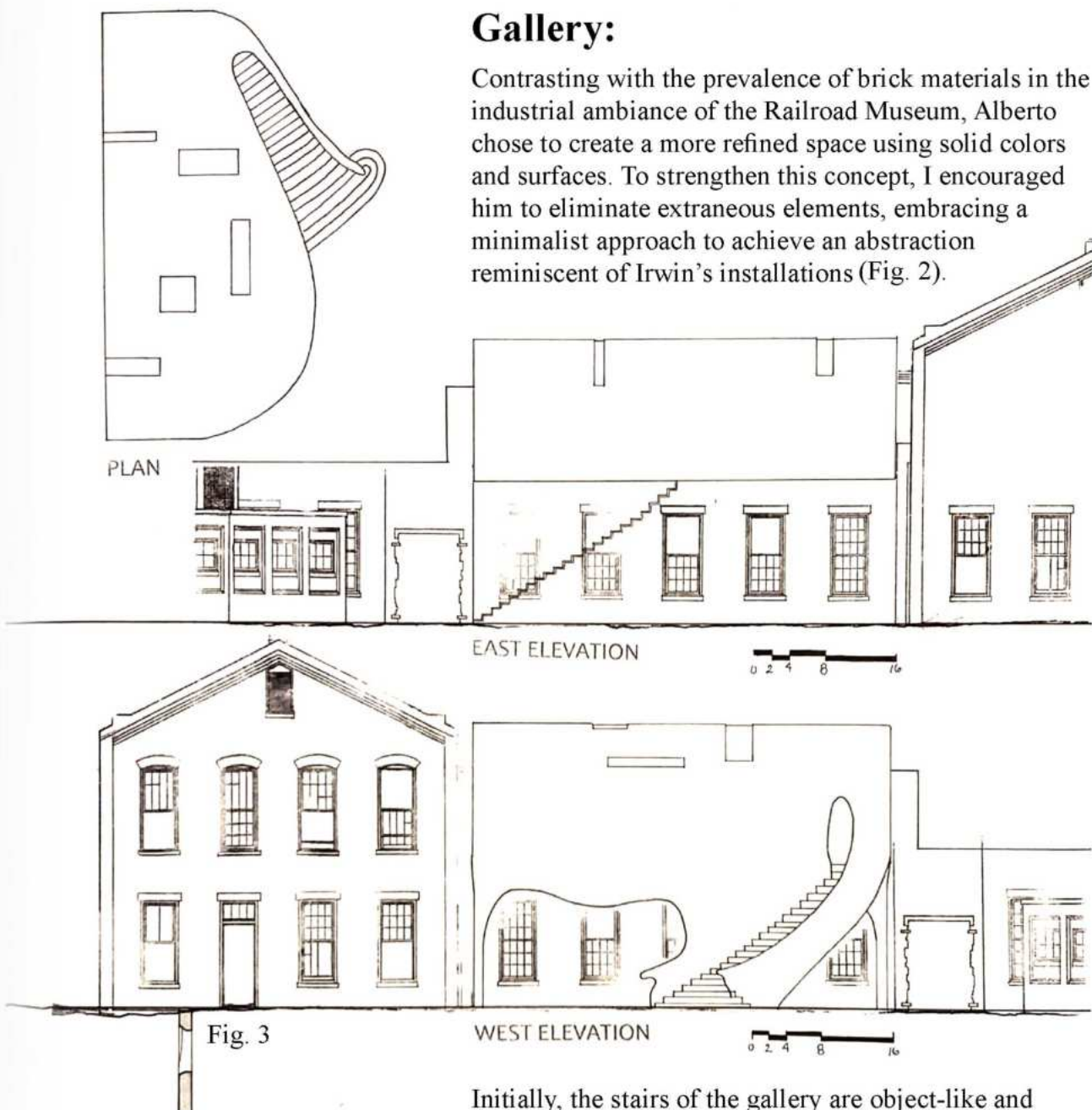
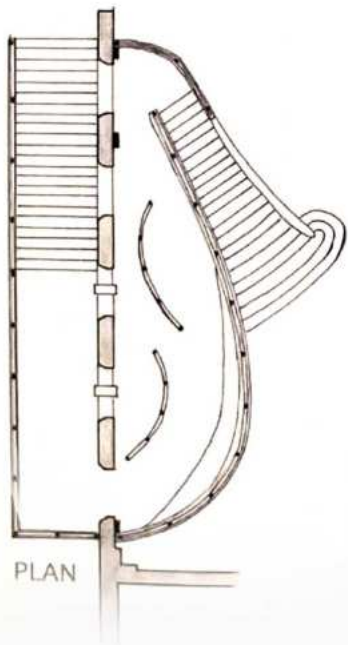


Fig. 3

Initially, the stairs of the gallery are object-like and sculptural, but through body movement and ascension, they begin to merge with the environment (Fig. 3).



PLAN

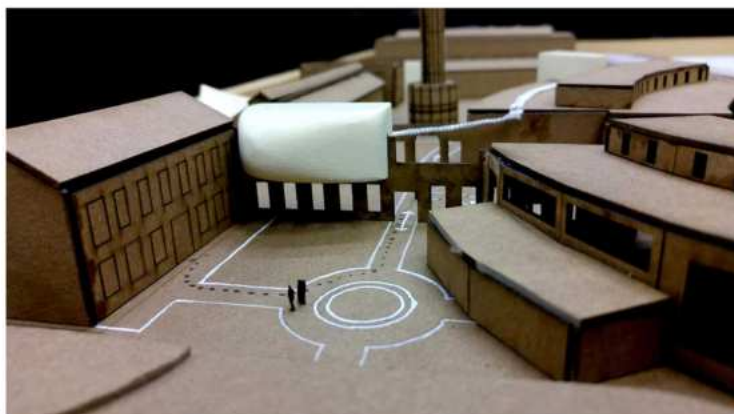
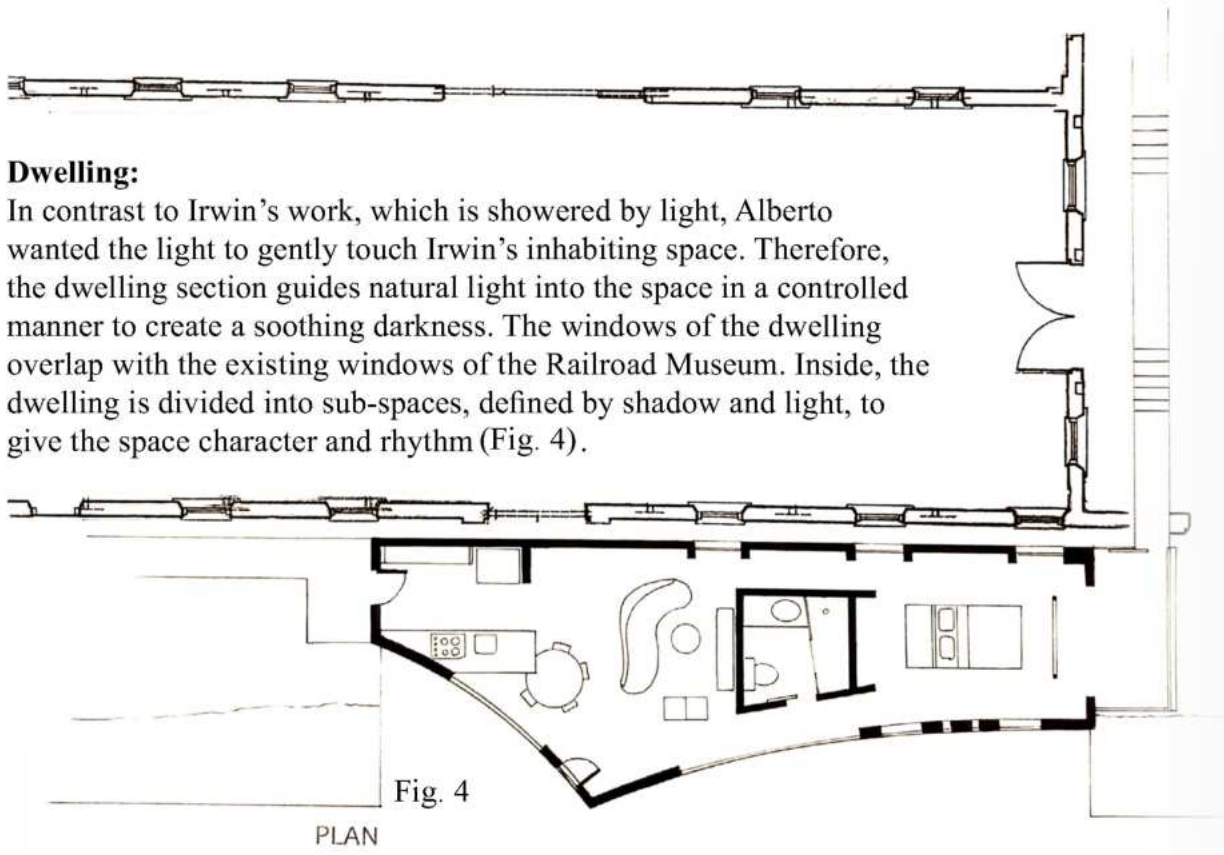
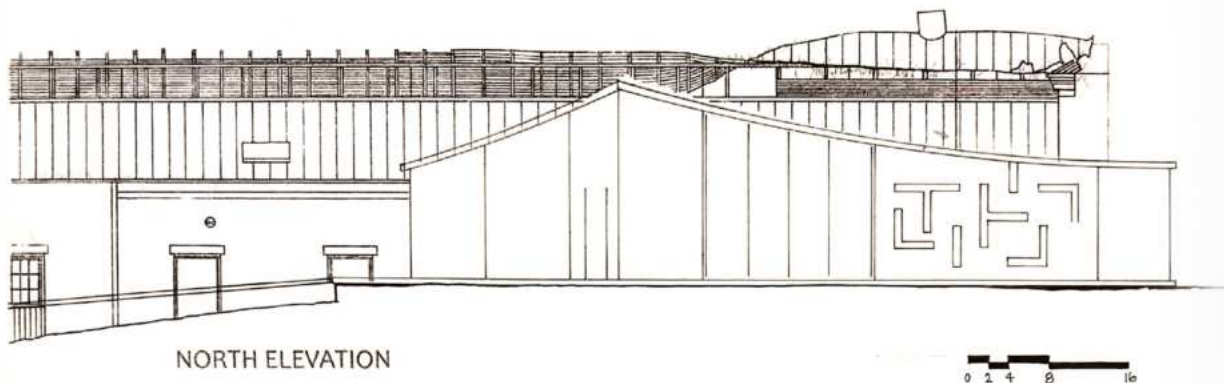


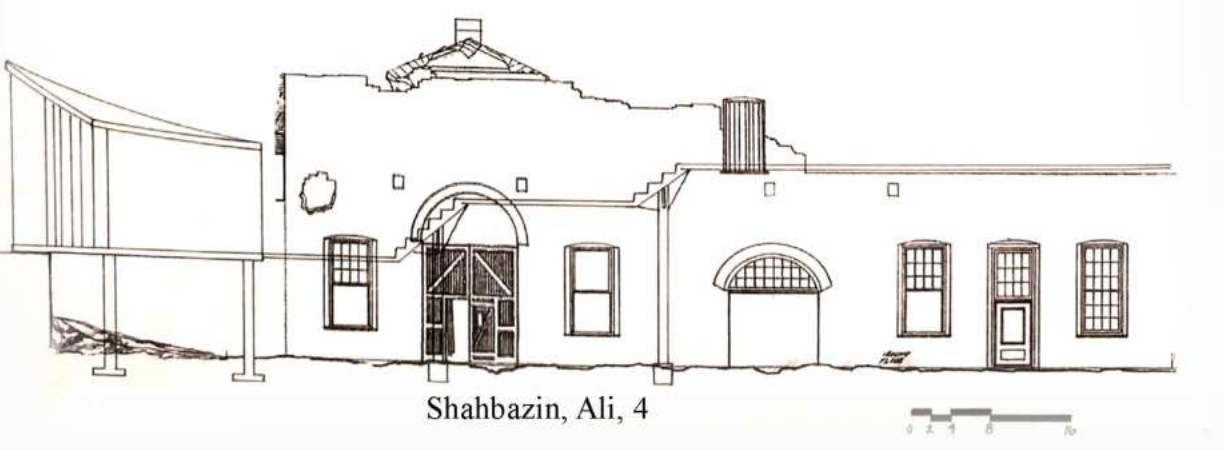
Fig. 2

Shahbazin, Ali, 3



Dwelling:

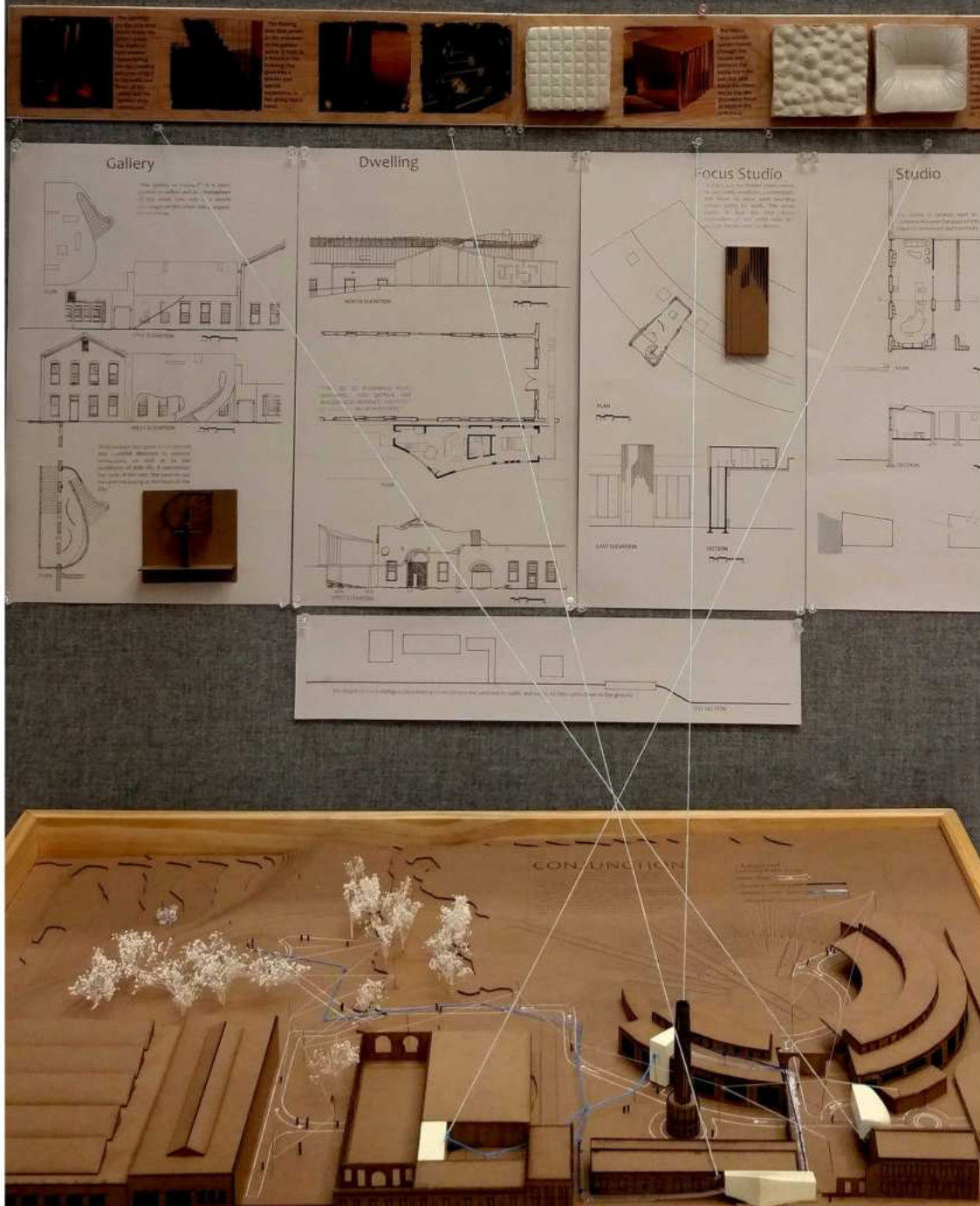
In contrast to Irwin’s work, which is showered by light, Alberto wanted the light to gently touch Irwin’s inhabiting space. Therefore, the dwelling section guides natural light into the space in a controlled manner to create a soothing darkness. The windows of the dwelling overlap with the existing windows of the Railroad Museum. Inside, the dwelling is divided into sub-spaces, defined by shadow and light, to give the space character and rhythm (Fig. 4).



Studio:

Alberto seamlessly blended his architectural vision with the reddish-brown and rusty surface materials, bricks, and historical ambiance of the railroad museum. Throughout the design phases, I motivated Alberto to envision his project as an architectural meditation inspired by Robert Irwin's compelling question:

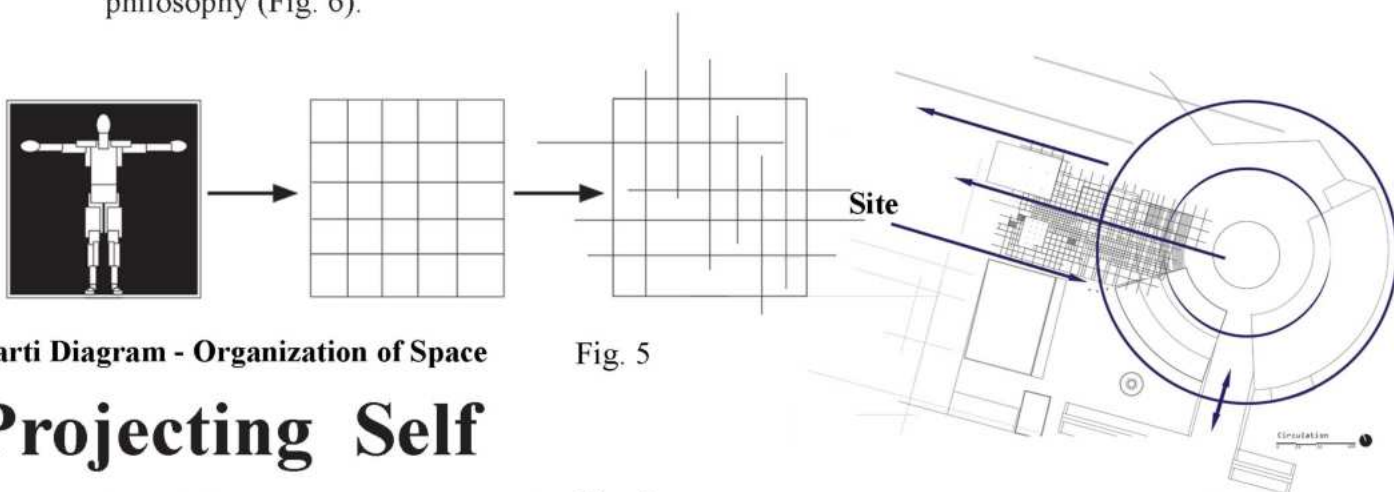
“What is more wonderful than our ability to perceive the world?”



Shahbazin, Ali, 5

Another student, Ryan Sweat drew inspiration from British artist Antony Gormley, particularly Gormley's exploration of the body's presence in space. Through our conversation about Gormley's works, Ryan conceptualized a design that mirrors the interaction between body and space, akin to architectural principles (Fig. 5).

In aligning architecture similarly to Gormley's approach to the human body, Ryan's design prioritizes transparency. Utilizing a scaffolding system based on grids, the massing envelops the building without explicitly defining the contained space. Rather than imposing on space, I encouraged Ryan to activate it, according to Gormley's philosophy (Fig. 6).



Parti Diagram - Organization of Space

Fig. 5

Projecting Self

Light study model used as a concept model

Fig. 6

Concrete study model

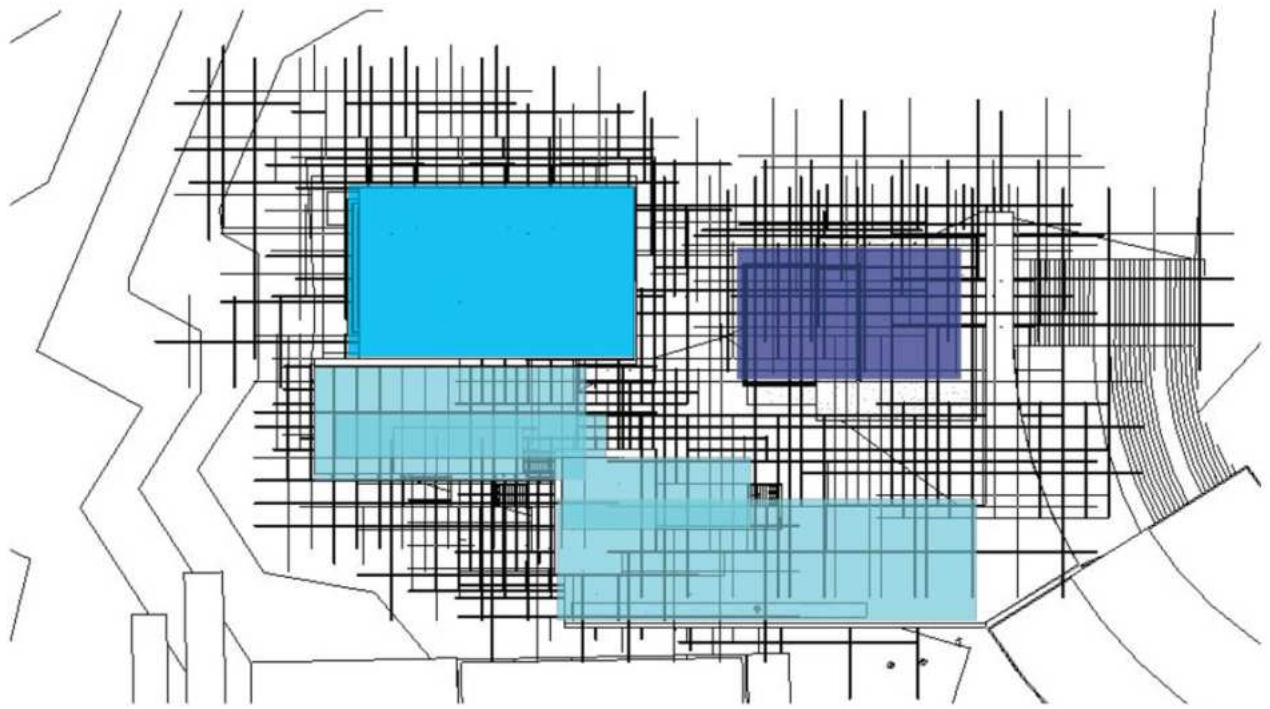


Antony Gormley, "Exposure," (2010)



Shahbazin, Ali, 6





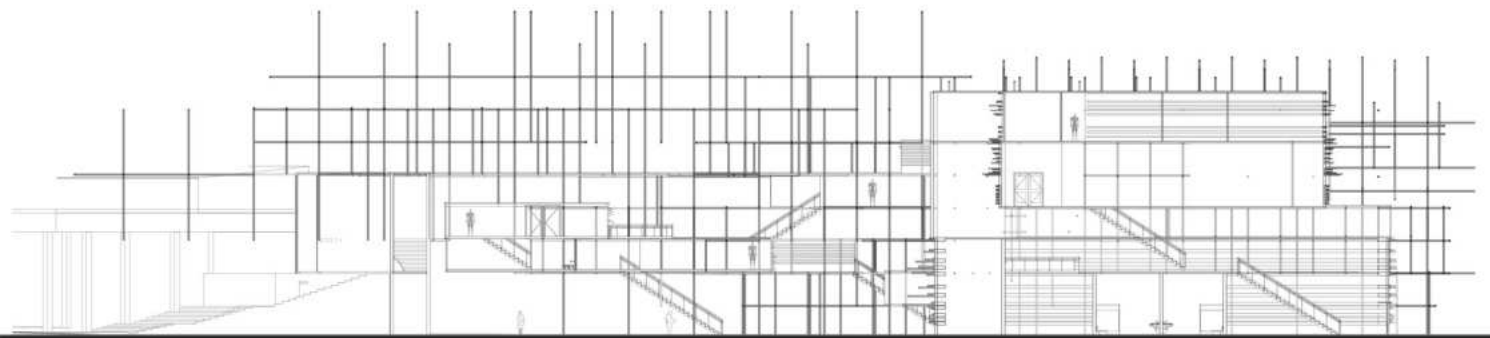
Programed Zones

 **Studio**

 **Residence**

 **Gallery**

 **Open Gallery**



Elevation



Lecture Class: Origins of Modern Architecture,
32 Undergraduate and Graduate Students
Winter 2020, McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada
Professor: Alberto Pérez-Gómez
Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin.
Representative Student Projects by Isabel Potworowski.

Introduction

I designed the assessment scheme and assignments (see Appendix) as the person responsible for the project component of the course. Assignments emphasize literary imagination as a tool for architectural design. By exploring space in the stories of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, students can perceive architecture not merely as a functional backdrop or formal shell, but as a lived-in space. Borges' narratives immerse us in the mystery of time and space, enriching the architectural experience.

Assignment 1

For the first assignment, I invited students to translate the mystical spatial experience of a Borges story into an architectural composite drawing using the techniques of collage and montage. I encouraged them to see space as a theatrical scenery with spatial potentialities for the story to take place.

One student, Isabel Potworowski, chose *El Aleph* (1945). In this story, “Aleph is one of the points in space that contains all other points.” One who looks into it can see everything in the universe without any confusion. Isabel's collage places the observer at the threshold of the character's mystical experience (Figure 7):

It's in the cellar under the dining room.... It's mine — mine. I discovered it [the Aleph] when I was a child, all by myself. The cellar stairway is so steep that my aunt and uncle forbade my using it, but I'd heard someone say there was a world down there. I found out later they meant an old-fashioned globe of the world, but at the time I thought they were referring to the world itself.

Assignment 2

For the second assignment, I asked students to find a real location for their Borges story, defining “place” as a meaningful space. They acted as set designers, choosing a built environment to stage their story, then creating a collage to reveal its spatial possibilities.

Isabel saw a spiritual dimension in everyday spaces, leading her to select the third floor of the McGill School of Architecture as the setting for the unfolding story. She saw the cast of the shadow at the end of the corridor as a mystical experience, an Aleph moment, in her daily life. She imagined the moment as a growing creative process for an architecture student in her school: The endless attempts – writing, sketching, and designing – are pulled into a calming darkness (Figure 8).

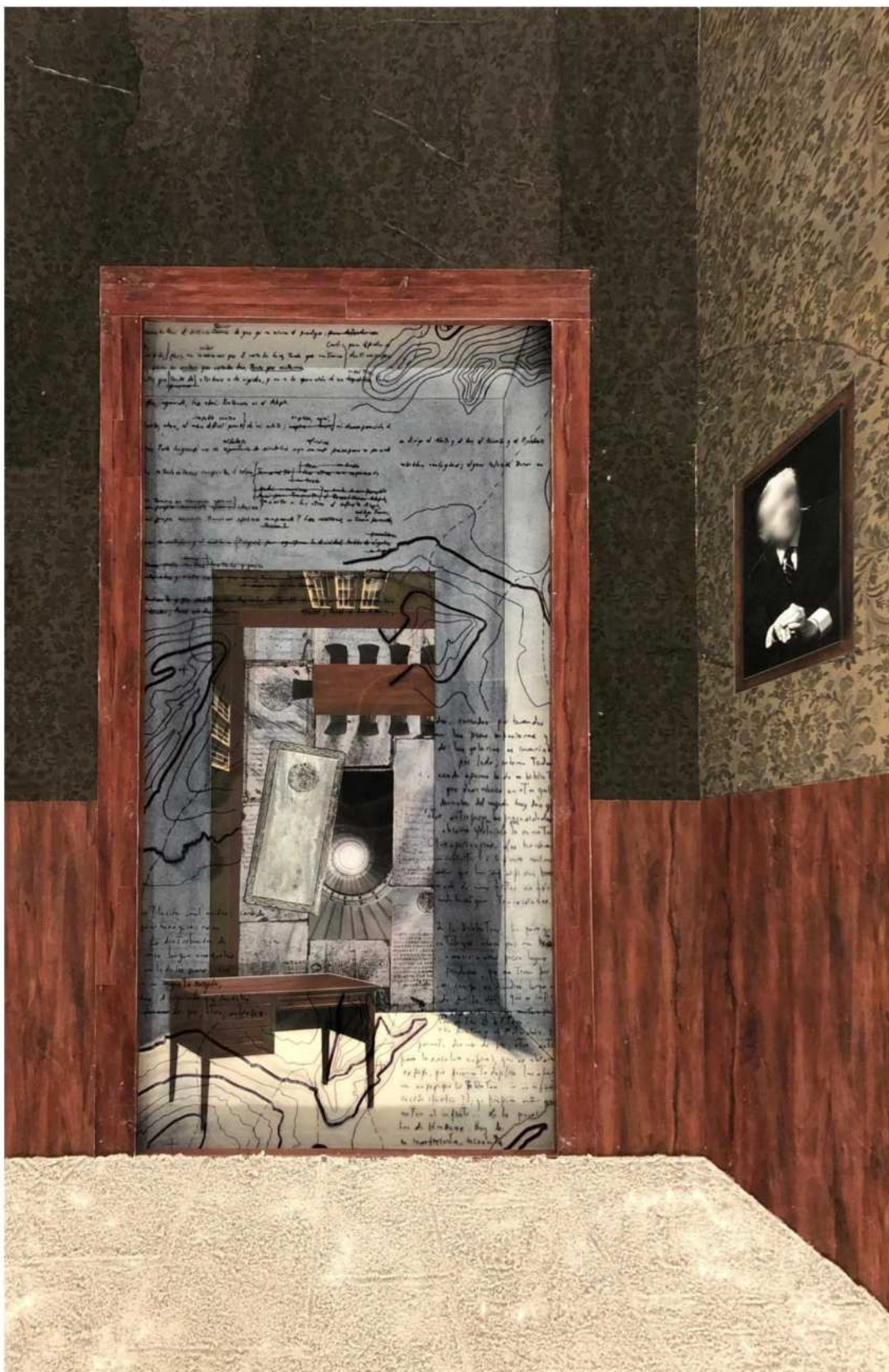


Fig. 7, Isabel Potworowski, Graduate Student, Assignment 1, 22"×33", Collage Techniques, Various Materials.



Fig. 8, Isabel Potworowski, Assignment 2, 22"×33", Collage Techniques, Watercolor and Papers.

Shahbazin, Ali, 10


Lecture Class: Global Architectural History from the 19th Century to Present**74 undergraduate students****Winter 2021 (Remote Delivery), McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada****Professor: Ipek Türeli****Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin****Representative Student Essays by Sara Cipolla, John Vaccaro, Clay Moon.****Introduction**

This course, organized chronologically, delves into the urban evolution of select cities worldwide over the past two centuries. In addition to leading discussions and curating materials centered on readings, I crafted exercises aimed at encouraging student engagement with lecture content. These exercises prompt exploration of design questions related to racial capitalism, colonial urbanism, and post-industrial cities. These sessions spotlighted contemporary design contributions to spatial justice. In our discussions, the emphasis was on the transformation of the built environment through the lens of urban and social theories. Additionally, I handled exam grading, guided students in choosing essay topics, and nurtured the development of their ideas.


Final Assignment

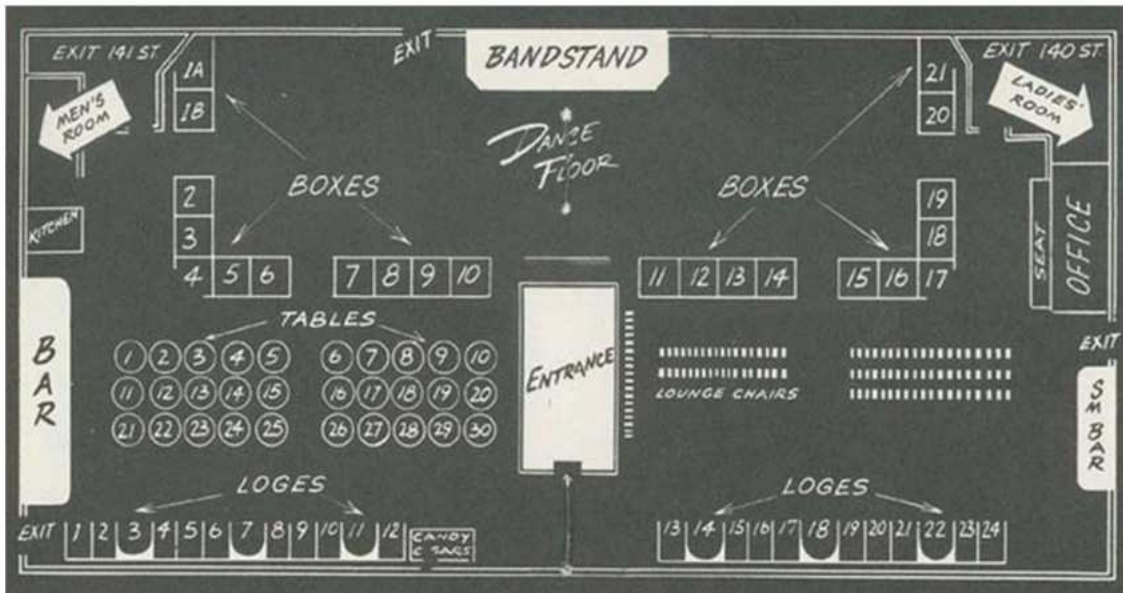
I guided students in refining research skills while nurturing cultural awareness. The final assignment resonated with the imperative of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, urging a central focus on Black lives within architectural thinking. The task involved crafting a 2000-word essay that explores the intersection of “Race and Space” in modern and contemporary architectural history (1800-2020). Furthermore, I recommended essays for presentation on the McGill School of Architecture blog dedicated to Race + Space, some of which are accessible for reading here:




**“The Face of a Nation Divided:
Discrimination Immortalized Through the Monticello on the Jefferson Nickel”
by Sara Cipolla **



“Strike a Pose:  The Importance of Black Queer Spaces in the Late 20th Century”
by John Vaccaro



“The Savoy Ballroom:  Rejecting Black Exoticism Through Community-Driven Design”
by Clay Moon

Lecture Class: Architectural History from the Ancient to the Baroque Era
45-59 Undergraduate Students, Fall 2023, 2022, 2020, McGill University

Professor: Ricardo L. Castro

Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin

Representative Student Projects by Maxence Perrault, Nathaniel

Chavez-Baumberg, Sophie Howard, and Alexandra Alfieri.

Introduction

The course comprised a series of lectures encompassing the history of world architecture from ancient times to the baroque era. I facilitated students in bridging their foundational understanding of the historical context of each architectural period with contemporary architectural issues.

Midterm Assignment

For the midterm project, students crafted their poster papers following my instructions. This task sharpened their focus on the detailed analysis of selected architectural elements, urging them to perceive buildings as cultural phenomena within distinct settings (Fig. 9, 10).

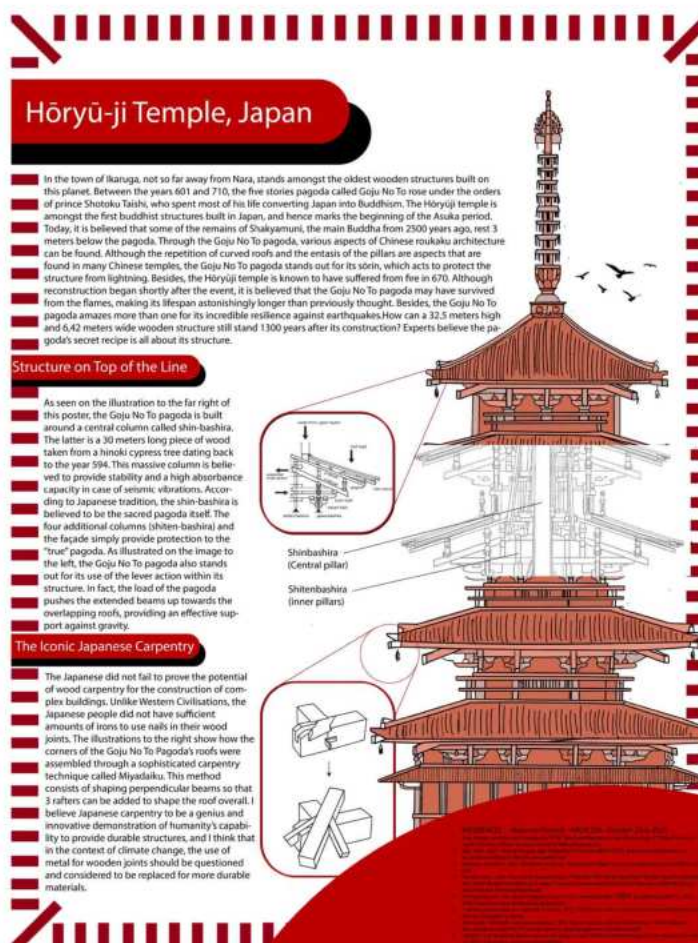


Fig. 9, Maxence Perrault, Poster Paper, "Hōryū-ji Temple," Digital, 17"×23", Fall 2023.

CUPOLA

Small text box with illegible text.

OCULUS

EYE OF THE PANTHEON

THE PANTHEON POSSESSES THE LARGEST UNSUPPORTED DOME IN THE WORLD. ITS DIAMETER EQUALING ITS DISTANCE FROM THE FLOOR, BEING 43.3 METERS (142 FT). THIS ARCHITECTURAL FEAT WAS POSSIBLE BY USING LIGHTER MATERIALS IN THE UPPER PART OF THE DOME WITH INTERNAL SPACES WITHIN ITS WALLS AND BY PROGRESSIVELY DECREASING THE DOME'S WALLS THICKNESS, RESULTING IN THE INTERIOR BEING SPHERICAL, AND ITS EXTERIOR SLIGHTLY FLATTENED.

IT IS THE PANTHEON'S ONLY LIGHT SOURCE BEING AN 8.2 METER (27 FT) IN DIAMETER HOLE. IT SYMBOLIZES THE "UNION OF EARTH AND SKY THAT ALLOWS HUMAN PRAYER TO ASCEND TO THE HEAVENS UNIMPEDED."

PORTICO

THE PORTICO IS BOLSTERED BY 16 MASSIVE COLUMNS OF THE CORINTHIAN ORDER. THEIR DIMENSIONS BEING 11.8 METERS (39 FT) IN HEIGHT, AND 1.5 METERS (5 FT) IN DIAMETER. IT HAS INSCRIPTIONS.

MAGRIPPA LFCOSTERTIVMFECTI

"IT WAS BUILT BY MARCOS AGRIPPA IN HIS THIRD CONSULATE" LEFT BY HADRIAN IN HONOR OF HIS PREDECESSOR

IN HIERA SRI CAESARI LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS ET ANTONINUS VED STATE CORRUPTUM CLAMORINI CULTU RESTITVERUNT

POPE PRINCE "EMPEROR LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AND EMPEROR MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS WITH EACH REFINEMENT THEY RESTORED THE PANTHEON, DAMAGED BY THE PASSAGE OF YEARS"

A GEOMETRIC WONDER

A SPHERE WITHIN A CYLINDER

SPACE AND SUMMERY ZAMWELIX

ARCHIMEDES' THEOREM OF THE SPHERE WITHIN A CYLINDER DEMONSTRATES THE 2:3 CORRELATION THEORY BETWEEN THE VOLUME OF A SPHERE AND A CYLINDER. THIS IS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE PANTHEON.

PANTHEON

ROME

NATHANIEL ERIC CHAVEZ-BAUMBERG (260918302) ARCH 250: ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY PROF. RICARDO CASTRO

Fig. 10, Nathaniel Chavez-Baumberg, Poster Paper, "Pantheon," Digital, 17"×23", Fall 2020.

Final Assignment

The goal was to teach students how literary imagination can serve as a fertile depository for architectural knowledge. The final assignment, a storyboard, centered on one of the cities described in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972). Collaborating with students, I guided them in selecting a trajectory for their imagined city plan. Subsequently, we used panels to sequentially illustrate spatial movement, treating the drawing panels akin to camera frames (Fig. 11, 12).

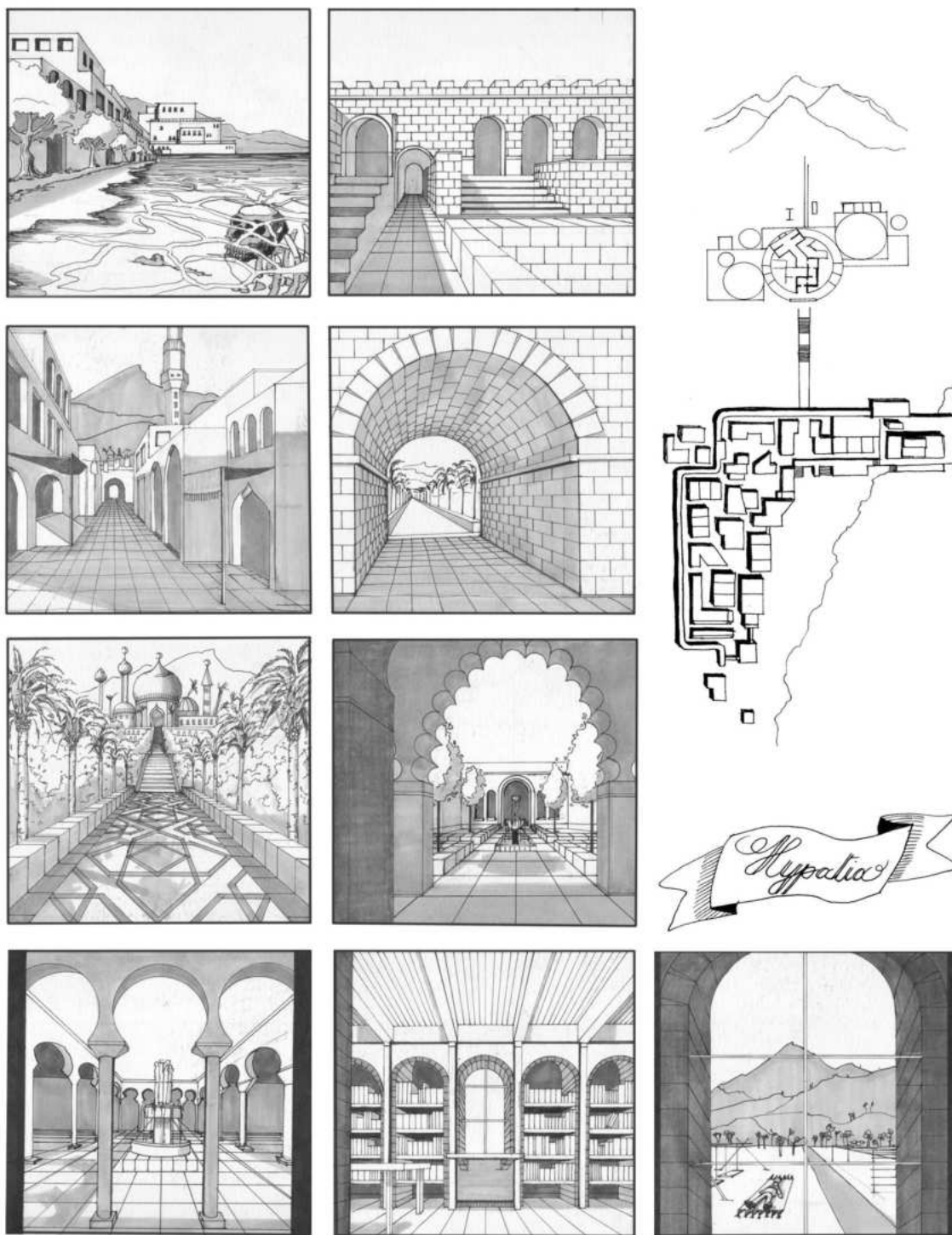


Fig. 11, Sophie Howard, *Invisible Cities*, City of Hypatia, Marker and Uni Pin Pen, 17"×23", Fall 2020.

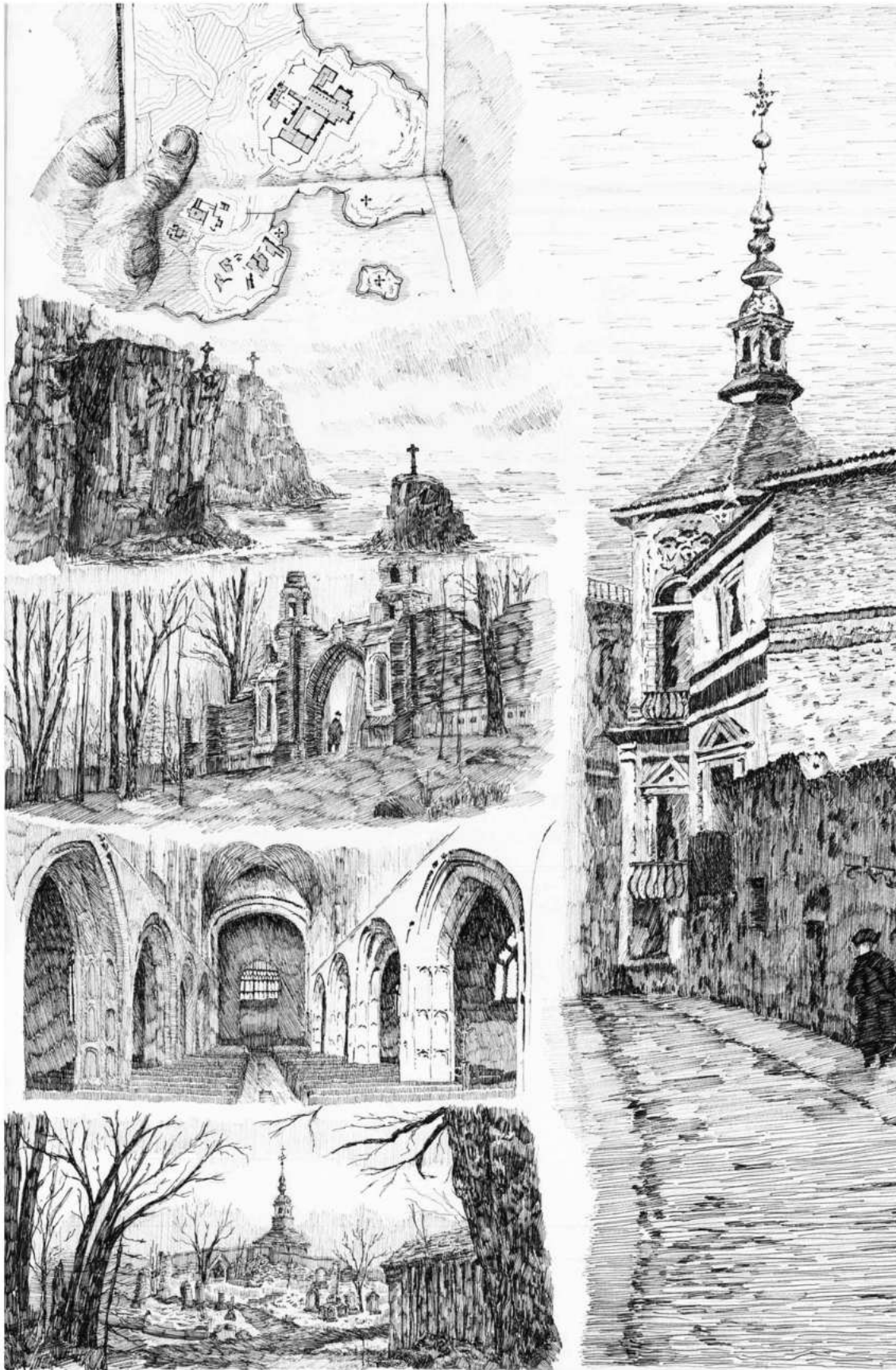


Fig. 12, Alexandra Alfieri, *Invisible Cities*, City of Laudomia, Uni Pin Pen, 17"×23", Fall 2022.



Architecture Crits

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
PETER GUO-HUA FU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

UI Winter Studio Reviews Friday, April 14th, 2023

♀ Room 102 & Exhibition Room
* 10am—6pm

INSTRUCTORS

Theodora Vardouli ●
Vedanta Balbahadur ■
Samiha Meem ▲

GUEST CRITICS

François-Luc Giraldeau →Approximately Blue
 →Frame Publishers
Latimer Hu →MakerHub Inc.
Naomi Julien →Provencher Roy
Daniela Leon →S+A Architects + Planners
 →Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
Julia Manacas →Julia Manacas Architecture
 →Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
TK Justin Ng →SPACED AGENCY
 →M.Arch Student, Harvard University GSD
Theodore Oyama →oyama
Eliza Pertigkiozoglou →PhD Candidate, McGill University
 Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
Cailen Pybus →Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
 →Lecturer, Carleton University Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Ali Shahbazin →PhD Candidate, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture

PRESENTERS

Adam Nsouli ■, Adèle Reilly ■, Aidan James ●, Alice Worden ●, Alison Frenido ●, Alixe Gauthier ■, Andi Lin ▲, Andrew Rezende ▲, Anne Moyses ■, Ariana Silvi ■, Badr Echchihab ●, Chloe Watkinson ▲, Dina Lisenko ●, Elaine Yao ●, Emilia Abergel ■, Evan Rajkovic ▲, Fennel Moore ▲, Frida Hou ●, Gabriel Audra ●, Gabrielle Nikolakakis ●, Jacob Desgagné ▲, Jad Yamak ▲, Julia Ngo ▲, Juliane Rivard ●, Julien Hébert ▲, Kayley Lau ■, Leah McAlpine ■, Leighton Corp ●, Lili Laguna ▲, Lucas Daitchman ■, Lynn Xu ■, Michael Lencz ●, Naomee Rakib ●, Philip Boivin ■, Riddhi Karani ▲, Salma Mohamed El Hamzawy ▲, Sara Hadj-Youssef ■, Sarah Karadakis ■, Sierra Dustin ●, Sonia Cao ▲, Théo Hovsepian ■, Thomas Simion ▲, Xavier Morin ■, Yu Xin Wang ▲, Zoe Small ●



Having been invited to architecture and design critiques at SCAD, McGill, and Concordia University, I embraced the opportunity to engage with students' work and provide feedback, and explore architectural pedagogy and diverse design studio cultures.

Introduction to Architecture Studio
64 International High School Students
Summer 2018, EXPLO at Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

Instructor: Ali Reza Shahbazin

Representative Student Projects by Athina Dimakis, Konstantin Schulenburg, Kha Hoang, Fouzieh Alhogayl, and Mauricio Woldenberg.

At the EXPLO at Yale summer school, I instructed high school students in architectural design and art foundations, introducing them to Yale University's iconic buildings designed by Louis Kahn, Paul Rudolph, and Eero Saarinen. The design exercises I assigned included folding paper architecture (Fig. 13), and architectural drawings to prepare students for an architectural challenge: designing residential houses for their final project in Pinehills Town, Massachusetts (Fig. 14, 15).

We visited the site, allowing students to explore and study the place, with the guiding question in mind: "Where should the house be?" Upon returning to the campus, I collaborated with them on their designs and the construction of models over a two-week period. Finally, I mentored students in presenting their designs to the Pinehills founder and showcasing their work at the Yale Green Art Gallery.



Fig. 13, Athina Dimakis, Highschool Student, Folding Paper Architecture, Paper.

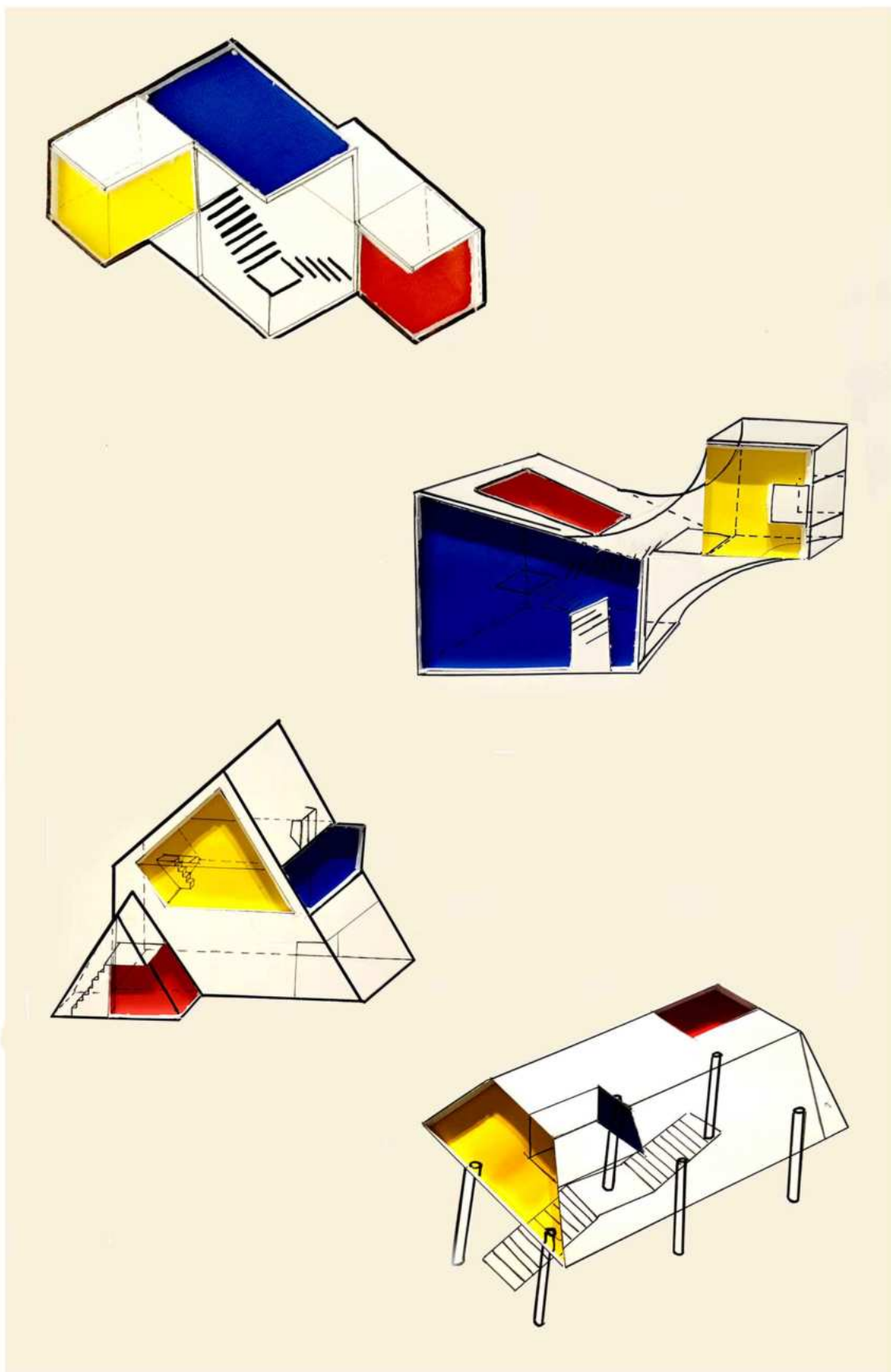


Fig. 14, Konstantin Schulenburg, Kha Hoang, Fouzieh Alhogayl, and Athina Dimakis, Highschool Students, The Pinchills Project, 2018.



Fig. 15, Mauricio Woldenberg, Highschool Student, The Pinehills Project, 2018.

Contemporary Architectural Theory and Research

16 Undergraduate Students

Fall 2024, RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University, Online

Academic Expert: Ali Reza Shahbazin.

Representative Student Projects by Zahra Abdi.

Introduction

In this class, I assist students examine contemporary architectural theory and practice from the late 1960s to the present. I guide them in exploring various issues and values through theoretical essays and critical writings that reveal the diversity of contemporary architectural thought and practice.

Students are assigned to read chapters of books such as:

Architectural Theory, Volume II, an Anthology from 1871-2005 (2008)

An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the Present (2011)

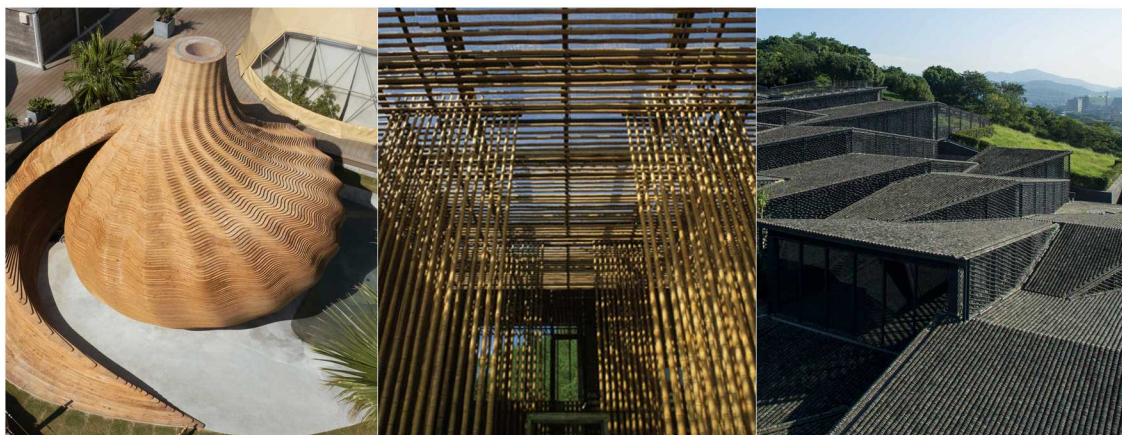
The Dissertation: A Guide for Architecture Students (2014)

Decoding Theoryspeak: An Illustrated Guide to Architectural Theory (2011)

I focus on developing student's advanced research skills by having them create a journal they use throughout the course, serving as a reference as they progress in their studies. This journal allows them to document their engagement with architectural theory and their thought process, and I regularly review it to provide feedback.

Final Assignments, Preliminary Research Proposal

For their final assignments, I assist students in selecting a topic that interests them and guide them through the creation of a preliminary research proposal. I help them define the theoretical foundation of their research; outline their methods of inquiry; identify relevant precedents, and compile an annotated bibliography. I review their initial drafts, providing feedback to help them refine their proposals before conducting the final assessment upon submission. In the following link, you will find an example of a final assignment.



**“Deconstructing Biomimicry in Architecture:
Kengo Kuma and the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida” by Zahra Abdi** 

Architectural Design Theory Fundamentals

48 Undergraduate Students

Fall 2024, RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University, Online

Academic Expert: Ali Reza Shahbazin.

Representative Student Projects by Lewis Golding.

Introduction

Within this course, I guide students in exploring the creative design process through readings and analysis of architectural ideas, forms, and relationships. Using case studies, primarily from regionalist architecture, I demonstrate how architects like Anna Heringer, Charles Correa, Glenn Murcutt convey societal values through built forms. I help students recognize architecture as a cultural artifact and think critically about architect's design decisions.

The course textbooks are *Architecture: Form, Space, & Order* (2023) and *Precedents in Architecture: Analytic Diagrams, Formative Ideas, and Partis* (2012). Throughout the course, students complete four collections. For each assignment, I help them to develop an objective awareness of natural and built environments.

Final Assignment

Collection 4 requires 3,500 words and up to 25 figures. In Part 1, I guide students in writing a critical commentary on three case studies: Parkeh House (1968) in Ahmadabad, India, by Charles Correa; Sage House (2008) in Taos, New Mexico, by Antoine Predock; and Tye River Cabin (2006) in Skykomish, WA, by Tom Kundig and Kirsten Murray, focusing on how local environmental conditions shape each project's architecture.

In Part 2, students compare the environmental considerations of these projects, using maps, sketches, and images to highlight key characteristics and interrelationships. I guide them in analyzing proportions and ordering principles, but also examining vernacular design elements and sustainable building techniques. Explore a sample of Collection 4 below to see how these concepts come to life.



“Proportion, Order, and Sustainability: Architectural Analysis of Parke House, Sage House, and Tye River Cabin” by Lewis Golding. ♻️

Appendix

Course Evaluations

Sample Syllabi: Assignments for
Origins of Modern Architecture





ARCH 355: Architectural History 4 - Lecture (Section 001, CRN 15261); ARCH 355: Architectural History 4 - Lecture (Section 002, CRN 15262) - Ali Reza Shahbazin (Winter 2021)

Project Title: **Mercury Course Evaluation (Winter 2021)**

Course Audience: **74**
Responses Received: **12**
Response Ratio: **16.2%**

Report Comments

End-of-course evaluations results, as one indicator of teaching effectiveness, are used to:

- a. to help instructors improve future offerings of courses;
- b. to inform students about courses and instructors;
- c. as a component of the teaching dossier; and
- d. to help administrators and faculty committees in their decision-making processes.

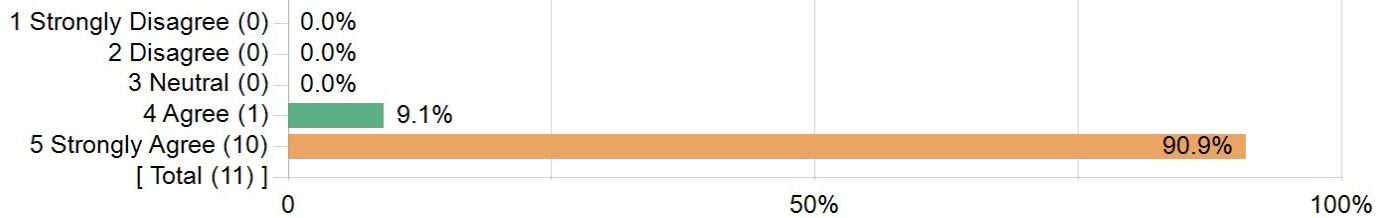
Written comments are treated as confidential and are not made available to the McGill community.

The course ratings reported here are only one indicator of teaching effectiveness and these results should be treated with caution since they represent reports on only one particular course.

Prepared by: **Rodney Jean-Paul**
Creation Date: **Monday, May 31, 2021**

The Teaching Assistant was available for consultation and provided feedback in a timely manner (e.g., during course-scheduled activities, office hours, email, etc.).

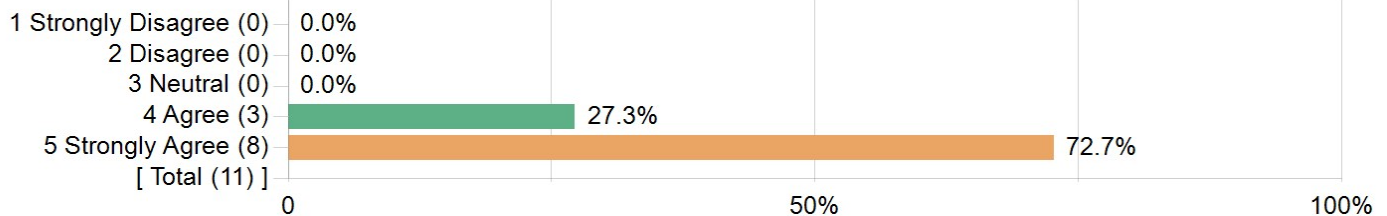
The Teaching Assistant was available for consultation and provided feedback in a timely manner (e.g., during course-scheduled activities, office hours, email, etc.).



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.9
Standard Deviation	0.3
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.1

The Teaching Assistant helped me understand the course material (e.g., through tutorials, lab sessions, grading, discussions, etc.).

The Teaching Assistant helped me understand the course material (e.g., through tutorials, lab sessions, grading, discussions, etc.).



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.7
Standard Deviation	0.5
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.1

Please provide any constructive comments on the overall effectiveness of the Teaching Assistant

Comments

Very responsive and clear! I enjoyed participating in seminars and the lecture he gave on Iranian architecture was clear, easy to follow, and interesting!

Ali was very dedicated to the class, and I appreciated his thoughtful answers to our questions.

Ali went above and beyond as a TA, he lead discussions elegantly and unbiased

Ali Reza Shahbazin is a great and responsible TA. I really enjoyed his seminars and his lecture on contemporary Irani architecture. His approach to the discussion is neutral and inclusive. Ali also has done a great job moderating and assisting the weekly lectures.

Ali is very patient and explains things very clearly.

The TA was always available if students needed help which was very considerate especially having the course online.

Ali was always respectful, acknowledged his biases before saying anything even mildly controversial. Responds promptly. I enjoyed his discussion sessions.

Ali was very present and always willing to help. Overall, Ali was a wonderful TA.



ARCH 250: Architectural History 1 - Lecture (Section 001, CRN 17675); ARCH 250: Architectural History 1 - Lecture (Section 002, CRN 17676) - Ali Reza Shahbazin (Fall 2020)

Project Title: **Mercury Course Evaluation (Fall 2020)**

Course Audience: **66**
Responses Received: **26**
Response Ratio: **39.4%**

Report Comments

End-of-course evaluations results, as one indicator of teaching effectiveness, are used to:

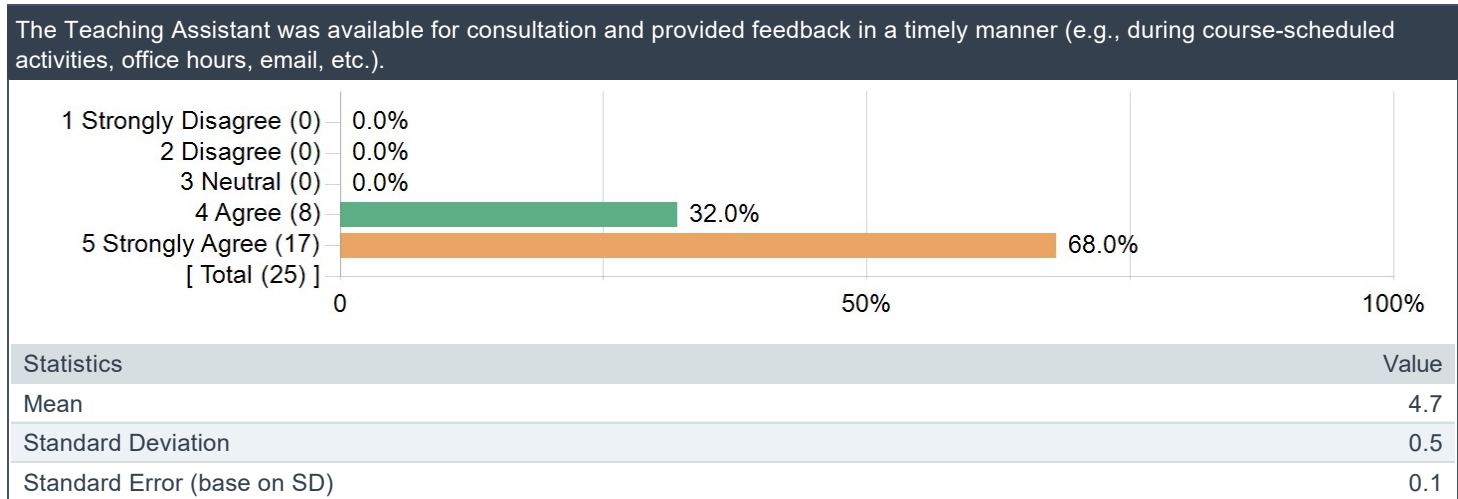
- a. to help instructors improve future offerings of courses;
- b. to inform students about courses and instructors;
- c. as a component of the teaching dossier; and
- d. to help administrators and faculty committees in their decision-making processes.

Written comments are treated as confidential and are not made available to the McGill community.

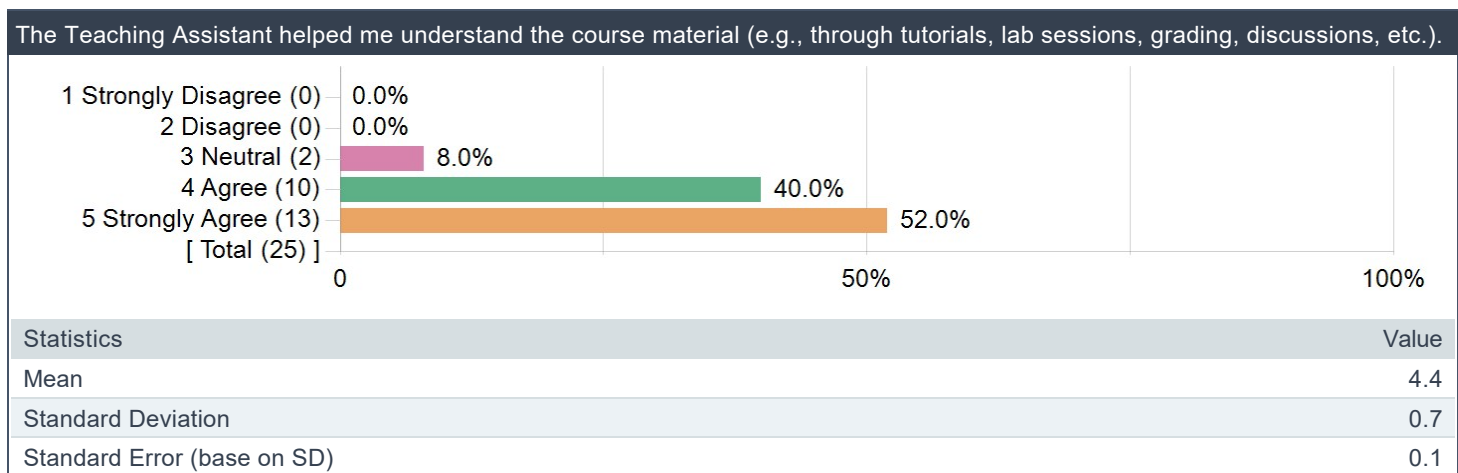
The course ratings reported here are only one indicator of teaching effectiveness and these results should be treated with caution since they represent reports on only one particular course.

Prepared by: **Rodney Jean-Paul**
Creation Date: **Saturday, January 30, 2021**

The Teaching Assistant was available for consultation and provided feedback in a timely manner (e.g., during course-scheduled activities, office hours, email, etc.).



The Teaching Assistant helped me understand the course material (e.g., through tutorials, lab sessions, grading, discussions, etc.).



Please provide any constructive comments on the overall effectiveness of the Teaching Assistant

Comments

Ali was always very quick to respond to my questions with detailed voice recordings that included feedback and additional resources. He was very encouraging and supportive throughout the course and projects.

He was warm, knowledgeable, and very responsive– a wonderful teaching assistant!



ARCH 250: Architectural History 1 - Lecture (Section 001, CRN 1263); ARCH 250: Architectural History 1 - Lecture (Section 002, CRN 1264) - Ali Reza Shahbazin (Fall 2023)

Project Title: **Mercury Course Evaluation (Fall 2023)**

Course Audience: **59**
Responses Received: **18**
Response Ratio: **30.5%**

Report Comments

End-of-course evaluations results, as one indicator of teaching effectiveness, are used to:

- a. to help instructors improve future offerings of courses;
- b. to inform students about courses and instructors;
- c. as a component of the teaching dossier; and
- d. to help administrators and faculty committees in their decision-making processes.

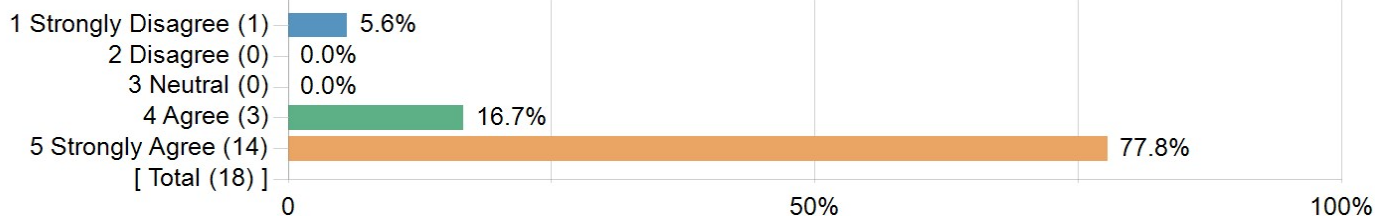
Written comments are treated as confidential and are not made available to the McGill community.

The course ratings reported here are only one indicator of teaching effectiveness and these results should be treated with caution since they represent reports on only one particular course.

Prepared by: **Rodney Jean-Paul**
Creation Date: **Tuesday, January 30, 2024**

The Teaching Assistant was available for consultation and provided feedback in a timely manner (e.g., during course-scheduled activities, office hours, email, etc.).

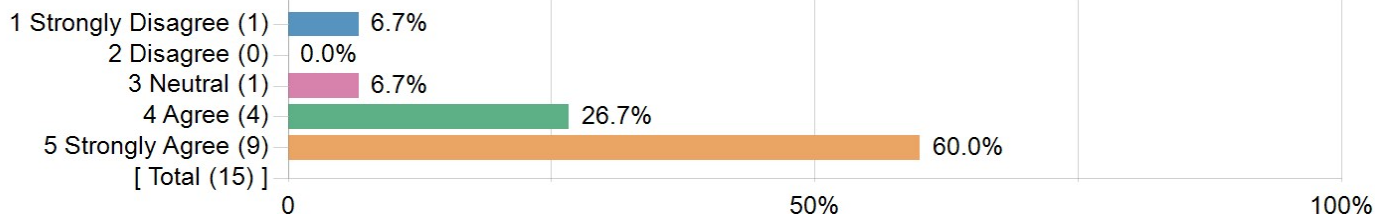
The Teaching Assistant was available for consultation and provided feedback in a timely manner (e.g., during course-scheduled activities, office hours, email, etc.).



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.6
Standard Deviation	1.0
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.2

The Teaching Assistant helped me understand the course material (e.g., through tutorials, lab sessions, grading, discussions, etc.).

The Teaching Assistant helped me understand the course material (e.g., through tutorials, lab sessions, grading, discussions, etc.).



Statistics	Value
Mean	4.3
Standard Deviation	1.1
Standard Error (base on SD)	0.3

Please provide any constructive comments on the overall effectiveness of the Teaching Assistant

Comments

Professor Reza Shahbazin was immensely helpful over the course of the term. Always prepared and happy to field questions, quick to respond to emails, and diligent in following up after class if something was unknown or additional reading material was requested, Professor Reza Shahbazin was essential to making this class so enjoyable

Ali is a great TA, he is full of passion and enthusiasm, as well as very knowledgeable about his work. He's been a pleasure to have as a TA, and been very responsive to emails and any concerns/ questions.

Ali was great and I enjoyed his periodic lectures. He was available for questions and providing additional clarity.

He was very kind and attentive, always sending out helpful emails or reminders

Ali was an amazing teaching assistant. He was present at every lecture, answered questions quickly and clearly, added his insights to each topic and provided us with additional relevant resources!



L'Empire des lumières (1949) by René Magritte

“O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space.”

Hamlet, II:2

BORGES IN PLACE

If it takes 4125 pages for Marcel Proust to create a real fictive world with a complete dimension of time and space; prophetic writer Jorge Luis Borges could magically create a fictional reality in 4 pages. Borges apart from being a master of magical realism, nesting mythical elements in a realistic fiction¹, he had a great capability for spatial anatomy. His stories are a spatial wandering in libraries with hidden doors, secret rooms with a mirror inside, and labyrinths. These are not just setting; each element contributes to the Borges philosophy of time and space.

He defines his notion of time and space in one of his stories “if space is infinite, we are anywhere, at any point in space. If time is infinite, we are at any point in time.”² This philosophy gives Borgesian

¹ Chris Baldrick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2nd ed. Oxford Paperback Reference. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 146.

² Jorge Luis Borges, *Book of Sand: And, Shakespeare's Memory*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 89.

time and space a mystic quality. The word mystery comes from the Greek word $\mu\upsilon\sigma$ /mys/ defined as “close the eyes or lips.”³ For him mystical experience is the unity of everything in the “river of history.”⁴ In this unity, his characters experiencing time and space with a repetitive nature through a mystic spatial experiences. Borgesian mysticism questions the hegemony of scientific time and space that only what is verifiable is real, no room is for the mystic and poetic side of experience.⁵ His approach to time and space is also phenomenological as he wrote, “ Things only exist once they have been observed by the mind. It is fair to respond: Yes, but the mind only exists as a perceiver and meditator of things.”⁶ For him Mind, Space, and Time is intersubjective experience as perceiving something out there.

Time, and Space are overly demystified and Borges story brings back mystery to them which is also vital for architectural experiences. As Juhani Pallasmaa put it, “For me, this is the highest praise for a piece of architecture: to turn lived reality and normality into something mysteriously comfortable, poetic and healing.”⁷ Borges stories are healing and poetic as well. He just does not leave the reader in his universe with the sense of fear or uncanny, he gives us hope with beauty and human poetic ability as he said, “thanks to poetry, to a haiku, humanity was saved.”⁸

Poetic language also has the ability to describe dense specificity and the essence of built environment as a personal yet intersubjective experience. In literary works, environmental experiences are often more accurately described than in professional writings on architecture since literature presents space as lived in, and not as reduced to geometric abstractions constructed for the scientific gaze.⁹ Encountering space in Borges literary works could help us to see architecture not as an uneventful functional background or a formal shell but as a spatiotemporal boundary in which narratives take place.

You are welcomed to choose and poetically translate one of Borges short stories to a spatial experience.

First assignment is translating a mystic spatial experience of a story into an architectural composite drawing using the technique of collage and montage. Collage here is narrative relationships between objects, a two-dimensional presentation of lived space (Borges stories) which is not a kind of

³ Jorge Luis Borges, *On Mysticism*. Edited by Kodama María and Suzanne Jill Levine, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), vii.

⁴ Borges, *Book of Sand*, xi.

⁵ Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics, Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 194.

⁶ Borges, *On Mysticism*, 99.

⁷ Ibid, xvi.

⁸ Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture*. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 32.

⁹ Klaske Havik, *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2014), 29.

illustration or a visual exercise.¹⁰ It is about creating a spatial frame or context for sensual experiences, atmospheres and activities.

Second assignment is to find a place for your Borges story to take place and justify your choice of place artistically and architecturally in the second collage. Place is a meaningful space, enriched with narratives and human experiences.¹¹ You could choose a place for this assignment from the corner of a library to an ancient romantic ruined landscape. You should tie the place and story together in a coherent way using the narrative of the selected story and spatial possibilities grounded upon a place.

Third assignment is about to creating a labyrinth, here labyrinth is not the classic architectural notion of it instead is the material demonstration of the mystic quality of Borges stories. Look at labyrinth not just as an object but also as an action, something which reveals and hides something simultaneously. Borges applying this mystical and mythical notion to a single object, a word, a map, or a book so in this assignment labyrinth more than a physical structure is a mystic quality which could be applied to a three-dimensional model, an installation, a performance, and so on. The embodiment of your labyrinth should provide a space for human interaction and poetic imagination. The labyrinth should be dwelled and fully understood in your chosen place in the assignment 2.

There is a detailed instruction for each assignment including readings for guidance and case studies.

List of Options, Stories by Jorge Luis Borges:

- *Parable of the Palace* (1956)
- *Ibn Hakkan Al-Bokhari - Dead in His Labyrinth* (1951)
- *The Immortal* (1949)
- *The Writing of the God* (1949)
- *The Aleph* (1945)
- *The Garden of Forking Paths* (1941)
- *The Library of Babel* (1941)
- *The Wall and the Books* (1941)
- *The Circular Ruins* (1940)
- *The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths* (1939)

¹⁰ Wim van den Bergh and Mark Proosten, "Narrative as an Educational Approach: Literary Methods in Architectural Education" in *Writing Place: Investigations in Architecture and Literature*. Edited by Klaske Havik (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016), 118.

¹¹ Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience, a Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198.

Apart from choosing a short story from the list above, it is also possible to choose a short story with spatial quality by Borges, you could send an e-mail with the name of the story for confirmation to ali.shahbazin@mail.mcgill.ca before January 17 2019.

Grade distribution

Attendance	10%
Assignment 1	25%
Assignment 2	25%
Mandatory meeting with TA in preparation for Assignment 3	5%
Assignment	35%

Deadlines

Selection of a short story by Borges	January 15 2019
Assignment 1	January 25 2019
Assignment 2	February 19 2019
Mid-term Review	TBT
Mandatory meeting with the TA in preparation for assignment 3*	13-15 March 2019
Assignment 3	April 3 2019
Final presentation	TBT

Please be advised that you will be informed about the date for the mid-term and the final presentation in coordination of your studio deadlines.

Deadlines are on Wednesdays, the same day as the lecture, by 12 o'clock - midnight. Please submit your work by uploading a file in a .pdf format in the appropriate folder in the shared Dropbox. You will receive the link to the Dropbox folder as soon as you register for the project section. The Dropbox folder will include the pdf of the listed stories, project outline, and some additional materials per your use.

In-person meetings /

For any questions concerning the course and project please contact the teaching assistant responsible for the project section – Ali Reza Shahbazin. Ali's office (PhD office, 215 F) is located in the post-professional Graduate Studio 215, second floor. He will be available for in person discussions on Wednesdays before the lecture from 10 am-1 pm. Please contact Ali per email to set up a meeting.

Late Policy /

Your late assignments will be deducted 5% per day, including weekends, to a maximum of 50% of their value. Penalties will be waived for documented medical or family emergencies with approval from Marry Lanni-Campoli, the Professional Program Student Advisor (mary.lanni@mcgill.ca).

** to enroll in the project section please send an e-mail to nathalie.kerschen@mail.mcgill.ca including your full name and your McGill ID number.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).

L'Université de McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>).



Deux Enfants sont menacés par un rossignol (1924) by Max Ernst

“The unfathomable, the mysterious, the poetic, something a translator can produce only if he is also a poet”

Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator” in *Illuminations*

“Genuine composition is immutably deeply human”

Sergei Eisenstein, *Nonindiffernt Nature*

ASSIGNMENT 1 - TRANSLATING BORGES (35%)

Translation

This assignment takes a phenomenological point of view, to poetically translate the mystic spatial quality of a Jorge Luis Borges short story into an architectural collage. Architecture is a “poetic translation,”¹ not a “prosaic transcription,”² and in this context translation denotes a successful transformation from one form of medium to another. Successful translation does not proceed literally

¹ Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Presentation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge: MIT press, 1997), 8.

² Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, 8.

or word by word: it includes adapting, reconstructing, twisting, and traversing by keeping the essence of the original.³ So architectural translation apart from keeping the “original meaning” goes beyond it in its built form, since it is always about unfinished boundaries in which narrative can take place. This collage exercise is in line with this perspective on architecture as “unfinished translation.” Students will poetically translate the spatiality of a Borges story into a narrative collage. To translate the mystic space of your story poetically, it is important to immerse yourself in the Borges story. Or in John Hejduk’s term, read it “Osmosistically, by osmosis.”⁴ The term osmosis refers to the technique of mastering a language by being environmentally immersed in it. Borgesian environments invite us to a game, but it is a serious game, and if we play it seriously and “osmosistically” we can translate the poetic mystery of Borgesian time and space.

Collage

Collage here is not about the illustrative composition of specific images or gluing different materials but rather about a narrative relationship between them.⁵ In other words, students should see their collage as a narrative told by different pieces using the montage technique. The craftsmanship generates the meaning translated from the Borges story. To reach the goal of this assignment, it is important to read and understand the technique of montage used and described by Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein, described in “Piranesi, or the Fluidity of Forms.”⁶ Eisenstein studies Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s *Carcere Oscure* to understand how he exposed specific meanings in his architectural drawing.⁷ Eisenstein borrows Piranesi’s techniques such as framing, cutting and piecing together for his creative field. These techniques could also be used to create a Borgesian space. Interestingly, there are similarities between Borges’ and Piranesi’s notion of space such as its being mysterious and unbuildable.

Borgesian space is spatiotemporal and eventful scene where activity and events take place mysteriously through time, repeatedly. Borges’s mystic environments invite us to look at being, objects, and architectural elements with a fresh eye and ask questions such as what is the common meaning of a desert, a book, a jaguar, and a labyrinth? How do architectural elements, colors, and lights contribute to the meaning of the story? How does Borges (the architect) may use mathematics, geometry and maps to generate meaning and mystery for a place? How does he give dualistic essence to people and elements, allow a character to be a protagonist and antagonist simultaneously, see Jesus and Judas in the same person, cause a labyrinth to hide and reveal, a building to be profane and sacred, and a map for losing a place instead of finding it?

³ Nora Wendl, “Fox/River/House: A Translation,” in *Writing Place: Investigations in Architecture and Literature*, ed. Klaske Havik (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016), 90.

⁴ Wim van den Bergh and Mark Proosten, “Narrative as an Educational Approach: Literary Methods in Architectural Education” in *Writing Place*, 111.

⁵ Bergh and Proosten, 118.

⁶ Sergei Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of Things*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

⁷ Please see MyCourses for this reading.

The first step is to select a story from the list, and then imagine yourself as the character and experience the space through their eyes. You should let your imagination go beyond the plot and see the character's past and future, and their lived spaces. How was the space before the narrative took place, and how it will be after the story? Is it the same atmosphere? How does the story unveil the atmosphere? Your poetic translation should add another layer of meaning or turning point to the story, without any demystification. Mystery is not about being vague or unclear, ask yourself Paul Valéry's question: "What is there more mysterious than clarity?"⁸ Borges stories are meaningful and clear while being about the mystery of being.

Your collage should be more than an illustration or a visualization of the story. It is the theatrical scenery with spatial potentialities for the story to take place. You are also welcome to look into other stories for aspects of Borges' world that may be useful to your task. I may suggest some options during personal meetings.

Quality and expectations:

- The collage should be 22" × 33" and use good quality thick paper. The materials and the way students curate them should be at the level of a gallery show. As designers, students should pay attention to all the details, from orally presenting the work to even the way they write their name.
- Students may use different media such as watercolor, pastel, transfer techniques, drawing, painting.
- Hybrid media presentations are acceptable; however, relying solely on digital techniques for the final product is not the ideal approach. It is crucial that the end result showcases your crafting and drawing abilities as well.
- Students should also add a separate sheet of 8.5" x 11" paper, describing their ideas (no more than 300 words.)

⁸ Paul Valéry, *Collected Works of Paul Valéry, Volume 4: Dialogues*, trans. William M. Stewart (New York: Princeton University Press, 1989), xx.

References

Blank Space. *Fairy Tales: When Architecture Tells A Story*, vol.1, 2, and 3. New York: Blank Space, 2015.
<https://blankspaceproject.com/>.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *On Mysticism*, edited by Kodama María and Suzanne Jill Levine (New York: Penguin Books, 2010).

———, Margarita Guerrero, and Sís Peter. *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin, 2006.

———. *Collected Fictions*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Viking, 1998.

Hays, K. Michael. *Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002.

“Profile of a Writer: Jorge Luis Borges.” YouTube video, 1:20:37. Posted [May 26, 2012].
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAM2Njnv3Dk>

TED-Ed. “Infinity according to Jorge Luis Borges - Ilan Stavans.” YouTube video, 4:42. Posted [JUL 11, 2019]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJeLGd3JV2I>.

Wescher, Herta. *Collage*. New York: Abrams, 1971.



Stage design for *Turandot*, performed at Lyric Opera of Chicago (1992) by David Hockney

“I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell, The sighing sound,
the lights around the shore...”
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sudden Light*

ASSIGNMENT 2 – IN SEARCH OF LOST PLACE (25%)

Place

In this assignment, place is not a measurable location on a map or physical concept but as referring to experience, to the phenomena of lived temporality, is qualitative space. Jeff Malpas, Australian philosopher, defines place as a narrower concept of space; place is a meaningful and humanized space, enriched with narratives and human experiences.¹ In simplest terms, place has a

¹ Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience, a Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198.

story to tell. It is through stories and narrative that Human beings tie their identity with a place. Narrative helps us to understand a place and construct a commonplace, a spiritual connection that people make with a place, collectively or personally. Lawrence Durrell who portray the feel of places with most striking quality as a novelist, wrote, “we are the children of our landscape.”² Place and human are both reflecting each other. This intersubjective definition of a place rejects the set up a contrast between the private world of the mind with the public world of external objectivity. Environment is the extension of mind as much as the mind is the extension of the environment. Merleau-Ponty articulates it in the *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) that “the world is the field of our experience, and...we are nothing but a view of the world [read, place].”³. Place gives us a sense of orientation functionally and sensually. The role of architecture is always to unveils the sense of place⁴ and gives us a sense of orientation which is meaningful. Meaning is always grounded and has a context, a place.⁵ The call for place is not a call for regionalism, nationalism or any ism⁶, it is a call for listening to the story that a place tells.

Assignment 2

You are in search for a real place (site) for your Borges’ story (You should work on the same story as Assignment 1) to unfold, take place. Imagine yourself as a director or a set designer to find a location for your filmscript or play (Borges story) to be staged. Selected story had to take place within a landscape, architecture or around it. You should bring the story and place together in a collage and reveal the spatial possibilities of the place and justify your choice artistically and architecturally in the second collage. In your collage you can use the plan, elevation, section or images of your chosen place and present it as an eventful location which narrates your story. The place can be the extension/reflection of your story character. How the character relates to it? How the character act or react towards the place? How the plot could happen there? You are making your collage with the creative limitations of the story and architectural characteristics and possibilities of the chosen place.

The goal of the assignment is not to create strange events in an architectural place; the goal is to open an imaginative and mysterious potentiality of a place. This happens when you know a place by knowing about the stories/histories of it. There is a difference between recognizing a place and knowing it. In Ancient Greek, they had a word “the *atopon*” (the strange), which used for the unknown things and being placeless.⁷ Going from unknown to known is a way to turn space into place as Edward Casey, American philosopher also defines it.⁸

For your Midterm Presentation you would present this collage next to your first collage as imaginative and creative continuation/translation of each other. The process and definition of

2 Lawrence Durrell, *Justine*, (London: Faber, 2012), 41.

3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes, (Oxon: Routledge, 2012. 2012), 405-407.

4 Alberto, Pérez Gómez, *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*. V2, (Montreal: Rightangle International, 2016), 138.

5 Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Language and Understanding (1970).” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 1 (January 2006): 14.

6 Pérez Gómez, *Timely Meditations*,), 133.

7 Gadamer, “Language and Understanding,” 24.

8 Casey, Edward S. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 22.

translation from Assignment 1 is applicable to this Assignment. Please read “Place is Not a Postcard: The Problem of Context in Contemporary Architecture” in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Volume 2 by Prof. Pérez Gómez and “Landscape and Character” in *Spirit of Place* by Lawrence Durrell (both uploaded in the Google Drive/Assignment 2 section) to have a better understanding of place as an intersubjective site.

Quality and expectations:

- The collage should be 22” x 33” and use good quality thick paper. The materials and the way students curate them should be at the level of a gallery show. As designers, you should pay attention to all the details, from orally presenting the work to even the way you write your name.
- You may use different media such as watercolor, pastel, transfer techniques, drawing, painting.
- Hybrid media presentation is acceptable, but the final product should be crafted and drawn by hand. Students should only use digital techniques in the process of creating the work, and then transfer it into collage or work on it by hand for the final presentation.
- Students should also add a separate sheet of 8.5” x 11” paper, describing their ideas (no more than 300 words.)

References

Bergh, Wim van den and Mark Proosten, “Narrative as an Educational Approach: Literary Methods in Architectural Education” in *Writing Place: Investigations in Architecture and Literature*. Edited by Klaske Havik. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016.

Casey, Edward S. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Durrell, Lawrence. *Spirit of Place*. Mediterranean Writings. London: Faber & Faber, 1969.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. “Language and Understanding(1970).” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 1 (January 2006): 13–27.

Malpas, Jeff. *Place and Experience, a Philosophical Topography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A Landes. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012. 2012.

Pérez Gómez, Alberto. *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*. V2, Montreal, Canada: Rightangle International, 2016.

Wescher, Herta. *Collage*. New York: Abrams, 1971.



Cadeau / Gift (1921) by Man Ray.

“There is a labyrinth which is a straight line.”

Borges

“But the universe to the eye of the human understanding is framed like a labyrinth, presenting as it does on every side so many ambiguities of way, so many deceitful resemblances of objects and signs, natures so irregular in their lines, and so knotted and entangled.”

Francis Bacon

ASSIGNMENT 3 – THERE IS A LABYRINTH WHICH IS A... (35%)

Labyrinth

Daedalus who his name tied with the legendary labyrinth is the archaic figure of the ancient Greek architect. He was best known for his craftsmanship, representative of art and technique to

create wonder, a divine moment. Daedalus comes from the word *Daidala* means “to make,” “to place on” which in Homeric poetry aligns with mysterious powers, fear, admiration and seduction.¹ Daedalus in order to enclose the half-man, half-bull Minotaur created the labyrinth of Cnossos (in Crete, Greek) defined by Umberto Eco² as the classic labyrinth in his categories of labyrinths, the unicursal one. In this maze, there is only one path and it could be solved in a single thread in our hands—the thread of Ariadne, Cretan princess, who solved the Labyrinth riddle in the legend. For Eco, the second labyrinth type is the Mannerist labyrinth which proposes alternative choices, but all the paths lead to a dead point— all but one, that is, which leads to the way out. The final type of labyrinth is a network, in which every point may relate to any other point. A network cannot be solved since every one of its points can be connected with any other. There is an infinite number of corridors. This labyrinth is like an open- ended conception of knowledge, like internet and online encyclopedias.³

Jorge Luis Borges collection of stories and poems is also a collection of Labyrinths, almost covering and combining all the types with a creative approach. He turns the classic maze into human extensible fear of loneliness by talking about anxieties and human fear of the Minotaur in his poem *The Labyrinth* (1969) He humanizes a monster for the reader and changes the definition of the labyrinth. The moralist labyrinth in his stories are the pathways that his protagonists take without knowing their destiny as a hero or an anti-hero such as *The Theme of the Traitor and the Hero* (1944). Network labyrinth is the most frequent one for him *The Aleph* (1945), *The Zahir* (1949), *The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths* (1939) among many others. He applies the idea of the labyrinth to an object, to a word, to a book, to create a mysterious universe, constantly changing, full of surprises, observing it as human life, to hid and reveal an idea, the Borgesian labyrinth existed everywhere, it just needed to be found.

Assignment 3

Inspired by your Borges story from Assignment 1 and 2 and relying on Daedalus techniques and craft, you are asked to make an object for final assignment. Create the mysterious experience of your story through a material demonstration. The goal of the Assignment 3 is not to design a classic labyrinth, rather in a Borgesian approach to capture the atmospheric and mysterious qualities of your story that you have worked on until now and reveal it through an object which poetically exhibit those qualities. For instance, imagine the function of your object as a mystery something which should be revealed through a process as for many centuries machines and buildings build to produce wonder.⁴ Imagine, your object as a game, a puzzle which engages the audience. Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, architectural educators insist that the essence of architectural design is that of deliberate “play.”⁵ Applying H.G. Gadamer’s hermeneutics onto architecture, Snodgrass and Coyne articulate that the design process take place like a game or a dialogue between the

¹ Alberto Pérez Gómez, “The Myth of Dedalus: On the Architect’s Metier ” *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*. Vol. 1, (Montreal: Rightangle International, 2016), 8.

² Eco was heavily influenced by Borges in writing his famous novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), he integrates the Borges’ *Library of Babel* (1941) and concept of Labyrinths with his historical murder mystery.

³ Umberto Eco, *From the Tree to the Labyrinth : Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation*. Translated by Anthony Oldcorn. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 52-55.

⁴ Pérez Gómez, “The Myth of Dedalus: On the Architect’s Metier ,” 6.

⁵ Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006, 33.

architect and the specific design situation.⁶ The concept of design as “play” or a situation helps to define your Borgesian object as the broad sense of term not just as a physical model or architectural sculpture but may considering it as a mini-installation, Video-art, a cinematic approach relying on architectural qualities and atmosphere. Even see your body as your material (See the work of artists such as Marina Abramović) by creating the mystery through body movements, dance and music, a ritual, an art performance to create a theatrical space for human interaction. Dedalus in Homer’s *The Iliad* is the founder of a dance and ritual stage.⁷ Your object should rely on the poetic aspect of the materials you are using, the feeling of touching it, the texture, how it appears in shadow and light by bringing forth a poetic understanding through the art of making inspired by Borgesian mysteries.

For better understanding the technique and art of Dedalus, please read “The Myth of Dedalus: On the Architect's Metier ” in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Volume 1 by Prof. Pérez Gómez. Also read “* WATER WRITES ALWAYS IN * PLURAL” by Octavio Paz on mysterious and mythical aspect of Marcel Duchamp’s artworks (both uploaded to the Google Drive Assignment 3 section).

Object Material Expectation:

- be made of a single or mix-materials such as metal, plexiglass, wood, metal as an example. Other materials, medium, and performances such as (your body, dance, music, light, and projecting videos, ...) are acceptable but it needs to be consulted with your TA).
- For final submission and presentation study models are not acceptable. Your work will be evaluated based on the quality of your final object which should have gallery quality (The quality and detail of your work is important, pay attention to the materials and your craft.)
- You should also add a separate sheet of 8.5” x 11” paper, describing their ideas (no more than 300 words.)

MANDATORY MEETING WITH THE TA (5%)

Please sign up for the mandatory meeting with the TA in preparation for assignment 3. The Google Sign-up sheets with possible time windows will be distributed after the Mid-term review on February 19. The discussions will take place on the following days:

Wednesday, March 5 between 11:30 – 1:30
Friday, March 7 between 9:30 – 12:30
Monday, March 10 between 9:30 – 1:30
Wednesday, March 12 between 11:30 – 1:30

Participation is mandatory and counts for 5% of your final grade. Please bring study models, good quality sketches, some visual or theoretical references for your object to the meeting.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Pérez Gómez, “*The Myth of Dedalus: On the Architect's Metier*,” 8.

References

Borges, Jorge Luis, *Collected Fictions*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Viking, 1998.

Bergh, Wim van den and Mark Proosten, “Narrative as an Educational Approach: Literary Methods in Architectural Education,” in *Writing Place: Investigations in Architecture and Literature*. Edited by Klaske Havik. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016.

Eco, Umberto. *From the Tree to the Labyrinth : Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation*. Translated by Anthony Oldcorn. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Matyiku, Anca, “Project Daedalus: An Earnest Play of Building Between Storytelling and Metaphors Anca Matyiku” in *Writing Place: Investigations in Architecture and Literature*. Edited by Klaske Havik. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2016.

Pérez Gómez, Alberto. *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*. Vol. 1, Montreal, Canada: Rightangle International, 2016.

Snodgrass Adrian and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture: Design as a Way of Thinking*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006.