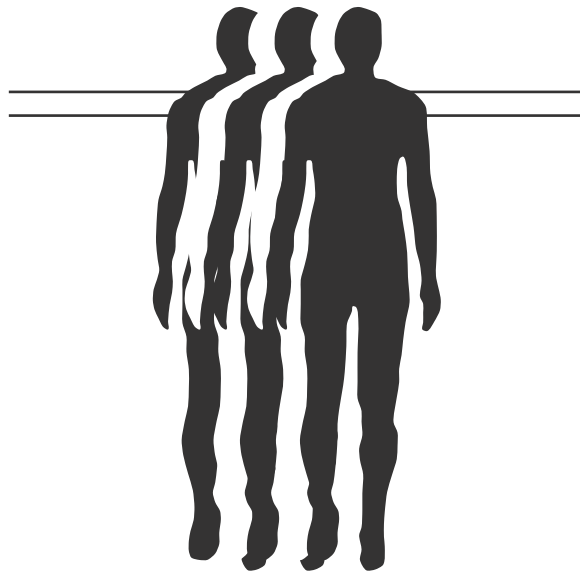


architecture while listening to SDRE

brock a. soderberg
universty of detroit mercy soa
ar510 & ar520
Prof. Tom Roberts
5th studio productions
10 may, 2008



architecture while listening to SDRE

brock a. soderberg

(ABSTRACT)

Who says that there has to be a line between architecture and education? Are schools the only buildings in which we seek knowledge and understanding? The role of the architect is evolving from a master of designed spatial experience into an educator whose teaching palette consists of building materials. Looking at the demands placed upon architecture firms today one will notice that the skills required to run a successful firm are multiplying exponentially. Architects are now required to be financial planners, human relations experts, and business consultants. Many clients come to architecture firms seeking not only to design a new headquarters, but also to design a whole new way of running their business. The success of architecture is proportionate to the success of the client. It is for these reasons that architects can no longer look at their work as simple as form and function. Education will be the goal at the forefront of all design choices, whether it be designing a fully interactive school to aid in the process of teaching young minds, or designing an office building that helps an employee better understand the product they represent. The idea of an architectural masterpiece shall cease to exist, because the true architectural masterpiece will never be finished. Architecture should be a never ending process, an ongoing relationship with the client, the user and the general public. In a perfect world an individual never stops learning; it will be the architect's job to facilitate this idea.

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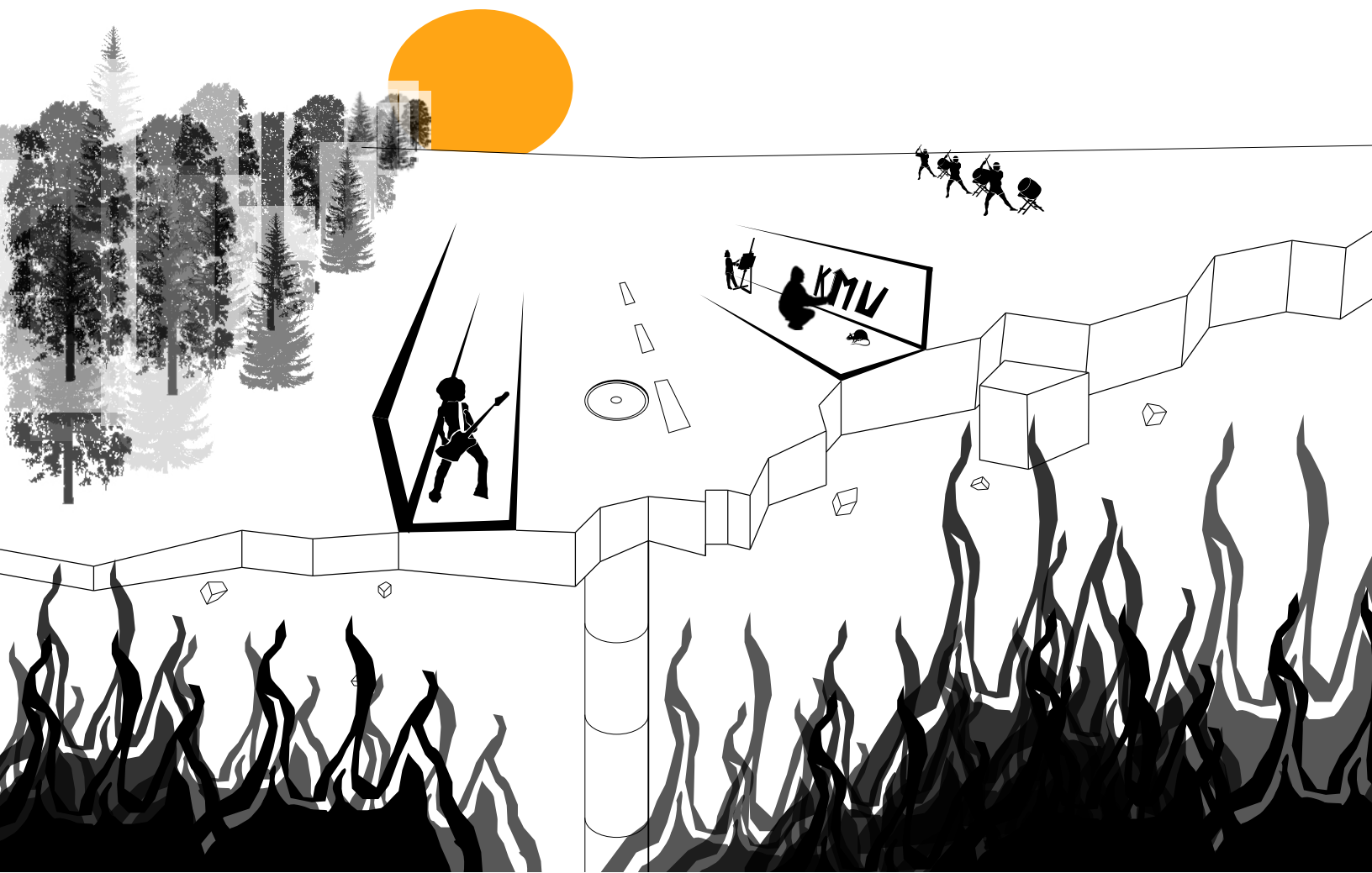
introduction

Over the past fifteen years the city of Royal Oak, MI has gone through a series of changes, both economical and social. These changes were brought on by the realization of current and future owners, that Royal Oak has the potential to be the next “It” city of Michigan. The downtown area of Royal Oak has been especially affected by this shift in thinking. Where there once stood an innocent free-spirited downtown community, full of energetic, unique and inspiring youth; there now stands a typical and monotonous epicenter of shopping and dinning that is bereft of all character formerly associated with Royal Oak.

This thesis seeks to explore the potential greatly overlooked by the recent developers of Royal Oak in an attempt to propose solutions for the future that would re-establish the charm and character once present in this fine city. By using architectural space as a means of enabling individuals to speak out and leave their mark on the physical environment, this thesis also attempts to expose individuals to an alternative way of living while allowing for the growth and development of an economically successful city to occur hand-in-hand with the “radical” objectives of this thesis.

“The system of owners of software encourages software owners to produce something—but not what society really needs. And it causes intangible ethical pollution that affects us all.”

— Richard Stallman, “Why Software should not have Owners”



misconception of anarchy —
life with no limits ≠ chaos

T H E S I S

(In so many words)

In the capitalist society of the 21st century currency has become the most important aspect of daily life. It is the very thing which pulls each and every working man or woman out of bed every day and forces them to inject themselves with caffeine filled espresso shots, haul themselves to work, slave over monotonous work eventually leading them back to their homes to pass out on the couch only to wake up the next morning and do it all over again. The idea of currency has always been instilled in our culture; however the form of currency has changed.

In Gilles Deleuze's "Postscript on the Societies of Control" he begins to compare the common practice of individuals within a society of discipline and individuals within a society of control. The common practices of an individual in a society of discipline show a theme of continually starting again, "from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory", where the practices of an individual in a society of control show a theme of never-ending servitude to a seemingly omnipotent system of regulation. This theme of an individual in a society of control is a theme lived out by individuals of today's society. From birth an individual is trained to conform to society's standards, upon the arrival of the proper age the individual is sent off to school, within the system of school there are several steps one must overcome in order to reach the next, level of expectations, after school the individual joins the work force, once the individual is of no use to society he or she retires. This series of events differs from the events within a society of discipline in the fact that each event that is mastered in an individual's life is only mastered because of an overwhelming need to succeed in society; it is no longer an act of personal bettering or an act of enjoyment as it were within the society of discipline. This shift in society is due to a shift in currency; where there once stood an idea of

individualism and personal achievement as an idea of currency, there now stands the idea of control.

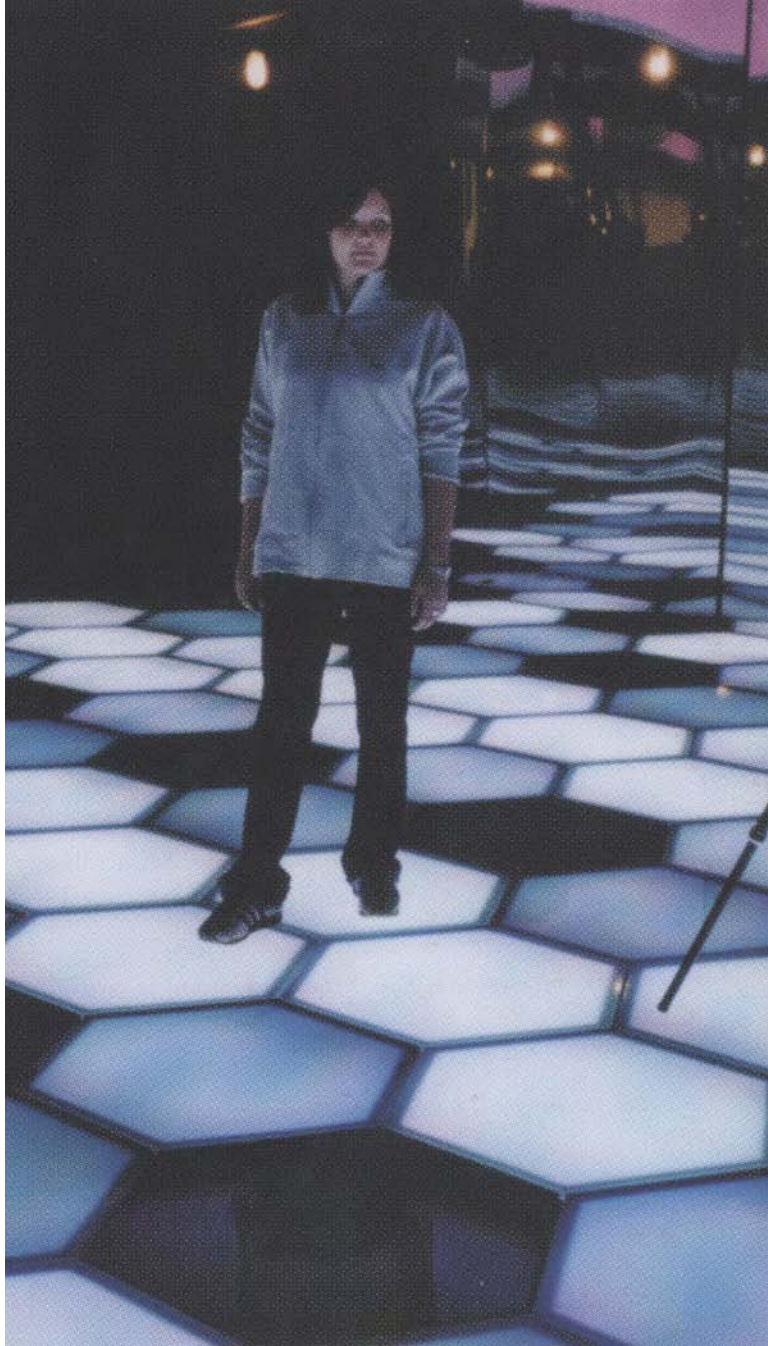
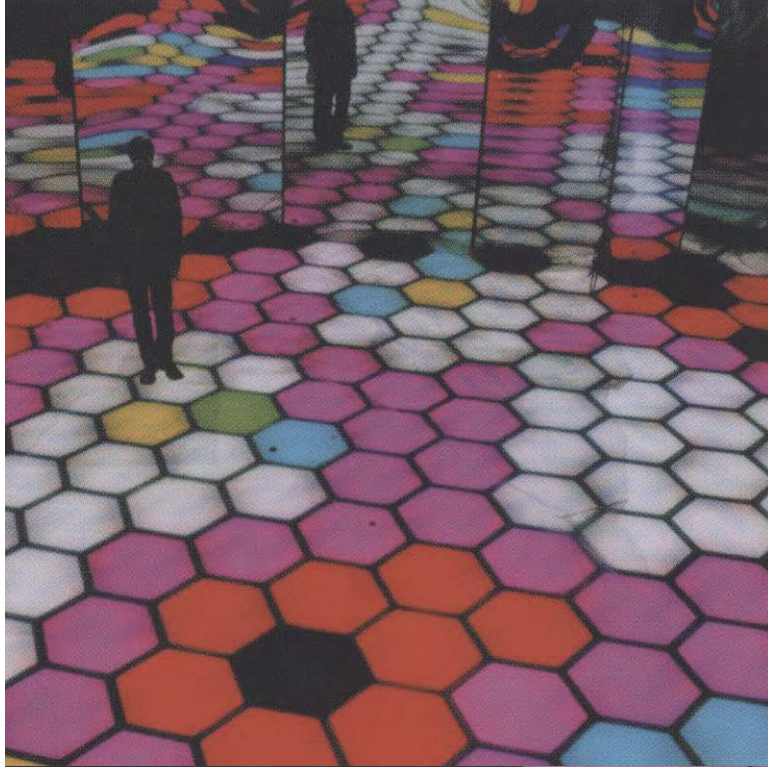
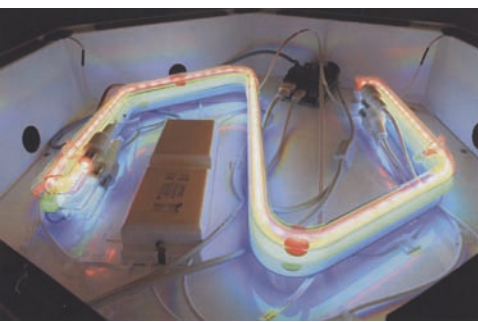
The notion of control is exemplified in an architectural sense in Foucault's "Panopticism". Through Bentham's Panopticon Foucault demonstrates how a building can determine control by way of articulation and scheme. Foucault begins to show that through an understanding of the human psyche control can be achieved in ways never thought of in the years passed. Bentham's Panopticon assimilates prisoners without the use of chains and the heavy reinforcements that were relied upon by prisons of the past. Foucault shows that articulated space can have an amazing affect upon people.

One common example of the power of Foucault's articulated space is the common feeder line found in most banks today. A standard bank consists primarily of a counter full of tellers behind bullet proof glass and an open floor full of people. How is it that a series of velvet ropes placed in a very hap-hazard fashion seem to demand control over anyone who enters a bank? Are humans now programmed to submit to an invisible force of control, or do we really need our surroundings to determine where we go?

In Steven Flusty's "Building Paranoia" he introduces the idea that people rely on their surroundings to tell them where not to go, and the control over space has overtaken the built environment. In his essay Flusty recalls his parent's home in a suburb of Los Angeles. He recalls the overbearing sense of exclusion built all around him as a child. This recollection is not far off from what the average person experiences every day. People no longer walk freely wherever they want; in fact the only places people walk any more are the paved sidewalks that tell us where we are allowed to go. We are faced with blocked roads, closed gates and locked doors all warning us to keep out. Control over space has simply infiltrated every aspect of our lives.

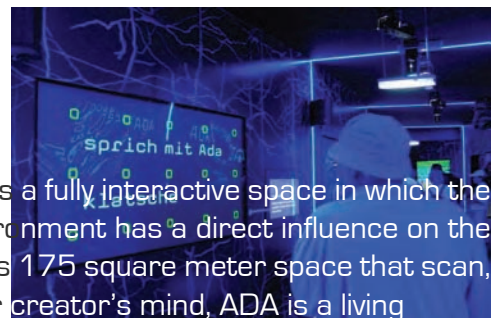
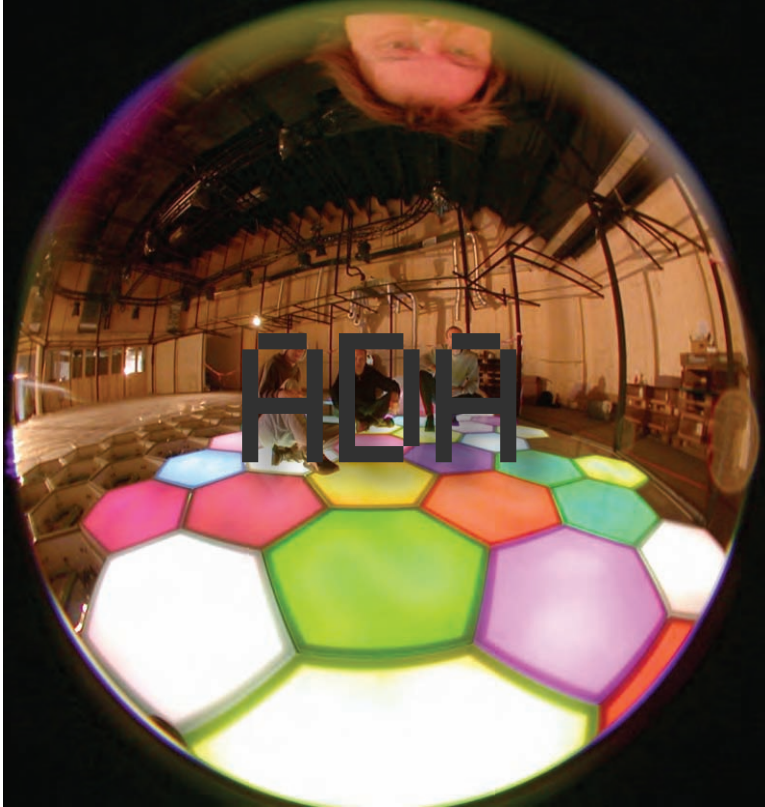
Perhaps the only way society can correct this problem of control is by stepping back and realizing where this control is coming from. As archi-

-tects we have the responsibility to acknowledge the fact that the built environment has a great power in controlling the way people live, and we must act in a way to better the lives of the people. We must do anything we can to combat this shift in control, and restore power back to the individual.



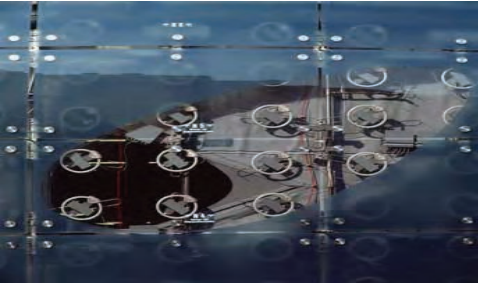
ADA - Intelligent Space

PRECIDENT



ADA is a production of the Institute of Neuroinformatics. It is a fully interactive space in which the user has direct influence on the environment, and the environment has a direct influence on the user. There are hundreds of sensors hidden throughout this 175 square meter space that scan, record and identify movement throughout the space. In her creator's mind, ADA is a living creature that has the ability to control the way people interact with her, she can recognize speech patterns and then communicate back with the user in a "baby talk" form of language. ADA even has the ability to play games with the user using her light-up floor that is comprised of 360 individual light tiles.



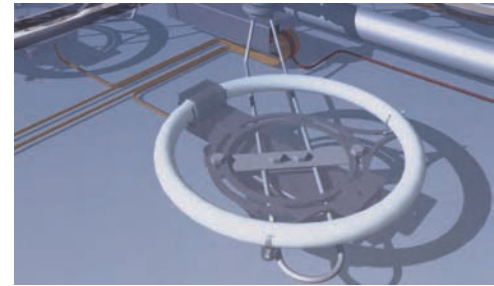


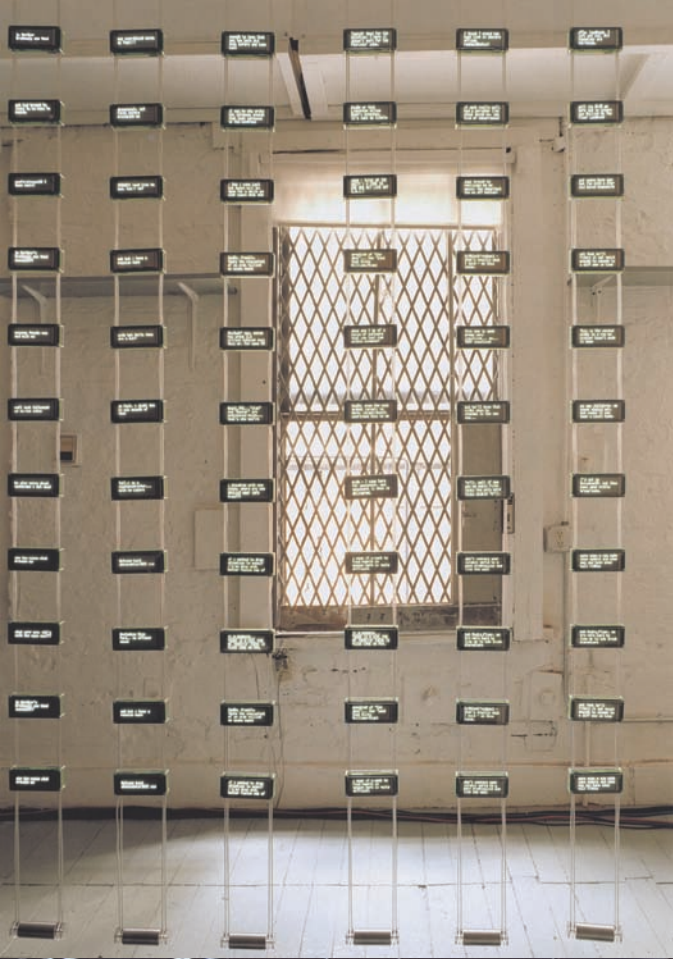
BIX MATRIX - Peter Cook & Colin Fournier

PRECIDENT

“The purpose of the BIX MATRIX is to tune the Eastern facade of the biomorphic Kunsthaus architecture with the help of 930 standard circular 40W fluorescent lights. Each lamp serves as a pixel, which can be controlled individually by a central computer. That way simple signs, images and films in low resolution can be generated over the whole Eastern front. Cook & Fournier’s main concern is not technology but the interaction between media, architecture and the activity of the Kunsthaus. BIX functions as membrane between the museum and public space by which the Kunsthaus identifies and presents itself. However at the same time the communicating skin is also a potential working platform for art projects, which address the interaction between media and space.”

– kunsthausgraz.at



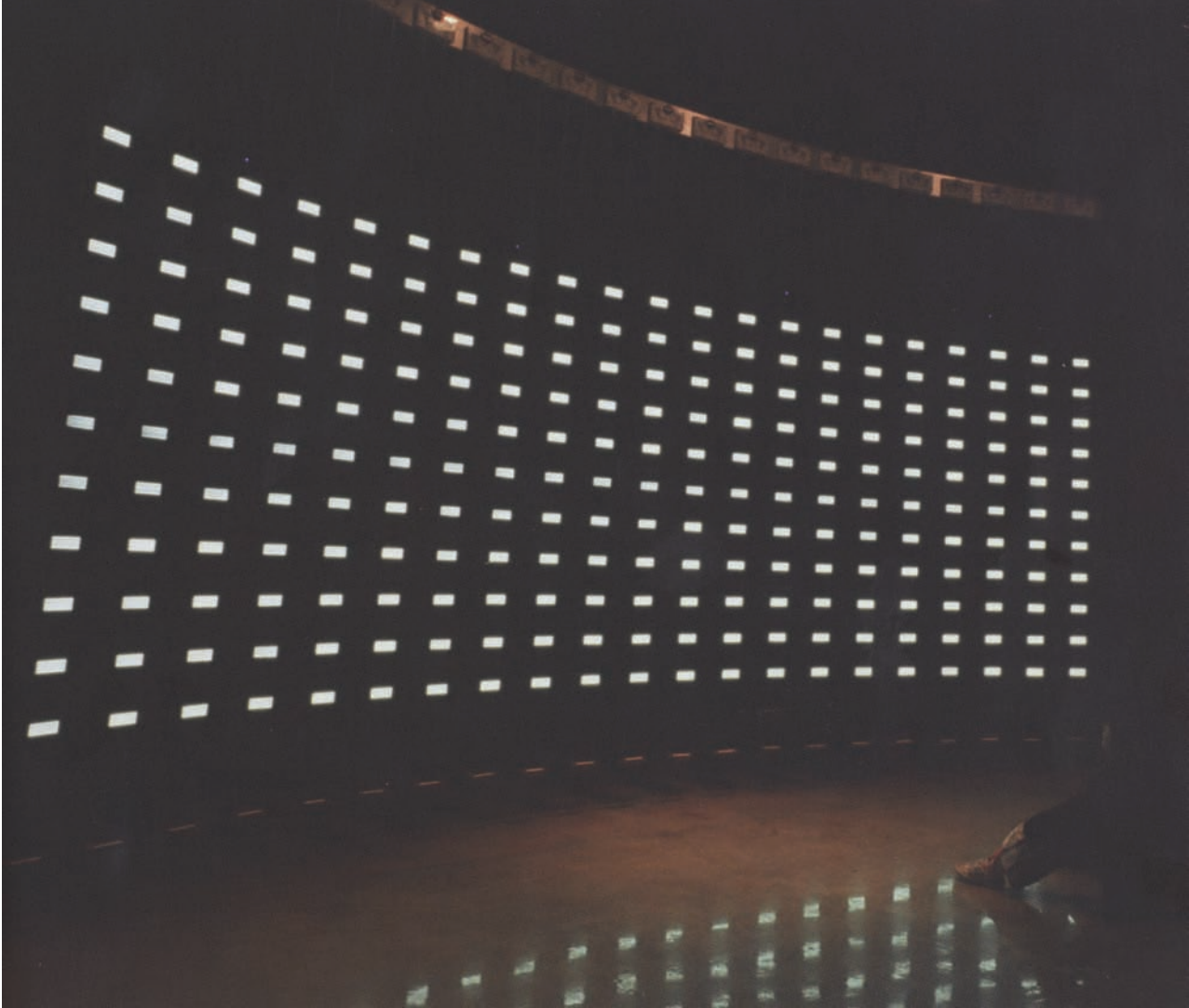


The Listening Post - Ben Ruben and Mark Hansen

PRESIDENT

The Listening Post - Ben Ruben and Mark Hansen

PRESIDENT





...We must do anything we can to combat this shift in control, and restore power back to the **individual**...

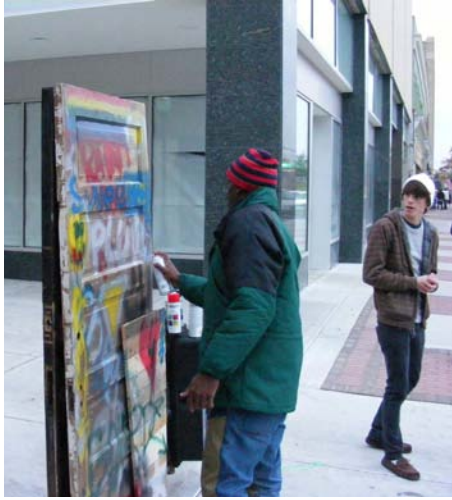
When people are afraid to interact with their surroundings, freedom cannot be realized. In the built environment of today the idea of “play” and “spontaneity” have ceased to exist, it seems that individual expression is discouraged if at any time the expression inconveniences someone else. These next studies are examples of instillations proposed in an absolutely free environment, an environment devoid of consequences. Various aspects of interaction and individual expression are to be encouraged at the very base of this thesis.



GRAFFITI DOOR







The Graffiti Door experiment was intended to explore the aspect of imprint and residue. Often Graffiti is viewed as an act of transgression, it is a common misconception that graffiti artists perform their art solely as a way of acting out against society. In fact many graffiti artists, anywhere from the amateur painting silly messages on a bathroom stall to the expert spraying murals covering entire building facades, do what they do as a way of witnessing their own impact on the world. Everyone wants to be heard, and people have a great desire to leave their impression on their surroundings, this instillation allows for this exact action to take place.



At random, several pedestrians were asked to leave their mark on the instillation, the patrons were reassured that no ill consequences would befall them for partaking in the experiment. When it was learned that they had absolute freedom to write as they wanted the subjects grew excited at the thought of expressing themselves. After a period of two hours the instillation was left unattended to discover what would happen if people approached the project with no preconceived notions of what to do. When the project was revisited several hours later to my surprise there had been several people that had interacted with the instillation writing various messages and pictures including an interesting political message.

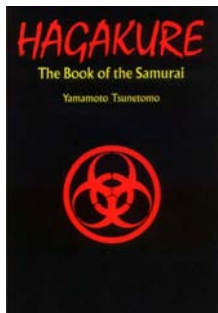
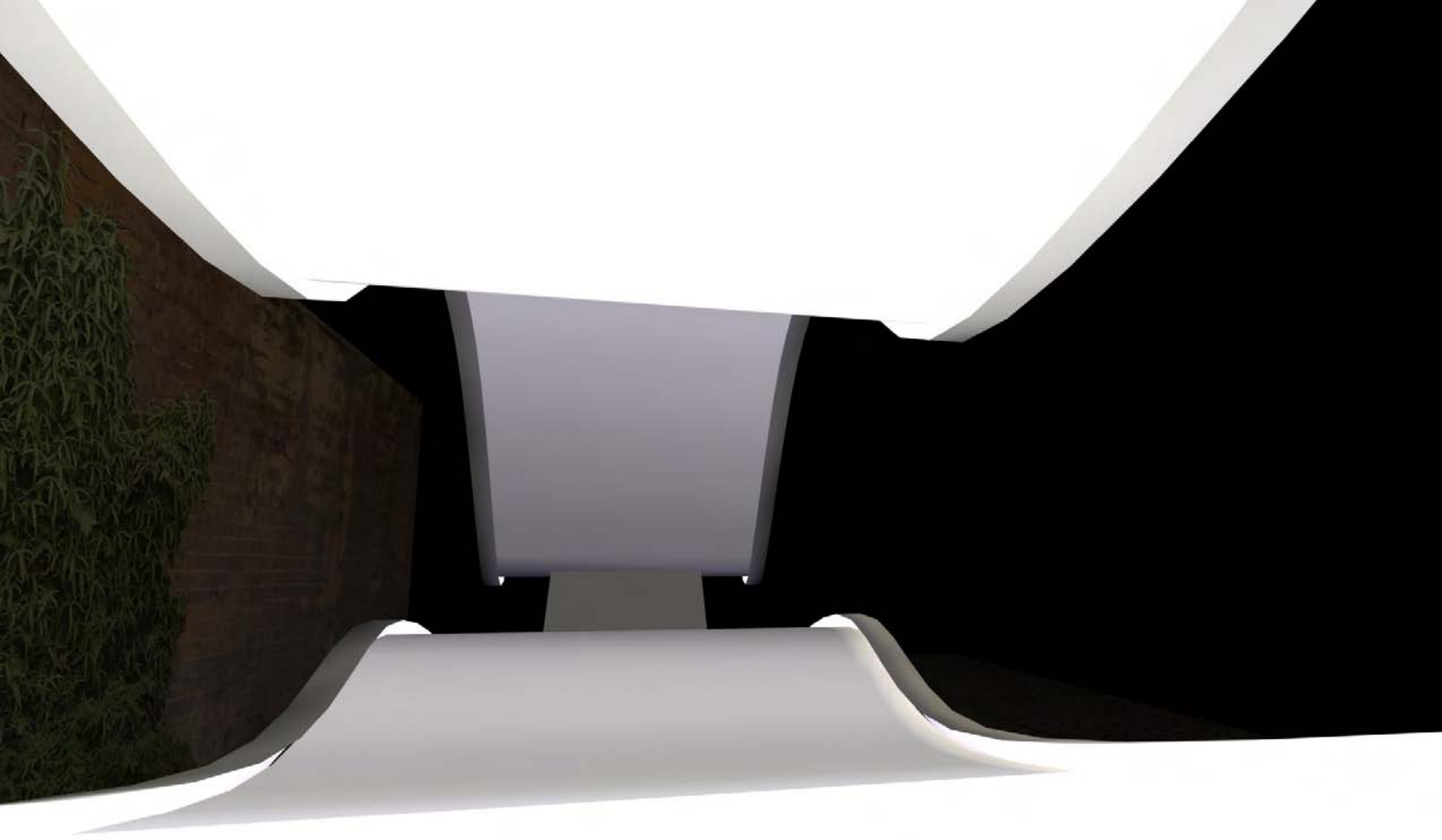
Perhaps the most important form of interaction received by the project occurred during the second phase of being unattended when the entire instillation was taken away by a mysterious force that was apparently offended by the project. After a period of 11 hours all that was left of the project were the smashed tops of the various spray paint cans that were left out for people to use.

While the project did not survive it still remains a success in the course of my studies. Through this simple experiment it was learned that many people would in fact interact with a space given the opportunity to do so freely. The feedback received while interviewing the various patrons would have a great influence on the upcoming instillations as well as the thesis as a whole.



...after several weeks of searching the project has yet to be retrieved, and the mysterious forces responsible for the disappearance are probably wishing they were included in the experiment.

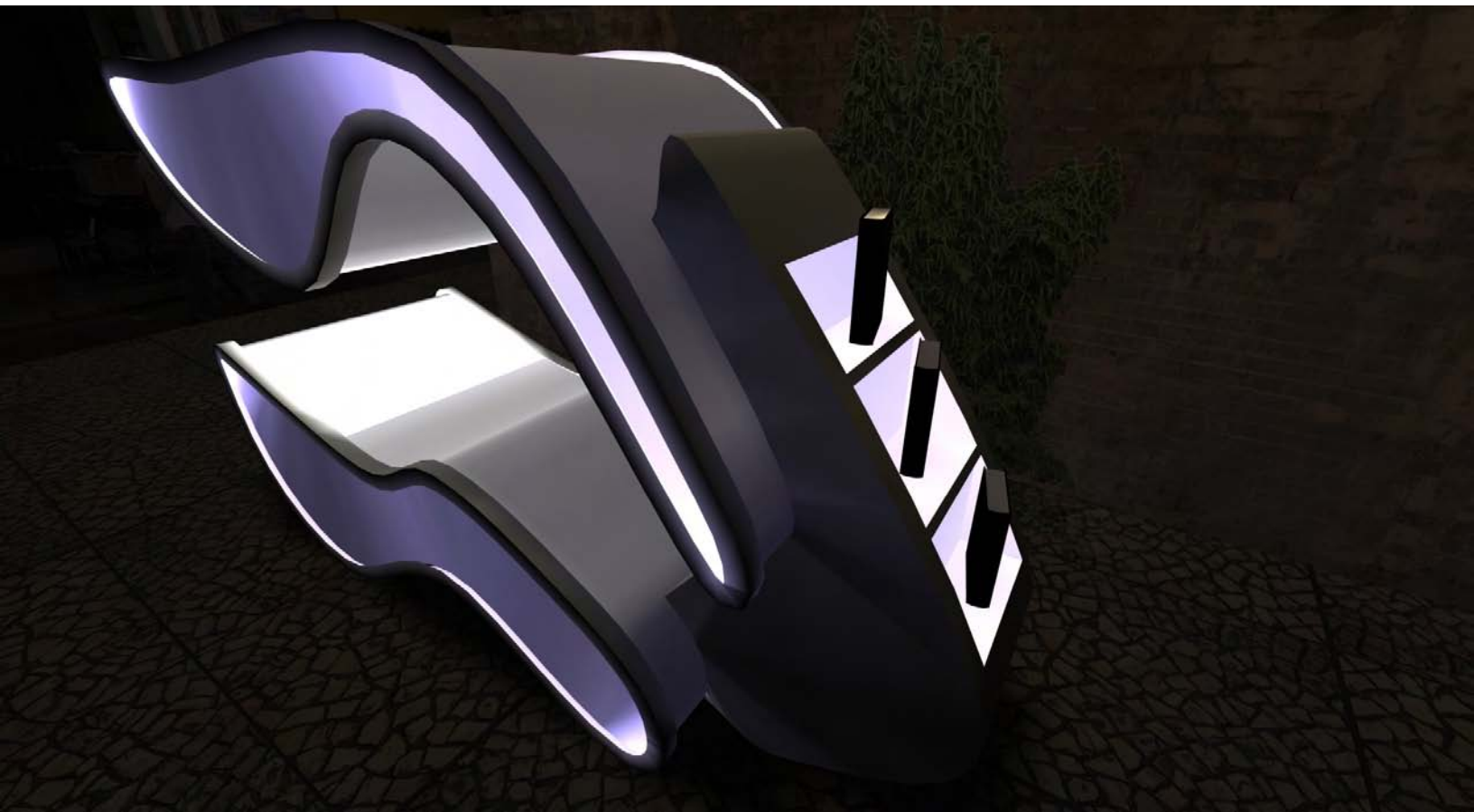




CITY READER



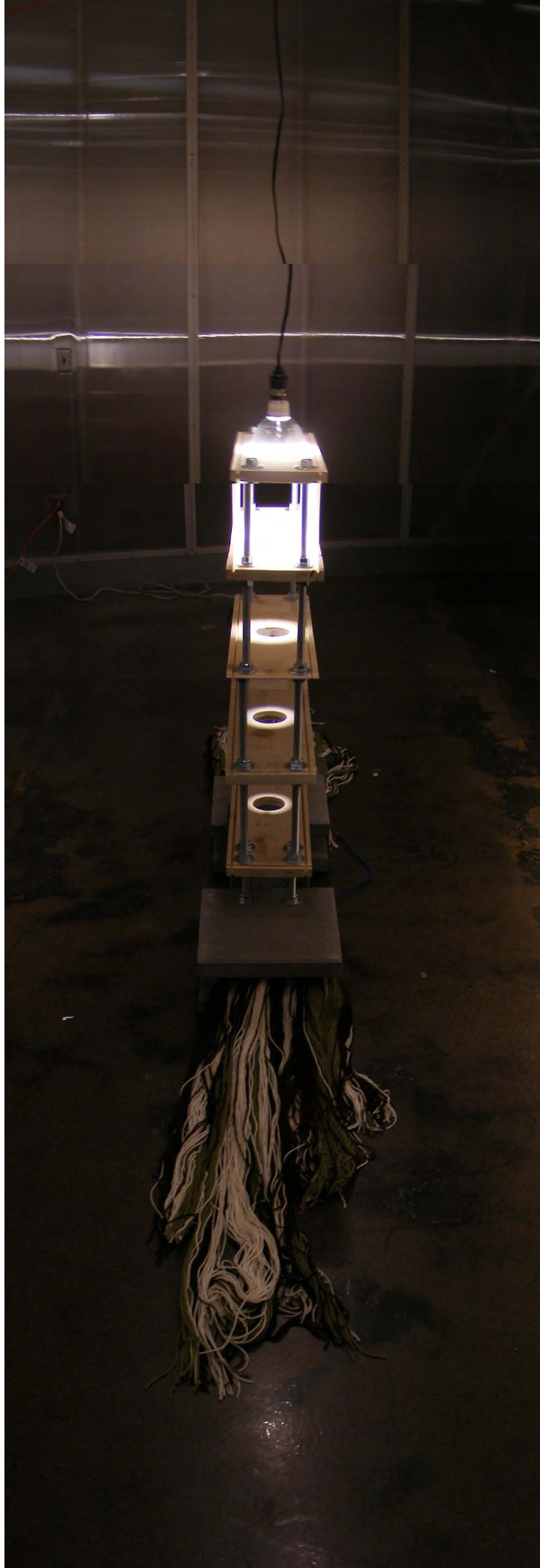
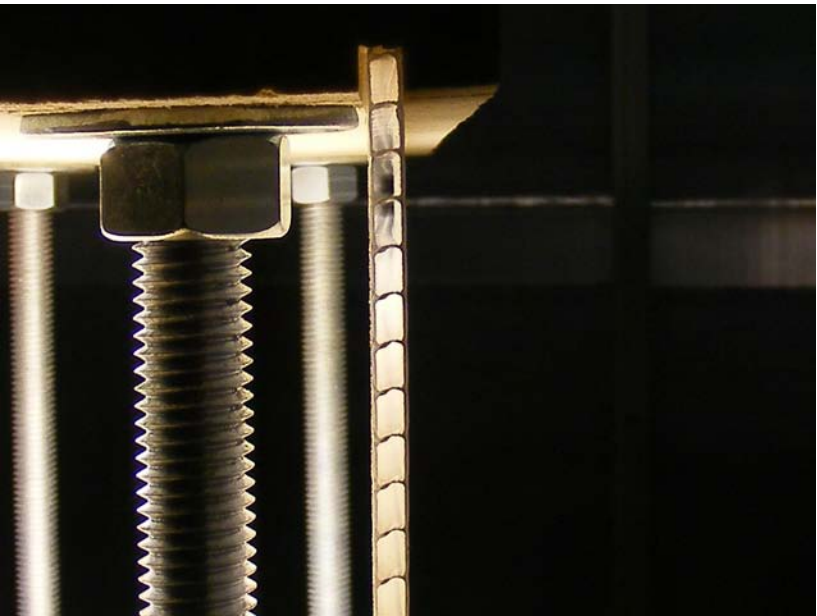
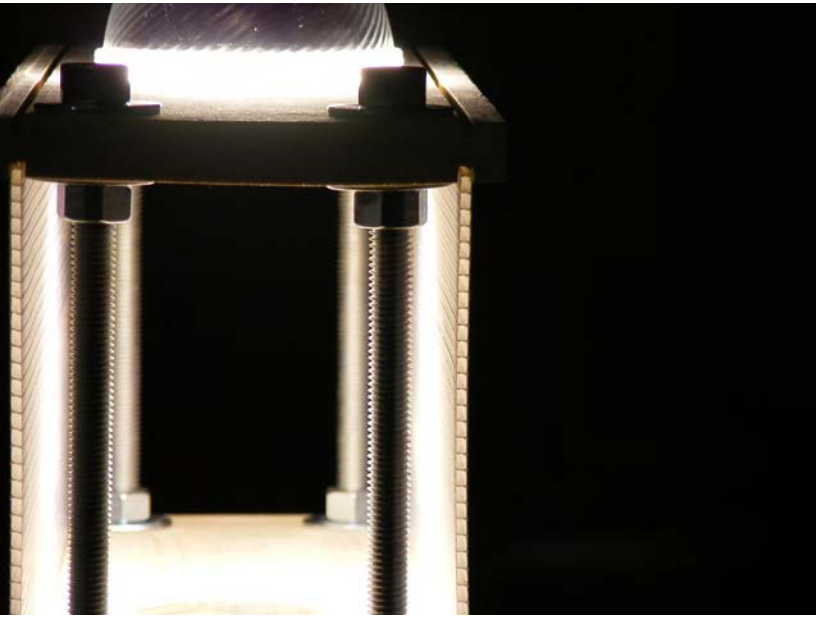
This instillation was a direct result of the information collected during the Graffiti Door instillation. When asked to describe what kind of activities she would like to see if provided a space with no consequences one individual replied that she would enjoy a space that allowed her to tuck herself away from the city to read a book in peace, while still able to view the outside public. What she described as her own “reading cubbyhole” was transformed into this City Reader, an instillation designed to house one individual at a time for the purpose of relaxing in a semi-enclosed spaced. When approaching the instillation the individual is presented with a display of the proposed “Book of the Month” (in this case The Hagakure), the individual would then lay down facing upwards in a relaxing fashion. When activated, the panels that make up the headrest would illuminate the individuals book from underneath providing ample light for comfortable reading. In the event that the patron’s arms become too tired to hold up the book, the individual would be able to upload a digital copy of their text via a usb device, and instantly the text would be displayed on the digital screen positioned in front of them. When the individual has finished their book the digital data remains stored within the hard drive of the City Reader, and the book is added to the list of the proposed “Book of the Month”. This enables the individual to have a direct impact on what books shall be showcased in the future. Frequent patrons of the City Reader will be able to setup a password protected profile enabling them to create a type of “must read” list that would further allow the individual to suggest possible readings for the next individual.





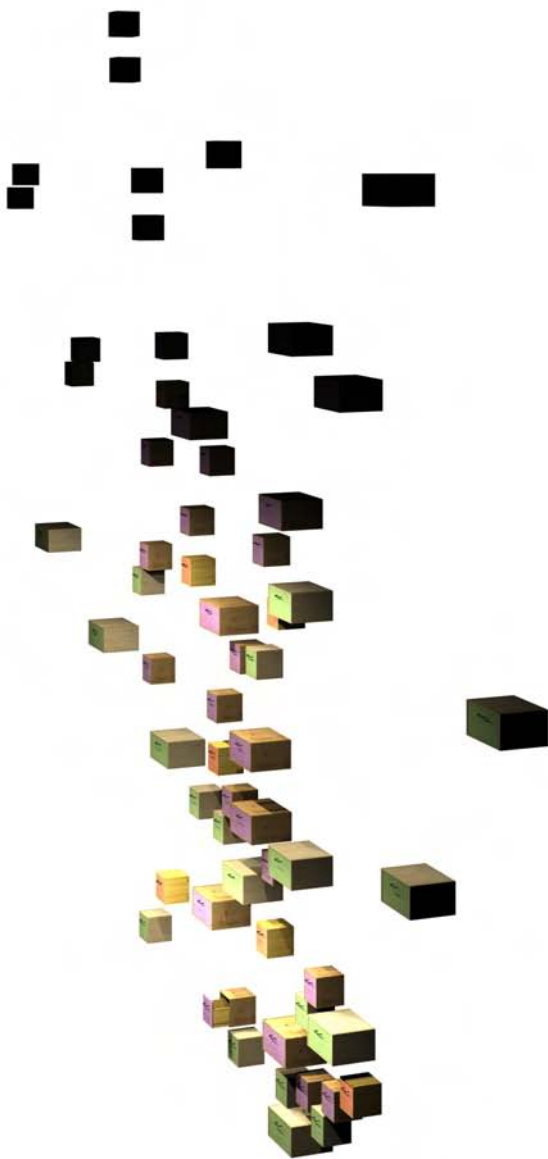
A glorified conversation piece, this Light Post was created to spark an exchange of dialogue among passing strangers. This installation would be placed in an under lit street corner, and from it would flow a plethora of strands of yarn stretching all over the city, at each end of yarn would be placed an object beckoning the finder to follow the string of yarn to its origin. When the finder finally arrives at the origin he or she would be greeted by a group of fellow string walkers that would be trying to figure out what exactly this stand of luminosity is. It is hoped that a conversation would ensue and each individual would leave knowing something they did not know before the experience.

LIGHT POST





The City Drawer seeks to provoke curiosity in the passerby. The desire to know what's inside each drawer will drive an individual to look, and upon witnessing what is inside, or the lack thereof, the individual will respond accordingly. It is hoped that some individuals would place different objects in each drawer, and this instillation would become a small trading post for random found objects





CITY DRAWER





THE SITE



Located in Royal Oak, MI, between The Fifth condominium tower and the now vacant Dobie Jewelers lies an alleyway that runs from Washington Avenue to Lafayette Avenue. As it exists this alleyway acts as a means of getting from point A to point B for most pedestrians. There is little intrinsic value in the alley that would interest a passerby, it is merely a short two hundred foot walk on your way to the bars or back to the parking garage located to the west of the site. This site is ideal for a socially charge architectural experiment because it provides a high traffic area of pedestrians located in a downtown area that is somewhat tucked away from everything else around it.



"I wanna hear a poem
I wanna learn something i didn't know
I wanna say 'YES' at the end
Because I'm sick of saying 'so?'"

I wanna hear a poem about who you are
and what you think
and why you slam
not a poem about my poem
because I know who I am
I wanna hear a love poem a sad poem an I hate my
dad poem
a dream poem an I'm not what I seem poem
an I need poem an I also bleed poem
an I'm alone poem an I can't find my home poem
I just wanna hear a poem
I wanna hear a poem about revolution
about fists raised high
and hips twisting in a rumble
like a rumba
I wanna follow the footsteps of Che
and hear the truth about the day
the CIA killed Lumumba
And because every second matters
I wanna hear long poems and short poems
about time and its limits
because it took less than three minutes
to attack Abner Louima
to frame Assata Shakur
and destroy Hiroshima
to kill Elanor Bumpers
and Anthony Baez
to gun down Malcolm with
bullets they bought
from the Feds

I wanna hear a poem
where ideas kiss similes so deeply
metaphors get jealous
where the subject matters so much
that adjectives start holding pro-noun rallies
at city hall
because I want to hear a poem

that attacks the status quo
that attracts the claps of the cats
with the phattest flows
that makes the crowd pass the hat
and pack my cap
with a stack of dough
I want to hear a poem that makes this audience
yell HOOOOO!!!!
Because I want to guess your favourite colour
then craft rhyme schemes out of thin air
I wanna hear a poem about why the statute
of limitations
for rape
is only five years
I wanna hear a poem
I wanna feel a poem
I wanna taste a poem
Give me your spot on the mic
If you wanna waste a poem
I wanna hear a poem"

by Steve Coleman



I have my sight, but nothing to see...

...I have a voice, but no one to listen...

...I *could* hear you, if you took your hand
from your mouth...

...I have the power to touch, but nothing touches me...

...I am Me, I am You, I am the neighbor
you've never said "Hi" to.

...so tuck me away in your conversational sock
drawer, along with every other awaiting face
you decided you were too busy for...

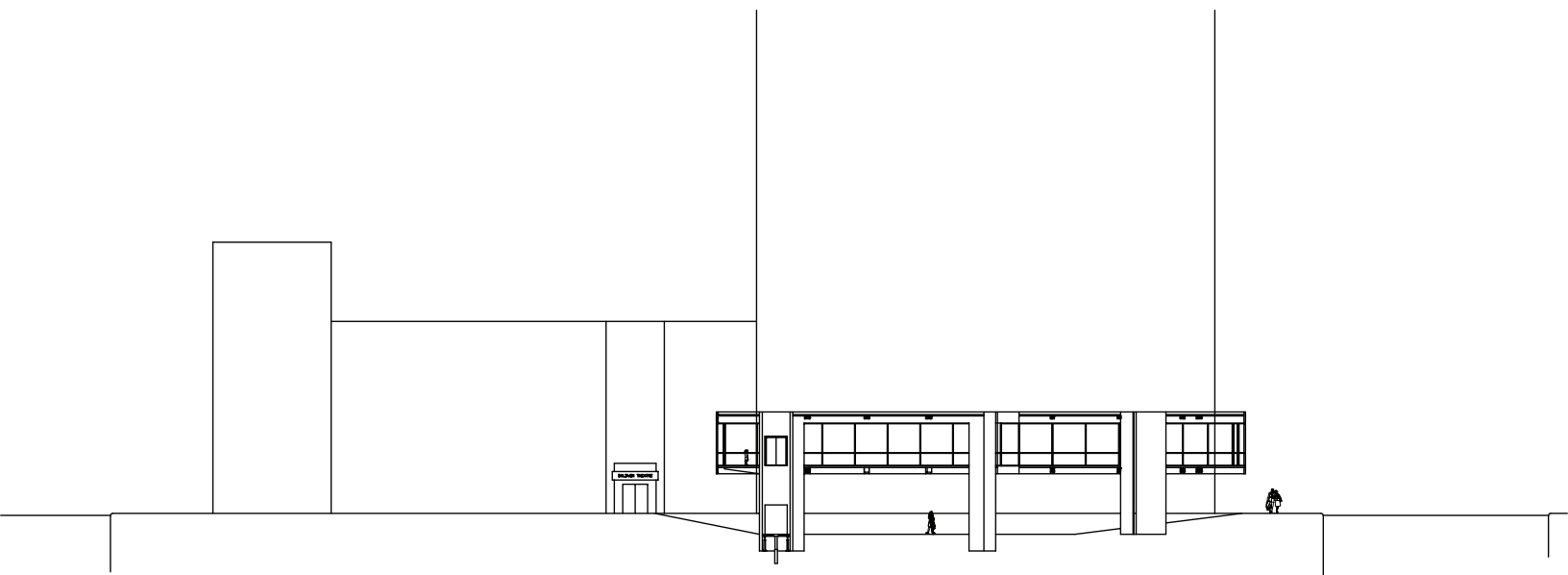
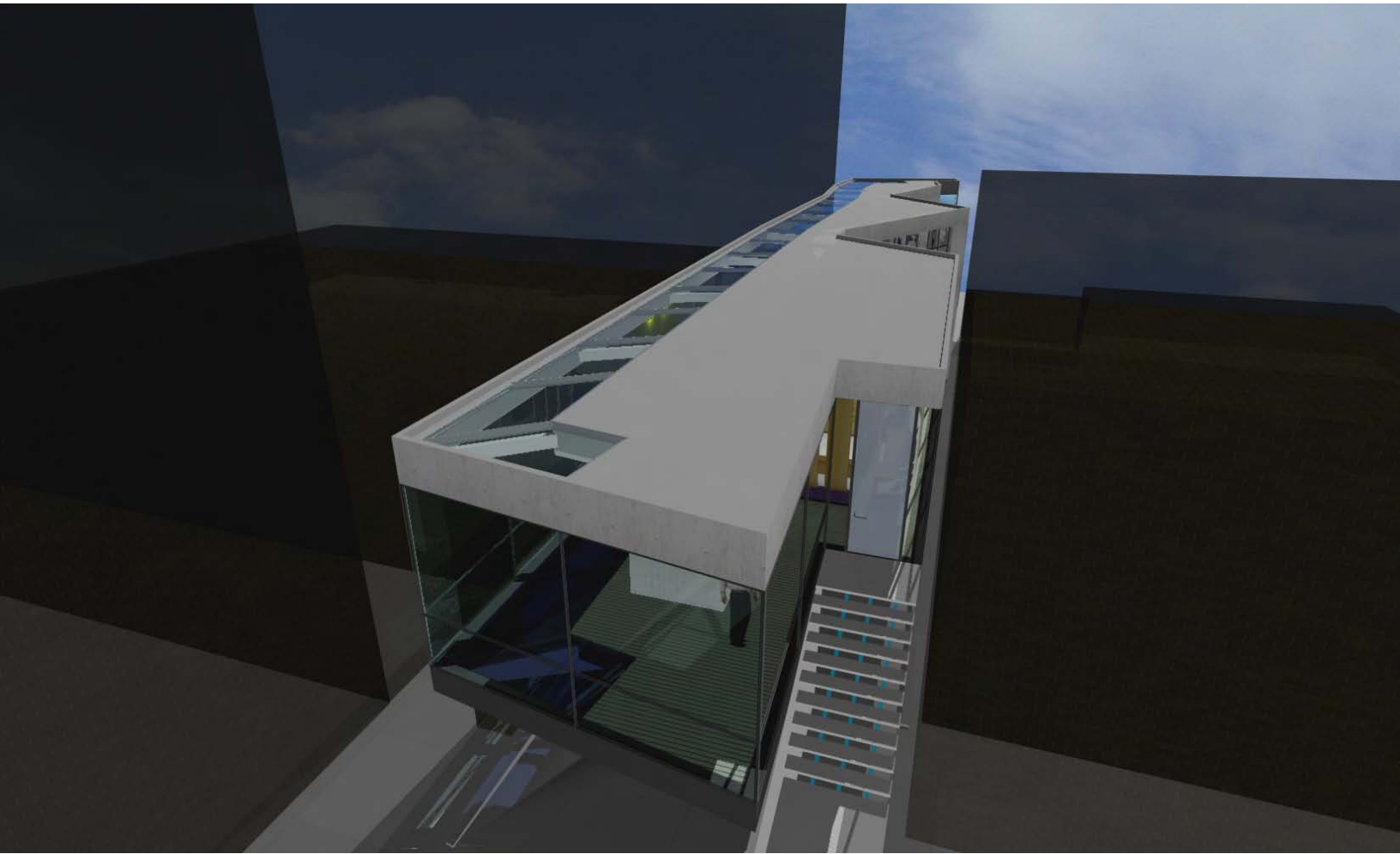
...or you could hold the door for me and let's have a
chat about the weather. I'll tell you how my sunshine
can't be bothered by any Michigan rain.

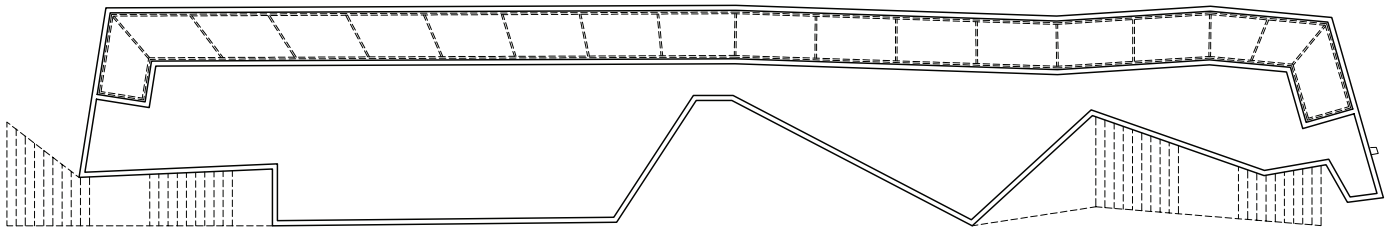


The first interpretation of the thesis came in the form of this large information kiosk. The program of this building was simple: Provide a space to display various types of information, as well as various installations and art pieces constructed by the public. This building was envisioned as a large interactive space that encouraged the participants to alter their physical environment by any means possible. The lower level of the project allowed individuals to pass through the alley, as well as a place for installations and art pieces to be displayed. The upper level was meant for more permanent installations that explained the inspiration and intent for creating this project. The type of information displayed within this project would vary anywhere from political propaganda, to poetry, to music, or to provide a space for a bulletin board utilized by local support groups. This project was intended to expose people to various ways of thinking that they would not normally have the chance to learn about.

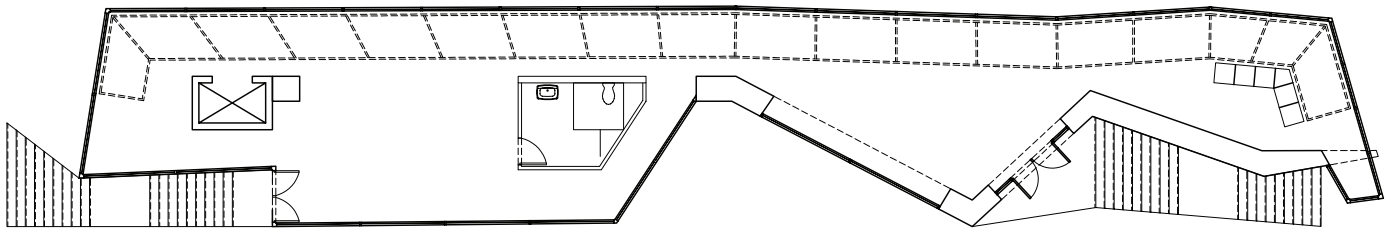
Education through creative architectural space...



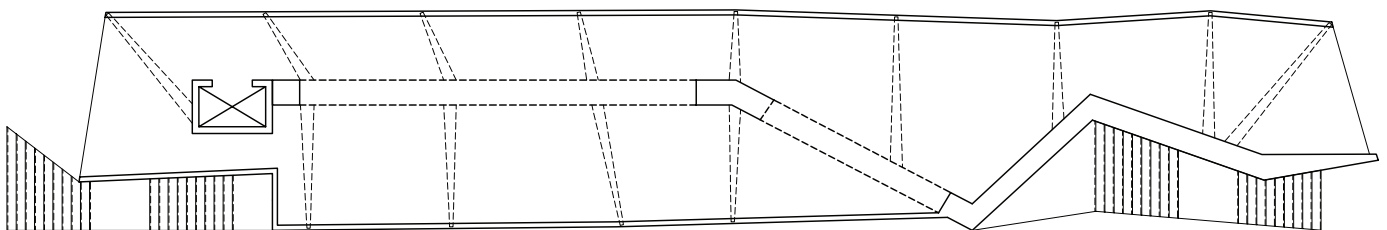




ROOF LEVEL

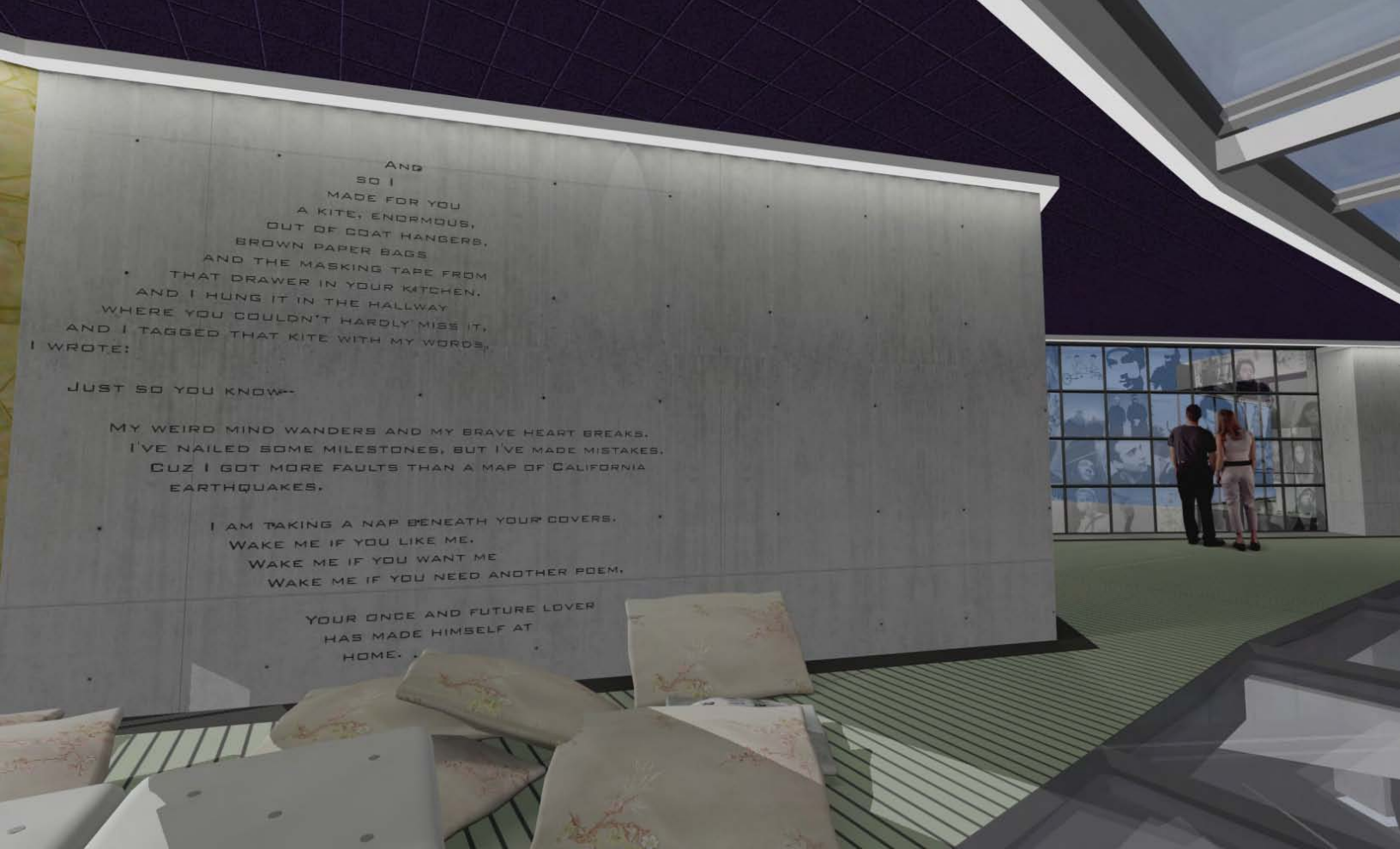


MAIN LEVEL



LOWER LEVEL





sun shines on my face
how its golden design
rain falls in this place
and the fields come alive
days are only rumours we've wasted

we cross the millions
we'll see where we stand
far removed from the womb
will you carry me across the sea?
will you carry me?
we can drink from fountains
and the taste of truth
far removed from the womb

rythm and mind
don't waste no time
want to let it all out
when the chains fall off
and the walls fall down
when we break the seal
and our hearts pour out
when the frozen ground
comes alive around us
with a scream

days are only rumours we've wasted

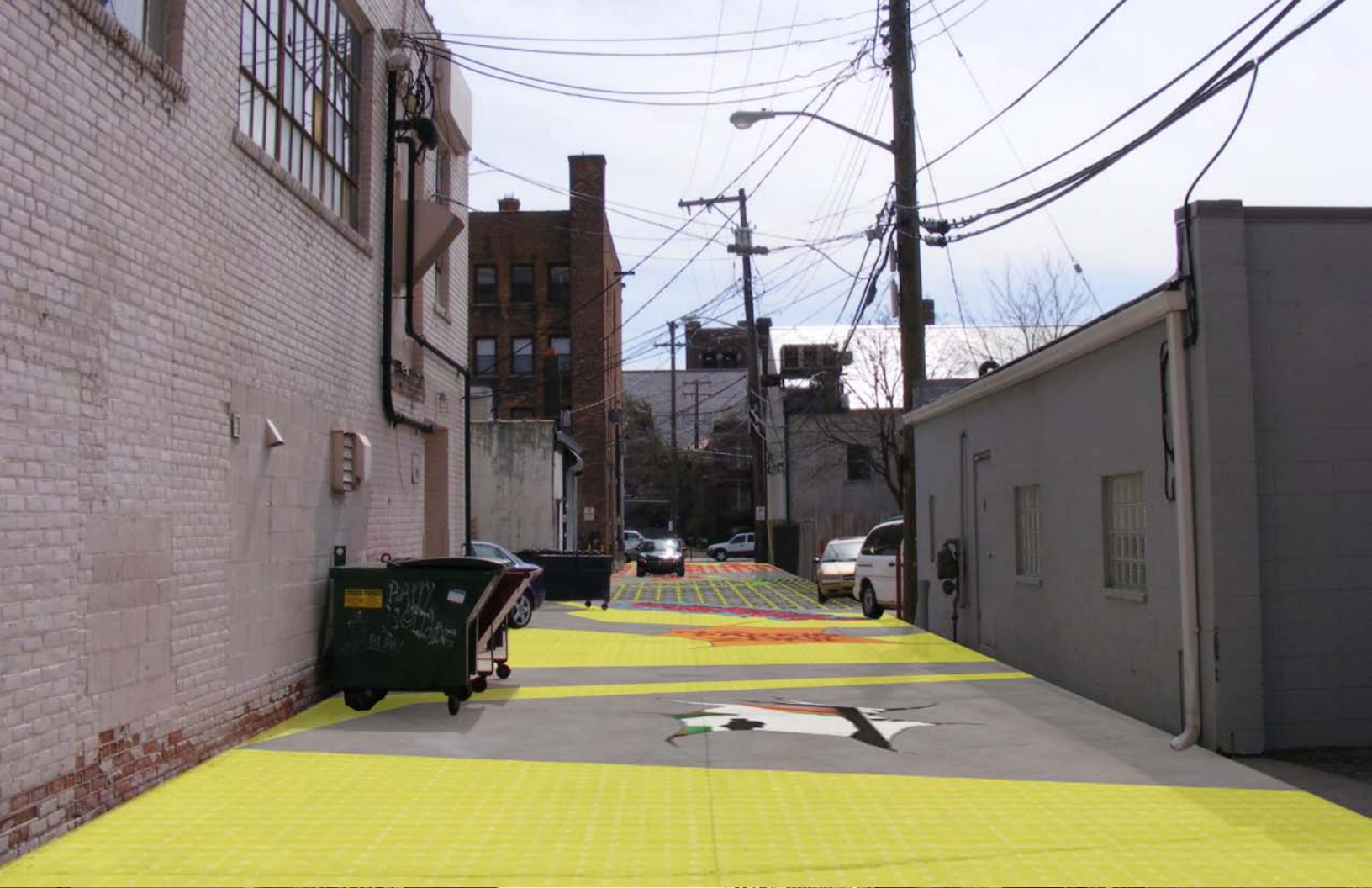
— "The Prophet" SDRE



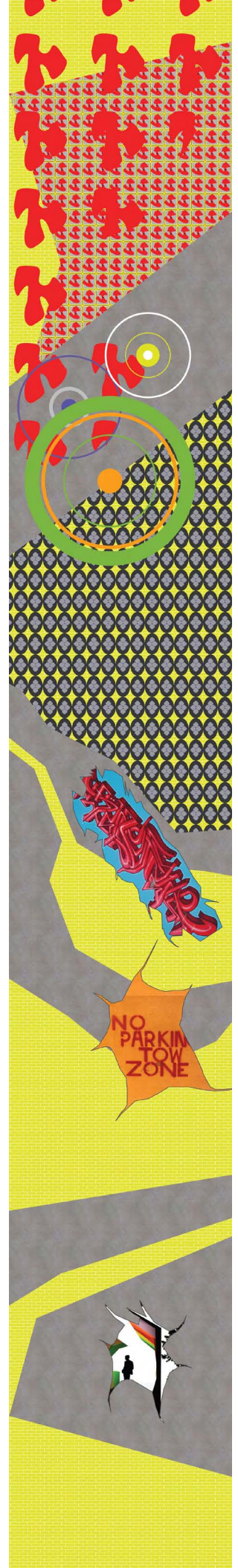
FINAL PROJECT

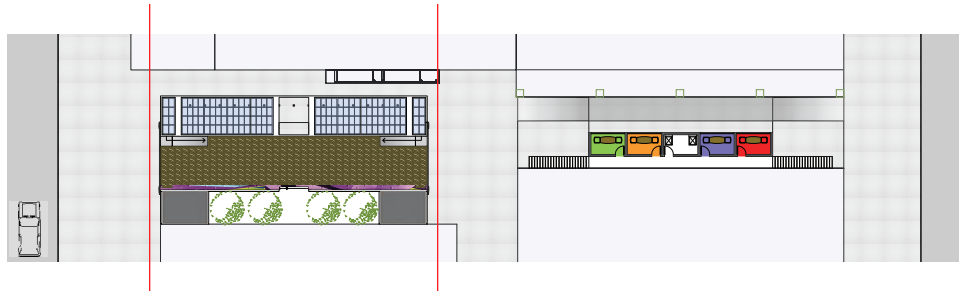


Upon completing the initial concept it was realized that this project demanded to be expanded beyond the limits of four walls, it required a more open and public space for the idea to thrive. The driving forces behind the design were the ideas of freedom of expression and creative catalyst. This new design would provide a creative outlet for the people of Royal Oak; a place to hold rallies, give speeches, design installations, perform various works of art, read stories, slam poems, interact with the surroundings, and above all instill values of reverence to the creative mind.



The project was divided into three phases. The first phase addressed the access alley that ran perpendicular to the main alley dividing it in half. This alley is used mainly for vehicular access, and provides access for service and maintenance. It was decided that obstruction of this service alley would not be wise due to the importance of it's function, however I still wanted to use the alley to attract possible patrons to my site. To do this I decided that the ground plane would be altered. Using various bright colors and patterns to attract people the concrete would be painted over in a graffiti-type manor. While this alley would still be used as service I did not want to leave it untouched as to suggest that people were not allowed to explore it.







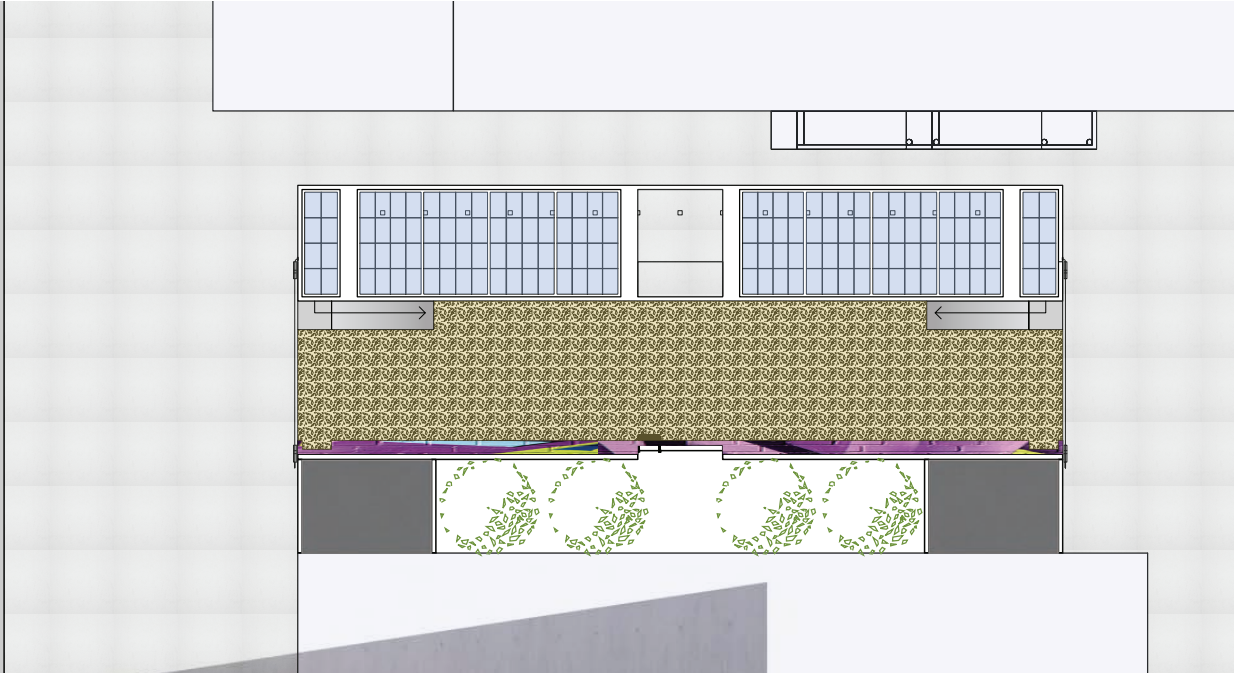
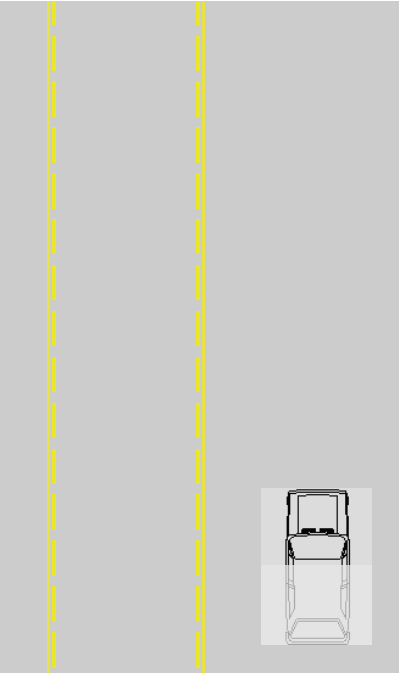
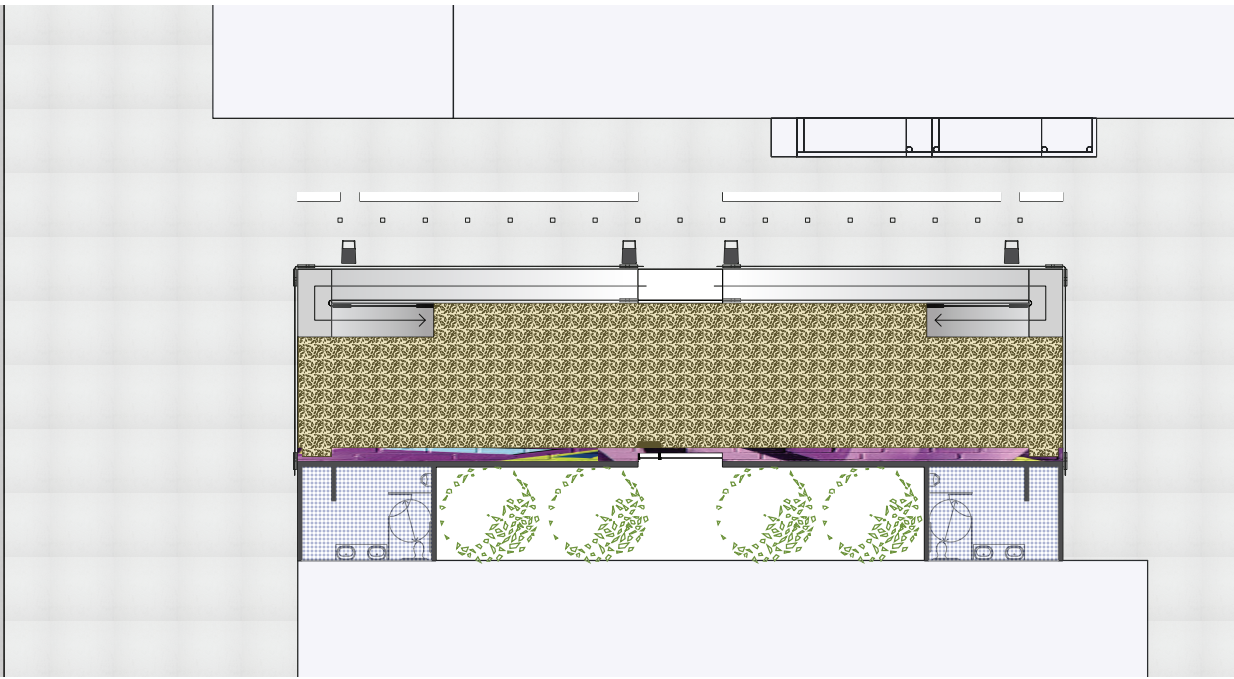
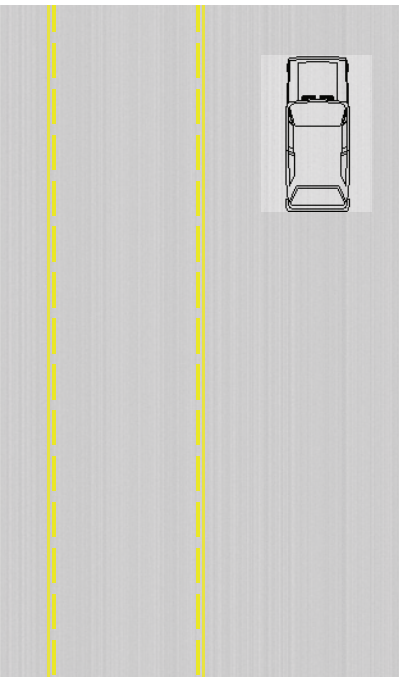
The second phase of the project, to the west of the site, proposed an open-air public space that would be accessible around the clock. This space consists of a covered walkway overlooking a large open space dug into the ground four feet deep, that faced a twelve foot wall enclosing two bathrooms and a green space. The dugout space would be used as the main design-build-display area. It is in this space that people would be able to do as they please, local artists would visit the site to design and display their work, graffiti artists would be encouraged to use every surface of the site as their canvas. It is intended that this site would become the new social gathering place dedicated to creative expression and the sharing of knowledge. One could envision walking to Royal Oak, picking up a cup of coffee at a local coffee shop, and coming to this site to discuss the topics brought up in the latest book purchased at the book store around the corner; and if one were so inclined they could create a beautiful painting or build an installation inspired by the dialogue exchanged.

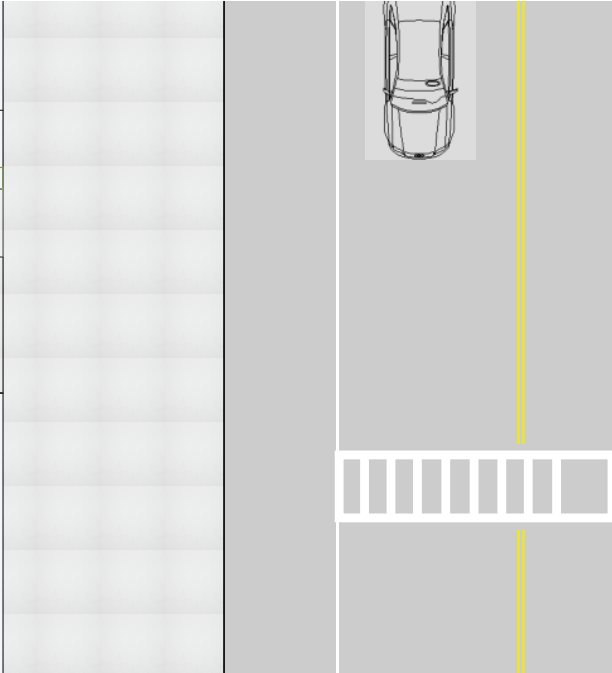
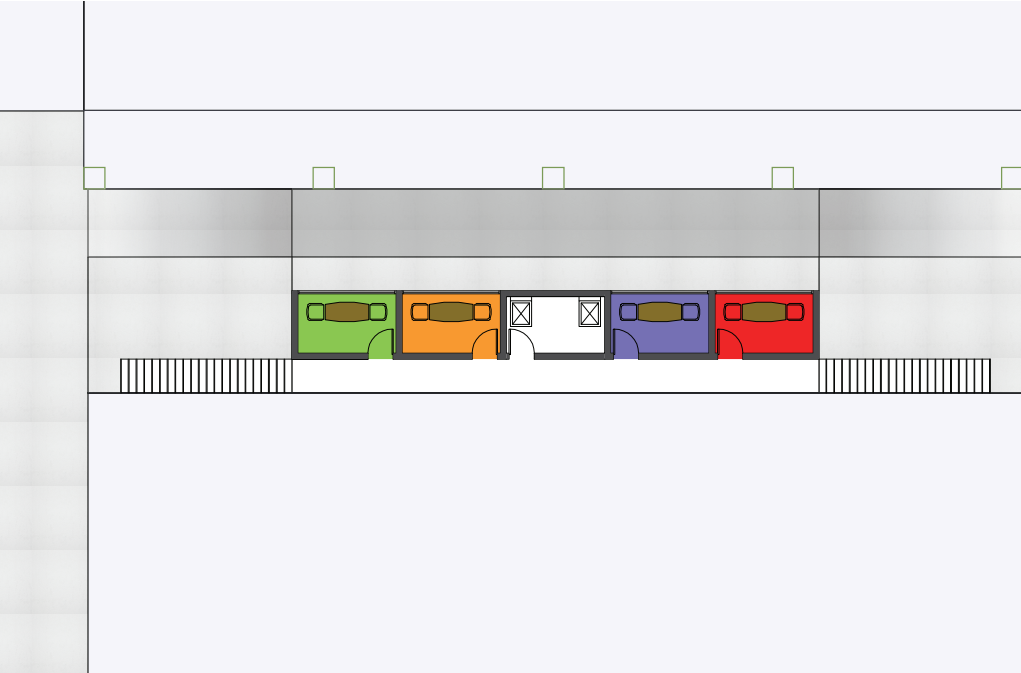
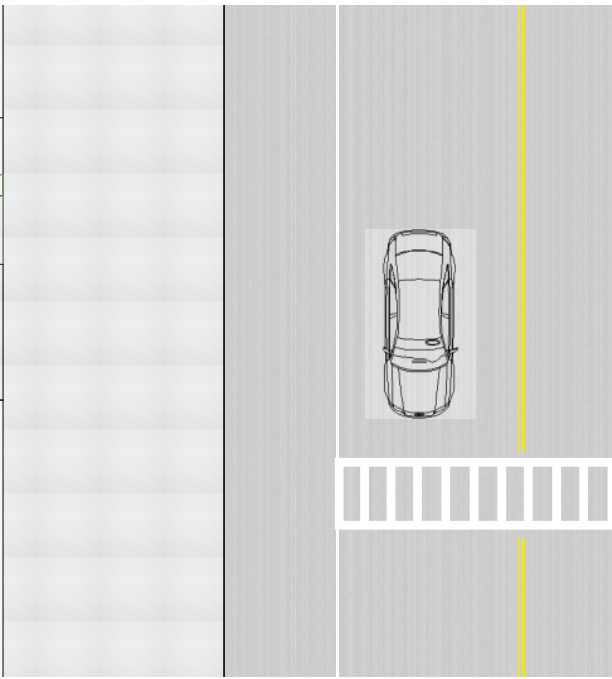
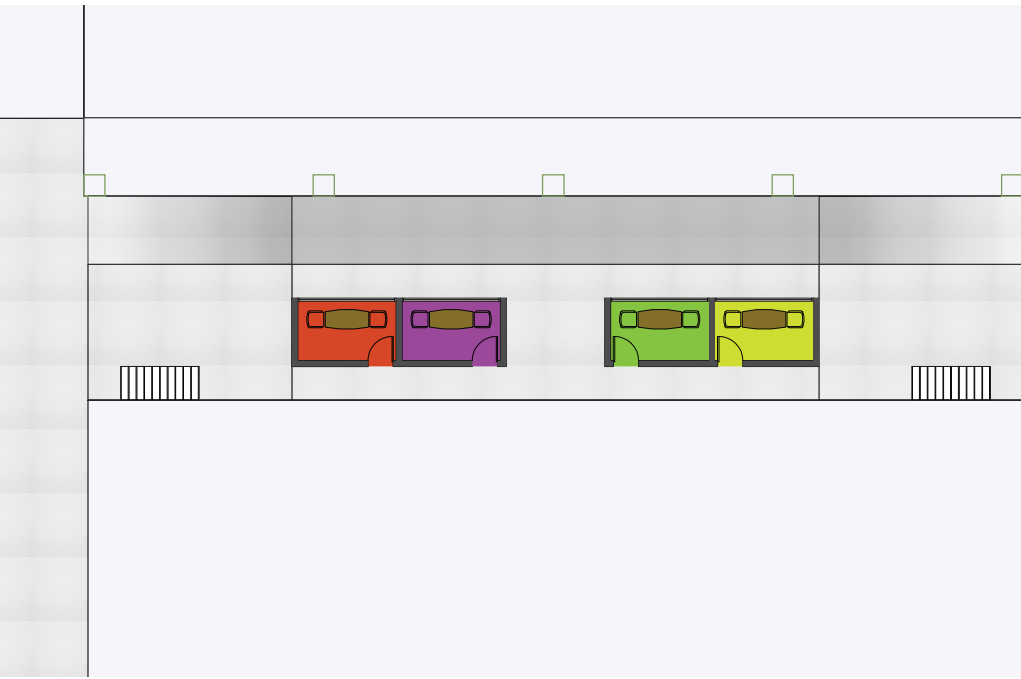
It is certain that not everything displayed in this space would be received enthusiastically by everyone who visited the site, however it is the driving nature of this project that if someone is offended or strongly disagrees with something being displayed or talked about, then this person should feel inclined, they should feel obligated, to express their opinion as freely as those before them. If this means that someone destroys or alters a piece of work completed by someone else as a way of expressing their perspective, then so be it. As a society we must learn to embrace criticism and difference of opinion, and recognize that not everyone thinks that same way. Instead of reacting to these differences of opinion by means of physical violence, we must learn to express our emotions and thoughts in a creative positive way.



The third and final stage of the design is The Hive, a series of (8) 7' x 12' rooms facing the Fifth condominium tower. This series of rooms would be used as small meeting spaces for the public. The Hive wants to provide a place for people to come and relax in a personal space where they can be alone to reflect on certain matters, or be in the company of several friends to discuss the type of instillation they would like to propose. It is envisioned that an individual could be in one room writing a thesis paper, while in the room right next to them a drummer for a local band could have his gear setup to practice, and further down the hall someone could be taking a nap. The Hive is a place to escape for a moment and collect one's thoughts.







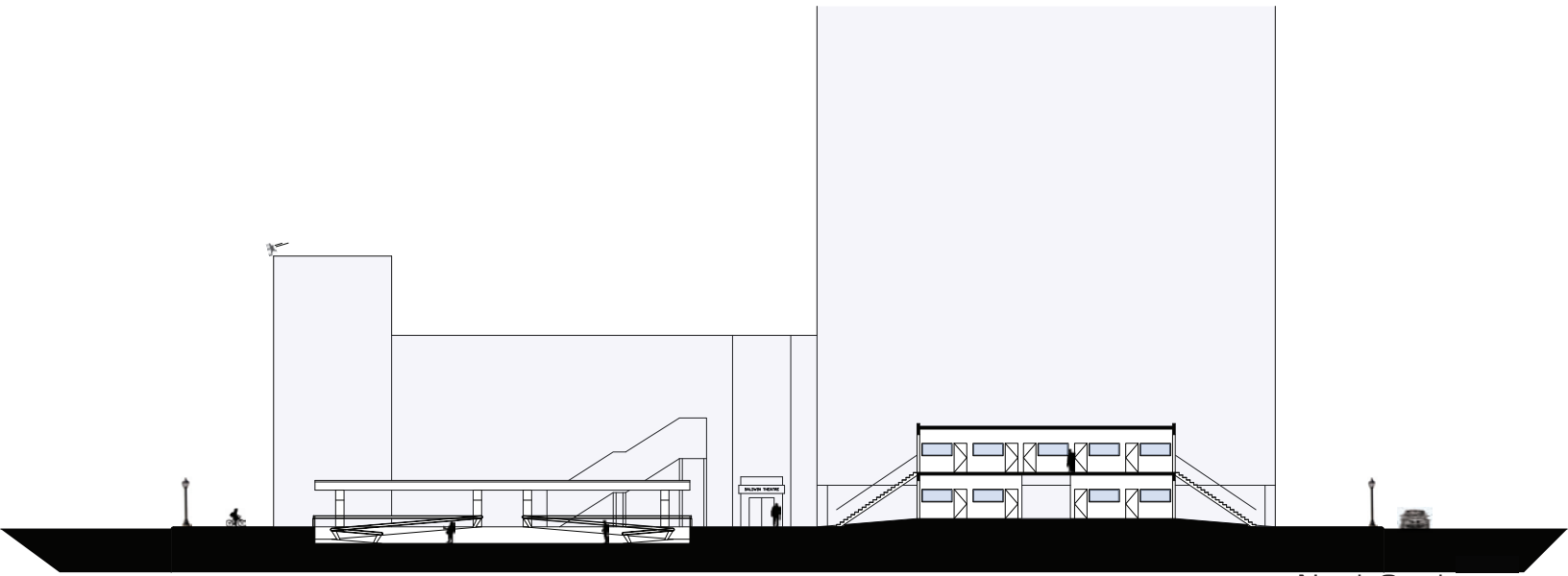


BALDWIN

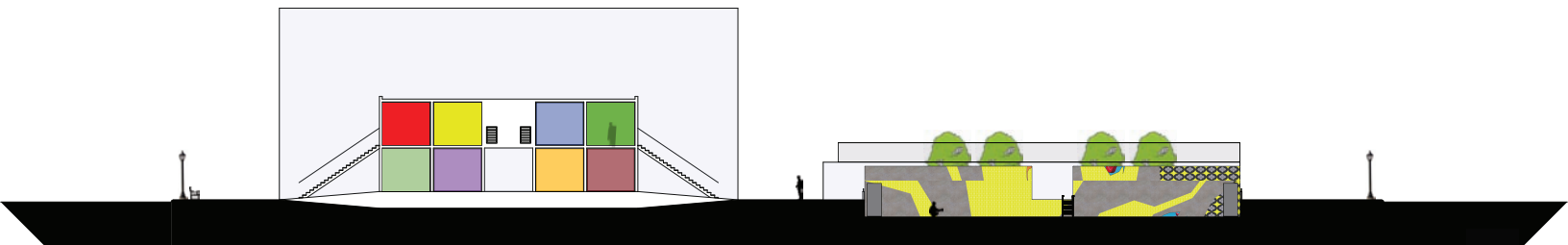
AGE
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DO NOT
ENTER

DO NOT
ENTER

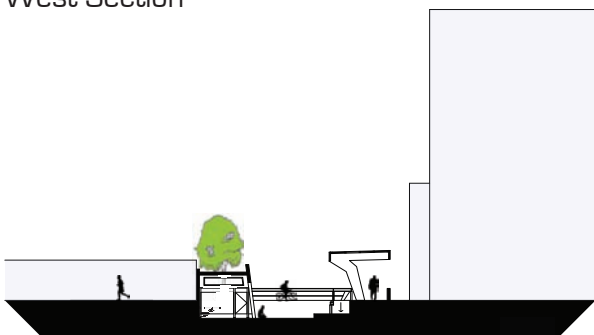


North Section

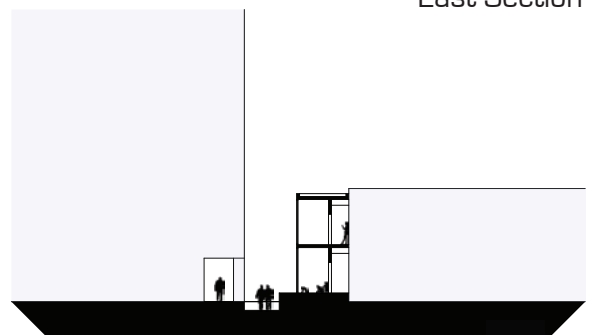


South Section

West Section



East Section





// RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE // Aphex Twin // Dj Shadow // Boards of Canada //
// Rives // Luke Vibert // Squarepusher // Bob Marley // Don Caballero // Beck //
// Cous B.I.G. // Buckethead // Minus the Bear // Bear vs. Shark // Dallas Green // Daft
// Stevie Wonder // Dj Tiesto // Two Lone Swordsmen // U2 // Underworld // Prince //
// Nirvana // Pearljam // Plastikman // Richie Hawtin // Ginormous // Red Hot Chili
// Fire Inside // Faithless // Air // Alice in Chains // ...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of
// Beastie Boys // Binary Star // Bjork // Blackstar // Blackalicious // Blessid Union of S
// Chiodos // Cold // Collective Soul // The Cranberries // The Crystal Method // The Cu
// De La Soul // A Tribe Called Quest // Death in Vegas // O.C. // Dj Q-bert // Deep D
// Dion // Dispatch // Distance // Dj Krush // Dr. Dre // Ed Rush & Optical // Eddie
// Eric B. & Rakim // Eric Clapton // Erykah Badu // Everlast // Everclear // Felix Da Hou
// Fischerspooner // A Flock of Seagulls // Floetry // Fluke // The Fugees // Future Sou
// Miller // Tommy Dorsey // The Go Find // Goldfrapp // Gravenhurst // Green Velvet //
// Herb Alpert // Herbie Hancock // Hive // Hybrid // HRC // House of Pain // Ian Br
// tion // Janet Jackson // Jdilla // Jedi Mind Tricks // Jeff Beck // JEM // Jeffrey Gair
// Scofield // Journey // Judge Jules // Juno Reactor // Jurassic 5 // K-os // Kenna //
// Convenience // Kool and The Gang // Korn // Kraftwerk // KRS-One // Kruder & Dorf
// Live // Lo-fidelity Allstars // Lords of Acid // Lostprophets // LTJ Bukem // Lynyrd Skyr
// Massive Attack // Masters at Work // Men Without Hats // Mephisto Odyssey // Meth
// Mouse on Mars // Mr. Scruff // Muddy Waters // Mum // Muse // Nas // The M
// Omid // The Orb // Outkast // Panterra // A Perfect Circle // Peter Tosh // Phant
// Porno for Pyros // Portishead // Posse // Postal Service // Primer 55 // Prodigy //
// Age // Quincy // Quiver // Rabbit in the Moon // Rachael Yamagata // Radiohead //
// Rinocerose // Rob Dougan // The Roots // Royksopp // Rui Da Silva // Run DMC // S
// liams // Saves the Day // Scarface // Seal // Seu Jorge // Sevendust // SiSe // Silver
// // St. Germain // Stage // Stone Temple Pilots // The Streets // Sublime // Submari
// popmusik // The Temptations // Tenacious D // Thievery Corporation // Third Eye Blind
// // The Used // Unkle // Van Morrison // Veruca Salt // VHS or Beta // Violent Femm





Maximo Park // Placebo // S.D.R.E. // Gorillaz // Mos Def // Common // Prefuse 73
Alkaline Trio // Alexisonfire // Braid // The Promise Ring // Big L // Tupac // Notori-
Punk // Dar Williams // Gregory and the Hawk // Death Cab for Cutie // Wu Tang //
NIN // Miles Davis // Nina Simone // Mirah // Immortal Technique // Foo Fighters
The Peppers // Incubus // Amon Tobin // Brandtson // Brand New // Blind Melon // A
Dead // Atmosphere // The Avalanches // Badly Drawn Boy // Stevie Ray Vaughan //
The Roots // Boston // Boy Hits Car // Boyz II Men // BT // Bush // Chemical Brothers //
The Cure // Cursive // Cypress Hill // D'Angelo // Dashboard Confessional // Dave Bruback
The Dish // Deltron 3030 // Dan The Automator // Depeche Mode // Dismemberment Plan
The Money // Ella Fitzgerald // Etta James // ELO // Elton John // Eminem // EPMD //
The Flamingo // Ferry Corsten // Fightstar // Filla Brazillia // Fiona Apple // The Fire Theft //
The Future // The Future of London // Gangstarr // Genesis // George Clinton // George Michael // Glenn
The Good // Hall & Oates // Handsome Boy Modeling School // The Herbaliser // Matthew Herbert
The Crown // The Innocence Mission // INXS // James Brown // Jamiroquai // Janes Addic-
The Jones // The Jesus and Mary Chain // Jimi Hendrix // Joe Pass // Johan Gielen // John
The Kick // Kick Kord // Kid 606 // Kid Koala // Kid Loco // Invisible Scratch Pickles // Kings of
The Meister // Ladytron // Laika // Lamb // Lewis Black // George Carlin // Lisa Loeb //
The Myrd // M.Rosner // Madonna // Mae // The Marshall Tucker Band // Marvin Gaye //
The Godman // Michael Jackson // Millencolin // Ministry of Sound // Mogwai // Morcheeba
The New Deal // New Order // Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds // No Doubt // NOFX // Oasis
The Atom Planet // Pharcyde // Phil Collins // Phoenecia // Photek // Plaid // The Police //
The Propellerheads // Public Enemy // Q-Tip // Quarashi // Queen // Queens of the Stone
The Rahzel // Ramsey Lewis Trio // Ray Charles // Red Animal War // Richard Devine //
The Sade // Sage Francis // Santana // Sarah Mclachlan // Sasha & Digweed // Saul Wil-
The Archair // Skalpel // Slick Rick // Slum Village // The Smashing Pumpkins // Snoop Dogg
The Line // System of a Down // Taking Back Sunday // Talib Kweli // The Tea Party // Tele-
The // Thursday // Timo Maas // TLC // Tool // Tricky // Tuomas Toivonen // Underoath
The Lines // Voo Voo // Wagon Christ // Way Out West // Weezer // The White Octave //



INSPIRATION

COMPLIMENT

I remember the first time
you named me "Good morning."

And how, the night before,
you considered my ceiling,
where the passing cars outside
the passing cars outside
the passing cars outside
cast their shadows and liquid lights
through the slats of my blinds.

You said: "Hey Romeo—
your CD player is skipping again...
but your ceiling's like fireworks for poor folks!"
And I liked that.

I like the tall pauses you take
when you tell your nephews knock-knock jokes.
And I like your theory
that men and women's shirts button on opposite
sides
so that couples can get dressed facing each other
after making love.

You seem to season your seasons,
your days, your time
with rhyme, not reason,
I've seen you. Daily. Nightly.
I've watched you housebreak a puppy
just by asking politely.

And your remedy for insomnia?
Is to pile every pillow and blanket into the tub
and you nap there like you're taking
a patchwork bath,
and I said once: "Oh—I wish I had a PICTURE!"
and you said: "Oh—I wish you and I had HOT SEX,
YOU gave ME a PEDICURE,
and then ELVES showed up at our doorstep,
with a PIZZA, to tell us JESUS just built a TREE-
HOUSE
in the backyard, and he'd like to meet us both,
so HOP IN HOTSHOT!"

You're weird,
with a capital "WE."

And I'm grateful, I marvel,
you've helped me hammer
some of my worst manners into manhood,
but I still admit—I like the way your shorts fit,
and how, overall, you'd call me "smart,"
even though sometimes
I do really stupid shit.

And I like how you giggle with your lips closed
like you've got a secret little moon in your mouth.

But I'm not insisting you're some kind of goddess,
(I know you're suspicious of unspecific love poems).
You're more like a sunflower,
growing in the courtyard of an old folks home—
you mean things to people on a daily basis,
and this petty poem won't explain
just how "my favorite" your face is,
(but I wish I'd been your bathroom mirror
the day they took off your braces).

You're so pretty.

You're like a vivid video game
and I'm the idiot kid
just trying to get to your next level—
I like your right-shoulder angel,
Hell, I like your left-shoulder devil.
I admire the lively deeds you do.
So if you come through a doorway again,
in a thrift store poncho,
or a drop-dead evening gown,
twirling and asking:
"Well, whaddya think?"
I'm gonna tell you:

"Shit howdy, Sunshine,
sit your fine self down!
If you're looking for a compliment—

I think you've come
to the right place."

— Rives

A wise man once said...nothing.

FINAL THOUGHTS

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