



# ON THE WATER

Ian Templeton | Masters Thesis | 2016-17



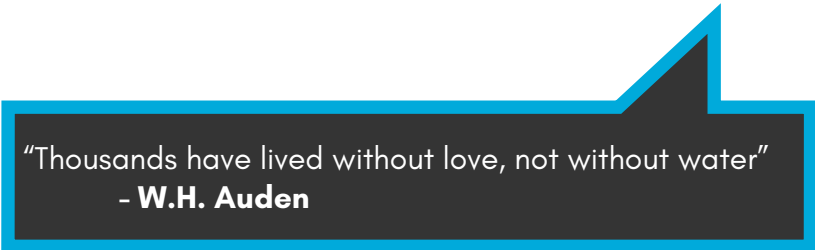




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# 00. CONTENT



"Thousands have lived without love, not without water"  
- **W.H. Auden**

# ON THE WATER

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# 00. CONTENT

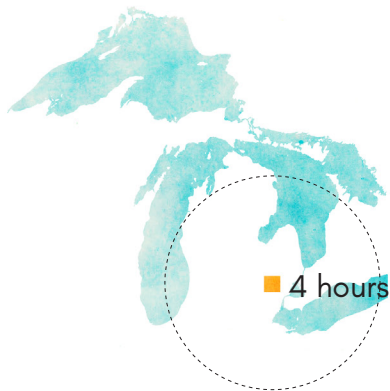
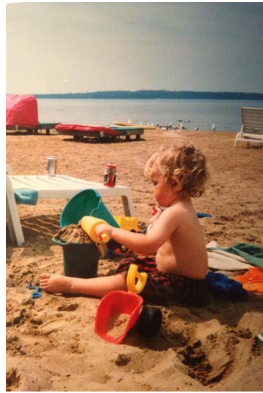
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# 01. INTRODUCTION

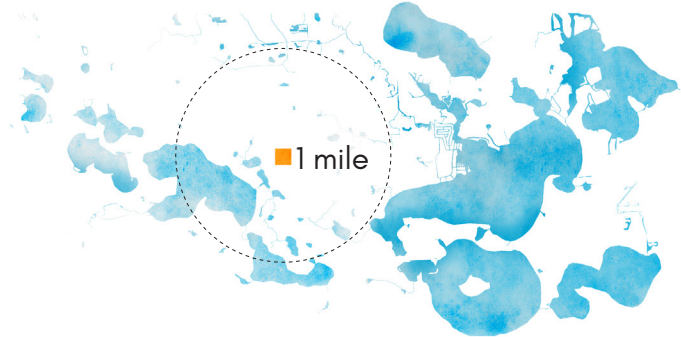
"You didn't come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean. You are not a stranger here."  
- **Alan Watts**

**.1** Introduction

**.2** Abstract



Home | Michigan



West Bloomfield, MI | Hometown

Figure 1.

## 01.1 Introduction

Personally, I was raised on water. Growing up in West Bloomfield, Michigan I lived in a house that was not on the water but surrounded by numerous inland lakes where my family and I had lake access. I grew up with a love and appreciation for being around water and though we only had a few months out of the year to enjoy boating and swimming in the lakes, we enjoy every moment of it. I have always had this personal attachment and passion for the water. In addition to learning how to swim at a very young age, my family and I took many vacations to the Grand Traverse Bay region. I feel this strong emotional connection to the Great Lakes region and being along the edge of the mighty Great Lakes, or 'inland seas' as they are also called, inspires me greatly.

The Great Lakes have formed the identity of how we know Michigan today. The water's edge itself has shaped how we identify Michigan as a "Winter Water Wonderland" or as many know it as, "The Mitten." The geographical shaping of the lakes gives Michigan its identity. The economic and recreational benefits of the Great Lakes have attracted people to the water's edge since they formed thousands of years ago. People have been drawn to the Great Lakes and other large bodies of water for centuries, and I strive to understand how and why people have been attracted to building and developing along the water's edge and how society can continue to do so in different ways in the future. The infrastructure of the water's edge has changed drastically over the years, and it will continue to evolve shortly. Something that I find incredibly beneficial to being along the water's edge is its ability to give a moment of pause from the hectic life we have on the inland. The time that we spend along large bodies of water can provide for us with a connection to nature and our inner selves. Something that we rarely get to experience in our hectic everyday lives.



## 01.2 Abstract

Whether we realize it or not, humans have always been attracted to water. The water's edge has had a physical, mental as well as emotional connection to people in ways that affect the human mind consciously and subconsciously. We know for a fact that the human body consists of over 75% water when we are born and by the time we are an adult, the body is 60% water (Nichols). In a way, you can say, "we are water." We cannot live without it, and it is a part of our everyday lives. The water and the mind are connected to each other in a link that makes us who we are today. We are attracted to it because of its aesthetic qualities and the sense that it evokes once we encounter it. There is a constant need and desire for people to be on the edge of the water, and if we are ambitious and willing enough, to dive right into it. This is also evident if we look at ancient history and the formation of cities in the first known civilizations. Mesopotamia, located in the middle east, was the first known ancient civilization settled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, giving it its name which translates out to "land between rivers" (Nichols). Ancient Egypt was also shaped by the abundant resources that were offered by the extensive Nile River, the longest river in the world. The rivers where these civilizations were founded shaped these places into what they had become; without the rivers, these civilization and settlements would not have been possible. It is crucial to note that almost all societies, cities, and settlements were formed primarily in or around bodies or systems of water. This was due mainly to survival and for commerce reasons, but today people find being along the water's edge more so for recreational purposes and aesthetically pleasing views. Today, it is estimated that 80 percent of the world's population lives within sixty miles of the coastline of an ocean, lake or river (Nichols). This is a very significant portion of the world's population, and it can be assumed that people today do still have a strong connection to water, but it is drastically different than it once was in the past. Though what does it mean to connect with water by being along the water's edge? And why

are we still so attracted to it in different ways? We no longer live in a time where we need to live by water to survive, yet the demand for being along the water is still incredibly high and valuable. This thesis is an attempt to understand better what the relationships are between the person and the water's edge. We can look to those relationships in different settings as well as understand better how they react in different situations. What does indeed attract people to the water, and how can that begin to start a conversation about how architects and planners begin to make spaces that are built and developed along this precious condition? This thesis has developed into a personal, physical, and mental exploration of what draws people to the edge of diverse bodies of water, and how can that condition begin to change the way we interact with the water's edge in different ways. This process has taken many twists and turns, but it has resulted in a topic that has less to do with the element of water itself. Though the element of water is the essential backbone, this thesis has more to do with how particular landscapes along large bodies of water can provide inspirational, meditative, and connective spaces for creative individuals who choose to express themselves and find stimulus by being on the water.

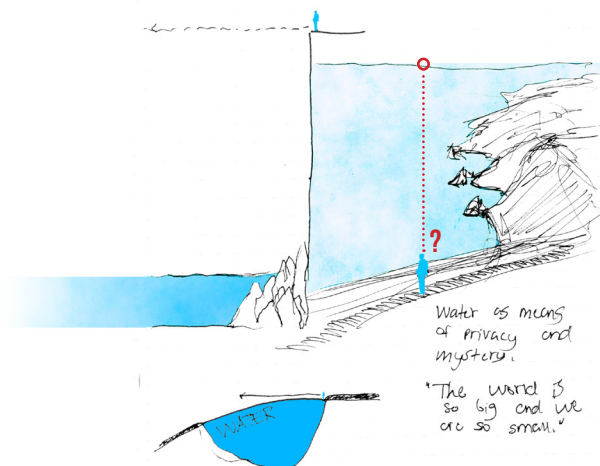


Figure 2.

## 02. CONTEXT

"We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch – we are going back from whence we came"

– **John F. Kennedy**

Water symbolizes many things connected with healing. Pouring forth from within the depths of the earth, it represents life and regeneration.

–**Wilbert M. Gesler, 'Healing Places'**

- .1 Water + Mind
- .2 Dive in
- .3 Connect
- .4 Human Relations
- .5 Land Between

## 02.1 Water + Mind

It stands to reason that we as humans are inevitably attracted to water both physically as well as mentally. A life without water is like a life without air; we cannot sustain ourselves if we do not have constant exposure to it. This exposure can be defined as simply consuming water on a daily basis, which is suggested to be about 8-ounces of water a day (Gunnars). Or we can reference the proven psychological and physical benefits that it provides to humans by merely sitting next to a fountain or taking a walk along a long sandy beach. Whatever the case may be, there is a constant need in our life for water, and being near it.



Figure 3.



Nearness to water has been proven to affect the brain and people's mental state in many different ways. Though the discoveries of the cognitive benefits to being near water are relatively new concepts that have just recently been grasped, we can still begin to have a better understanding of how being near water can affect us in positive ways. We turn to water for a sense of calm and clarity (Gregoirse). A significant percent of vacationers spends their time away from their daily hectic lives to visit an ocean, lake or waterside resort. In addition to taking vacations along the water, many people take great pleasure in water sports such as swimming, kayaking, surfing or fishing, just to name a few. People turn to water as a break, a break away from the constant distractions and hectic things in our lives that we do on a constant daily basis. We go to water for a chance to relax and reflect and dispel any worries or stress.

Our attraction for water is even reflected in the very common attraction to the color blue (Gregoirse). We



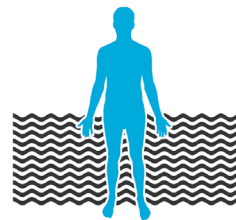
"Kayaking on the canals by my house is a great break from the stresses I have in my life. It is a very peaceful thing that I enjoy very much."

Figure 4.

are naturally drawn to aquatic hues, and further marketing research has shown that people associate the color blue with spatial and mental qualities such as; calm, openness, depth, and wisdom. Though water is naturally a transparent substance, the way water is often perceived from the shoreline is a bottomless liquid element that comes off as very powerful and overwhelming bigger than ourselves, a mysteriously pleasing quality to being along water's edge. According to Professor of Urban Planning, Steven C. Bourassa, "These instinctual and emotional responses occur separately from rational and cognitive responses." What Bourassa means by this is that the emotional responses that we encounter when we are in different environments arise from the oldest parts of our brain, and these can, in fact, emerge before any another cognitive response occurs. Therefore, to understand the relationships, we have with our environment, we must understand both our cognitive and our emotional interactions with it; we have to dive in!



"Neuroplasticity" the fact that our brains are 80% water - are shaped, for good or ill, by a multitude of factors that include our perceptions, our emotions, our biology, our culture and our environment (Nichols).



The average human body is 60% water. But when you are first born your body is 75-78%. As we age our body has less water (Nichols).

Figure 5.

## 02.2 Dive in

This strange feeling that we obtain while being near water is best explained by a marine biologist, Wallace J. Nichols. As Nichols puts it, we all have a “blue mind,” “a mildly meditative state characterized by calm, peacefulness, unity, and a sense of general happiness and satisfaction with life in the moment.” This is almost instantly triggered when we are near water or in it. “We are beginning to learn that our brains are hardwired to react positively to water and that being near it can calm and connect us, increase innovation and insight, and even heal what’s broken,” Nichols writes in his book “Blue Mind.” Water can heal the mind and the body and can bring out creativity and calmness in an existential state of being. To find this state of being one only look no further than finding some time to be along water’s edge.

Being near water can affect our minds in very positive ways, and knowing the different benefits of being along water can give us a better understanding of why humans take great pleasure and advantage of being close to water.



Figure 6.

## WALLACE J. NICHOLS. | BLUE MIND

### Mental Break

Water gives our brains a rest from our everyday lives. We are constantly blasted with sensory stimuli, and it is important for our brains to have some downtime from the things that constantly distract us on a daily basis. Being in or around water gives our mind and senses a rest from overstimulation (Nichols). "The sound around us...is simplified. It's not quiet, but the sound of water is far purer than the sound of voices or the sound of music or the sound of a city," (Nichols). In addition to the auditory benefits, the visual input is simplified when being along the water. "When you stand at the edge of the water and look out on the horizon, it's visually simplified" (Nichols). When we are on, in or under water, we have a very rare chance to get a cognitive break, simply because there is less information coming into our brains. In a way our brains shut down, but it keeps working in different ways.



### Meditative

In addition to this, water can induce a meditative state after spending just a few minutes sitting along the water's edge. Though we may not realize it, the water movement, sounds and reflective characteristics are encouraging a mildly meditative state of calm focus and gentle awareness. When we are near water, our mind is completely captivated by the water. Our brains are in a state of mild attentiveness, what is described by Nichols as a "soft fascination." The state of mind means that the brain is entirely engaged in the water, taking in sensory input, but not to the point of overloading the brain to the point of "hard fascination." Being in a meditative state in which the brain is relaxed but focused benefits the mind and body in very effective ways. Mindfulness has been proven to lower stress, relief from mild anxiety, reduces pain and depression and improves mental clarity and focus, which can result in better sleep quality (Nichols).



## Passion and connection

Water can inspire us to be more passionate and connected with ourselves. While in a restful state observing or interacting with water, it is very common to experience a moment of awe. The emotion of awe can summon a feeling of connection to something outside ourselves, a complete sense of the massiveness of nature and an effort to make sense of the whole experience. “That switches you from a ‘me’ orientation to a ‘we’ orientation,” says Nichols, quoting research that supports the notion that feelings of awe can, in fact, increase our capacity for connection and empathy with other things. This can be backed up by the fact that many people find great ‘romance’ and ‘wonder’ in being near water. You experience a kind of ‘one with the universe’ kind of feeling, and it allows you to connect with something outside of yourself, something that can be best experienced when simply being near water.



## Creative Mind

A blue mind is a creative mind, according to Nichols. Our mind is constantly clogged with outside distraction that can distract us from our creative mind. In today’s society, it is very rare that we get a moment of complete rest from outside distraction, and our brains have little room to rest. However, when we do allow the mind to rest, the mind switches into a different mode of engagement, known as the default mode network-the brain network associated with daydreaming, imagination, consolidation or memories, self-referential thought, insight and introspection (Gregoire). The brain is constantly striving to be in this mode, and it can simply be obtained when we simply focus in an environment that has little to no outside distractions. Being along the water’s edge is incredibly helpful to reach this state of mind. When you are along the water’s edge you remove a lot of visual stimulation and auditory interruptions; you are not hearing outside voices or processing ideas, you are entirely alone with your thoughts. Though you are not necessarily switching off your brain, you are in a different mode. A mode that is very restful and suddenly you can make new and unusual connections within your mind.





## 02.3 Connect

In addition to the closeness to water providing an out-of-mind cognitive benefits and putting us in a meditative state that is beyond oneself, another truly valuable aspect of being on or near water is something that we strive for on almost a daily basis; privacy. As author John Jerome put it, "The thing about the ritual morning plunge, the entry into water that provides the small existential moment, is its total privacy. Swimming is between me and the water, nothing else." Being surrounded by water along a shoreline, floating in a kayak, or swimming in a deep pool offers something that we find hard to comprehend, but also strive for more often than we think;

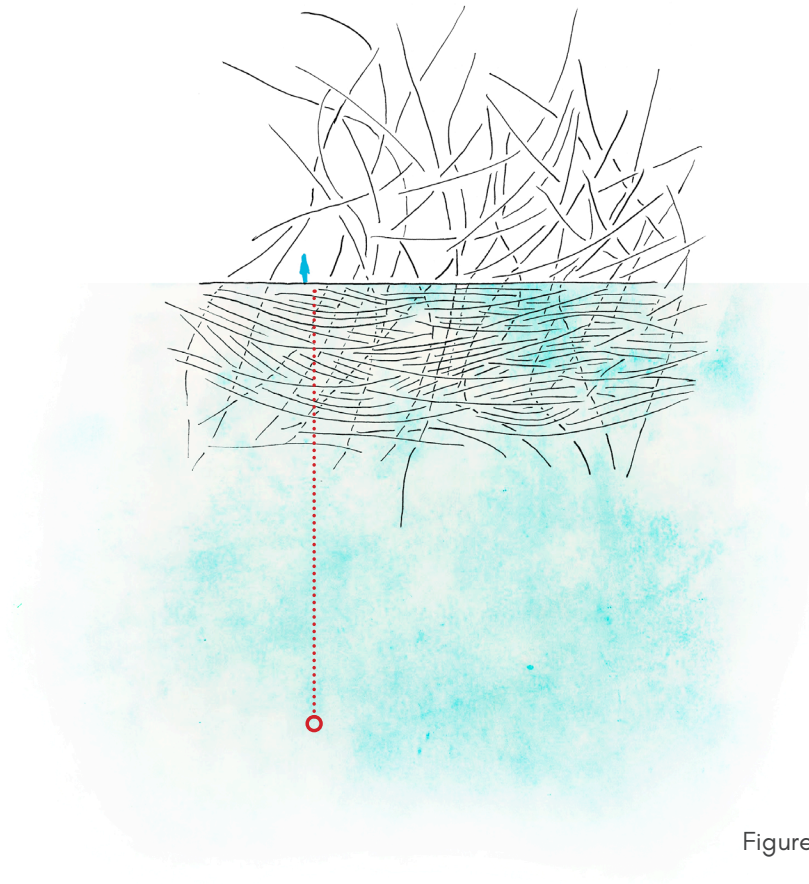


Figure 7.

Figure 02.6.

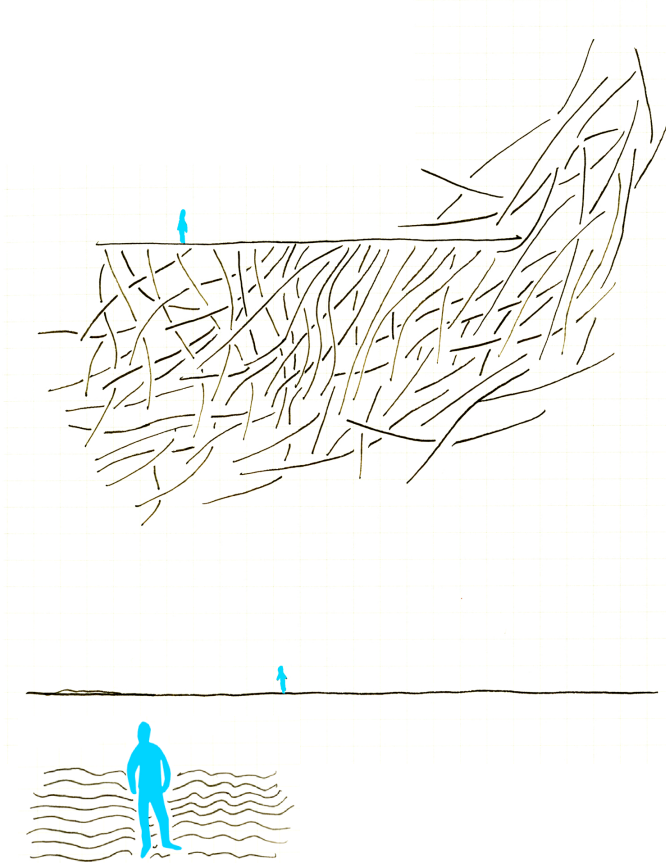


Figure 8.

just a moment to feel entirely engulfed in an element that allows for self-reflectance, relaxation, and connection.

This immediate connection that we have with water is infectious, and even if we may not realize it, we strive to be near water. "Water is something that humanity has cherished since the beginning of history and means something different to everyone," writes archaeologist, Brian Fagan. To try and connect with water, one needs to understand the full benefits that it has on our minds and our well-being. We know that we as humans evolved from nature, and because of this we have an instinctual connection to it. In 1984, Harvard University biologist, naturalist, and entomologist brought this theory to

light in a term, he called Biophilia. This hypothesizes that we as humans have “ingrained” in our genes an instinctive bond with nature and the living organisms we share our planet with. Much like how we are dependent on water for survival, we inevitably depend on nature for survival; it is ingrained in our genes. Just as we are dependent on water for life, we are linked to nature physically, cognitively, and emotionally (Nichols).

“You didn’t come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean. You are not a stranger here.”  
– Alan Watts

Though it is relevant to have a conversation about nearness to water in today’s society, our connection with water was not always this way. In fact, it was almost quite the opposite. If we look at history, it is clear that our mental and physical connection to water has changed significantly in recent decades, and to understand how water affects us today, it is important to understand how it has affected us as a society in the past.

“The thing about the ritual morning plunge, the entry into water that provides the small existential moment, is its total privacy. Swimming is between me and the water, nothing else” – John Jerome

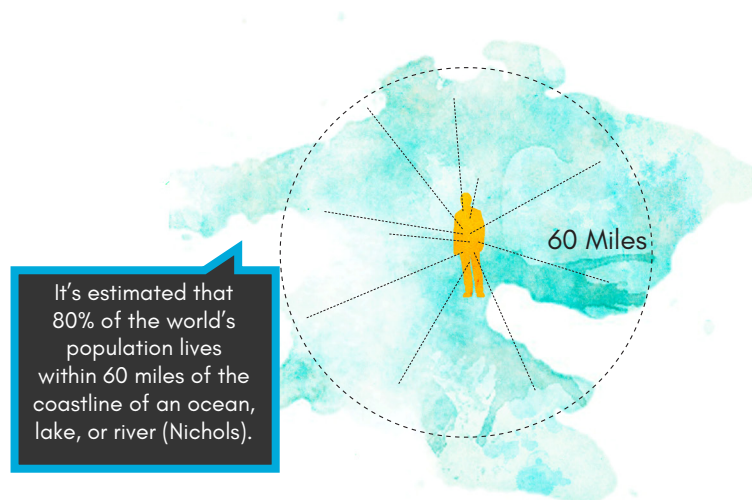


Figure 9.

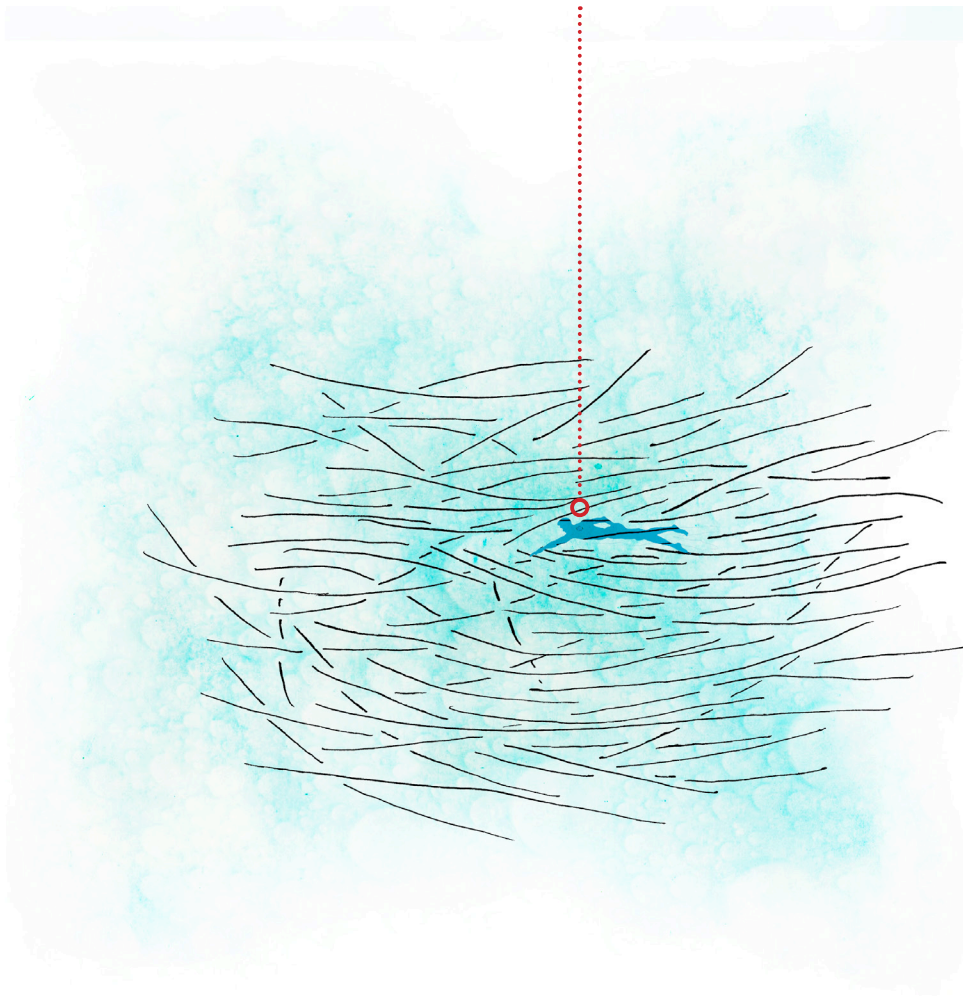


Figure 10.

## 02.4 Human Relations

Civilization has been shaped by the water's edge; it is what drew our ancient ancestors from the depths of the forest and close to the shoreline to survive and thrive. According to the Dennis Dutton theory, "Universal Landscape" is a type of natural setting that contains all the elements needed for human survival; grasses and trees for food; the ability to see approaching danger before it arrives; trees to climb if you need to escape predators; and the presence of an accessible source of water nearby. This can attest to the fact that almost every early civilization that formed before the Industrial Revolution, and even beyond that was settled along a reliable, abundant source of water. This is a source that is often seen in the form of an ocean, river or large sea.

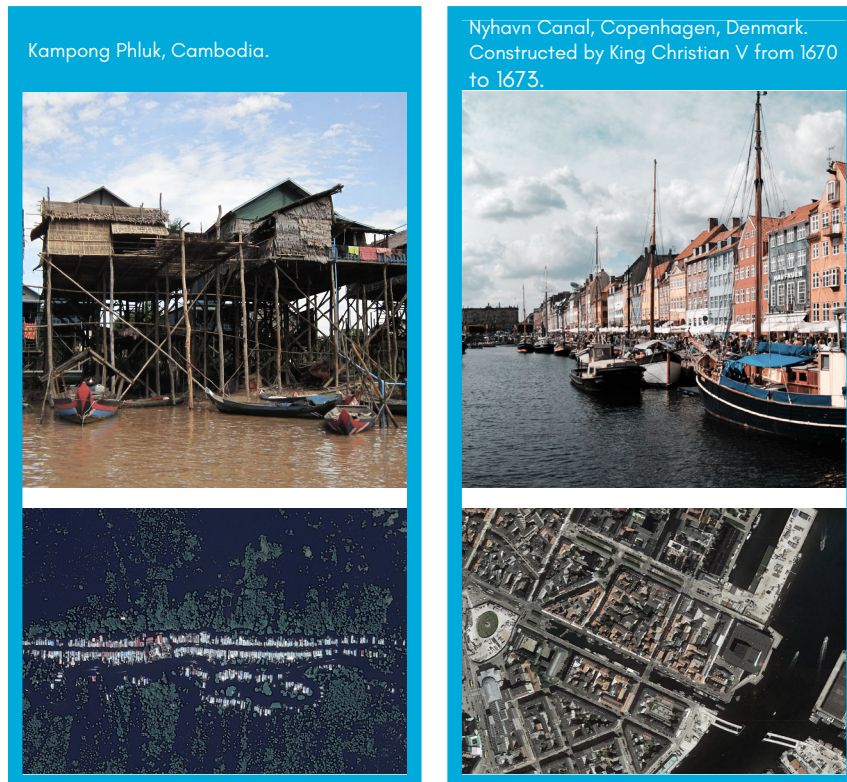


Figure 11.



Luzhi Town, Suzhou, China. Over 2500 years old.



Caerlaverock Castle, Built by Clan Maxwell in the late 13th Century.



Figure 12.

## 02.5 Land between Two Rivers

The world's first known civilization of Mesopotamia, which translates out to "land between two rivers," was formed in the Middle East as early as 5000 B.C. around what is today known as modern day Iran. Though what made this civilization thrive was its location between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, two major rivers that divert from the Persian Gulf. Though little is known about the daily lives of the people of Mesopotamia, it is known in the history that we do know about these people is that the rivers played a significant role in their everyday lives. The rivers were a significant means of survival, commerce and trade, and defense from any possible enemies. The rivers served the region well, and it was the water's edge that drove the people to build the first known cities right along the water's edge and continue to grow. The first known major city in Mesopotamia, the city of Ur, was originally settled in a region that was once part of the Persian Gulf water basin, water was abundant, but as the water started to recede further and further away from the city, the way of life went with it. The city became uninhabitable due to the loss of its accessibility to water.

The word Mesopotamia comes from the Ancient Greek word 'Μεσοποταμία' meaning "[land] between rivers"

## WATER + MESOPOTAMIA

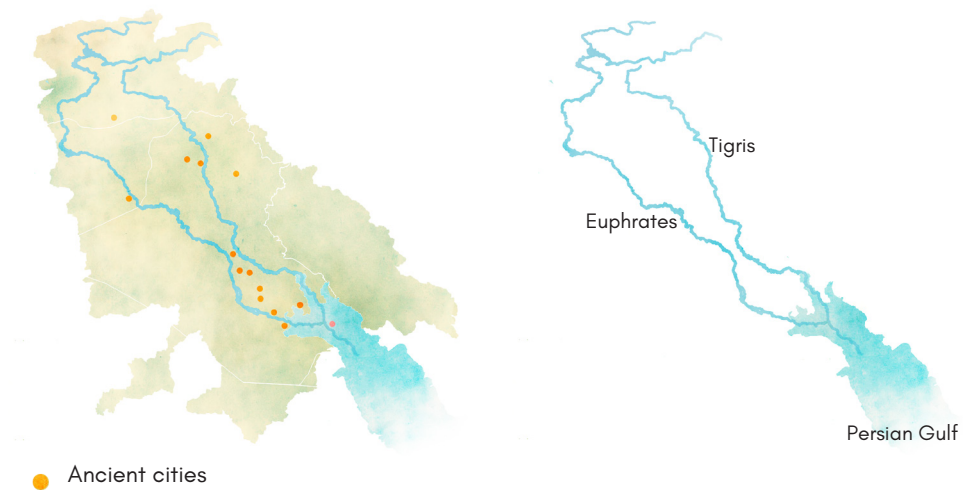


Figure 13.



Figure 14.



## 02.6 Mighty Nile

In ancient Egypt, civilization thrived and expanded drastically along the world's longest river, the Nile. This river, though cutting through the very harsh Sahara Desert, offered a rather large water basin that allowed for agriculture, and commerce to flourish. The Egyptians were well aware of the resources that the Nile had to offer, and because of these cities grew and expanded due to a large amount of trade and resources that the Nile had to offer. People used the river in their everyday lives, whether it be for washing their clothes, watering their crops, or using as a means of transportation. Without the closeness to the Nile River, the ancient Egyptian civilization would have never become the great superpower that we know today. Even in the modern world, the people's closeness to the Nile continues to serve people well, but not necessarily in the same kind of ways; people continue to live further and further from the water, and it is no longer a necessity to be as close to the water's edge as it once was.



## WATER + ANCIENT EGYPT



Figure 15.



Figure 16.

## 02.7 Effects

Though ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia are only two of many numerous examples of how water has influenced the growth and development of society, they both share one common trait; they were entirely dependent on their closeness to water. These places flourished on their closeness to water because of its ability to allow accessibility to other places in the world, trade and commerce, defense, and agriculture. In some cases, if these earlier civilizations were located along freshwater, the water could even be used for drinking. However, one thing that was missing, or perhaps not even thought of as much was leisure and recreation. Though water offered all the things people needed for survival on a daily basis, closeness to water was not necessarily seen as a luxury because of its psychological and physical benefits mentioned earlier. Before we get into this, it also crucial to know that, being near water was and is even to this day not always necessarily a positive thing, in fact, it can even be very harmful.

Though nearness to water can be beneficial to people's well-being and help benefit the growth and development of people and societies, it can also have detrimental effects on humans. So much so that it has resulted in many deaths, injuries, millions of dollars in damages, and mental illnesses.



Figure 17.

## Natural Disasters

Natural disaster such as floods, tsunamis, and hurricanes or typhoons are some of the deadliest natural disasters in the world, and they affect as many as 208 million people every year (Coutts+Barker). Many individuals who are affected by natural disasters may have once found great pleasure in being near water, but like any human, a detrimental event like a natural disaster can quickly change people's perception of water, which can result in people moving away from water, and not look back to it. However, a vast majority of individuals who are affected by natural disasters near the water, or away from water do have the urge to rebuild what they lost. Even in the worst of disasters, people do not turn their back on the water. This is often because people do in fact feel a strong connection with places that they dwell in. Though being near water can have dangerous consequences, we as people have come to accept that fact that water is something that we cannot control, and we learn to work with nature rather than against it, or simply ignore. Therefore, it is reasonable to say those natural disasters associated with water affect people significantly, but it does not mean that we turn away from the water and ignore the great power that in fact has over us.

## Fear of Water

In addition to disasters, there are a large number of people who have a great fear of water, known as Aquaphobia (fearof.net). This Phobia affects as many as 19.2 million Americans, and it is often triggered by a traumatic effect that may have occurred in one's life, which can also be related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, it is fair to note that often Aquaphobia is more related to a rational fear of drowning, rather an irrational fear of water itself. Aquaphobia is usually related to people who cannot swim, and often Aquaphobia can be triggered in someone when they may have experienced a case where they almost drowned. It is understandable for people to fear to drown, but the fear

of water is an “abnormal and persist fear of water,” and it is usually seen as irrational. However, this does not mean that people with Aquaphobia should be disregarded if we are going to have a conversation about people's relationship to water. It needs to be understood how water can also help them get better. Treatment for people with Aquaphobia often involves people being exposed to water to help conquer their fears (Anker). In time, nearness to the water can even benefit people who fear it the most –the water affects them negatively, but it can also help them in ways they don't even realize.

### **Connection with Water**

With many of the adverse effects that water has on people, it can be easy to say that we should not find much advantage's in being on or near water. The only problem is; we can't help it. Humans are naturally attracted to water. It is in our nature to be attracted to the water's edge, and this has been proven from what we know from early history as well as how we interact with water today. Though our closeness to water isn't nearly as dependent upon for survival as it is now, it is in our evolutionary history that we as humans are linked with water. However, as the population of this planet increases, people continue to move further and further away from water, and as a result, we as a society begin to lose our maritime roots. Though this does not necessarily mean that everyone has to move to a lake, ocean or river to live a full life, but it is imperative to understand that being near water can, in fact, be incredibly beneficial to our mind and our body. Therefore, it is important for us as people to not necessarily always be near water, but have a piece of it ourselves; a place to connect with water on the water's edge.





Figure 18.



## 03. VENEZIA

"Venice never quite seems real, but rather an ornate film set suspended on the water."

**-Frida Giannini**

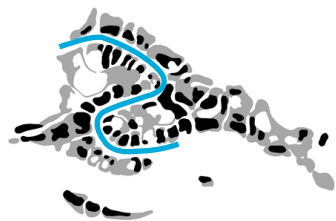
- .1 Case Study
- .2 Sketch
- .3 Stuck in Time



How did this city shape? Why keep a system of canals when they are practically obsolete?



Figure 19.



1000 AD



1500 AD



Present

Formation of the Grand Canal

Figure 20.

## 03.1 Case Study

People have always been making connections to the places they live, dwell, or visit since the time they were born until the end of their lives. But what does it truly mean to connect with a place? Often we make connections to places by visiting them and experiencing them firsthand. This is why we can say that we have the strongest connections with places that we spend a good amount of our time, whether it be a home, your work, or the places you visit for a brief period. We have discussed the connections that humans have with water and the water's edge, and in order to better understand that kind of connection, it can be assumed there can be a similar kind of relationship that water may have to a city; in this case, a city literally built on water, Venice, Italy.

Venice or Venezia, in Italian, is a city that originally started out as a series of small islands in a vast lagoon located at the mouth of the Adriatic Sea. Originally just a series of small fishing communities many refugees found refuge on the small islands from the barbarians that flooded through Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. In the beginning, Venice was seen as a city of refuge from the enemy and the water served as the primary defense mechanism to keep people protected and allow them to form a new kind of society that would change the way we think of city planning. As time went on, Venice would grow into the city that is built on top of the water. Because of an engineering wonder, the people of Venice began to increase the land mass of the islands by pounding wooden piles into the soft lagoon to build new buildings and expand outward. However, instead of making one entire large island into a city, the city continued to stay as a cluster of islands divided by much thinner canals that would create a unique urban fabric. Unique in the sense that the city was shaped by the once natural waterways.

The canals, though now entirely human-made, were once part of a system that was formed and carved from natural currents and waterways. Some of which still do exist today.





Figure 21.



The Grand Canal that weaves through the city of Venice was present even in the earliest stages of Venice's development, and it is this natural current and waterway that gave the unique shape of the Grand Canal that we know today. The way cities form is far from arbitrarily and random. Every move and every building constructed has a specific intention or memory. The canals of Venice were once part of a natural waterway system, though unrecognizable today as anything but natural waterways, the only indication that this city was once part of a completely different environment is the waterways themselves. Even today, Venice is entirely dependent on the canals and the lagoon for transportation. Even though the city could have become just like any other, the canals could have been covered up and replaced with roads;



Map of Venice in the 17th century.

Figure 22.

the city did not take that route. Venice is a city seemingly trapped in time because of the canals. They allow people to experience a piece of nostalgia or reminder of the past. The use of the gondola boats, originally utilized by the people who lived in the city has changed, the way people live there has not changed all that much. The city is in a state where nearness to water, or in this case on the water, is a constant way of life. The people connect with it on a daily basis, but not in the same ways mentioned earlier.

Though Venice is an example of a city that is built on water, one does not necessarily connect with water in the same ways that result in the positive cognitive affects mentioned earlier. Venice is, in fact, the opposite of that, though it is as near to the water as a city can get, there are not many places where one can simply benefit from being near it. Today, Venice is a city that lives off of tourism, and because of that people are not necessarily going to Venice to connect with the water's edge, but instead they are almost pretending to. Venice is surrounded by hundreds of noises, distractions, smells, and overwhelming large amounts of information. Information that clogs the brain and prevents it from purely allowing the city to connect with you and vice versa.



Figure 23.

Map of Venice in the Middle Ages



I would like to share an experience I had in the city of Venice Myself.

"I had gone to Venice with my two friends Lexy and Jose; we were to stay in the city for one night, and had no set agenda on what to see or do once we got there. What we were overwhelmed by most was the amount of tourist. There were people everywhere, but most were not locals who lived there. In addition to that, almost all of the shops were purely gift shops and boutiques, none of which seemed authentic or essential to everyday life. Though there were canals everywhere, there was no connection that we had with the water, at least not during the day. Almost immediately after the sun had set, the city completely changed. All the businesses had closed, and there were no people on the streets or the hundreds of gondola boats, strictly meant to be used for tourists. We had decided to explore the city in this kind of state, as an attempt to see the city in a different kind of way. It was a worthy decision. We have had a chance to see the city in a state of complete silence and closure from the constant distractions and the hustle and bustle that fills the city during the day. Once we had the opportunity only to sit on a deck that was right along the water's edge, we had a moment to connect with the water. Though we dare not touch the water, knowing the smell of it and unnatural color would result in an unpleasant feeling, we for once felt that we were in a moment of complete privacy, between ourselves and the water's edge. We could finally take notice of the calmness of the water when there were no boats and the fascination that we were in fact in a city that was once almost all water. Something which could not have been achieved had we had a significant amount of noise and distractions coming from the crowds of tourists, and selfie sticks sales people. What we had finally been able to experience was a moment of calm and a kind of connection with this place that we would not have experienced with all these constant distractions."

- **Ian Templeton**

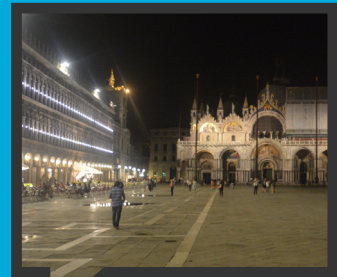


Figure 24.



## 03.2 Sketch Problems

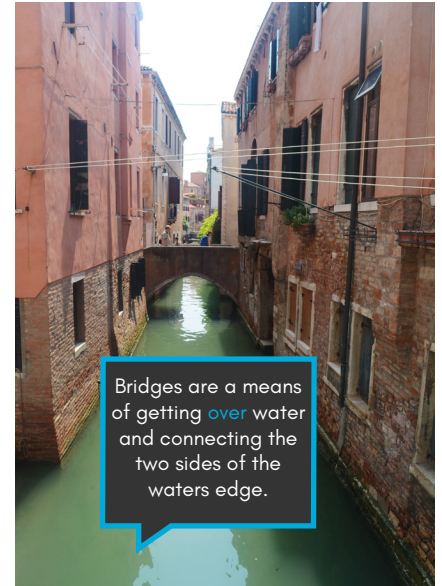


Figure 25.

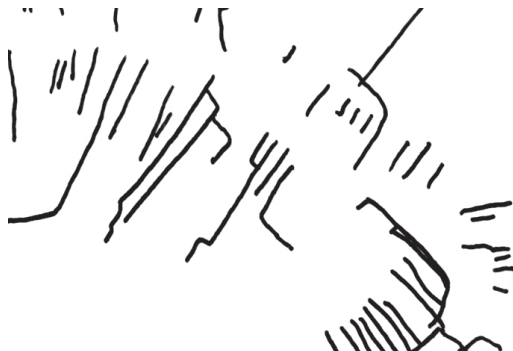
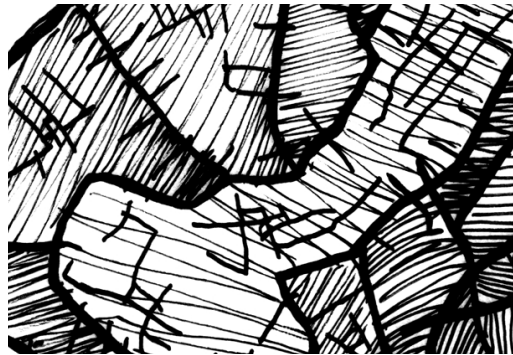


Figure 26.



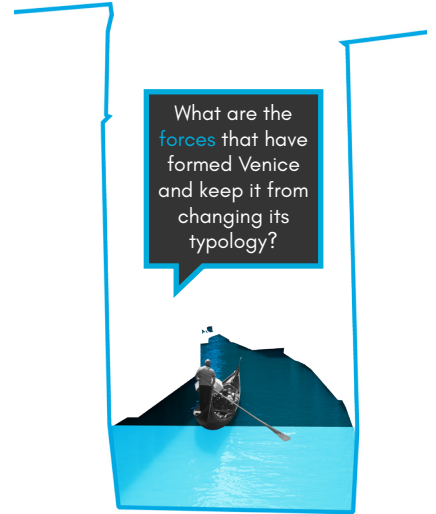


Figure 27.

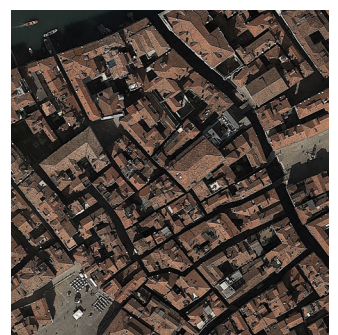
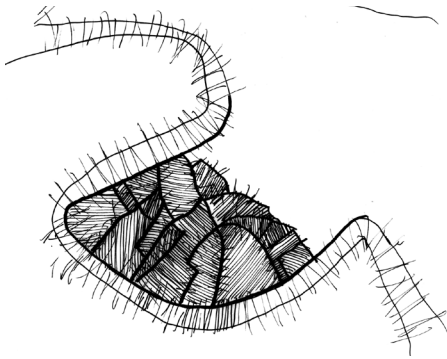


Figure 28.



## 03.3 Stuck in Time

The city of Venice is rich in history and is seen as an engineering marvel. The forces that shaped the city were a result of its existing environment, as well as the will of the people who lived there. This can be attested to in the way the city looks today, and the way people have adapted to this environment; a shallow lagoon. However, the connection that people have with Venice is very complicated. Venice comes off as a place that is authentic in its physical form, the face of the city has changed very little since the middle ages, but the way people connect with the city is very different. Venice lives almost entirely on tourism, and there is very little sense of realness and connection with the forces that formed the city into how we see it today, aside from the look of it. People get very little to no contact with the water that surrounds the city; you don't care to touch it, and you barely even notice it is there. What we can learn from Venice is that closeness to water does not always have the same kind of connection with humans, particularly in this city. The city of Venice was formed by the forces of its existing natural surroundings, and it has meant many different things to people through the years. Today, it is even hard to call Venice a city; it seems more like a place that is living almost purely on nostalgia. And the fact of the matter is, the way people connect with Venice is not the same as it was in the past, and pretending it is, that makes it tough for people to make real connections with it. To make connections with places, primitive and emotional responses often occur separately from rational and cognitive responses. The way we feel in spaces can significantly affect our connections to them. In Venice's case, the strongest connection we have to this place can occur when we are simply alone with the city, and there are no outside distractions or interruptions; the connection is between you and the place, nothing else.



Figure 29.

## 04. GREAT LAKES

"And all things are ordered together somehow, but not all alike, both fishes and fowls and plants; and the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are all connected."

**-Aristotle, *Metaphysica***

"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order."

**- John Burroughs**

**.1** Great Lakes Nature

**.2** Glen Haven

**.3** Edge to Edge

**.4** Being Alone

**.5** Landscape Analysis

**.6** Landscape Sites

**.7** Focus

## GREAT LAKES BASIN LARGER AREA OF FOCUS

- Home to 40 million people.
- 78 people per sq/mi
- 14.6 people per sq/mi in North America

This area has direct surface runoff and watersheds form this large drainage basin that feeds into the lakes

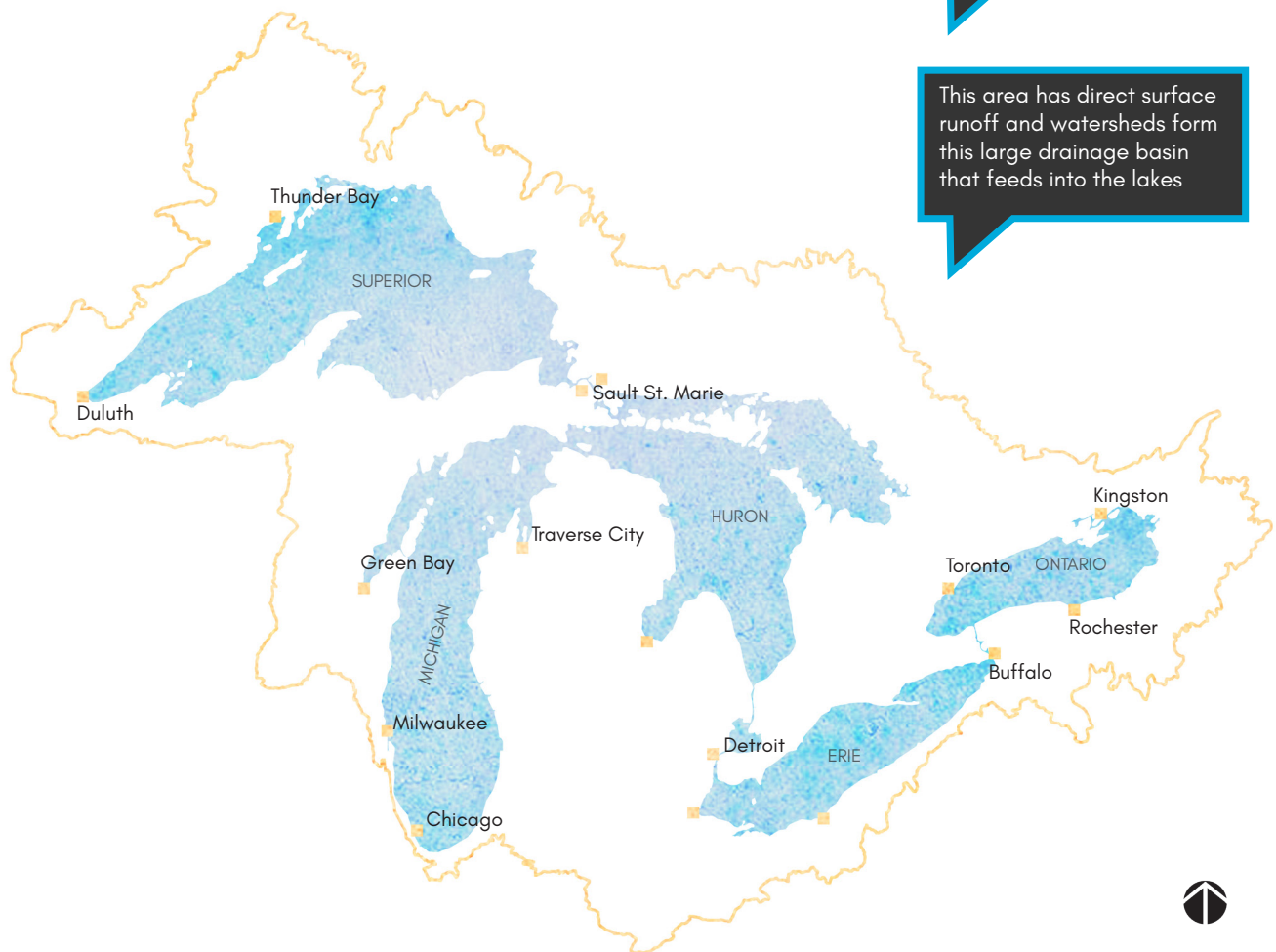


Figure 30.

## 04.1 Great Lakes Nature

As mentioned earlier, I have a great connection with where I grew up as a child. I grew up in West Bloomfield, MI and had always had lake access. I learned how to swim in Michigan's inland lakes and the Great Lakes on summer vacations. My connection to Michigan is based almost entirely on the lake access that the Great Lakes that the state has to offer. Though Michigan's lakes are only usable for recreational water activities about half of the year, there is still an instinctual kind of attachment that many people find in the Great Lakes even when one cannot necessarily dive right into it. Nearness to the water's edge is in high demand in real estate, and hundreds of tourists come from all around the world to get a glimpse of these inland seas. But what is it about these lakes that draw people to them, and how do people make connections with these places once they are within sight of it, or right on its sandy shores? How can these places begin to change the way we think about interacting with the water's edge?



Figure 31.



## THE SPACE BETWEEN LAND AND WATERS EDGE [THE LAKE SHORE]



Chicago



Milwaukee



Traverse City



**ATLANTIC OCEAN** LARGEST CONTEXT



Figure 32.



Detroit



Toronto

Figure 33.



## Inland Seas

The Great Lakes are the largest cluster of freshwater on earth. Often referred to “Inland Sea’s” due to their incredibly large size, and similar characteristics to that of an ocean or sea, the Great Lakes have had a massive influence on the people that live close to its shoreline and the ones who benefit from its natural resources. The planet earth is over 70% water, and only 2.5% of it is fresh. Of that 2.5%, 21% of it comes from the Great Lakes itself, and around 84% of North America’s freshwater comes from the Great Lakes. What these facts tell us is that the Great Lakes are something that we as humans greatly rely on for everyday survival; fresh drinking water. In addition to the abundant amount of fresh water the Great Lakes provide, they are home to hundreds of different species of animals, plants, and natural resources that have shaped the regions with which they surround themselves with. Though the Great Lakes have such a powerful influence, they are also very young given the age of our planet. It is believed that the age of the Great Lakes is anywhere between 7,000 to 32,000 years old, and it is found that all five of the Great Lakes reached their current level only 3,000 years ago (Grady). Despite the Great Lakes young age and small size compared to the oceans, they are incredibly fierce bodies of water. Water temperatures can be extremely cold in the winter, storms on the lake have caused many shipwrecks to be littered throughout the lakes deep depths, and often the weather is very unpredictable, and can become quite detrimental in a matter of minutes. Despite all this, a unique way of life has evolved, many people have made a living along the lakes extensive shorelines, with many forms of commerce over the years. The native people of the Great Lakes region took significant advantage of the lakes as a means of trade and basic survival, and as the setting for many mystical legends.



## The Legend of the Sleeping Bear

"Long ago a great famine had spread over the land. Longingly, a mother bear and two famished cubs walked the shore on the Wisconsin side, gazing wistfully across the great lake at Michigan, which in those days was the land of plenty (as it is today). Finally hunger overcame their timidness and the bears launched out, trying to swim to Michigan. As they got closer and closer to the Michigan shore, the mother's words of encouragement urged on the weary cubs. When only twelve miles from the land of plenty, the mother's heart was rent as she saw a babe sink and drown. With the remaining cub she struggled to gain the beach. Two miles of slow dragging and the second of her beloved cubs also perished.

The mother reached the beach, alone, and crept to a resting place where she lay down facing the restless waters that covered her lost ones. As she gazed, two beautiful islands slowly rose to mark the graves of the cubs. The Great Spirit Manitou created two islands (North and South Manitou Islands) to mark the spot where the cubs disappeared and then created a solitary dune to represent the faithful mother bear."

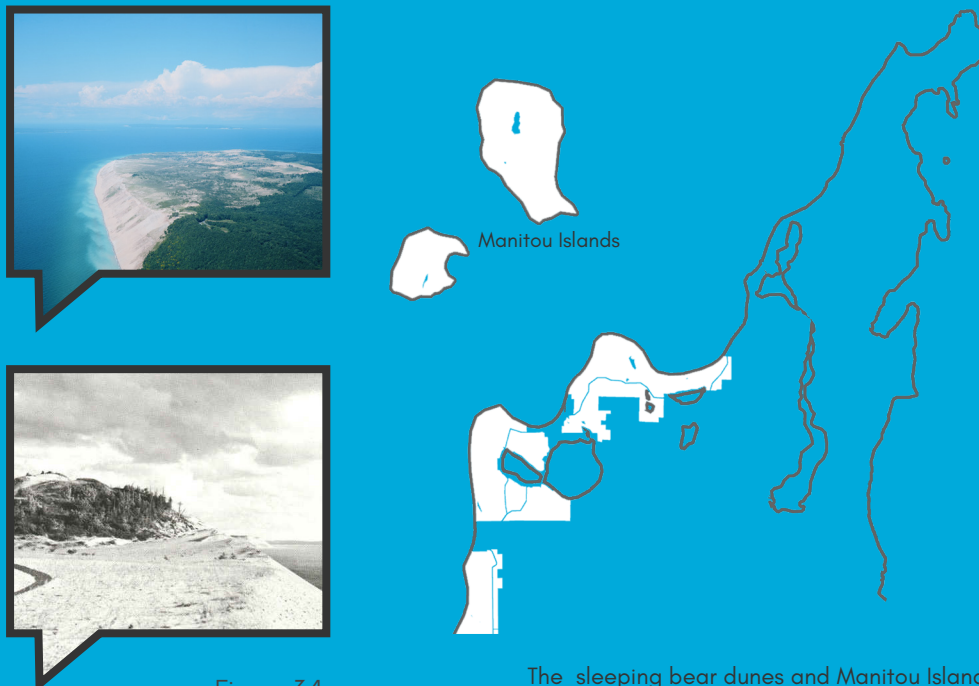


Figure 34.

The sleeping bear dunes and Manitou Islands.



Grand Haven Lighthouse

Figure 35.

### Life along the Lake

Early European settlers recognized the accessible transportation routes the lakes had to offer into the heartland of North America. The extensive forests and fertile land in the region along the Great Lakes was soon comprehended, and lumbering and agriculture became significant. The combination of the Great Lakes vast resources with a plentiful water supply allowed for the development of large industries and great metropolitan areas. The main cities along the Great Lakes include a long strand that extends from Milwaukee, Wisconsin through Chicago around southern Lake Michigan, southward from Detroit, and then continues along the southern shore of Lake Erie; and the Toronto-Hamilton area on the northern shore of Lake Ontario (Beeton). Each one of these places gets a great deal of its identity and flourishing thanks to its location along the Great Lakes. Within every place, there is different kind of connection and attachment that the people who live there have to the water's edge. In the early years of these sites, the growth and development of these cities all began on the water's edge; water access was essential. However, due to development in technology, specifically with

the development of the railroad and the automobile, closeness to water became less necessary, and people began to move further and further from the water's edge. Now, a majority of individuals who live in the Great Lakes major cities don't live close to the lakes, but many still yearn for lake access. But what does it truly mean to have access to water, and what exactly are the forces that drive people towards the shoreline for people to connect with the water's edge? What does that relationship look like and what are the spatial qualities of it? Perhaps the best way to understand this relationship is to look back to where we came from, nature itself.



Leland, MI Fishtown

Figure 36.

### Connection to Nature

In recent years "Ecopsychologists are beginning to catch up with what indigenous rites of passage specialists have known for thousands of years: Immersion in the natural world brings life enhancing peace, joy, zest, the ability to meet life's challenges with a positive attitude, and to see the interconnectedness of all things" (8sheilds.com). Though we as humans can learn so much about nature in different ways, the best way to connect with nature is to "meet the world on its own terms, through a direct sensory experience"

(8sheilds.com). When we experience places first hand when we get down and dirty by going out and exploring nature, deep connections and a sense of curiosity begins to develop. When this process is experienced reputably, deep connections start to form with places. All the while, a system of paths in the brain is developing, and your perception expands to comprehend the rich variety of textures, scents, sounds, and images of nature. These connections are what make everlasting memories of places, and this is why we remember places best when we have this type of deep sensory engagement. This way of connection is often referred to as primary learning (8sheilds.com). Primary learning is a similar way that children learn through experience, and even as adults we can learn so much from our surroundings by experiencing them first hand; connection and learning take place on a direct, instinctual level. This connection that humans have with nature can be associated with how people connect to many places in general. In this case, how people connect with the water's edge in a more natural setting, devoid of outside distractions and information that may prevent the mind from connecting.



The waters edge.

Figure 37.





Figure 38.



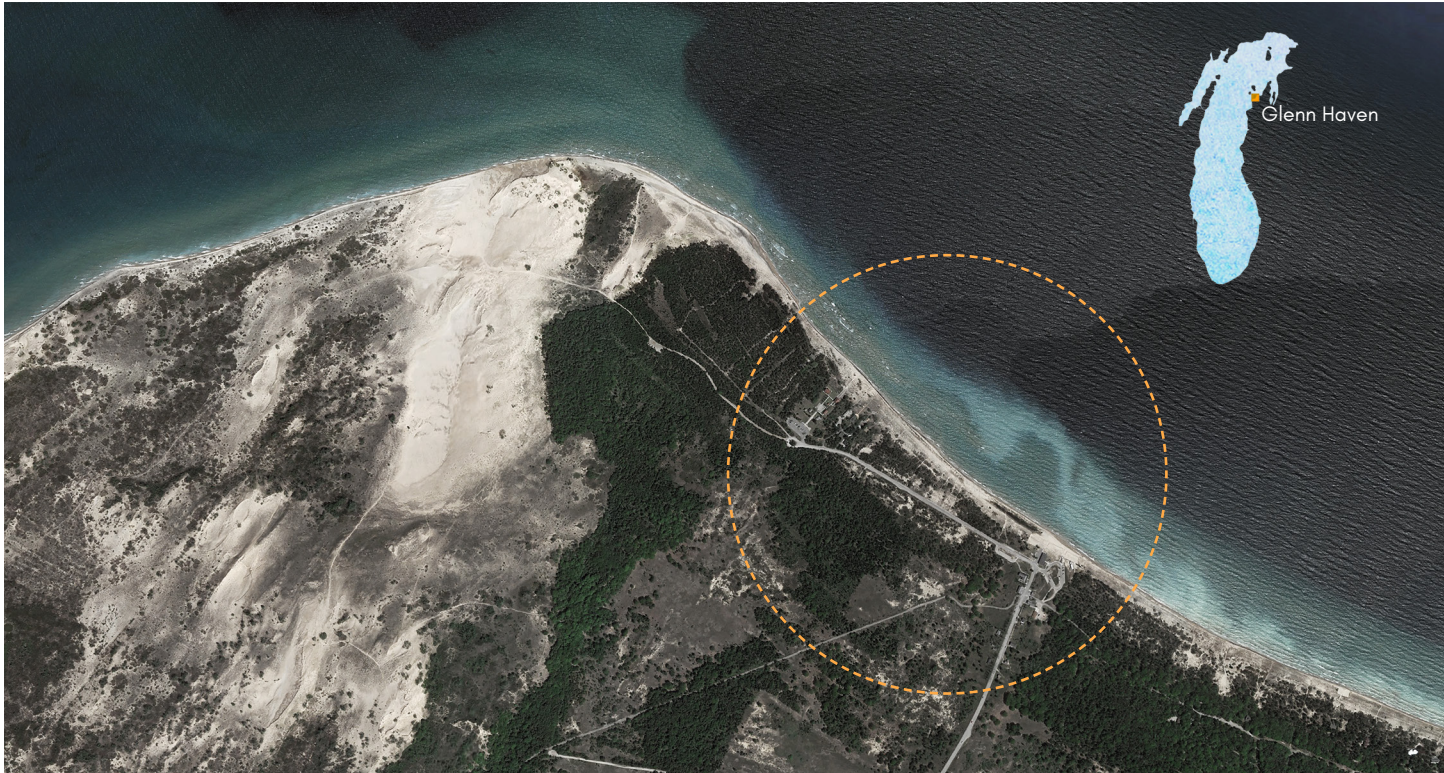
## 04.2 Sketch Exercise

### Glen Haven

Glen Haven Michigan, originally a lumber town located right along the shores of the sleeping bear dunes in Lake Michigan, was originally a place that was identified for its significance to industrial development along the Great Lakes. A small coast guard post was located just outside the village where many brave men and women would risk their lives to try and save any ships from disaster in the dangerously shallow Sleeping Bear bay. There was also a very long iconic dock built in 1865 that would become a symbol of Glen Haven's importance in the Great Lakes shipping and water transportation history. However, due to the eventual lack of need for shipping in the region and a decline in the lumber industry, Glen Haven lost much of its significance towards the middle of the 20th century. The coast guard station closed in 1941, and by 2007 the once booming lakeside town lost its last official resident. Today, the village is a tourist destination that is open to the public for people to learn of the village's maritime history and significance to the sleeping bear lakeshore and region. The dock that once harbored many ships is now long



Glen Haven coast guard station.



Location.

Figure 39.

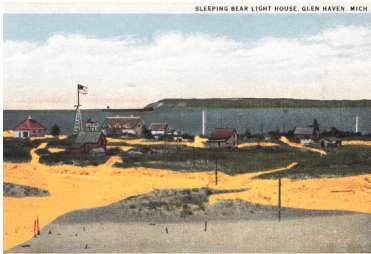
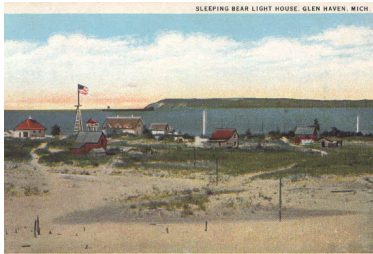


Figure 40.



Glen Haven boardwalk.



Figure 41.



gone and all that remains are a few pylons that just barely stick out above the water's surface. Much like Venice, Glen Haven has become a place where people come to feel a bit of nostalgia about the past experiences that people may have had when living and working in this area. Venice and Glen Haven couldn't be more different from one another. Aside from being in two separate countries 1000's of miles apart, Venice is very dense and urban, and Glen Haven is a ghost town and very rural. However, the biggest difference between these two places isn't necessarily the way they look, it is the way people connect with the water's edge.

Venice is a city built on water, and Glen Haven was formed along the water, and this has a lot to do with how people experience being close to the water's edge. Venice has created a kind of artificial water's edge in a once natural setting. Whereas Glen Haven has retained most of its natural edge in a still very natural setting, the Sleeping Bear Dunes. The shoreline is always changing and reverting at the mercy of the forces of nature. Glen Haven has become a place where people go to enjoy Lake Michigan's sandy beaches and crystal clear waters, primarily in the summer. Outside of the summer months', people cannot necessarily connect with the water by swimming in it, but deep sensory engagement can still be found by focusing on the elements that are always present along Lake Michigan's shoreline.



Figure 42.



## Inspiration: Christo + Jeanne Claude

The work of Christo and Jeanne Claude speaks a direct language with nature. Their installation art is very site specific and allows the user who interacts with it to notice the natural forces that are always present within a place but are not always visible. Calling attention to the wind, the waves, and the color of the installation enhances the deep sensory engagement one has in nature. The Claude's themselves have stated that their art is not meant to contain a deeper meaning that requires explanation; the art works purely on aesthetics'. The purpose of the art installations is to simply create works of art that provide joy and beauty and generate new and different ways of seeing familiar landscapes. This approach, which takes on natural places, is very similar to how humans find a connection to the water's edge. The senses that are evoked when on the water, both physically and aesthetically allow for people to have a one-on-one connection between themselves and with a place.



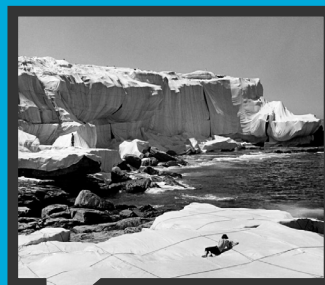
"Over the River"



"Floating Piers"



"Surrounded Islands"



"Wrapped Coast"

Figure 43.

## 04.3 **Instillation [Edge to Edge]**

The sandy beaches of Glenn Haven are a place of great importance to people. Many vacation in the area and take great pleasure in spending some time on the beaches to get away from the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives. However, connecting with water in this place does not always have to be in the summer months. Though the Great Lakes freeze over in the winter months and the weather in Northern Michigan can be quite blistering cold, connections with spaces along water's edge can still be experienced at different times of the year. This fabric installation is an attempt to understand better what attracts people to the water's edge in this site-specific study. People are typically drawn to the water because of the senses. The sound of the waves guides you towards the crashing shoreline, the touch of the sand when it comes into contact with the foot suggests that the water's edge is close by, and the sight of the water's surface seems to go on forever off into the horizon. The colored fabric calls out all of these senses that draw us to the shoreline, and in this case, they are exaggerated with the orange permeable material. The material allows for water and sand to pass, though, and it does not block the sound of the wind from the lake. Instead it very flowingly moves with it. When one is taking the journey to the edge of the water, they are captivated by what is to come. Once the water does come into sight, the mind is at rest, the sound of the waves, the wind that runs through the air is expressed with the installation that drew the individual to the shore with complete support from the natural senses that one experiences when approaching the shoreline. The relationship between the individual and the shoreline is very intimate. Because the Great Lakes are so vast and seemingly boundless, one also does feel a bit of loneliness, but they are not alone when they can't see the other side of the lake, they have made a connection with the shoreline that is between the individual and nothing else.

## BELLE ISLE BEACH, DETROIT

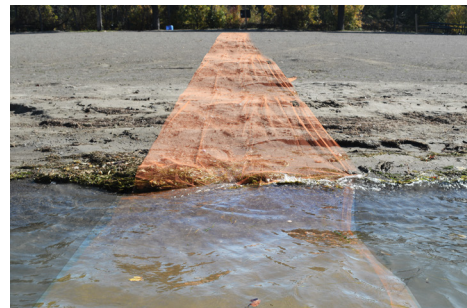
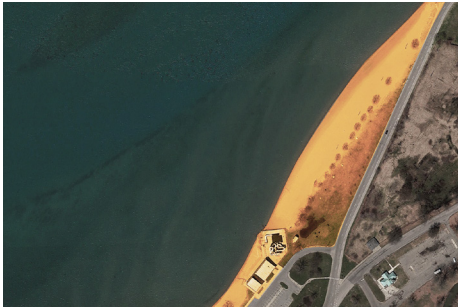


Figure 44.

Belle Isle Beach, Detroit implication.



**LAKEPORT STATE PARK, FORT GRATIOT TWP, MI.**

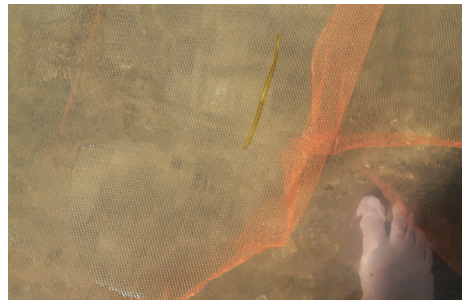


Figure 45.

Lakeport State Park, Fort Gratiot, MI implication





The instillation placed on the beached of Glen Haven on Lake Michigan.

Figure 46.





Figure 47.



Site Plan



Instillation Section



## Application

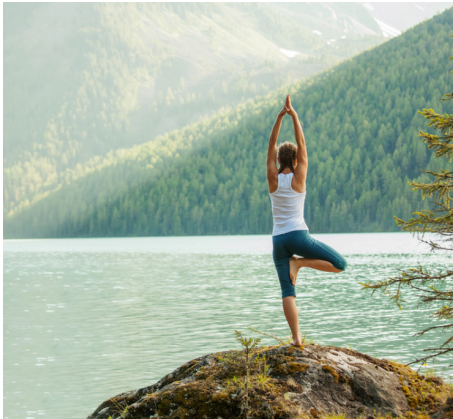
This installation is intended to be usable in during the fall seasons, a particularly harsh season for the Great Lakes. Lake storms in the fall can be very strong, and waves are unusually high. However, the installation can begin to explain how we relate to places in different environments. Water is not always necessarily safe, but it is still incredibly effective to humans when they experience these places first-hand. What we can learn from this installation is – though the connection that people can make with the water's edge is very intimate, it can come off as very lonely and quite intimidating at times. But, as mentioned before, one is not necessarily lonely when they are on a shoreline, they are simply alone, and there is a distinct difference between the two.



Figure 48.

## 04.4 Being Alone

Large bodies of water such as the Great Lakes, oceans or seas have a horizon line that seemingly goes on forever. The reason we can't see the other side is that the earth is so round and the water goes on for so long. Therefore, we can only see so far. As a child, I used to assume that the Great Lakes were an ocean because I couldn't see the other side, like the inland lakes I grew up on in West Bloomfield. Whether it be a large lake or ocean, another thing that these large bodies of water also provide for us is almost complete privacy. One of the main reasons many people find value in living along the water is because of the privacy that it offers. You look out to the water, but nothing looks back at you. Though this may come off as very lonely and depressing, especially if one does find that they are all by themselves on the edge of a large body of water like the Great Lakes, there are benefits to this complete feeling of solitude. Having privacy allows you to reconnect with yourself. "Alone time" is different from loneliness. Loneliness can often lead to health risks associated with depression and heart failure (Welngus). When we go to be by ourselves we often don't do it to be deliberately alone; we do it as a way to reflect upon ourselves and to be creative. It has even been proven that people who work in groups often get less work done, and are not nearly as creative when they work by themselves (Sawyer). Therefore, there is much creativity to be found by being along the shoreline of the Great Lakes if we take a moment to find some "alone time" at the water's edge. "The great omission of American life is solitude; not loneliness, for this, is an alienation that thrives most on the midst of crowds, but that zone of time and space free from outside pressure which is the incubator of the spirit" -Marya Mannes. This can explain why one cannot connect with water in the Venice the same way one can begin to connect with the water's edge in Glenn Haven. Glenn Haven is a place that often does not surround itself with crowds and large amounts of outside information.



"Solitude" in nature

Figure 49.



## 04.5 Landscape Analysis

Places often contain different forms of information that can tell us greater detail about the qualities of a place and space. The shoreline of the Great Lakes, specifically Lake Michigan contains many different kinds of materials and elements that make up the identity of the places along the water's edge. This materials analysis will look at two specific sites along Lake Michigan's shoreline. Ludington State Park and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Platte River Campground. Two places that I had, in fact, visited in October. Visiting these sites in October is very critical to this study because it is towards the end of the tourist season. There were much fewer people present in these places than there typically are in the high tourist season. However, this made exploring these places even more worthwhile, because it gave me a chance to explore these places privately with an opportunity to be more in touch with my surrounding and my thoughts. This time of solitude from others can indeed help one be immersed in these natural settings along the captivating lakeshore. It allows for one to take in all these ones senses that the site has to offer and it creates a personal attachment to a place that could not be achieved when exploring with many other people around.



## Inspiration: Andy Goldsworthy

The work of British artist, Andy Goldsworthy, comes straight from nature. Using materials that are from the earth itself, Goldsworthy creates art installations in natural sites that are meant to work with the forces of nature, rather than work against them. All of his work is only intended to be temporary, and eventually, with time the work is either swept away or ‘deterritorialized’ by the forces of nature around it. Often time he uses very colorful items found in nature, such as leaves, sticks, or petals;” I think it’s incredibly brave to be working with flowers and leaves and petals. But I have to: I can’t edit the materials I work with. My remit is to work with nature as a whole” (Goldsworthy). Goldsworthy’s approach to creating art in nature is similar to how we interact with different landscapes in a more natural setting. It is often unpredictable what will occur when we are in nature, but we are usually captivated by the forces and senses that surround us. The different materials found in natural landscapes can tell us a lot about a place, as well as the things that may have been an act of man.

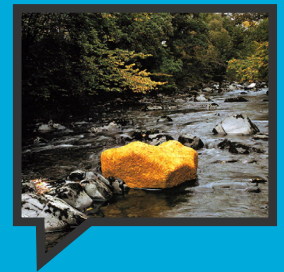
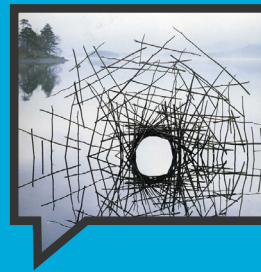


Figure 50.

## 04.6 Landscape Sites

### LUDINGTON STATE PARK | SAND DUNES | LUDINGTON, MI



Figure 51.





## SLEEPING BEAR NATIONAL LAKE SHORE | PLATTE RIVER TRIBUTARY | FRANKFORT, MI

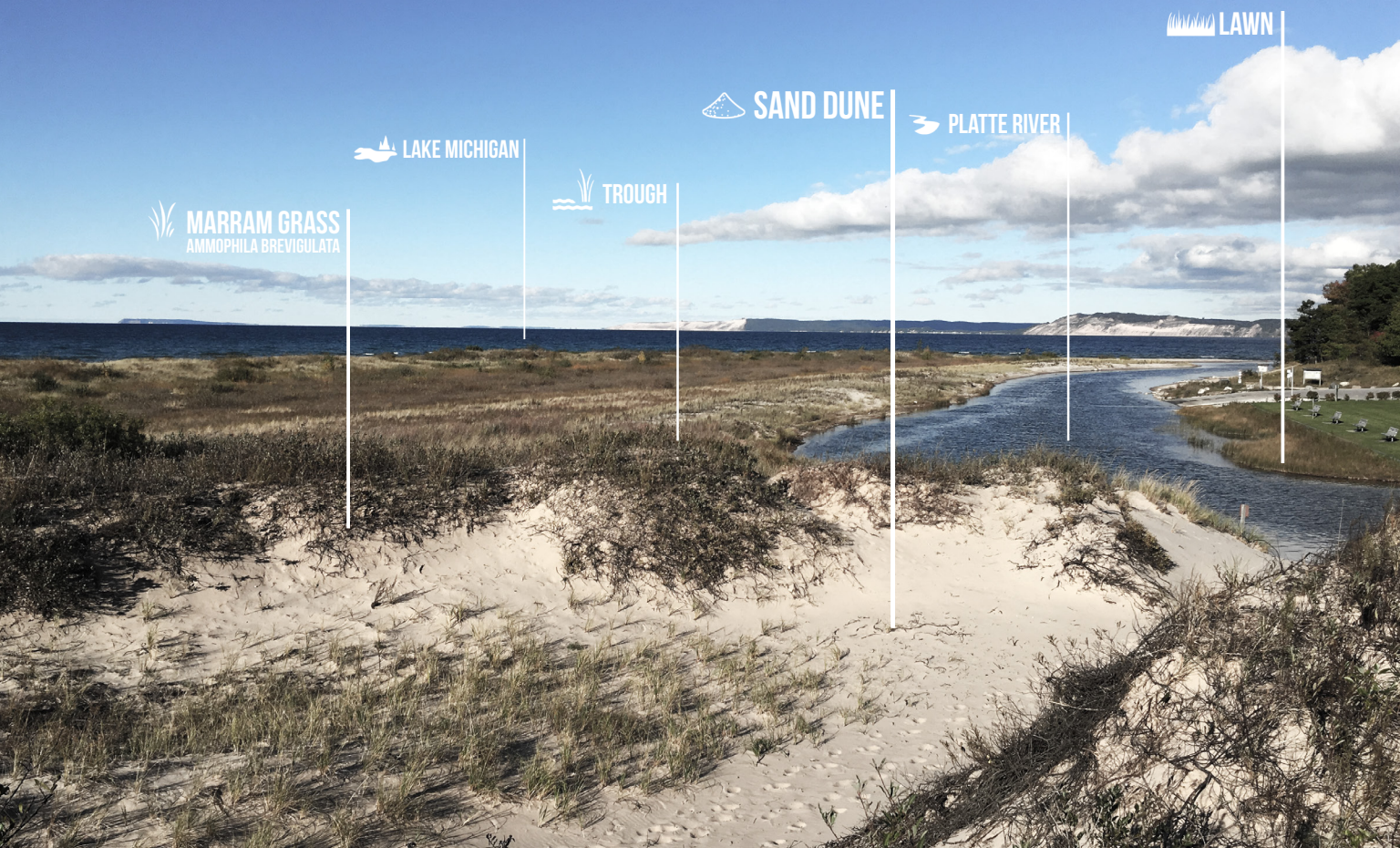


Figure 52.







# MARRAM GRASS

## AMMOPHILA BREVIGULATA



Grass stem structure.



Grass along Ludington State Park, MI.



Grass root structure



Regions where Marram Grass is present.

Marram grass derives from the Greek term, ἄμμος (ámmos), meaning “sand”, and φίλος (phílos), meaning “lover”. Also known as “Beach Grass,” Marram grass is given this name because of its structural qualities. The grass is primarily found in coastal regions along the east and west coast of North America, as well as the Great Lakes region. Because of the grasses dense roots system, the grass plays a vital role in the stability of the sand dunes of the Great Lakes. The roots grow very tightly together and help keep the dunes from eroding from the wind, snow and foot traffic brought on by human interaction like tourism. The Grass is notorious for being a xerophyte, plants that can withstand dry conditions, despite their high presence on the coast (wildlife Trust).

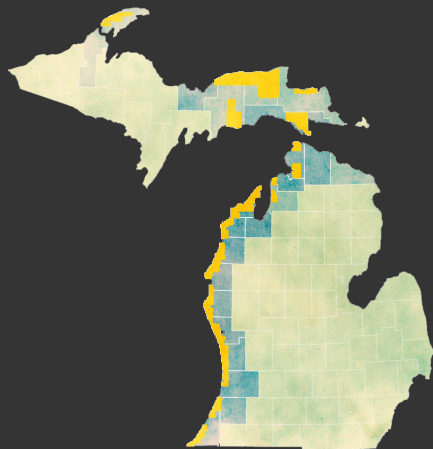
Marram grass adapts well to its surroundings to thrive in a harsh environment. The natural loss of water through transpiration is not desirable in a very dry landscape, and marram grass has developed particular adaptations to help it deal with this. Sandy conditions drain water quickly, and very windy conditions will further increase rates of transpiration.

Marram grass has a rolled leaf that helps collect water vapor and prevent water loss for the grass. The stomata sit in small pits within the curls of the grass stems, which make them less likely to lose water. The folded leaves have hairs on the inside to slow or stop air movement, like many other xerophytes. This slowing of air movement once again reduces the amount of water vapor being lost. A waxy cuticle on the leaf surface also prevents evaporation.

Figure 53.



## SAND DUNE



Dunes along the great lakes shore.



Sand dune composition

The Great Lakes dune complex is relatively young. Only 16,000 years ago, Michigan was covered with glacial ice thousands of feet thick. This glacial ice contained a combination of boulders, cobbles, sand, and clay. Due to the glacial drift the deposits were left behind; this is the source of sand that is along the shoreline. The sands were either eroded from glacial drift along the coast by wave activity or eroded from inland deposits and carried by rivers and streams. Only the hardest, smallest, and least soluble sand grains were moved. Waves and currents eventually moved these tiny rocks inland, creating beaches along the Great Lakes shoreline.

Winds, blowing shoreward, begin to move the sand upward, creating the sand dunes that are seen today. This activity continues even to this day and each year the dunes are constantly shifting and changing according to the winds and lapped waves and current. The size of grains which are moving is directly related to wind velocity larger grains require higher wind speeds. The bouncing of sand grains moving along the shore is a process known as saltation. This process leads to the creation of a slight mound that eventually builds up over time and creates sand massive sand dunes. A dunes continuing growth is dependent upon perennial vegetation, the wind, and sand. Because dune plants (dune grass) the sand movement is held together and keeps the dunes structure stable.



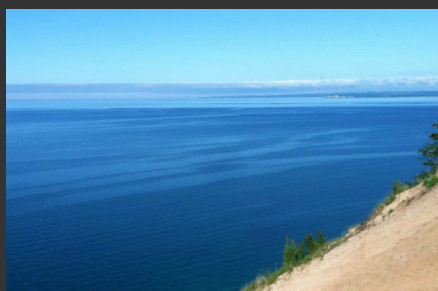
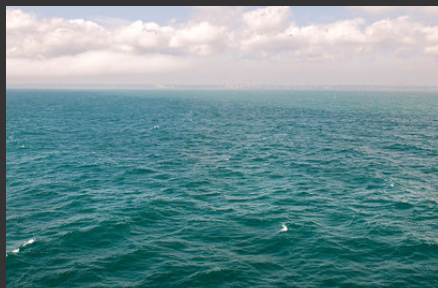
Sand lines from waves



Dunes with dune grass



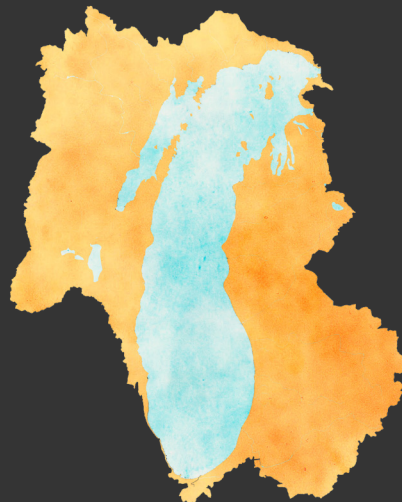
## LAKE MICHIGAN



Sleeping Bear National Lake Shore



Lake Michigan froze in the winter



Lake Michigan Drainage Basin

Lake Michigan, the second largest Great Lake by volume with just under 1,180 cubic miles of water, is the only Great Lake entirely within the United States and known as one of the lakes with the clearest waters. Approximately 118 miles wide and 307 miles long, Lake Michigan has more than 1,600 miles of shoreline, most of which is in the state of Michigan. Averaging 279 feet in depth, the lake reaches 925 feet at its deepest point. The lake's northern tier is in the colder, less developed upper Great Lakes region, while its more temperate southern basin contains the Milwaukee and Chicago metropolitan areas. The drainage basin, approximately twice as large as the 22,300 square miles of surface water, includes portions of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. Lake Michigan is hydrologically inseparable from Lake Huron, joined by the wide Straits of Mackinac, the location of the Mackinaw Bridge.

Figure 55.





## AVERAGE LAKE WATER TEMPERATURE

Most of the year the lake water temperatures are quite low. The highest temperatures for the lakes reaches its peak in and around August and then quickly drops into the fall in winter. This condition makes the lake relatively unusable for recreational activities most in the year.

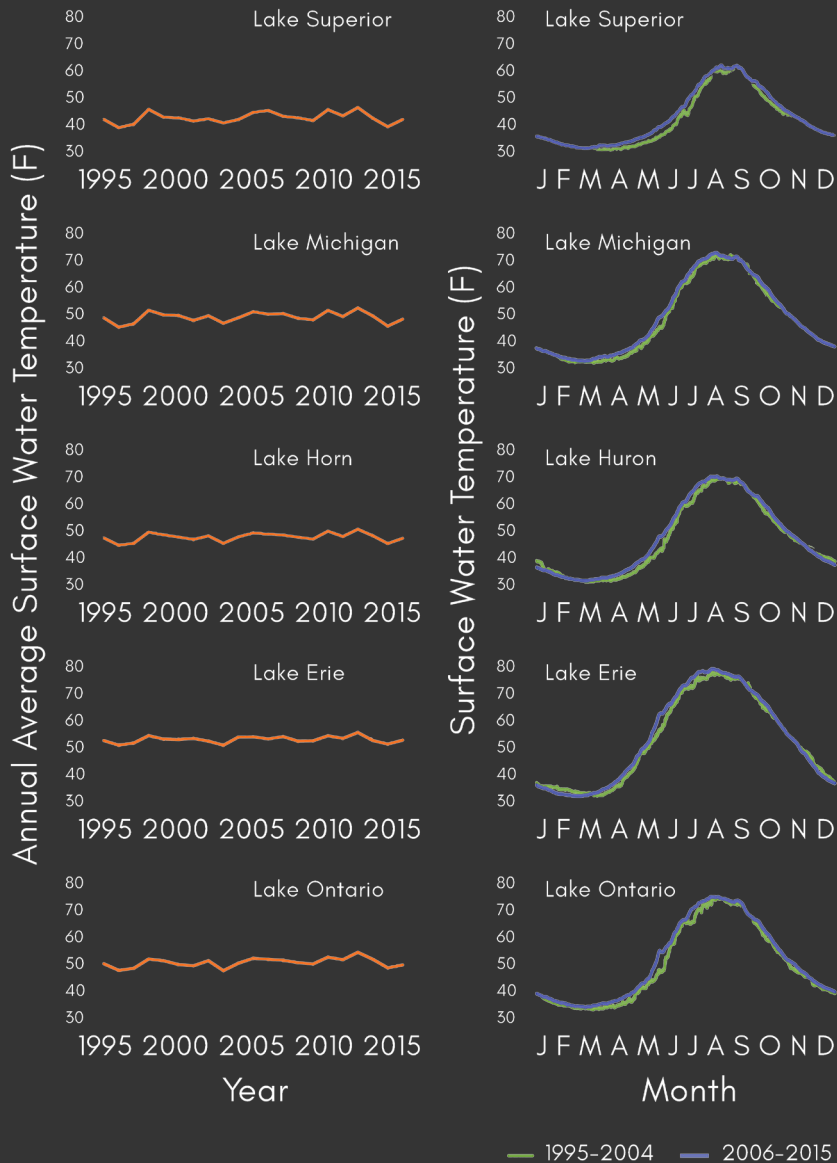


Figure 56.

## TROUGH



Grass stem structure.



Grass stem structure.



Grass root structure

A trough is an elongated depression with a topographically deep throat opening into a central trough bordered by steep walls on either side of a less steep ramp that rises to a depositional lobe at the far end. Because of strong winds from the lake and waves from crashing on the shoreline, the trough depression is filled with water and creates a new habitat that gives life for many plants that can only live in harsh environments. Blowing sands, temperature extremes, constant exposure and lack of cover all make a tough environment that only robust plants and animals can live in. The trough allows for different plants and animals to thrive in their ecosystem, but also gives some form of protection from the harshness of Lake Michigan. Because the trough is located deep between two relatively high sand dunes, some protection is created.



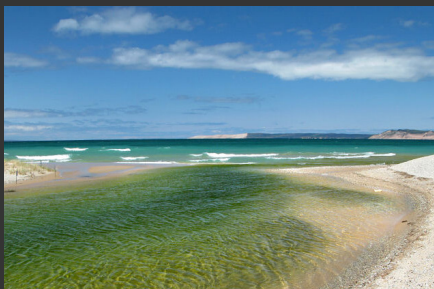
Many small troughs are very evident throughout Ludington State Park

Figure 57.

## PLATTE RIVER



Kayaking and canoing on the river



The mouth of the river at Lake Michigan

The Platte River is 29.5 mile stretch of water that starts at Lake Michigan along the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore and finishes in the Interlochen area at Lake Dubonett. The river is relatively shallow in its upper regions and has a steady current that makes it ideal for recreational uses.

The Platte River has little historical significance to the region. In the time of early settlers, the river was seen as too small to capture the imaginations of serious explorers and these days, anglers routinely bypass it en route to the Pere Marquette or the AuSable. Even the river's significance to Native Americans and its important role in the modern salmon fishery in the Great Lakes arguably have not earned the Platte an enduring reputation in the state of Michigan. It is essentially a local river. However, the Platte being a local river has allowed the people in the area and tourists to appreciate its natural beauty and connection to Lake Michigan. The river is notorious for kayaking, paddle boarding, tubing, fishing and any other form of water recreational activities.

The land coverage of the Platte River:

- 82% Forest
- 12% Agriculture
- 7% Urban

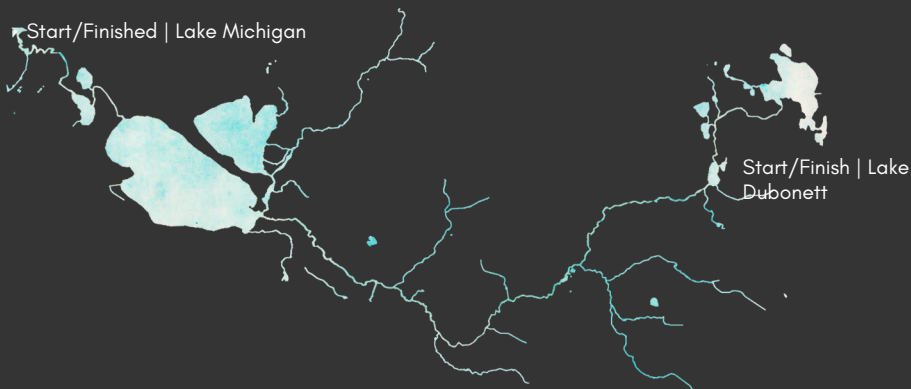


Figure 58.





## BIG STABLE POINT LIGHTHOUSE



Alexander A.L. "Alonzo"  
Hyde  
First lighthouse keeper  
1867-71



Big Stable Point Lighthouse, with black and white stripes and 112 feet tall, this lighthouse has illuminated the shores of the Ludington State Park region since 1867. The area was originally known by French settlers at Grande Point Au Stable, giving the lighthouse its name. When first constructed the light could be seen 19 miles out from Lake Michigan. In 1949 the lighthouse was the last lighthouse in Michigan to be electrified, therefore eliminating the need for a lighthouse keeper. Construction of the lighthouse called for construction materials to be brought in by boat from the lake; there was no road to the lighthouse from the mainland until 1933, and even to this day visitors can only reach the lighthouse by foot due to the conservation efforts of the State Park sand dunes. The lighthouse was originally constructed of yellow brick, but with year of constant erosion and weathering from the lake, the lighthouse was encased in metal to prevent further deterioration. Because of the sites sandy unstable land, a seawall was constructed in 1943 to prevent further erosion.

Today, the lighthouse is protected by the Sable Points Light Keepers Association, allowing people to visit the lighthouse and appreciate the area's maritime history. Ships still depend on the lighthouse even today for navigation and the lighthouse itself has become an icon that identifies the state park. Lighthouses are very present along Lake Michigan and the other great lakes and even though they no longer serve as much of purposes as they used to, they still provide us a reminder of the past and allows us to reflect upon it along the shores of Lake Michigan

Figure 59.

## 04.7 Focus

Of all the things that stand out most on Lake Michigan's shoreline, lighthouses are a very common staple to the identity of the lake's shoreline. Michigan is home to the most lighthouses of any state in the United States. They are very iconic to the lake's identity and they are always associated with large bodies of water. In addition to being an icon, they also represent some of the loneliest places in the world. This is fitting with the idea that large bodies of water where one cannot see the other side of the lake gets a sense of isolation, loneliness and solitude. This feeling of isolation does not necessarily mean that a person always feels incredibly lonely when in a place that is secluded from the rest of the world, in fact, it can sometimes be very beneficial to an individual, as mentioned earlier. Lighthouses can become a place where connecting with the shoreline can begin to take shape.

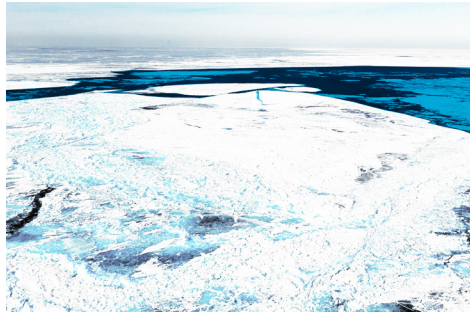
# 05. LIGHTHOUSES



"It is life, I think, to watch the water. A man can learn so many things"

- **Nicholas Sparks**

- .1 Iconic
- .2 Re-thinking
- .3 South Manitou Island
- .4 Stannard Rock
- .5 Big Sable Point



STANNARD ROCK LIGHT



PORT AUSTIN LIGHT



PORT AUSTIN LIGHT



LITTLE SABLE LIGHT

## 05.1 Iconic

Lighthouses are often located in places that are very secluded from the outside world. Many of Michigan's lighthouses were built in the middle or late 19th century and at the time many were not easily accessible; they were predominately shut off from the rest of the world. This is still the case for a handful of the lighthouse along the Great Lakes even today. Before advances in technology, lighthouses were an essential guide used to warn ships of dangerous waters and emanate shorelines.

Lighthouse keepers were the people who attended the lighthouses and made sure that the light would always stay lit. Often, lighthouse keepers would spend days, weeks, and even months completely alone in the lighthouse. Sometimes lighthouse keepers would live in lighthouses with their families, but even then the family would live a life of complete solitude. Because of this seemingly lonely position along with the isolated location, lighthouses and the lighthouse keepers job are referred to as "The Loneliest Places in the World" or "The Loneliest job in the World." However, some lighthouse keepers have found being by themselves in a lighthouse as a very creative process and a fantastic opportunity to connect with the land along the shoreline or the senses evoked when close to water. Lighthouse keeper of Stannard Rock Lighthouse, a lighthouse 24 miles from the shoreline in Lake Superior, Louis Wilk Marquette would find great enjoyment in his assignment to "The Rock"; relishing the opportunity to leave the hustle and bustle of life ashore.

Lighthouses have lost much of their purpose due to advances in technology, and many of them are now automated and no longer require a lighthouse keeper to man the light. They have become a kind of tourist destination that serves as a reminder of the past. Much like Venice, the city is run entirely on tourism, and today lighthouses operate on a similar concept. Lighthouses have a rich history and many are drawn to them due to their location, interest in maritime history and the tales of those who lived there, but they are also perceived

as incredibly lonely places. Is it possible for a lighthouse to not be seen as a place that is lonely, but instead as a place where one goes to be alone, and benefit from the positive cognitive effects of being in solitude along the water; a place where the mind can rest, and creativity can flourish?

Split Rock Light



Figure 61.



# MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSES

There are an estimated 124 Lighthouses remaining in Michigan | The most in any state



■ Lighthouses

Figure 62.

## 05.2 Re-thinking

Lighthouse are seen as a place of loneliness, but what if they could become a place where one can go to be alone, and make a strong connection to a place along the water. Outside commotions can clog the brain from being at rest and distract people from allowing themselves to be alone with their thoughts or with a place that they can connect with. Being in a place that is along the water and allows for privacy between the individual and the site can become a vessel for creativity and resting the mind; something that we get very little of in today's society.

Each lighthouse selected in this course of the study are just a few of the many very secluded lighthouses along Michigan's shoreline. Each one dates back to the 19th century and no longer requires a lighthouse keeper for day to day maintenance; they are all automated. There are even some that are not accessible by car, but instead require people to reach the lighthouse only by water or by foot. The journey that one may take to get to these private places is similar to the journey one may take to get to the shoreline in Glenn Haven. The senses are being enhanced with each moment an individual has to interact with the elements present along the shore. Each lighthouse study serves as a conceptual sketch exercise that tries to defamiliarize what we typically see or feel as we look upon a lighthouse. The architectural intervention performed in each lighthouse is not meant to be a finalized proposal, but instead a way of re-thinking lighthouses. Lighthouses don't need to be seen as a place of loneliness, but instead a place of solitude; something people can mentally benefit from to connect with a place along the water.

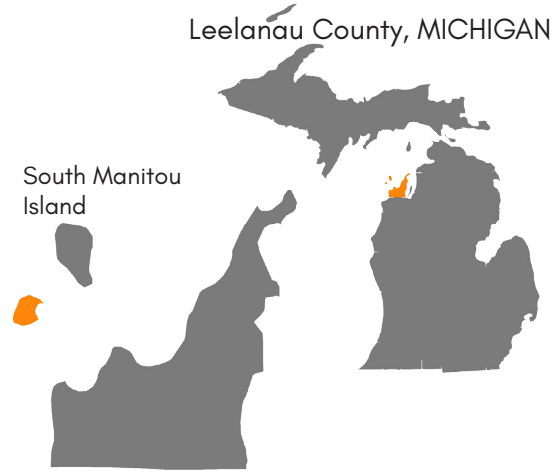


Selected Lighthouses

Figure 63.

Leelanau County, MICHIGAN

South Manitou  
Island



## SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

"THE LONELIEST PLACE IN THE WORLD"

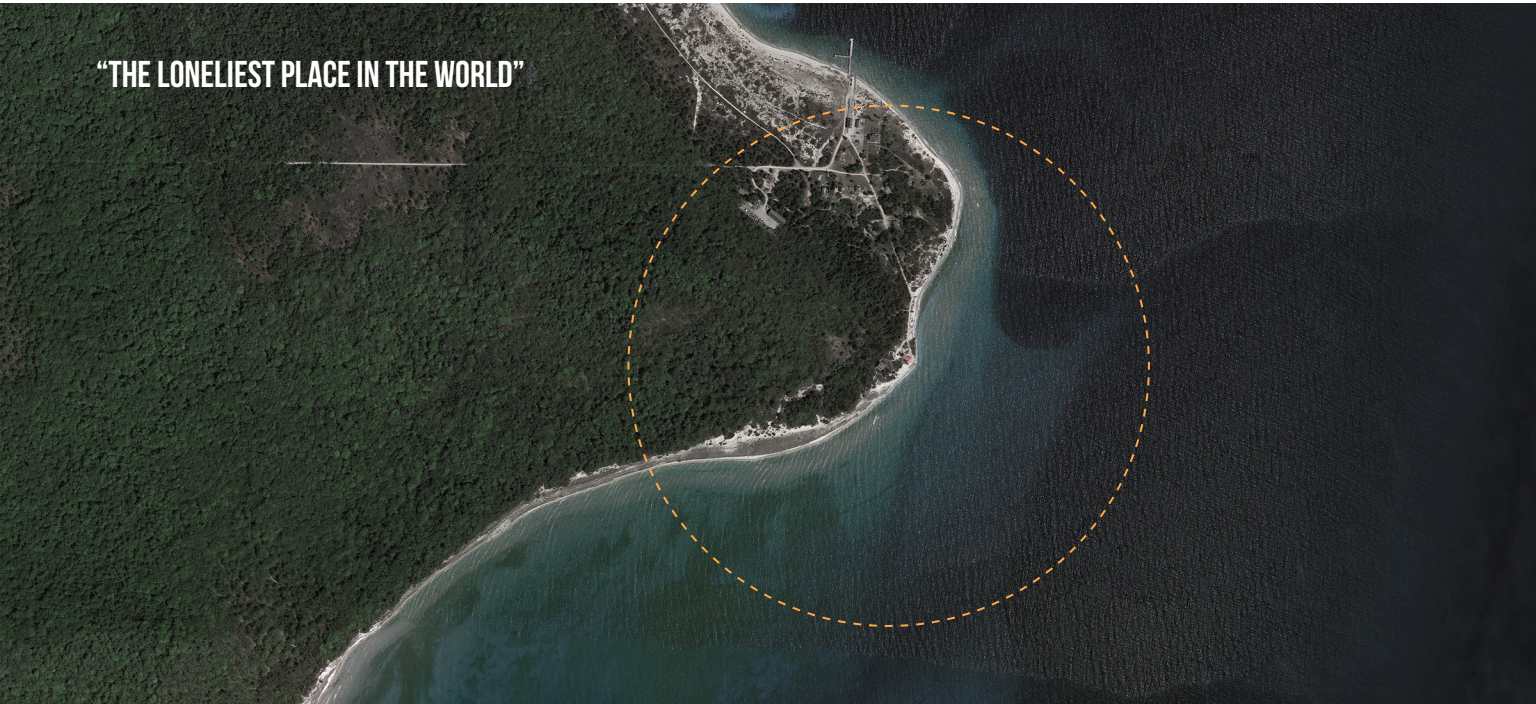
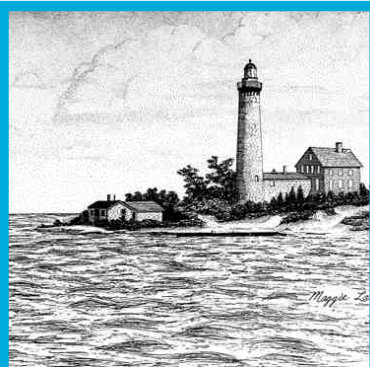


Figure 64.



## 05.3 South Manitou Island Lighthouse

Built in 1840 and deactivated in 1958, South Manitou Lighthouse is one of the oldest lighthouses in Michigan and located on the very secluded South Manitou Island, 8 miles north of Glenn Arbor Michigan. The only way to reach the island is by boat and even then reaching the island is often a seasonal thing. The waters between the island and the mainland are known to be quite dangerous for ships and depending on the harshness of the winter season, access to the island is virtually impossible in the winter months due to storms or frozen waters. Getting to the lighthouse is hard, but once there, an individual can be completely alone with their thoughts. The lighthouse looks out over the water, and the space inside the lighthouse gives the sense that a person is enclosed in a place that is surrounded by nature and attached to the shoreline.



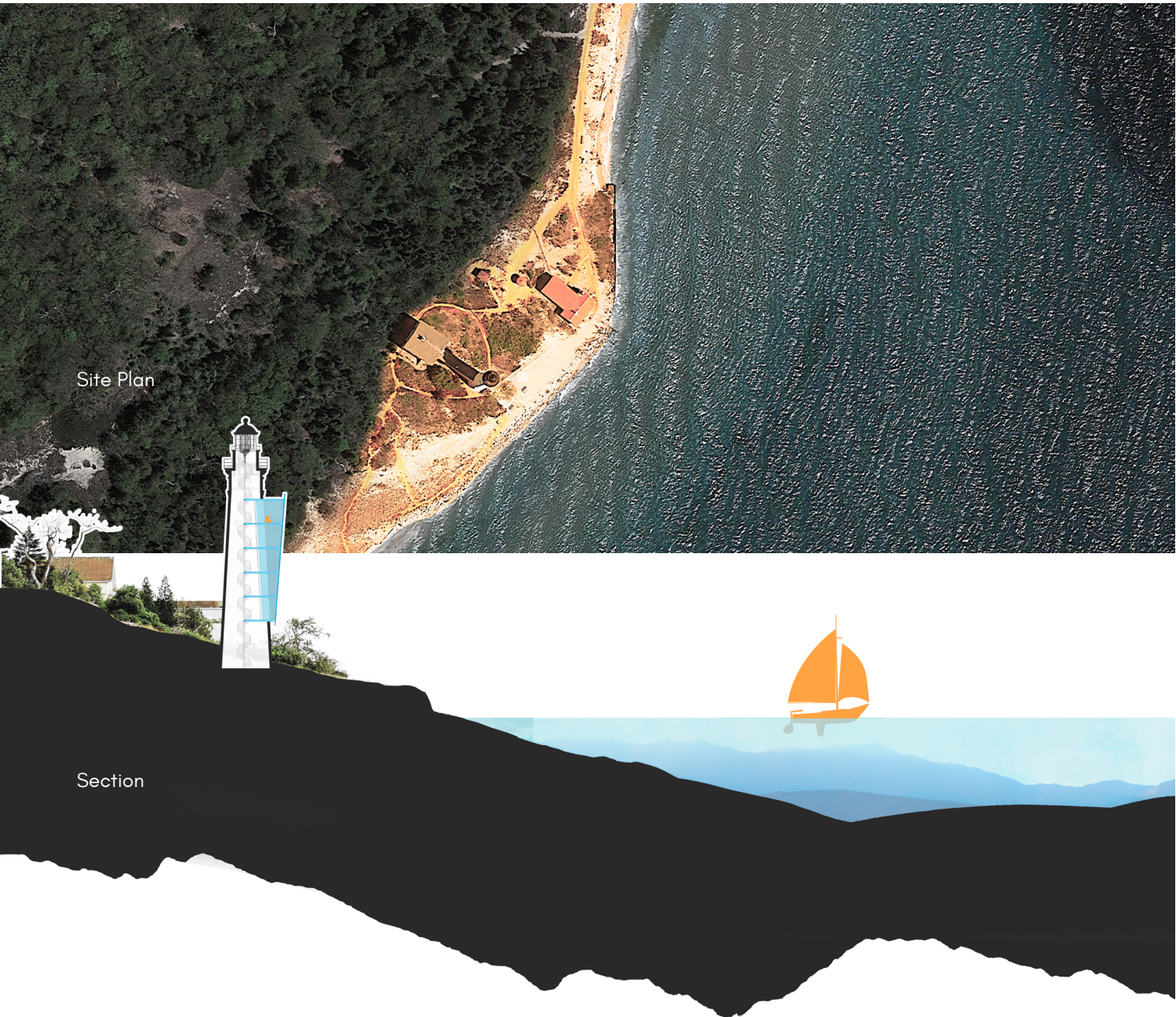






Figure 67.



Keweenaw County, Michigan



## STANNARD ROCK LIGHTHOUSE

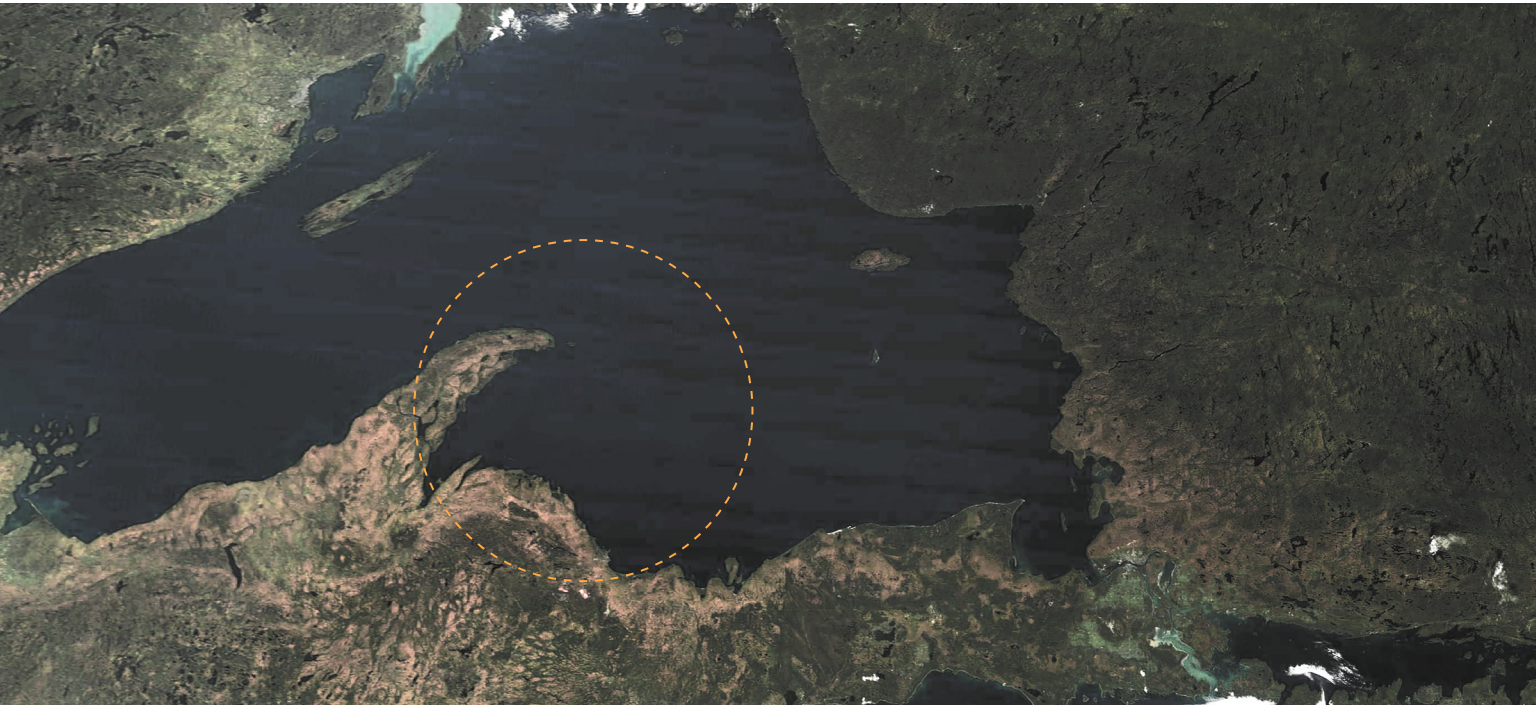


Figure 68.



## 05.4 Stannard Rock Lighthouse

Stannard Rock lighthouse is unique compared to most lighthouses along the great lakes. Starting with the fact that the lighthouse is not along the shoreline at all. The light is about 30 miles from the shore and is built on top of an underwater mountain in the middle of Lake Superior known as Stannard Rock. Often referred to as the “Loneliest Place on Earth” by the mainland locals, this lighthouse was notorious for being a place that left lighthouse keepers completely alone for weeks at a time. There is even a legend of a lighthouse keeper going insane after being at the lighthouse alone for too long. However, there is great potential for a person to connect with this place if they are simply given time to be alone with their thoughts. Being alone does not always mean you are by yourself. You can also be alone with other people around you. In this way, one does not always feel lonely, but instead one can also share space to make a connection with a place.

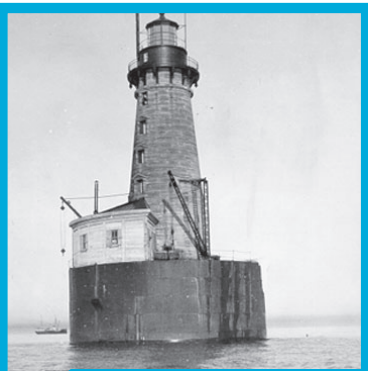


Figure 69. 97





Figure 71.



Mason County, MICHIGAN

Ludington State Park



## SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

"THE LONELIEST PLACE IN THE WORLD"



Figure 72.

## 05.5 Big Sable Point Lighthouse

This lighthouse was originally built with materials that were brought to the site by boat only. The large Ludington sand dunes prevented people from reaching the lighthouse from the mainland. It wasn't until the 1930's that a road was constructed to reach the lighthouse. Even today, the only way for visitors to reach the lighthouse is by a 3-mile hiking trail. Once someone reaches this lighthouse, they have the opportunity to connect with a place along the water that allows them to be in a state of complete solitude. There are no outside distractions present at this site, and an individual is capable of making connections to places best when they can rest their mind and allow their creativity to aggrandize.

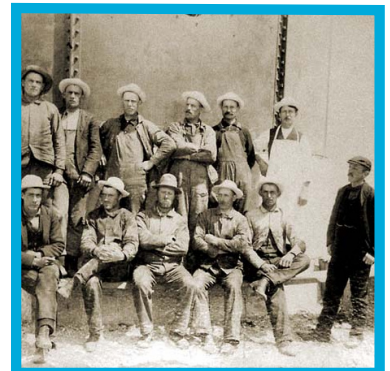
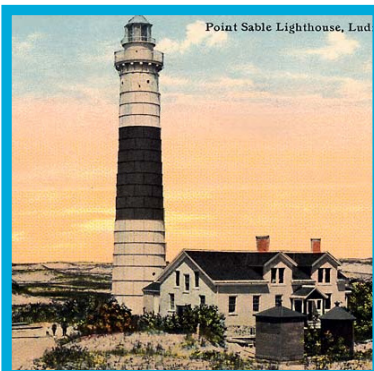


Figure 73. 101



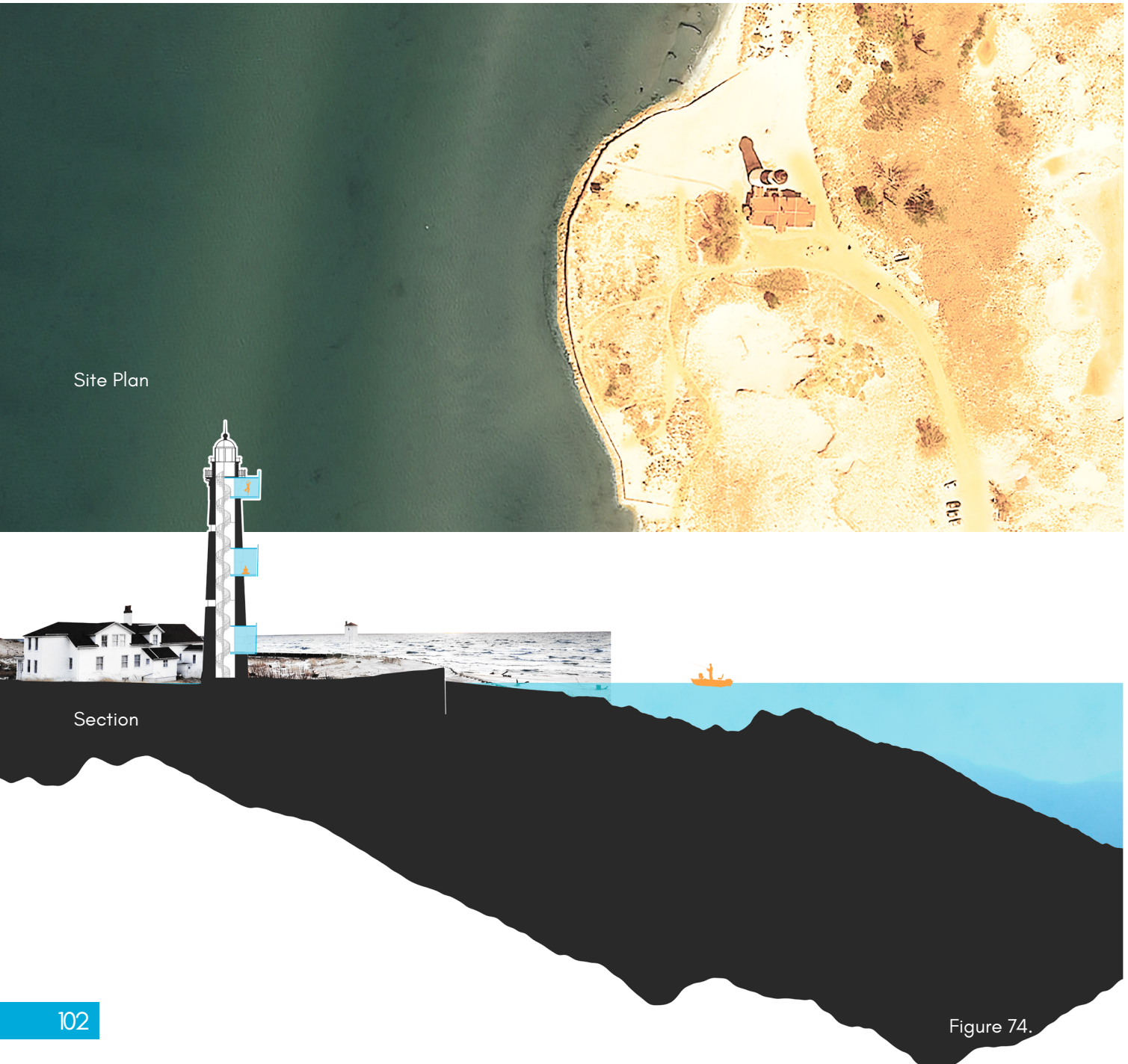






Figure 75



## 06. CONNECTION

"My connection to the earth is reinforced through the rhythm of the waves."

**-Mike Dolan**

- .1 Enclosure Without Closure
- .2 Season
- .3 Concept for Design
- .4 Design Intent



## LAKE MICHIGAN



Figure 76.

## 06.1 Enclosure Without Closure

When building connections with places, it all starts with a visit to form our interpretations of what makes a place particularly special to us as an individual, and with others around us. Quite often, we make strong connections to places when we go somewhere alone. We are given pause from what may typically distract us; making us more aware of our surroundings and our relationships with places personal. However, one does not always have to be alone to make strong connections to places. Often, the best experiences one may have is with other people in a collaborative kind of way. Collaborative in the sense that we make connections to places with others around us; like how an individual may feel comfortable in their home by themselves. However, people strive to allow people to come into their dwelling to make new memories and interactions with others in places they may feel most comfortable. In these kinds of situations, we dwell or interact with others; we get a sense of enclosure without closure. This feeling of comfort and connection can often be associated with the existential connection and sense of belonging one may feel when they visit places on the water. Water is often associated with feelings of calm, well-being and altruism. Being on the water can evoke feelings of solitude and privacy, but it also can provide a humble sense of community and oneness with others around us; this can vary depending on the kind of body of water you are on.

The Great Lakes of North America provide a vast amount of resources and uses for the people that visit or reside in these wide bodies of water. One of the greatest things they offer is a sense of privacy as well as community and connection with the people who live on and visit the great lakes. This is something that can be very hard to come by in places where we are surrounded by daily distractions and



CASS LAKE, MI

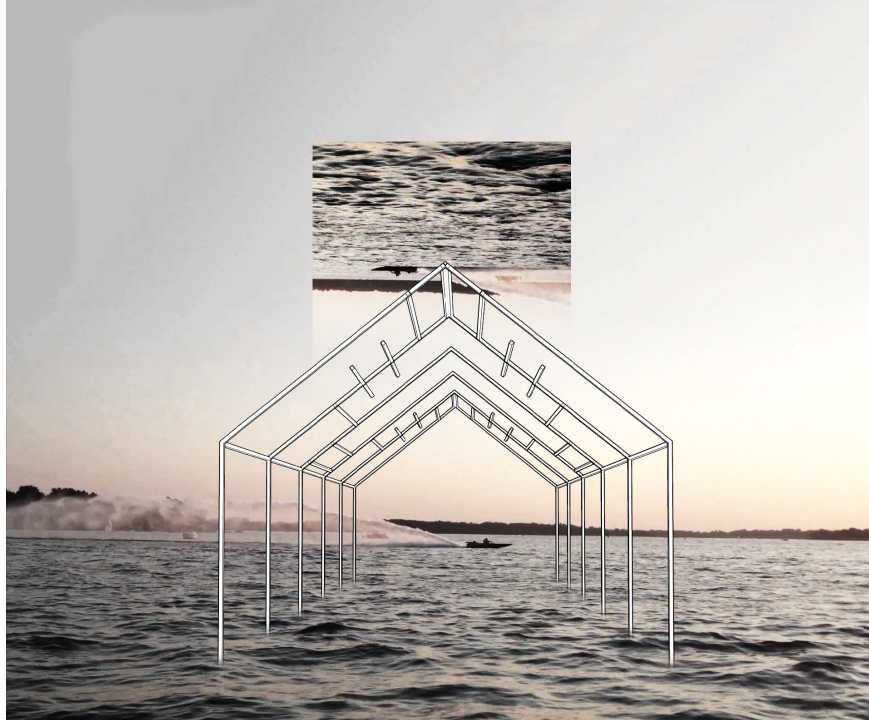


Figure 77.

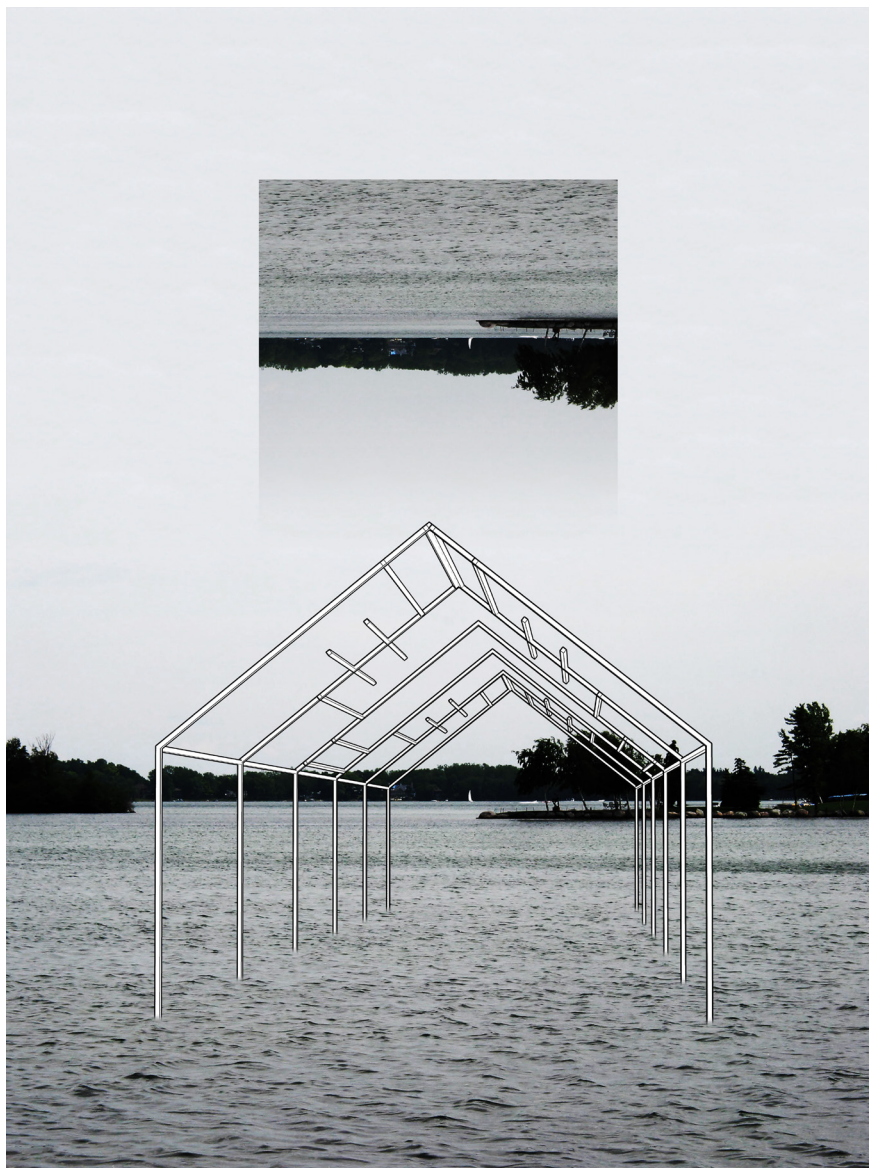


Figure 78.



things that prevent us from connecting to an area. In a smaller body of water, like Cass Lake in Oakland County, Michigan, there is a different sense of enclosure without closure occurring. Cass Lake is the largest lake in Oakland County, but it is just a puddle compared to the size of Lake Michigan. This lake is available for both private and public use and allows individuals to interact in a unique way. Often people on Cass Lake take great pleasure in boating in the summer months and making new memories with others within this lake community. Though the interactions people make on Lake Michigan and Cass Lake are similar, the biggest difference between the two is its geographical context and landscape elements which allow for people to connect to these places differently. There are forces at play that draw people to make individual connections with these areas. An effect that seems constant with interacting with water is this power of curiosity to look for something beyond ourselves. Being on the water gives us a pause from what we may typically be used to and allows us to connect with ourselves and with others. This is one of the reasons why people take great pleasure with vacationing along the water and using it as an escape from what we may not usually be exposed to every day (Nichols). This kind of landscape can allow for individuals to dive deeper within themselves; a pause from their hectic everyday lives and a time for mental breaks.

## DETROIT RIVER



Figure 79.

## 06.2 Season

This sense of enclosure without closure can be best explored if we look beyond places that we feel most comfortable. Though we feel comfortable in places we are familiar with, it can feel a bit discomfoting at first to go to a place we have never visited or a place that we would not initially recognize. For example, Lake Michigan is a place that is often visited, by many tourists, in the summer months, when the weather is warmer, and the landscapes are easier to feel comfortable in. But, in the winter months, many towns along Lake Michigan are empty because of the bitter cold temperatures associated with being along Lake Michigan. However, if we look beyond the ways one typically connects and interacts with a place we can begin to make new connections and conclusions about the landscape along the water in different settings and times of the year.





## Inspiration: Cass Lake

Cass Lake is a special place to me. It is a place where I grew up on and spent many summer days interacting with my family and friends. It was the place where I first learned how to swim, and was first exposed to water sports such as skiing, tubing, or wakeboarding. Cass Lake is also a place where my dad grew up. He lived in a house in Orchard Lake that had lake access, and he would spend his days sun up to sun down on the lake, enjoying quality time with his family and friends. Though Cass Lake is a small lake in comparison to the great lakes, it is enormous in why I have such a personal connection to being on the water. Cass Lake serves as a place for a pause in my day, a chance to get away from the hectic occurrences in my life. Though Cass Lake is not used the same way in the winter months, it still serves as a place where I know I can turn to and look for relaxation, leisure, and a sense of belonging. My connection to Cass Lake will act as a source of inspiration and guidance in how I go about thinking about the way people can connect with the land along the water. Though I never lived directly on Cass Lake, this place serves as a very inspirational place to me. I spend many hours kayaking its canals, and I turn to this location to connect with myself, as well as with others around me.

The land along Cass Lake is not entirely as private or closed off from the world as the shores of the Great Lakes; they offer a more intimate and personal sense of community. However, what makes Cass Lake different from places where water is absent is its sense of community that would be completely absent without the water. The lake community of Cass Lake is what brings people together. There is no single demographic that is not welcomed or distinguished at Cass Lake. Here, everyone is equal and people find ways to enjoy this place by coming to the lake to enjoy its waters. This sense of community will be critical in selecting a site that offers a close kind of community on the water, and can also serve to inspire and effect people in powerful ways; much like how it has affected myself and my family.



Figure 80..

## 06.3 Concept for Design

Landscapes change and adapt over time continuously. They are not always seen as places people want to be year-round. When it comes to thinking about how architectural spaces can begin to interact with landscape along the water, it is important to note that these places allow for people to dwell and interact as well as provide spaces for people to better connect with a landscape within a built environment. The question of course is, what kind of concept or architectural program can allow for such connections with places along the water to occur? One of the strongest ways people can connect to places along the water has a lot to do with arousing feelings of passion and inspiration, mental clarity and calmness, and allowing for a kind of meditative state. These elements serve as a driving point in selecting a site for such forces to take place. What kind of place can allow for architectural interventions to occur in places along the water and to provide spaces for individuals and collaborative groups to interact and connect in meaningful ways?



Figure 81.





Figure 82..



## 06.4 Design Intent

One of the greatest ways people express their passions is through the creation and making of things. In other words, art is an incredibly useful way for people to express themselves and look within themselves to let their creativity flourish and expand their mind. A part of creating art has a lot to do with inspiration and passion, and almost habitually turning to landscapes for inspiration can allow for individuals to make connections to places in creative ways. One of the greatest experiences about creating art is that it allows for the creator to make things that permit self-expression and looking outside of oneself to discover what truly inspires them. Looking to landscapes along water has been shown to allow for a creative mind to flourish because of its cognitive and physical benefits. Because the art of creating things can allow for a very intimate relationship between one's mind and their surroundings, it can be assumed that one of the best ways to connect with a place along water would be to provide a space where the landscape can inspire the creator and even vice versa; through the creation of art.

With this relationship established, the intent of the design for this architectural intervention calls for creating an artist studio or place where people can create things in an environment along the water's edge.

## 07. SITE

The experience of being immersed in nature opens up different ways of thinking...you change your environment, you change your perspective, you change your way of thinking about things.

- **Elizabeth Chodos, Ox-Bow Executive Director**

**.1** Selection

**.2** Allegan County

**.3** Saugatuck

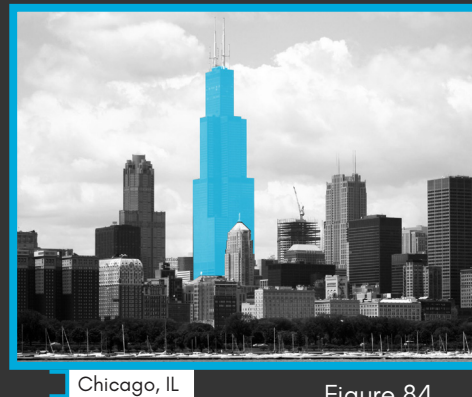
**.4** Ox-Bow

**.5** Analysis





Figure 83.



Chicago, IL

Figure 84.

## 07.1 Michigan

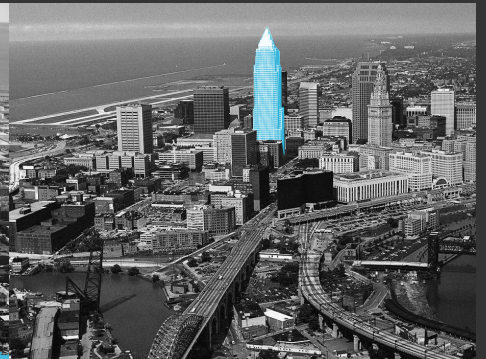
There are numerous places across this country along the water that are considered to be breathtaking, inspirational places. The Great Lakes region is one of these locations. The Great Lakes has a rich history of commerce over the years for many who have made their living in this area. At first, the area was utilized as a productive means for trade along the waterways and industry grew. Many of The United States and Canada's major cities grew from this commerce and are in the Great Lakes region; such as Chicago, Detroit or Toronto. However, as time has gone on, trade and industry have changed in this area and tourism and art has replaced the way of life for many small towns along the Great Lake's shoreline. Now, as many people find great enjoyment in discovering and being near the Great Lakes as a means of finding pause from their daily hectic lives - vacationing or living - the Great Lakes continues to be the identity of the State of Michigan and for the people that live there or visit; a source of beauty and pleasure.



Milwaukee, WI



Green Bay, WI



Cleveland, OH



MICHIGAN | GREAT LAKE STATE

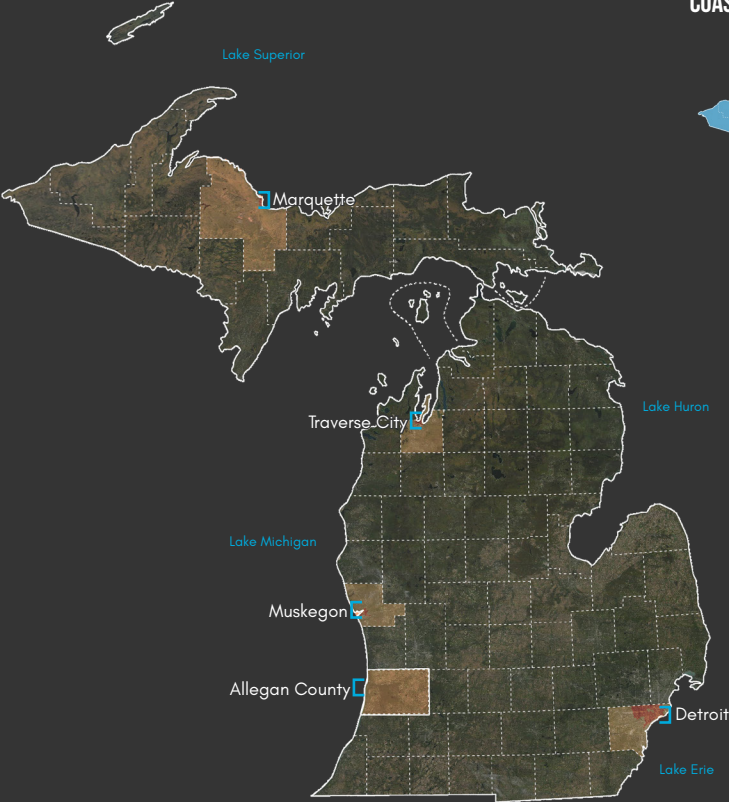


Figure 85.

COASTLINE COUNTIES



INLAND LAKES



FORESTS

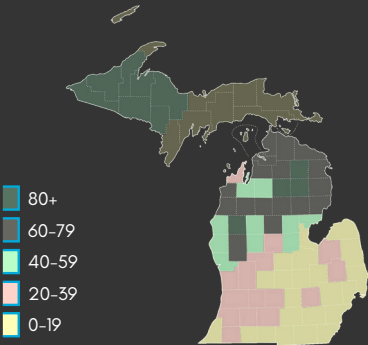
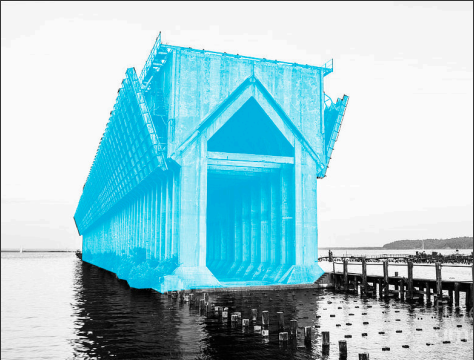


Figure 86.



Marquette

Figure 87.

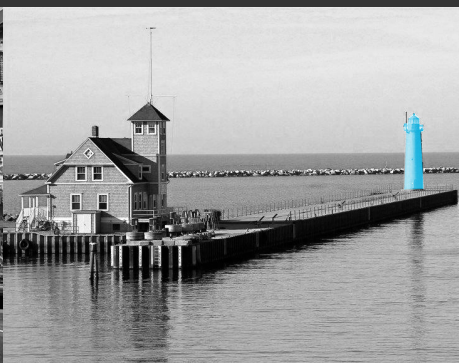


## 07.2 Allegan County

One of the most prominent features of the State of Michigan is its abundant amount of freshwater supply. Water covers over 40% of the State of Michigan, the largest percentage of any state in the United States. Lake Michigan, the second largest great lake in the Great Lakes region, has become a place where many take great pleasure in visiting in the summer and winter months and is home to many lakeside towns that identify Michigan's West coast. One such small town along Lake Michigan's Shoreline is one of the communities that makes Lake Michigan an inspirational place for many artists and creative individuals; the town of Saugatuck, or know by some as the Provincetown of the Midwest.



Traverse City



Muskegon



Detroit, MI

ALLEGAN COUNTY, MI

- Saugatuck 1
- Douglas 2
- Fennville 3
- Hopkins 4
- Wayland 5
- Allegan 6
- Martin 7
- Ostego 8
- Plainwell 9
- Holland 10

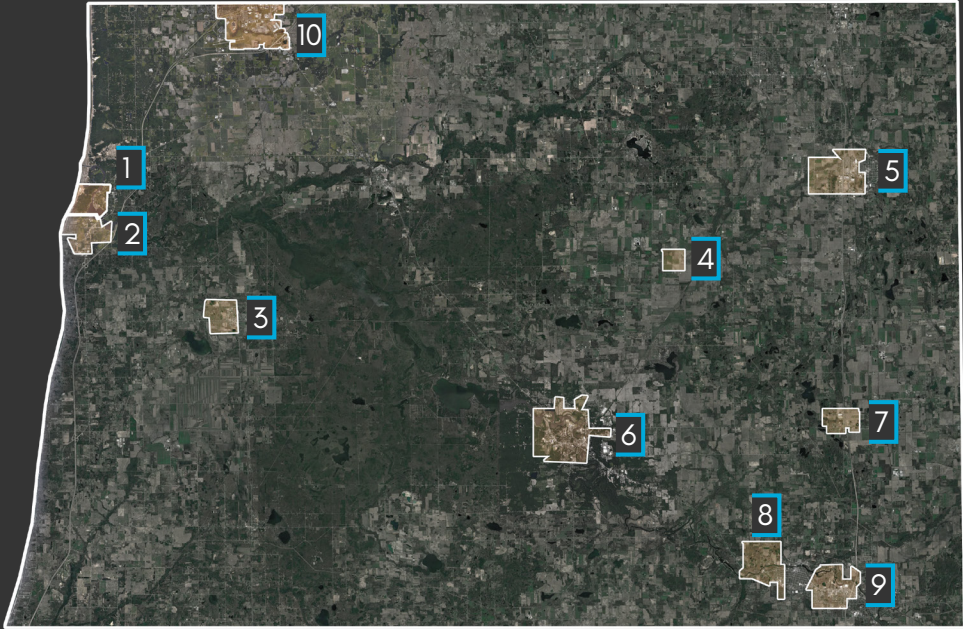
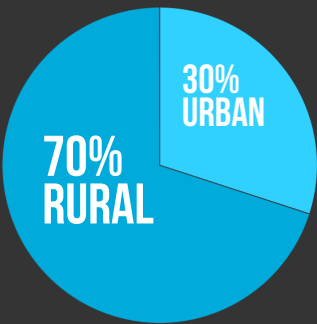


Figure 88.



Population  
• 114,625  
Density  
• 135/sq mi

24 MILES  
OF LAKE MICHIGAN SHORELINE

Figure 90.



Holland Light

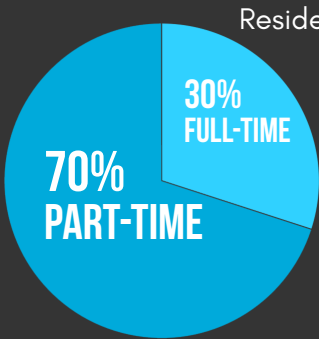
Figure 92.

SAUGATUCK | ART CULTURE | GALLERIES

- 1 Saugatuck Center For the Arts
- 1 Armstrong-De Graaf International Fine Art
- 1 Saugatuck Gallery
- 1 Bruce Baughman Studio-Gallery
- 1 Saugatuck Artists Collective
- 1 Discovery Art Center
- 1 Good Goods
- 1 Amazwi Contemporary Art



Figure 89.



1 MILE  
OF LAKE MICHIGAN SHORELINE

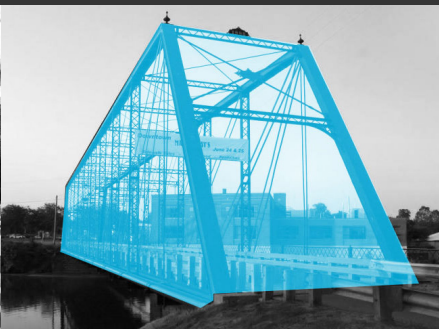
Figure 91.



Holland, MI



Douglas



Allegan



## SEASONAL POPULATION

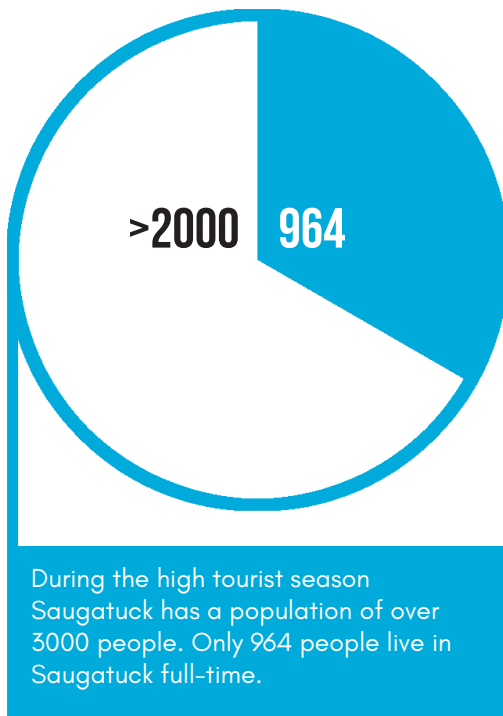


Figure 93.



Many businesses in saugatuck are closed for the winter due to lack of tourists and part-time residents in the winter season.



View from Mt Baldhead



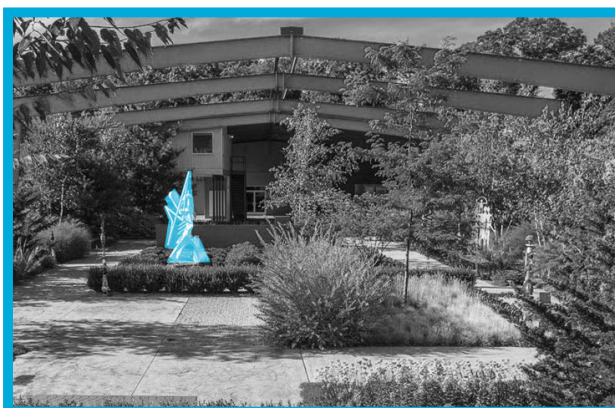
Downtown

Figure 94.

## 07.3 Saugatuck

Saugatuck is a small town nestled along Lake Michigan, just outside of Holland. With a population of just under 1000 people, Saugatuck is a small town with a big culture and impact. In the summer months, the population of the city grows to nearly 3000 people, many of whom vacation there, coming from different states or various parts of Michigan. What truly draws people to this small town is its art culture that shapes the identity of Saugatuck itself. The town is home to many art galleries, boutique shops, and businesses where people sell their art or various works of art produced by people from all around the region and beyond. This artistic environment is evident as you first enter the town and are greeted by a welcome sign that has a neon paint pallet attached to it. Saugatuck has become a kind of “creative place” for individuals that visit there. A creative get away from the typical and mundane; a place that is both urban and rural in regard to its location. Though Saugatuck’s downtown region is urban in context, just slightly west of the city center is a place that has given the art identity to Saugatuck since the early 1900’s; Ox-Bow.

The region where Saugatuck is located today was first settled by William C. Butler in 1830. At first, the town was called Kalamazoo Village, due to its location on the mouth of the



Saugatuck Center For the Arts



Welcome sign

Kalamazoo River into Lake Michigan. It was not until 1868 when Saugatuck was incorporated as a village, and the town was given its current name. Originally a lumber town, Saugatuck grew rapidly because of its proximity to Lake Michigan and its connection to major inland cities such as Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. As the city grew due to the lumber industry, more people from down south or the east side of the state would visit the region as a vacation destination. However, by the late 1800's the lumber industry began to decline, and fewer jobs were available to people. The town had to adapt to the changes that were occurring around it, and it was then that the city began to make a cultural shift from industry and trade to art and tourism. Today, Saugatuck is a very popular summer tourist destination and in winter months, is almost completely closed. Many people don't live in Saugatuck year-round, and the town seemingly takes on two different identities; the bustling town where one sees a lot of activity in the warmer months and the slower ghost-town like characteristic it takes on in the colder months. Though one thing remains constant, outside the town there is an art school run by the Art Institute of Chicago where the practice of creating art in Saugatuck all began; it is here where a certain level of activity is always occurring, and the art culture of Saugatuck takes great influence from.



Figure 95.

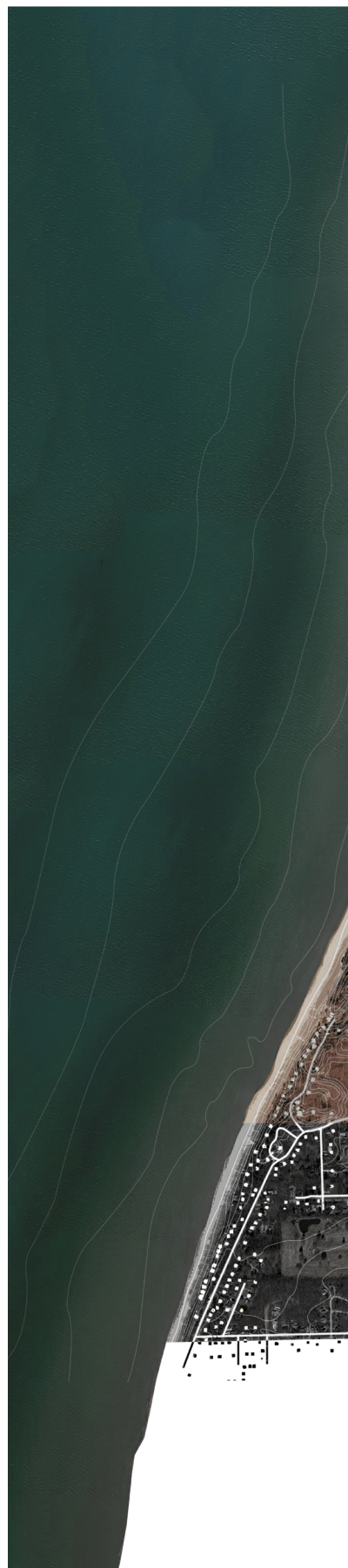






Figure 96.





Figure 97.



## 07.4 Ox-Bow

Ox-Bow School of Art is an art school that is linked to the Art Institute of Chicago. Similar to a summer camp program, Ox-Bow offers art classes and seminars to students or individuals who want to take a one to two week “break” from their typical work environment. The people who come to Ox-Bow are usually students who attend the Art Institute of Chicago, and they go to Ox-Bow to work in a collaborative environment with other artists and get immersed in the landscape that Ox-Bow surrounds itself.

The school was originally an orchard with a hotel attached called the Riverside Hotel which opened in 1867. At that time, the Inn was along the Kalamazoo River which connected to Lake Michigan and Saugatuck. The Hotel was used mostly by fishermen who would come from the lake on the river and was in heavy use until the early 20th century. Many of the buildings that are used for Ox-Bow today date back to when the Hotel was still open, and there are even some cabins that are said to have come from a nearby fishing town that closed due to decline in business. In 1907, to make access to Lake Michigan easier for ships, a canal was created just north of the Riverside Hotel, and the first entry of the Kalamazoo River from Lake Michigan was closed off. Because of this, ships no longer needed to pass the Hotel and the Riverside Hotel would lose much of its patrons because of it. Due to a lack of guests, the hotel owners began to lease the hotel to a group of artists for the entire summer. The commerce of art and relaxation



# OX BOW SCHOOL OF ART | ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Mission Statement:

OX-BOW CONNECTS ARTISTS TO:

- A NETWORK OF CREATIVE RESOURCES, PEOPLE, AND IDEAS
- AN ENERGIZING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- A RICH ARTISTIC HISTORY AND VITAL FUTURE

## COURSES AVAILABLE

Ceramics

Glassblowing

Printmaking

Painting and Drawing

Sculpture and Metals

Sculpture and Performance

Fiber

Art History

Book Structures

Photography

Animation

## SUMMER

CAMPUS IS IN FULL OPERATION

## FALL

CAMPUS IS PARTIALLY OPEN AND COURSE ARE AVAILABLE, BUT LIMITED.

## WINTER

CAMPUS AND MOST OF THE BUILDINGS ARE CLOSED. SOME COURSE ARE STILL AVAILABLE, BUT LIMITED.

## SPRING

CAMPUS IS PARTIALLY OPEN AND COURSE ARE AVAILABLE, BUT LIMITED.

was taking over as the area began to reinvent itself as a Midwestern resort community. The Riverside Hotel persisted as lodging for its clients even though the clientele had changed from traders to artists. By 1910, artists from the Art Institute of Chicago Frederick Fursman and Walter Marshall Clute bought the property and opened the Ox-Bow School of Art. Ever since then the school's mission has remained the same: "After a century in operation, Ox-Bow's mission has remained consistent—to serve as a haven for the creative process through instruction, example, and community." (Ox-Bow). The primary intention of Ox-Bow is to allow artists to come to this school and turn to nature for inspiration within a natural landscape in a rustic kind of camp setting. The school has served as a significant influence on the identity of many artists who has passed through the school and the town of Saugatuck itself. As the school became more known, more people began to see Saugatuck as an artist's community for people to sell their art and create art in a different setting, along Lake Michigan.



Ox-Bow School of Art site plan

Figure 98.



Figure 99.



In addition to its practice, the school has not changed in its infrastructure as well. Many of the building still have their rustic character which makes the school a place where individuals create art in an environment that they may not be as comfortable with at first. However, in most cases, by the time they leave, they are completely immersed in the landscape and with the people that they have worked with at the school. Campus director, Shanna Shearer, a local oil painter at Ox-Bow describes the school as “place that changes the way people think about the way they make and think.” Though the point of this schools existed isn’t purely to force students to work in nature, but rather it serves as a kind of pause from what these artists are used to doing when they create art. The school is in a very secluded kind of environment, there is no Internet, the cabins have no heat or air conditioning, and habitually the artists who come to the school take great inspiration from the landscape and being near the waters of Lake Michigan and the lagoon that used to be the Kalamazoo River.

Though Ox-Bow has been beyond successful in execution and in practice since its formation for the artists who visit, there is one thing that Ox-Bow seems to be missing; architectural spaces that allow for usage in the colder winter months and spaces that connect with the landscape along the water. The school is primarily open only during the summer months and almost completely closed in the winter. Due to lack of staffing and the seasonal harsh weather, Ox-Bow has a significant lack of activity in the winter. However, this lack of activity at the school is one element that makes the landscape it surrounds itself in so beneficial to an artist. The school is in a state of rest when there are fewer people there and can allow for different potentials to emerge in a time where there is a lack of activity. There are significant benefits to how Ox-Bow can be used during a time of year where an artist may be in a different level of being and outside their comfort zone. The season has a lot to do with how artists can interact with the landscape at Ox-Bow, and the land along the water is a pivotal point to this kind of interaction.

# Ox-Bow

## Visiting Ox-Bow

I had visited Ox-Bow in the middle of winter, a time where the school is, for the most part, shut down for the season. It is hard to get a hold of people who worked at the school this time of year, and once I finally did it was hard to access the school to meet and talk with some of the staff that work at Ox-Bow year-round. Nevertheless, I made the two-hour drive to Saugatuck and sat down with Camp Director and oil painter, Shanna Shearer. I had prepared a series of questions for Shanna about the school, but the biggest question I had for her was how she finds Ox-Bow to be such an inspirational place and how such a precious setting in nature, on the water, affects her art.

My talk with Shanna was long and filled with information that would prove useful in the rest of thesis. The most powerful thing that she had said to me which would serve as a driver for my process of working with Ox-Bow was when I asked her about how working in nature can affect how and what artists create. Her response was that working in nature indeed provides a



moment that you cannot get in a city or a typical studio. It opens the mind to different ways of thinking, and it changes what the artists create one way or another. Working in nature effects the artist, and is something that stays with them long after they leave Ox-Bow. Shanna's outlook on the Ox-Bow school would serve as an inspirational aspect to my thesis, and it brings up the point of why creative individuals are drawn to come to Ox-Bow.

Once our talk had concluded, Shanna and another staff member showed me around the school grounds. Though the school was empty because of the season, it was very apparent that the school had a lot of potential for greater utilization in the winter months. The school's buildings are very rustic, and most of them do not have heat or proper installation. Without diminishing the school's culture and practice, it became necessary for me to think about how I could intervene in Ox-Bow by implementing the principles I had established in my research, without changing the schools existing practice or look. This would become a design principle that I would stick with through the rest of my process.



Figure 100.



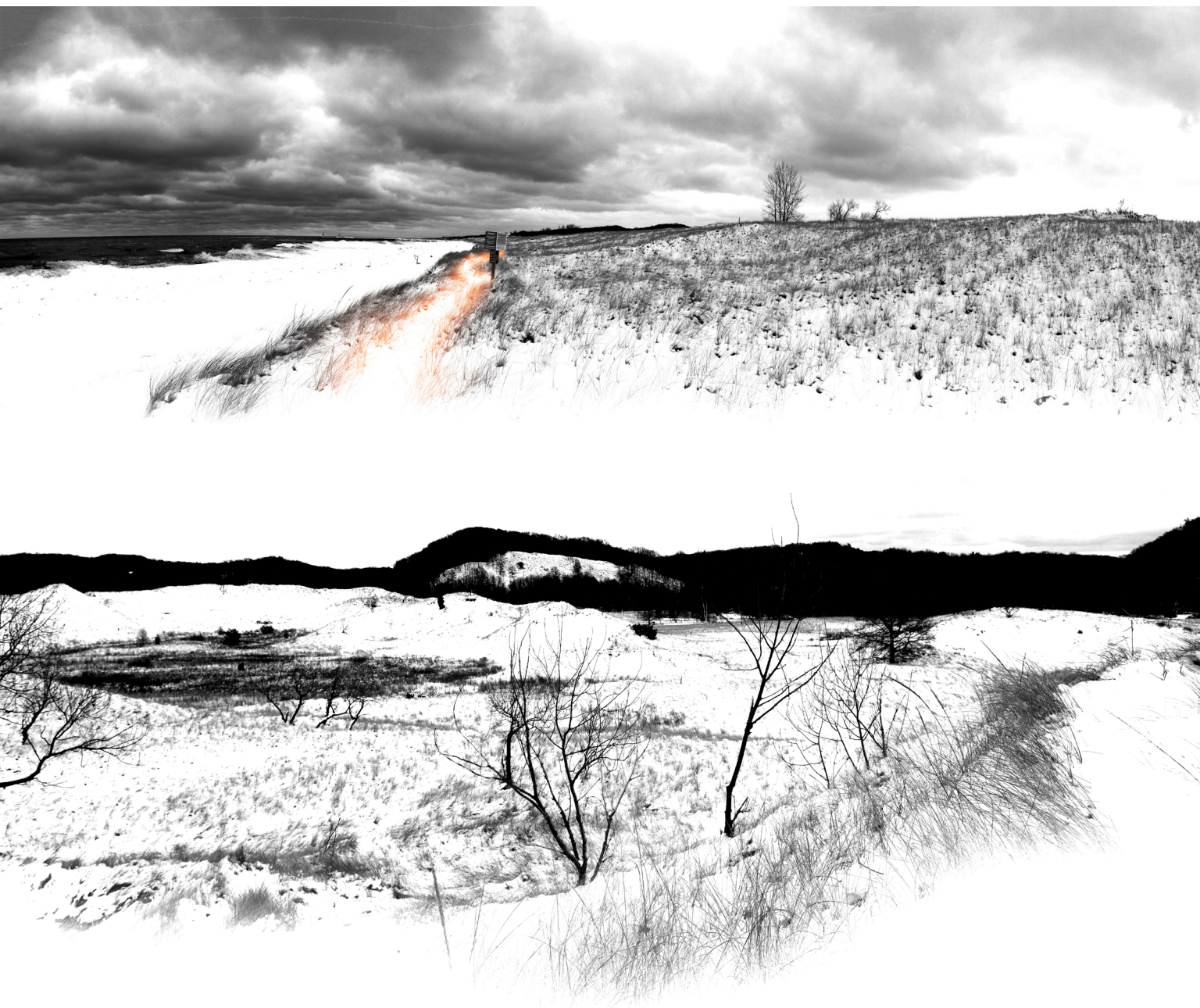


Figure 101.

## 07.5 Site Analysis

Ox-Bow lays nestled between Downtown Saugatuck and Lake Michigan along with a shallow lagoon that used to be a port of the Kalamazoo River Bend. Many of the structures at Ox-Bow date back to the 1930's or earlier, and many of the buildings are unheated or don't have air conditioning. Because of this many of the buildings are completely closed off for the winter and are unused. This practice has been in use since its founding, and it has been critical to the traditions of Ox-Bow to keep these structures at the level of rustic character that they currently have. Most of the building also have a level of adaptive re-use. Almost all the buildings were at one time or another a fishing shack, home, or even a hotel; they were all designed for a different use at first. Much like the buildings in Saugatuck, they have adapted to becoming different uses throughout history.

There is a region just west of Ox-Bow along Lake Michigan that is currently a part of the Saugatuck sand dunes, where a vast amount of beach grass resides, and a wooded area serves as a buffer between the winds of Lake Michigan and Ox-Bow. This region is currently designated as a Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area and is protected by the town of Saugatuck due to its fragile dunes. One of the unique characteristics of this site is that is almost entirely covered in beach grass, which keeps the sand dunes intact and from collapsing. This area is considered so precious; various designated walking paths cut through the beach grass with signs advising people to stay

on the trail to help protect the dune. The tracks appear to be permanent, but they have more than likely gone through various kinds of changes throughout time. The sand dunes along Lake Michigan are a very harsh environment, where only the toughest plant species can live, and weather patterns can be quite brutal. However, they do offer something that many places along water do not; a pause. A break from the regular forms of information and outside sources that clog our brain and prevent our creative mind from flourishing. This kind of element can become very beneficial to an artist who is looking to take inspiration from nature to create new things. Being exposed to this environment, where one can connect and relate to landscape, greatly benefits an artistic creator who is looking to pull inspiration from beyond themselves and their comfort zone to create great pieces of art. One truly can look to the land along the water to gain inspiration. An architectural space where one can have this kind of opportunity, even in the coldest time of the year, can greatly benefit the culture of Ox-Bow and landscape that surrounds it.



Figure 102.

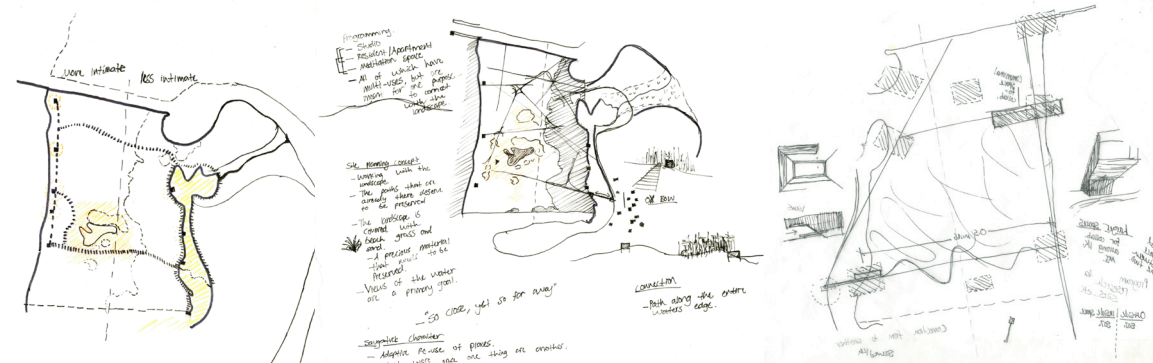


Figure 103.





## Visiting the Site

I made two separate site visits to better understand the Ox-Bow school of art as well as the site I had selected adjacent to the school. I wanted to view the site in different ways and put myself in a kind of “Blue Mind” by visiting the site two distinct ways. The first way was without any form of documentation or capturing of images. The second way was to return to the site and document the site through photography, sketching, and taking notes of what I saw, perceived and felt.

The first time I had gone to Saugatuck to visit Ox-Bow was in the middle of winter on the eve of a harsh snow storm. The site was very barren, and I only came across two people during my first walk along the beach and through the sandy dunes. It was quiet, yet the waves were always crashing, but felt very alone. I was captivated by the landscape and what I was seeing. I saw great potential in the use of the existing hiking trails that wind throughout the site. They did not seem to have a particular direction, but they led me somewhere; through the entire sites sand dunes. The journey, which was entirely on foot along the shores of Lake Michigan, was an experience that changed my outlook on the sites potential. The in-person journey allowed me to experience the site in ways that could not have been gained through maps and research alone; which proved how important site visits can be. The visit allowed me to see things in ways that I could not have imagined and what I had gained through visiting the site on a cold winter day would serve as further inspiration for what would come in my thesis.



Figure 104.

## WALLACE J. NICHOLS. | BLUE MIND | REFLECT

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Marine Biologist Wallace J. Nichols defines our mental and physical connections to water as the “Blue Mind” theory. The idea that we can connect to places along water has been the core of this thesis. Part of the process of selecting a site and a program that can allow for individuals to find a place along the water where they can allow their Blue Mind to flourish, Ox-Bow was the most appropriate choice. Ox-Bow is isolated but rich in community. Inactive in different times of the year, but has potential to be an active place even closer to Lake Michigan and be open year-round. When analyzing and designing the program for an architectural interaction at Ox-Bow, these Blue Mind principles will be the core concepts for design decisions and way of thinking about Ox-Bow and the site.

### **Mental Break**

Ox-Bow is a place of intellect and creativity, but it can also be a place where artists go to step out of their comfort zone and immerse themselves in nature. Being surrounded by nature where there is less noise, few distractions, and opportunities to find moments of pause – mental breaks take place at Ox-Bow all the time. It will be important to incorporate areas where mental breaks can occur along the water and can allow for one to connect with the land along the water.



### **Meditative**

Meditation can be a great way for one to connect with their inner selves and the places around them (Nichols). Meditation does not always mean sitting in a room cross-legged and closing your eyes; it can be much more than that. Places that are meditative can be anywhere, but they are best suited when they are in a place that is free of distractions and has little disturbances. The site, though harsh in certain weather conditions, is mute and free of outside noises, especially during the winter months. This element of quiet is what makes the site a suitable place for “Blue Mind” to occur, and it will be taken advantage of in future design decisions.



# PARALLELS WITH OX-BOW

## Passion and connection

The artists that go to Ox-Bow have a strong passion for art and learning with others in a collaborative effort. The artists that come to Ox-Bow may not instantly love the idea of being in nature; there are certain things about being in nature that doesn't suit everyone's needs. But, in almost every case, the artists that leave Ox-Bow find great passion and connection with working in nature and the school itself. This kind of relationship that artists make at Ox-Bow is due in part to working within the nature that Ox-Bow surrounds itself in. Often artists at Ox-Bow work along the lagoon or the lake; they find it very inspirational and relaxing. Proximity to water is important, and this can allow for the artists at Ox-Bow to express their passion for art and make new connections to their talents.



## Creative Mind

"A Blue Mind is a creative mind" (Nichols). This does not mean that being near water instantly makes you creative, but the subtle movement of water or the loud crashing sounds of its waves triggers a part of our brain that can open us up to new possibilities and find inspiration within waters depths. The artists at Ox-Bow strive to go here because of its isolation and proximity to nature and Lake Michigan. The reason for this is because many of the artist's work in an environment that may be filled with many distractions and outside information that is not needed. Our brains constantly long to be free of distractions, and be put in a mode of creativity. Creative individuals at Ox-Bow can find inspiration and motivation at Ox-Bow because of its calm and collective environment. Being in a place that is still in this mode of isolation and proximity to water is important, and it will be a driving force for design decisions and analysis of the site.







Singapore ghost-town



Old Kalamazoo River Passage



Old Saugatuck Lighthouse

Figure 105.



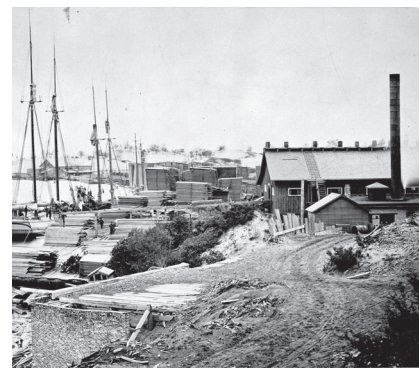




Private residence where the old lighthouse stood.



Lighthouse after being destroyed by a tornado



Singapore lumber town

Figure 106.



LIGHTHOUSE

OX-BOW

LAGOON

OVAL BEACH

Figure 107.



# SITE SELECTION

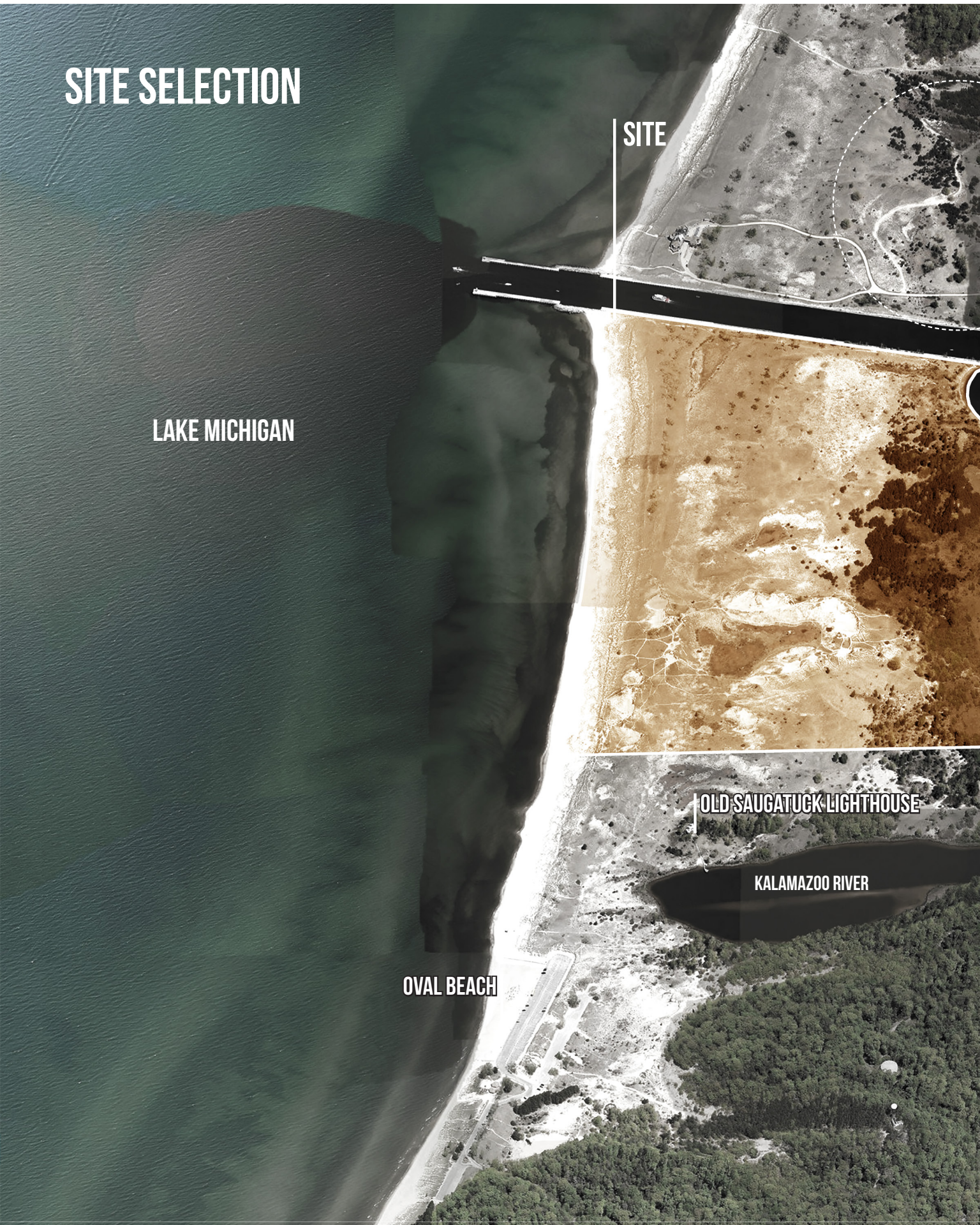
LAKE MICHIGAN

SITE

OLD SAUGATUCK LIGHTHOUSE

KALAMAZOO RIVER

OVAL BEACH







SINGAPORE GHOST TOWN

KALAMAZOO RIVER

OX BOW SCHOOL OF ART

DOWNTOWN SAUGATUCK

Figure 108.





# SITE ELEMENTS

1. Lake Michigan

2. Shoreline

3. Sand Dunes



Figure 110.



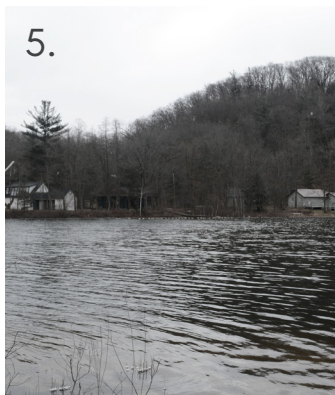
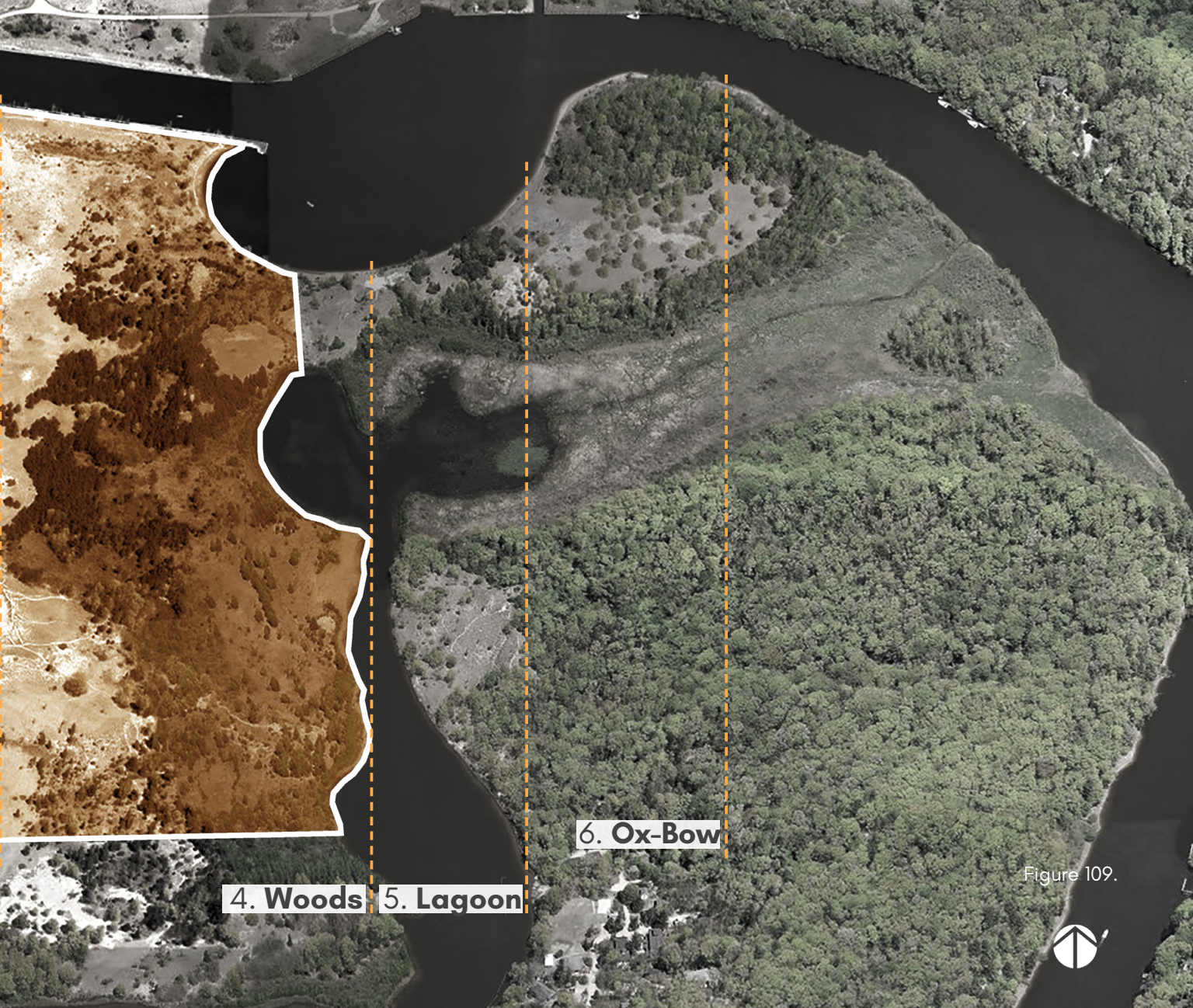


Figure 111.



# 08. PRECEDENTS

"We saw an opportunity to use architecture as a way to preserve some of the things we were afraid of losing in terms of traditional knowledge."

**-Zita Cobb, Fogo Island Studios Owner**

- .1 Fogo Island
- .2 Villa...
- .3 Design Build Spaces

## FOGO ISLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

Saunders Architecture

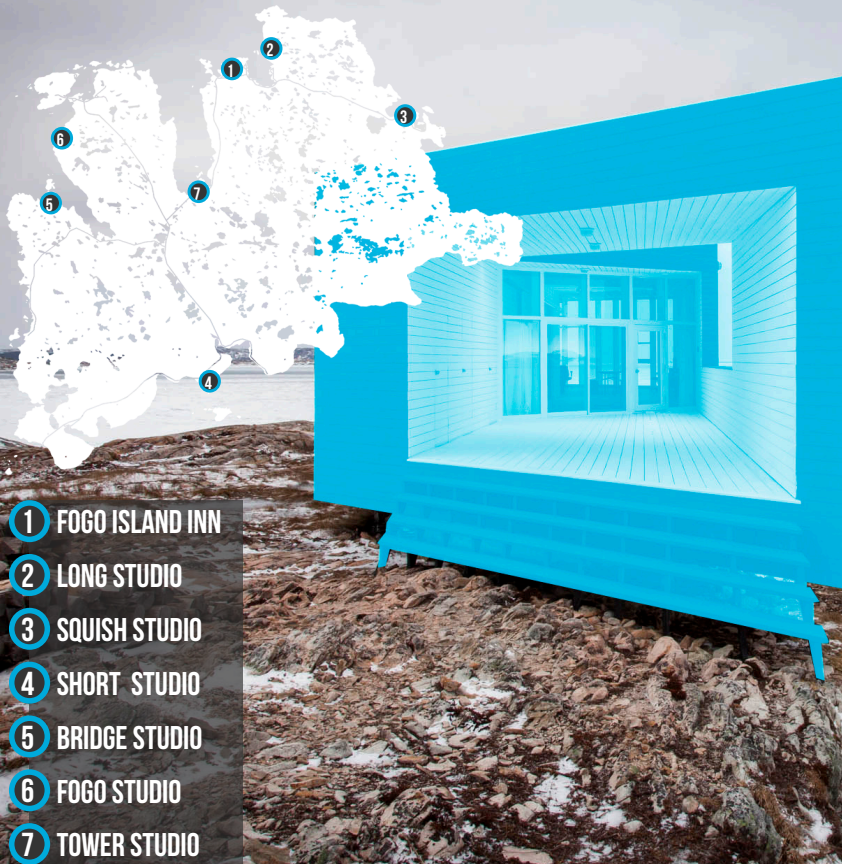


Figure 112



## 08.1 Fogo Island Studios

Located on Fogo Island Newfoundland, Canada, the Fogo Island studios are public residence for people to utilize as art studios or places where they feel the need to get away for a while. Each studio is very isolated, and the only way to access them is by hiking to the destination from the central Fogo Island Hotel. Each studio has its distinct look and personality, and it offers the user a chance to connect with the landscape around it without necessarily harming the land around it or intervening so drastically. The style of construction is also very like that of the Newfoundland architecture. The structures are suspended from the ground, and they greatly contrast the landscape.

The key design elements to be drawn from here is not so much its formal elements, but more so its sense of being in a place of solitude and isolation within a natural landscape. The studios offer moments and spaces where one can look directly out into the landscape, and the users feel immersed in nature without necessarily being outside. This is relevant because of my thesis sites isolated location and its harsh weather patterns associated with being along Lake Michigan. This design element of an indoor-outdoor space as well as being immersed in nature is something that will be occurring in future design decisions.



Figure 113.





Figure 114.



## VILLA MINIMA (#1-5)

Laboratoriord Architecture Design

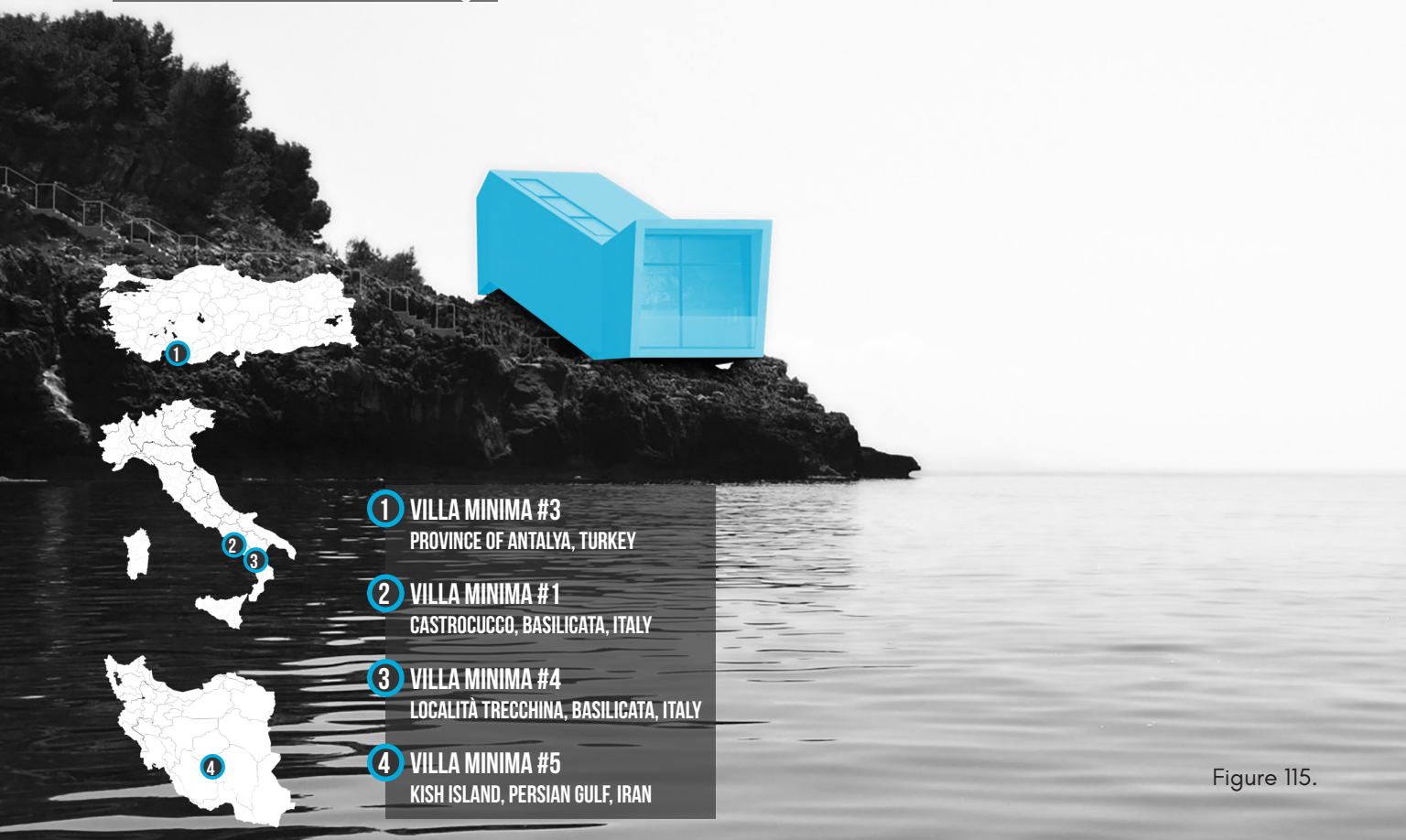


Figure 115.

## 08.2 Villa Minima

Villa Minima consists of four different conceptual designs for a private residence located in the Iran, Turkey, and Italy. Each Villa is a very site-specific design that takes advantage of its isolated site location as well as its proximity to water and views to large mountain ranges. These villas have a similar kind of design concept to that of the Fogo Island Studios. They are meant to be cut off from the rest of the world and take in the surrounding context. There is great attention to detail in the views that are framed and organized within the building looking out, and they drive the concept of the building's design. Though not every Villa is located on the water, the design element that can be taken away from here and applied to the site by Ox-Bow is its site-specific design. Though each Villa is relatively similar in style, they are all different because of their surrounding context and site.

The site-specific design elements that are present in each Villa will be carried over into the design of the new buildings to be placed in the site by Ox-Bow. Though the program of the future buildings will not be a private residence, the idea of creating architecture that is speaking to the site in a different kind of way will be necessary for developing the building or buildings design.

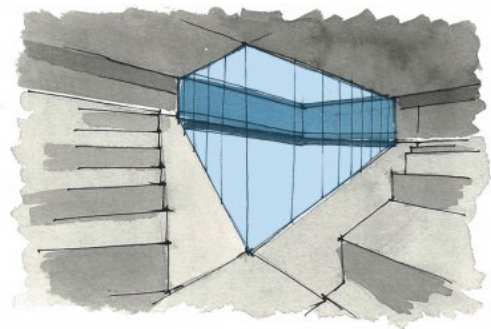
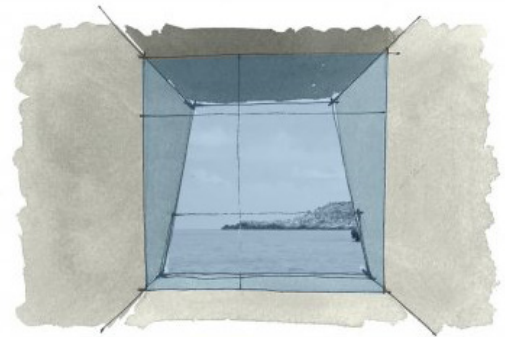
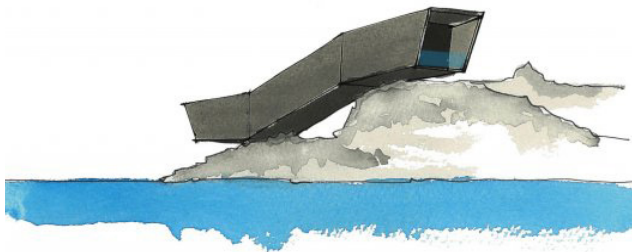
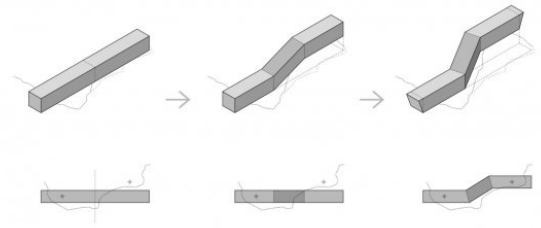


Figure 116.



4 VILLA MINIMA #5

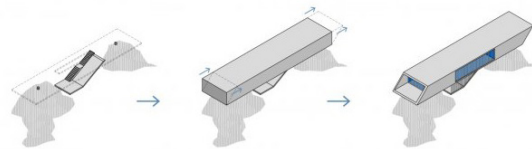
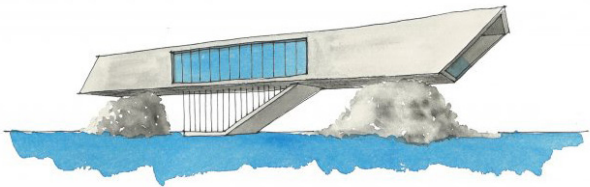
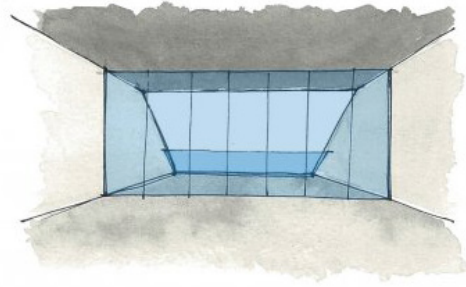


Figure 117.

## THE OXBOW SCHOOL, NAPA, CALIFORNIA

Natoma Architects inc.



Figure 118.

1 NAPA, CALIFORNIA

## 08.3 The Oxbow School

The Ox-Bow school is an art school located in Napa California and has a very similar program and culture to that of the Saugatuck Ox-Bow school of art. Though these two schools share the same name, they are different regarding its architecture and curriculum. The Ox-Bow school is meant for high school students looking to further explore art before attending college. The high school students go to Ox Bow to learn about art in a collaborative effort; like Ox-Bow School of Art. The culture of the two schools is very similar, but the biggest difference between the two are its formal art studios and their connection to the site and nature. The Ox-Bow school studios are very open to the outside, and they provide an indoor-outdoor space, allowing students to feel as though they are working outside. With very direct views to the school's nearby river, the Ox-Bow school provides its students with an inspirational landscape to look to while working in a collaborative environment where they are always working with and learning from their peers and teachers.

As mentioned before, it is important that the new design for the Ox-Bow School of Art in Saugatuck try and preserves the current school's culture and curriculum. In addition to this, adding a new element for its students to work in a space that can allow them to work inside while also relating to the site around them will be crucial. This will call for spaces that provide both indoor and outdoor work areas, as well as spaces that are versatile for both collaborative and individual teaching and learning.





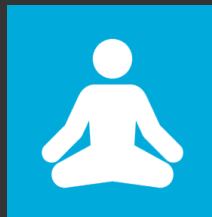
Figure 119.





Figure 120.

# 09. DESIGN





"You cant hold back the water, but you can swim with the current."

- **Wallace J. Nichols**

- .1 Concept
- .2 Program
- .3 Site Planning
- .4 Three Places
- .5 Bridge Studio
- .6 Hostel
- .7 Lake Michigan Studio
- .8 Adaptive use of Space
- .9 Blue Mind Spaces
- .10 Future and Takeaway

**SITE HIKING TRAILS**





## 09.1 On the Water

With these site and precedent studies established, how one may go about implementing them into an architectural space for creative individuals at Ox-Bow is the next challenge. The new design for the Ox-Bow School of Art calls for considering the previous principles studied before and incorporating them into the built environment along the shores of Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River Lagoon adjacent to Ox-Bow. The most prominent principles that have been extracted from this thesis are that of the “Blue Mind” theory that was put forth by Wallace J. Nichols. Four of the principles that were found to coincide with the site analysis and what could be brought to the Ox-Bow School of Art culture and curriculum are the implementation of creating spaces that provide Mental Breaks, Meditative States, Passion and Connection, and Creative Mind. These principles are the core of the final design concept. How they are applied to the final site design and the program will determine the possible success and future of creating spaces along the water that allow the creative individual to express themselves in environments on the water. Proximity to the water is critical, and having direct access to it both physically and visually are the most prominent factors in the design of the school’s new spaces.

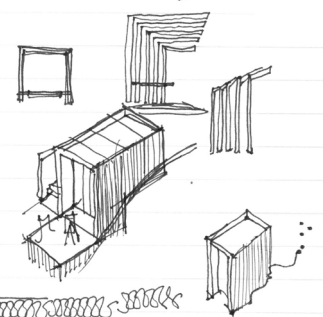
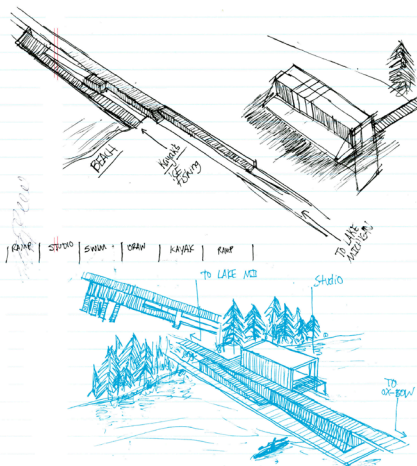
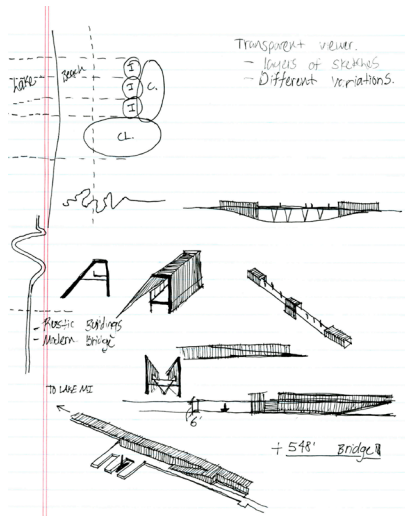
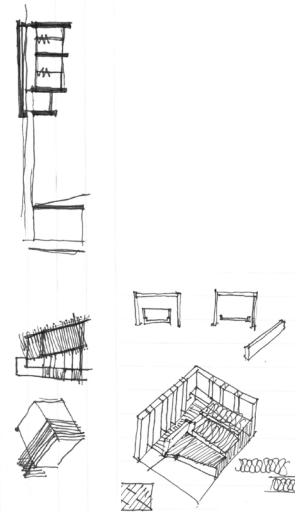
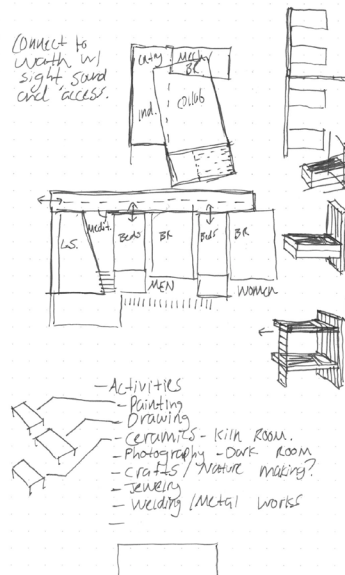
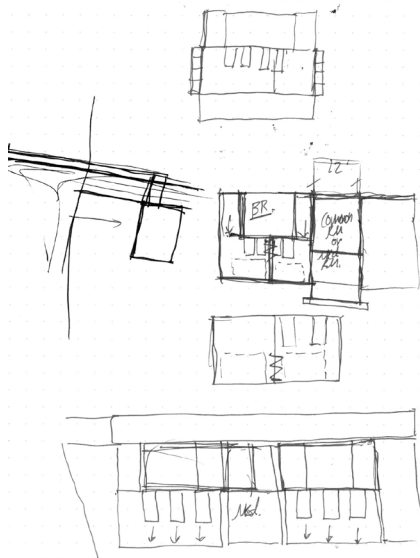
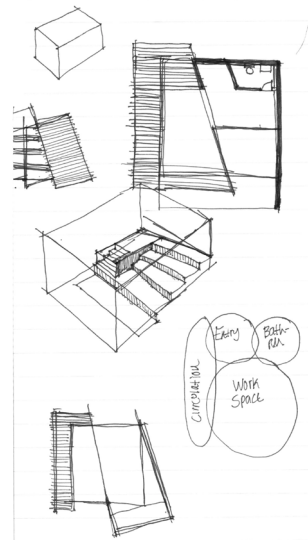
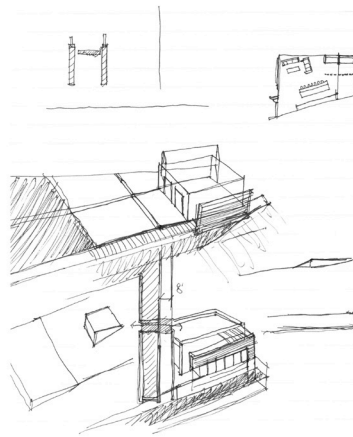
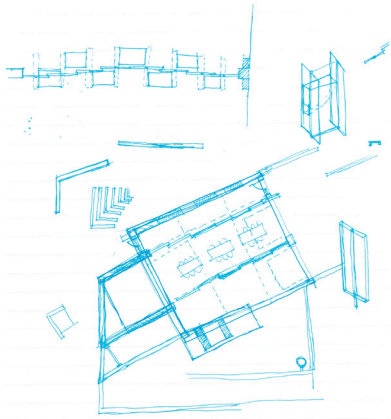
The journey one takes to get to these new spaces is also important. Like the design of the Fogo Island Studios, the journey ones take to get to these new spaces will match that of what is currently done on the site today; hiking and taking the time to get from one point to another. The journey one takes to go through water and get to the water’s edge goes back to our instinctual attraction to being on the water. The sounds of the waves guide us, and it drives our curiosity to know where the water meets the land. The journey one will take to get to the new buildings is meant to be an effective one. A journey that may not be the most comfortable at times, but it makes the end of the journey more meaningful to the individual who is trying to get to the new buildings, allowing for a stronger connection to the site in the sand dunes of Saugatuck.



## 09.2 Program

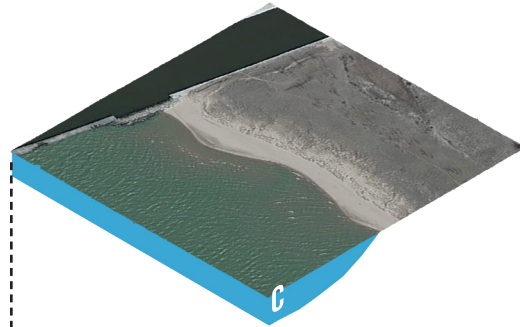
Ox-Bow currently lacks spaces that are near water. Though the studios that are currently there are successful in execution and contributes significantly to the school's culture and curriculum, they lack this intimate relationship one can have with being on the water. Seeing that Ox-Bow is so close to Lake Michigan, the school needs a better way to get people to the Lakeshore. A pedestrian bridge over the lagoon will allow people to get a sense of what it is like to travel across water, without always having to take a boat or swim across. There will be moments where artists can find places and spaces to express their art on the bridge, and it will serve as a studio at the end as well. This bridge will be used as a connector for the school to the site, and will also not diminish the access that people have to the lagoon. Instead, it will enhance it.

To better serve artists at Ox-Bow in the off-season, such as in the Fall, Winter, and Spring, a new artist's residence, or Hostel, in this case, will be designed to meet the needs of the people who wish to have proximity to Lake Michigan. With the artist's residency along Lake Michigan, a new artist studio will be implemented along Lake Michigan. This studio will have a similar typology to that of the Ox-Bow school in Napa California. The studio will have spaces that can change and are not restricted to one program, and they will provide moments where the artist can turn to the landscape and the water for inspiration or for a chance to relax and still practice their art. With these three primary programs and architectural spaces established, the relationships that they have to one another as well as to the school and the site can begin to be arranged.



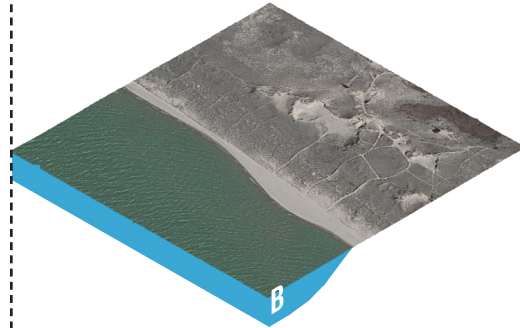
## STUDIO

The studio will be along lake Michigan in the sand dunes.



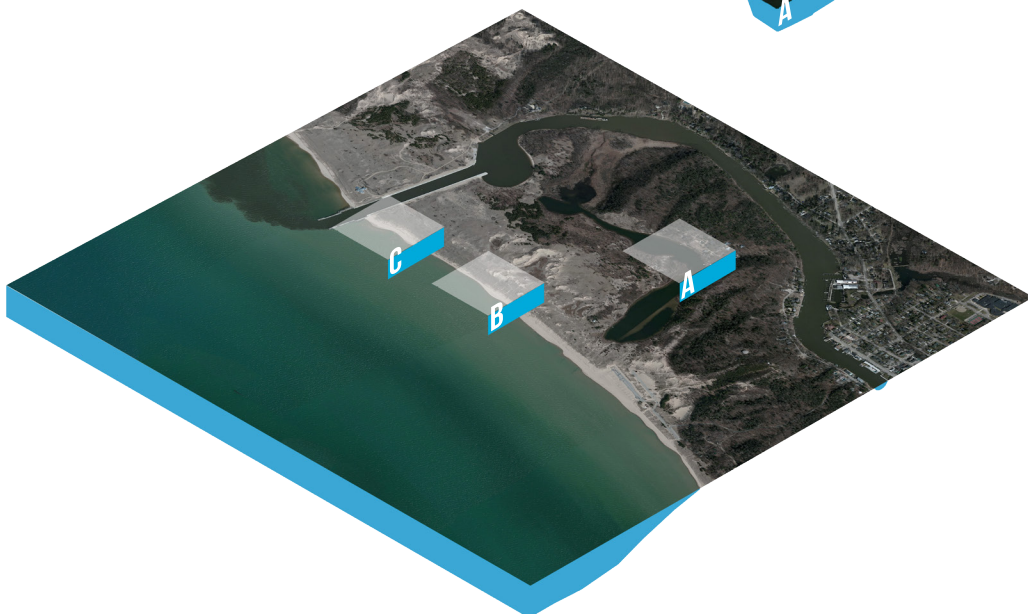
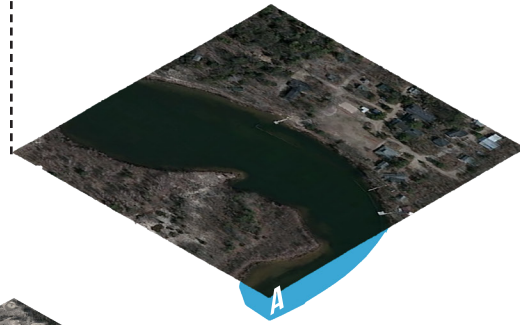
## HOSTEL

The Hostel will be placed not as close to the shoreline, but near Lake Michigan in the dunes.



## BRIDGE

The Bridge will go over the lagoon connecting Ox-Bow and the site.





## 09.3 Site Planning

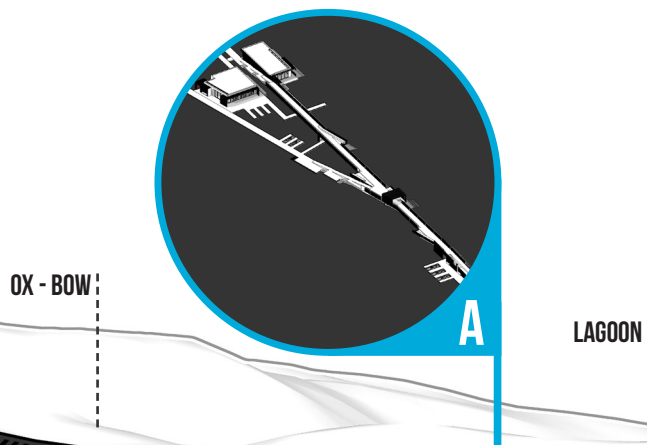
The three primary programs site location and site planning took on a rural and distant approach. The Bridge, Hostel, and Studio are all meant to be put into a large site that has many different site elements and places where creative minds can take advantage of its scenery and isolation. The most important design element about planning the site was to make sure the buildings would have proximity to the water's edge. The spacing in-between the buildings is about not disturbing too much of the natural landscape and respecting what is currently there. Therefore, the buildings are spaced far apart. The hiking trails that are currently on the site will be utilized to get from the Bridge Studio at Ox-Bow to the hostel and the studio on Lake Michigan. The hiking trails are not meant to be permanent. Much like the sand dunes, they change over time, but they still have a similar direction and endpoint, they reach the lakeshore and the new hostel and studio. The journey that one takes through the beach grass is meant to take some time, but not too much to the point of exhaustion. The important intention for getting across the site is to initiate an intimate relationship one can have with the landscape and others around them. Walking and hiking can evoke a great outlook for those who are trying to relax their brains and allow for inspiration to flow through.

The buildings are located far away from each other to enable them to breathe in the site and not diminish the site's sense of privacy and solitude. Though these places are seemingly in the middle of an empty place, they are surrounded by water and the constant sounds of the waves crashing or the wind blowing through the beach sand. These site elements make the site a place where the mind can rest, and creative individuals can find peace and closure when they are creating within this environment. The strongest element of the site is its privacy and sense of solitude, and the site planning takes advantage of that by being minimal in approach, but effective because of its existing site elements and features.

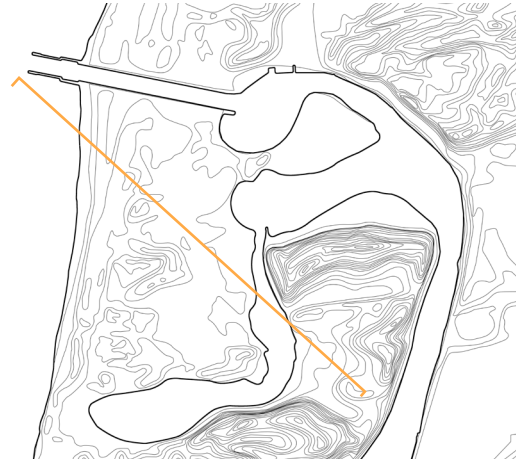
## 09.4 Three Places

The three elements that make up the final design consist of a pedestrian bridge with two art studios and a kayak storage attached, a artists residency/hostel along Lake Michigan, and a new main art studio with direct access to Lake Michigan. Each architectural intervention ties in the principles of “Blue Mind” while also providing an additional program and use for the Ox-Bow School of Art. There are moments in each building where artists have an opportunity to express themselves in different ways at various times of the year, while also keeping the culture of collaborative and individual learning alive and well at Ox-Bow. The three building elements are each designed and planned to suit different needs for artists or persons who just wish to take advantage of being on the water while being surrounded by nature in a site that is seemingly separate from the busy world. Each building is integrated carefully into the site, and they are site unique to the landscape they surround themselves in, but also similar in style and take advantage of being on the water.

### BRIDGE STUDIO



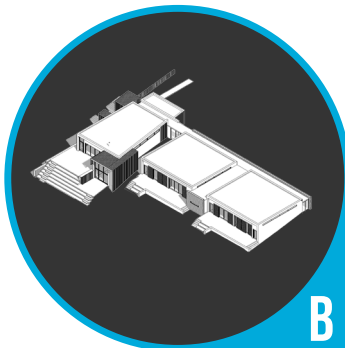
SITE SECTION



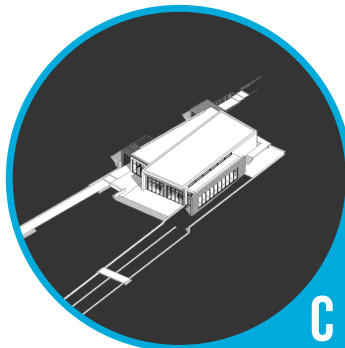
SECTION CUT

HOSTEL

LAKE MICHIGAN STUDIO



B



C

LAKE MICHIGAN





# SITE PLAN | HIKING TRAIL MAP







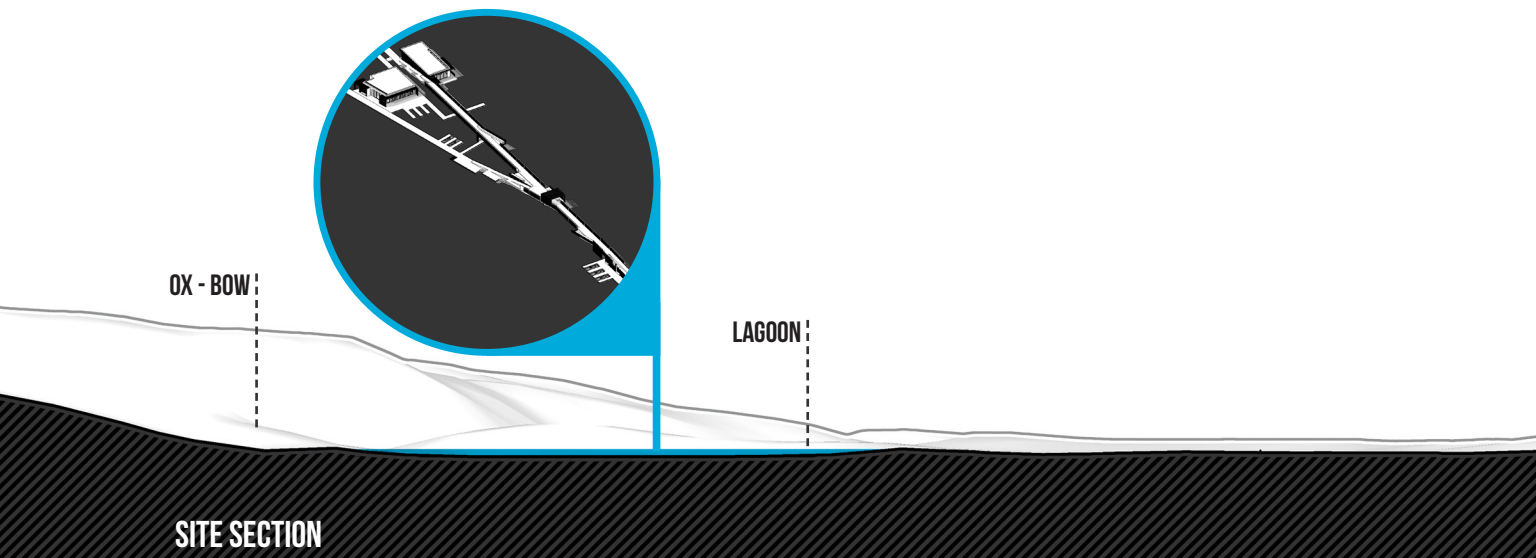
B & C

A

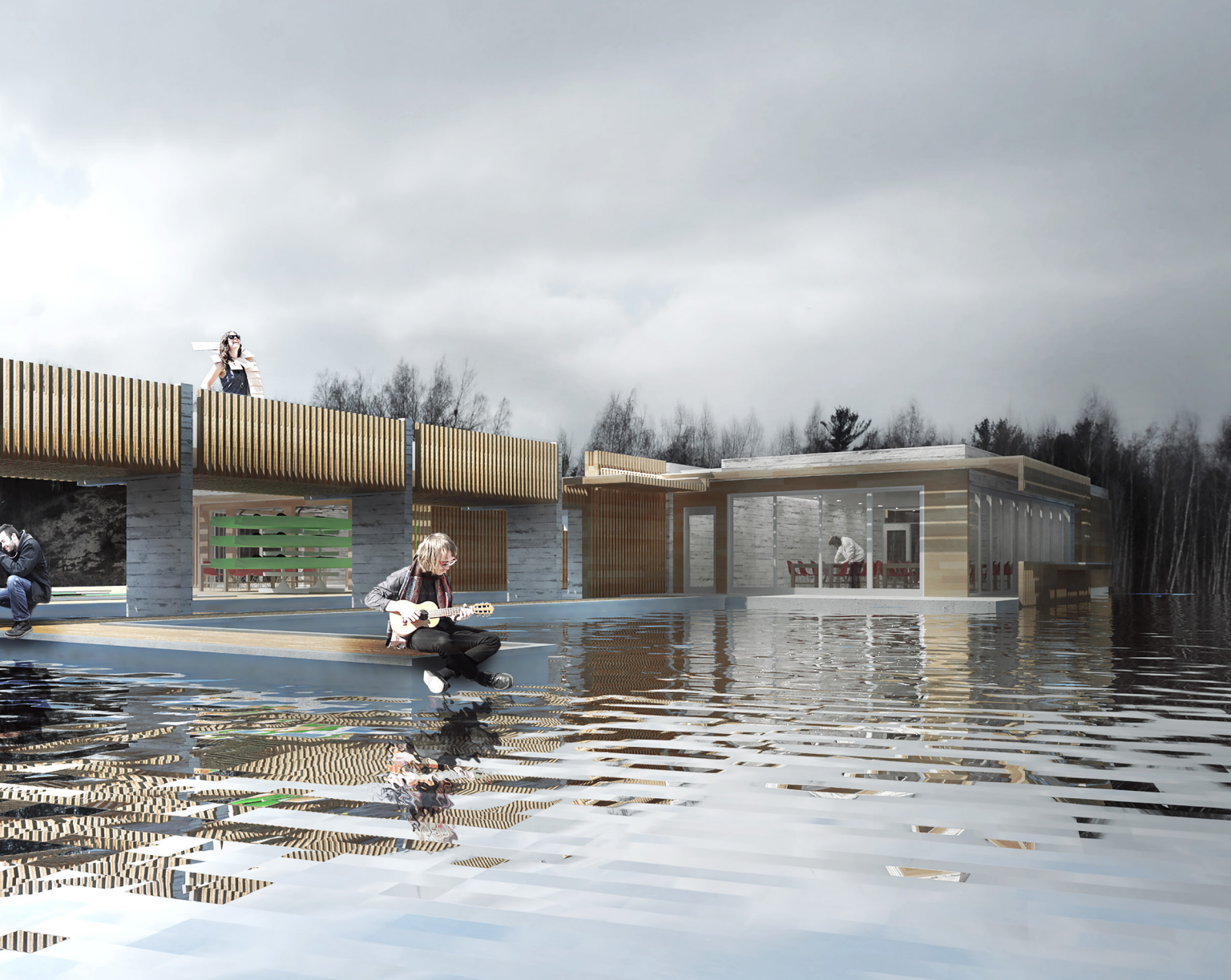


## 09.5 Bridge Studio

The bridge is not only a connector for people to walk from one point to another, but it is also an experience. The bridge or 'Bridge Studio' serves as both a pedestrian bridge to allow people to cross over the Kalamazoo River lagoon and have direct access to Lake Michigan and the site. In addition to being a pedestrian bridge, it houses an artist's studio that is directly on level with the lagoon and a kayak storage which also serves as a collaborative and design-build studio. The bridge houses many areas for Kayakers to dock and moments where artists can sit and practice their art, as well as host classes directly on the bridge. The purpose of this bridge is to connect the people to Lake Michigan, but also connect individuals with the lagoon itself.

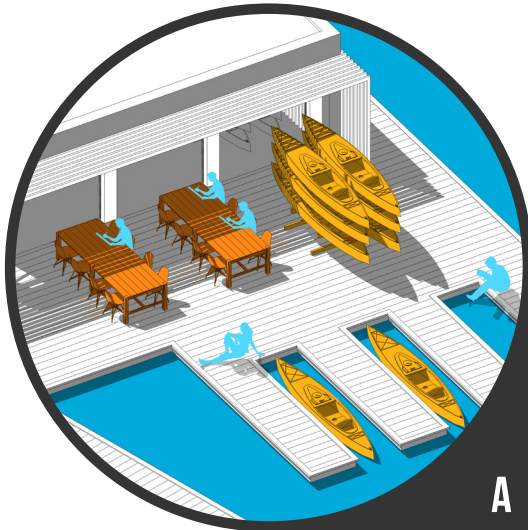




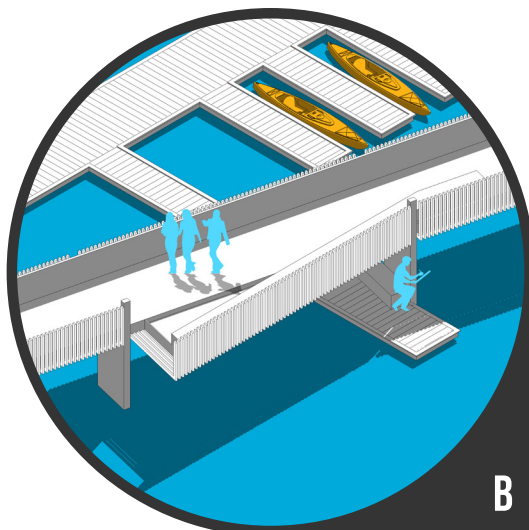


LAKE MICHIGAN

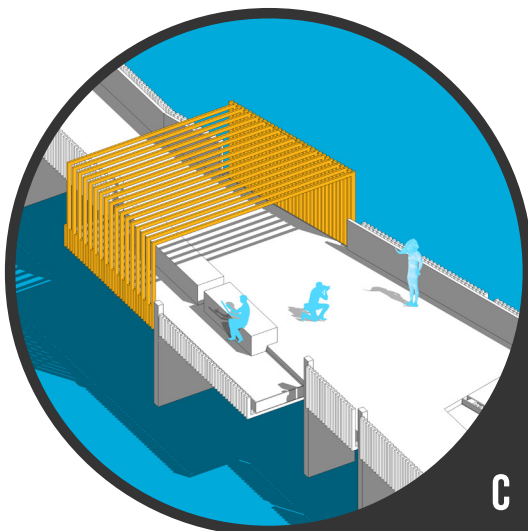
## KAYAK STORAGE / STUDIO



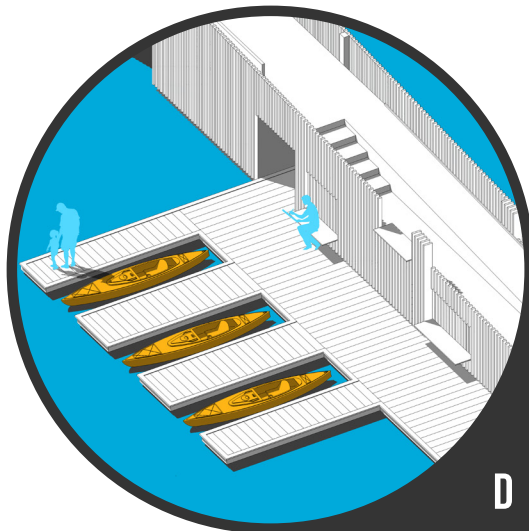
## MOMENTS FOR ART



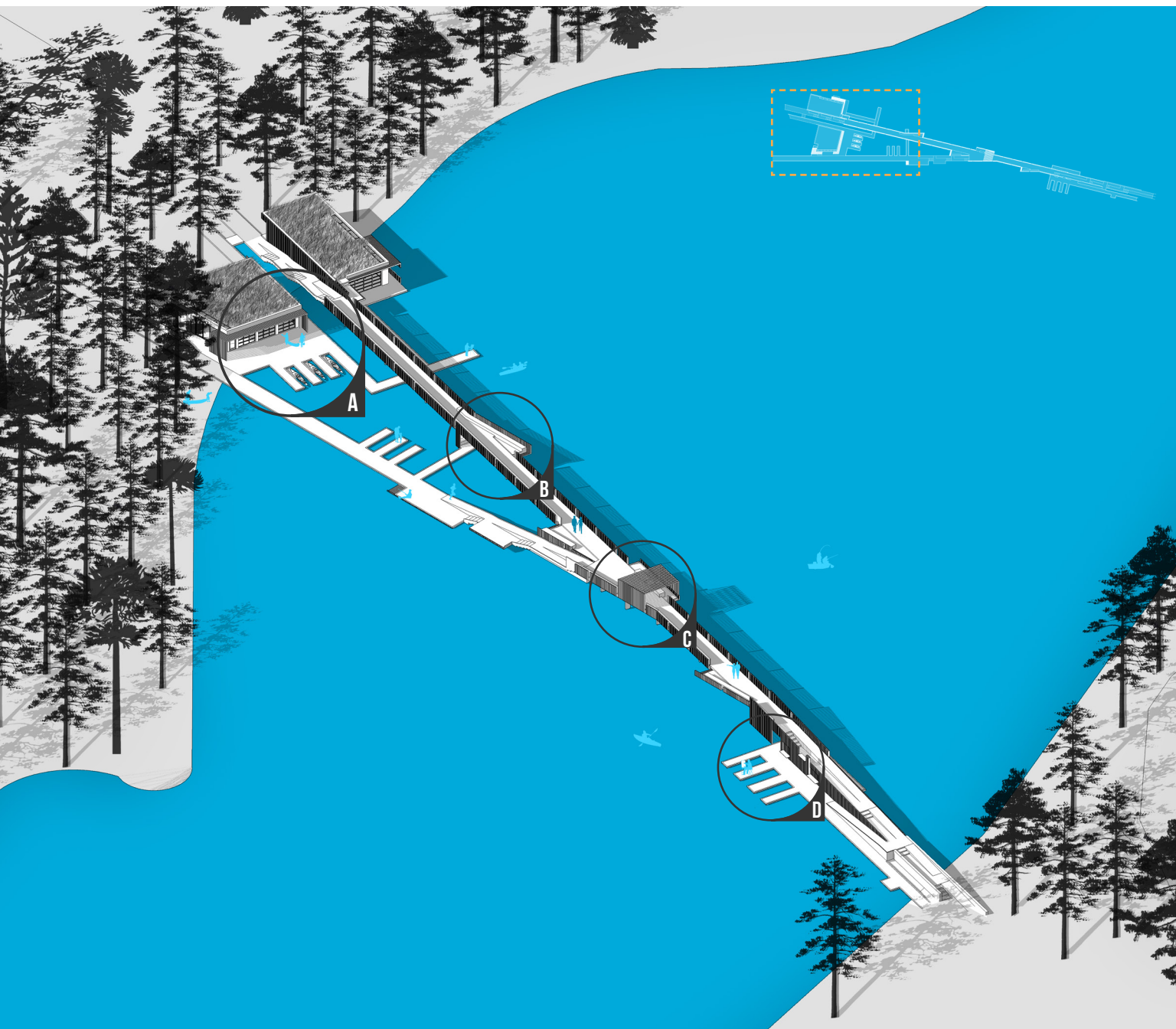
## OUTDOOR STUDIO



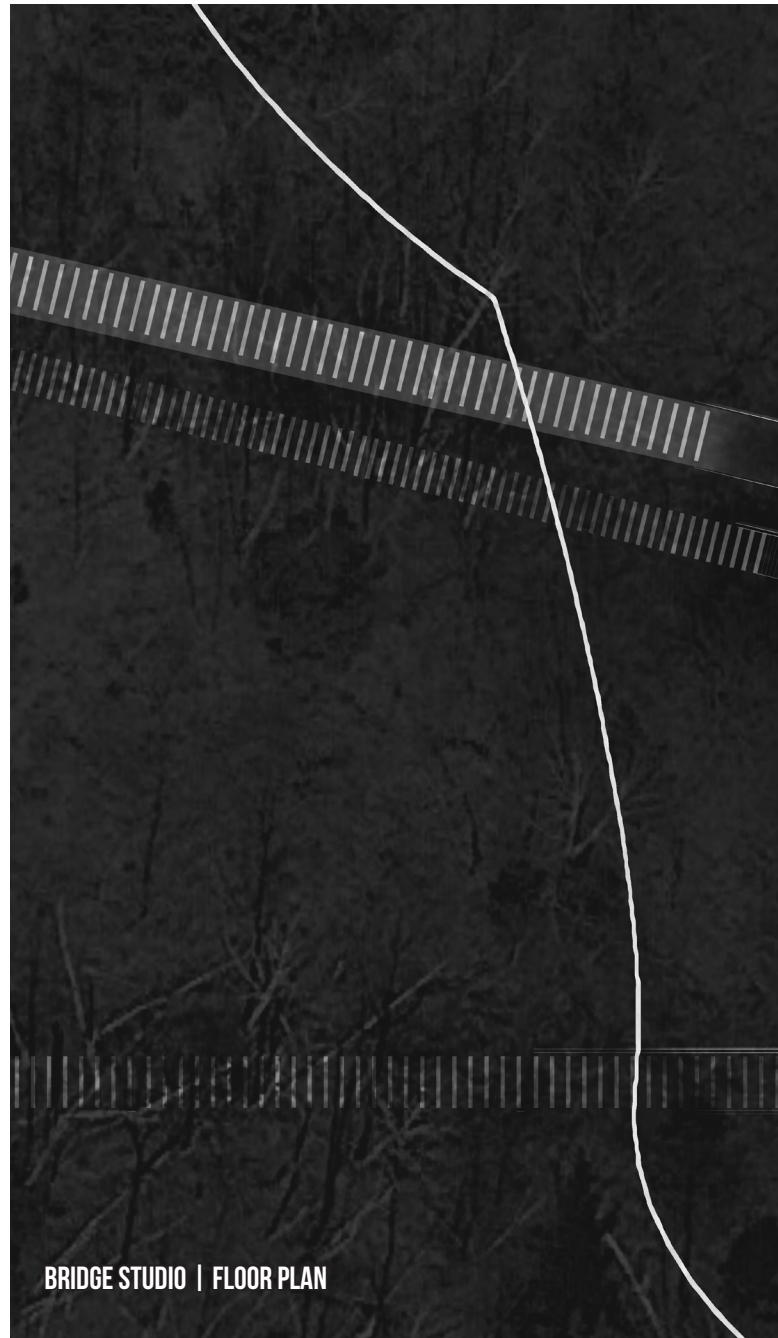
## KAYAK DOCK



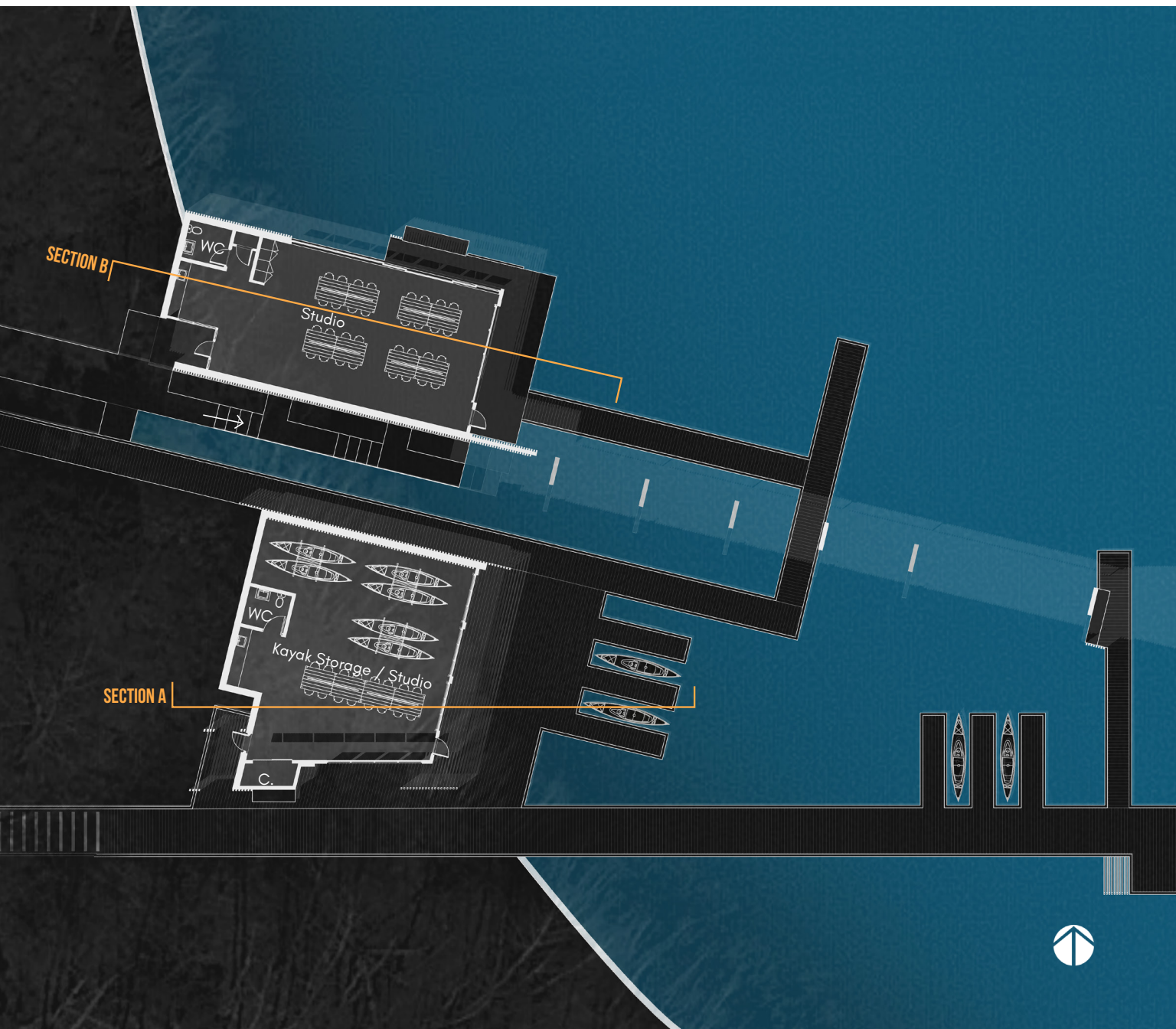






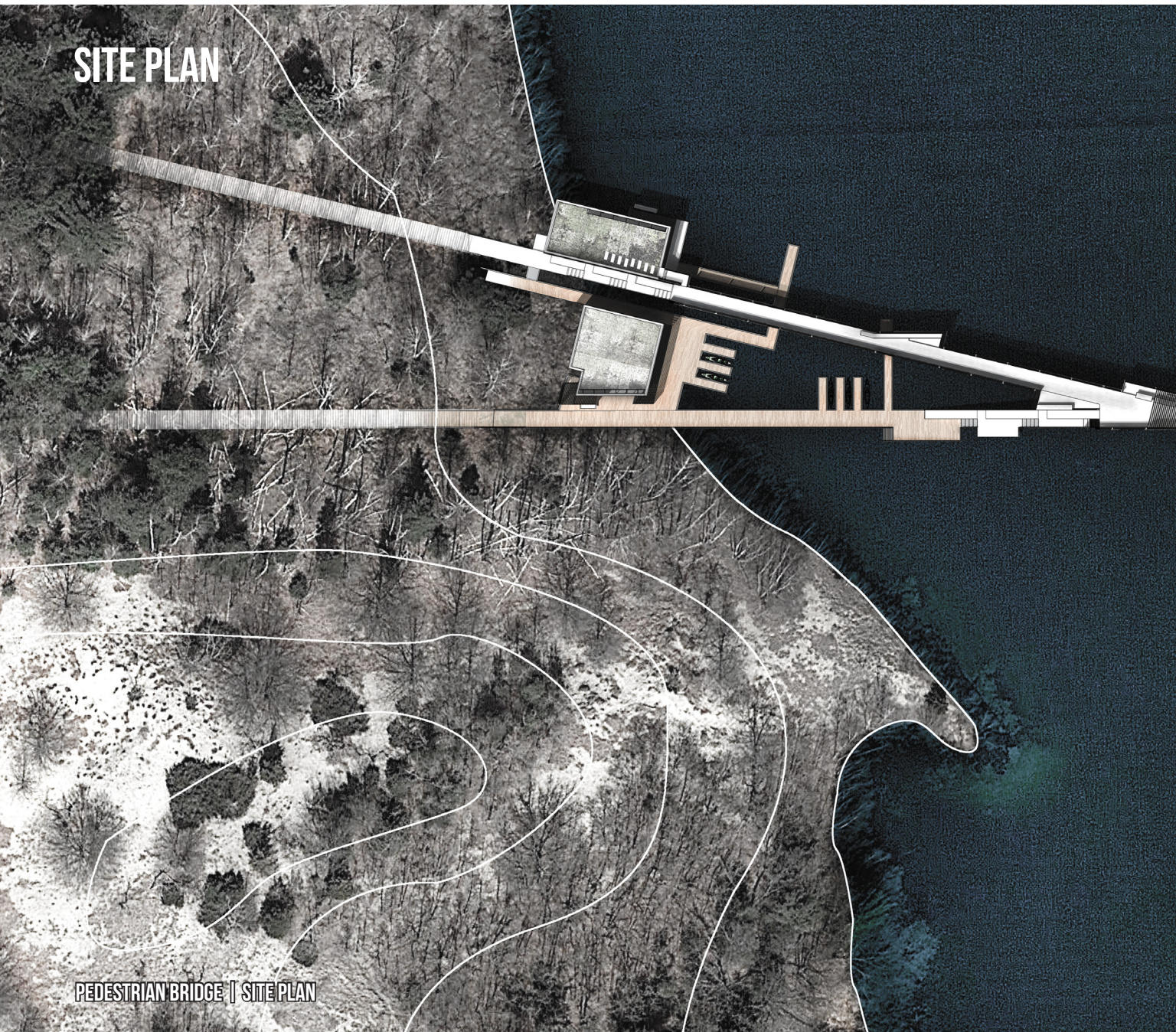


BRIDGE STUDIO | FLOOR PLAN



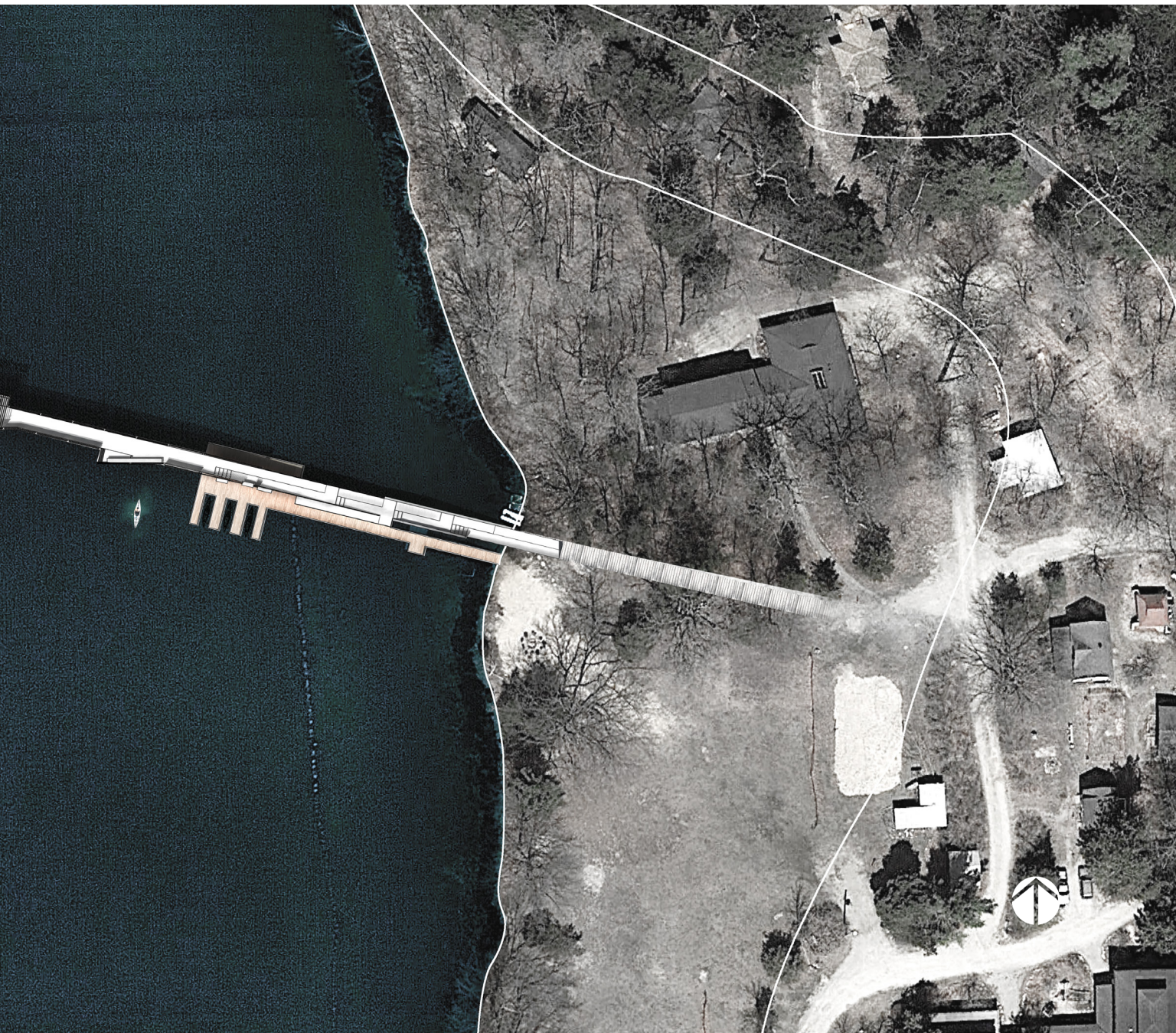


# SITE PLAN



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE | SITE PLAN









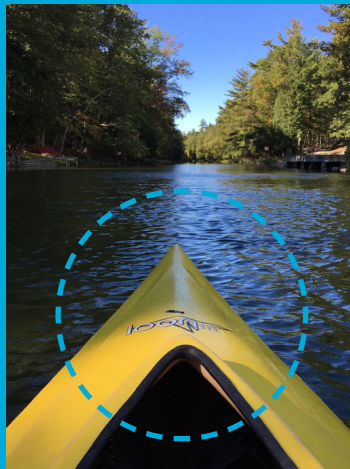
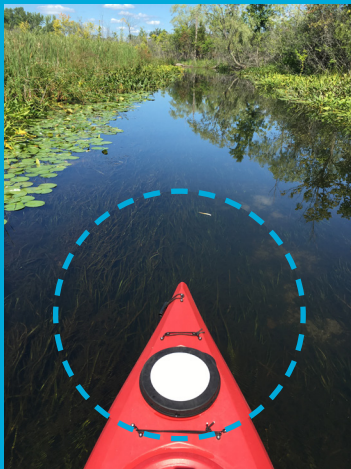
KAYAK STORAGE / STUDIO



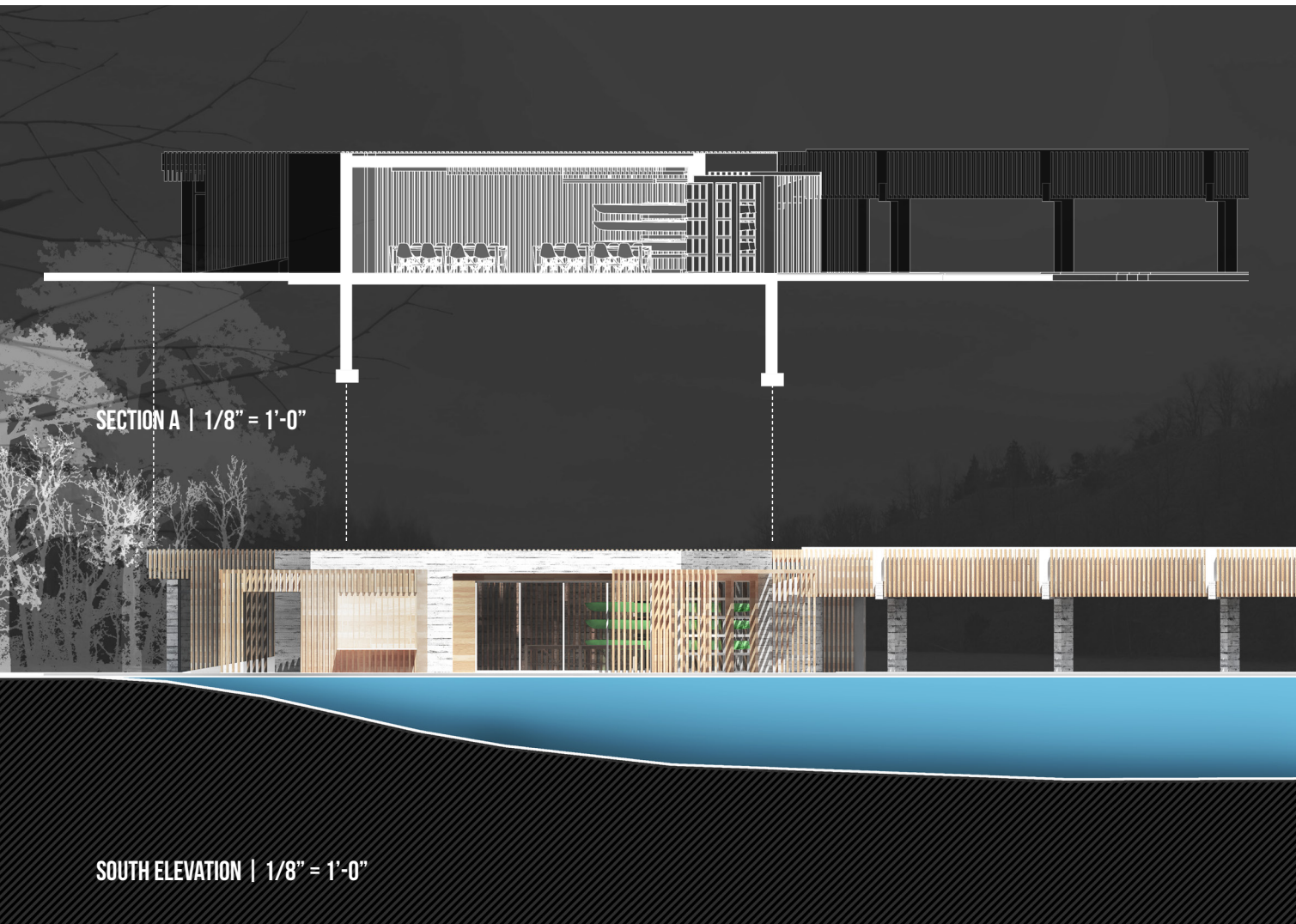
## Kayaking

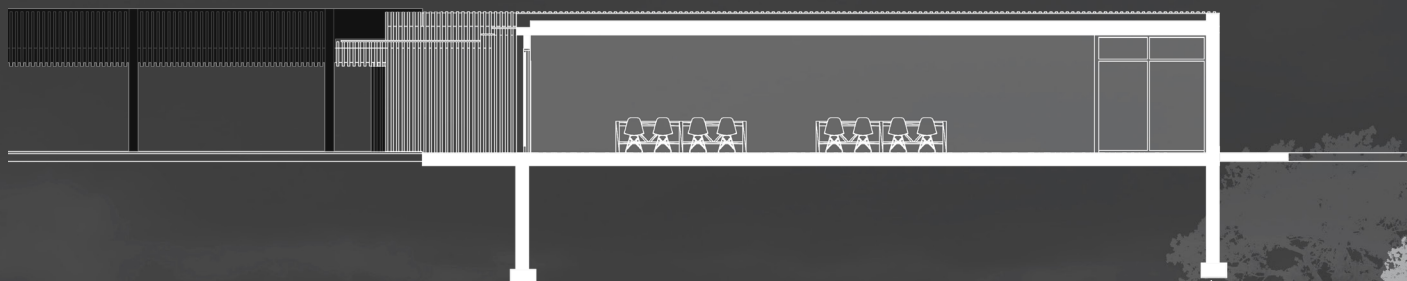
Kayaking has been a great outlook for me as a designer. I kayak whenever I can. It allows me to relax and spend some time away from everyday stresses that I come across. Kayaking has also been a great outlook for spending time with my family and friends. Being in a Kayak is a chance for me to have a very intimate relationship with the water. I am surrounded by water, and it is something that makes me feel very light and one with my surroundings. Kayaking is an effort that we take to try and be one with water. It is an opportunity to enjoy being out on the water to find moments of calm and collective thoughts. Though kayaking is not always as relaxing as it may suggest, even in the harshness of weather conditions it affects us in ways that cannot be achieved while on the land.

I saw kayaking as a starting point in my thesis process because of my personal connection to it, by adding it, the Ox-Bow bridge studio is my way of applying what I have learned and what I already knew about this topic of being on the water. Kayaking is a great way for artists of Ox-Bow to take a mental break from their work and turn to the water for inspiration. Though one does not need to create art in a kayak, it is something that the artists of Ox-Bow can take advantage of, while still giving themselves a moment of awe and calmness in the lagoon.









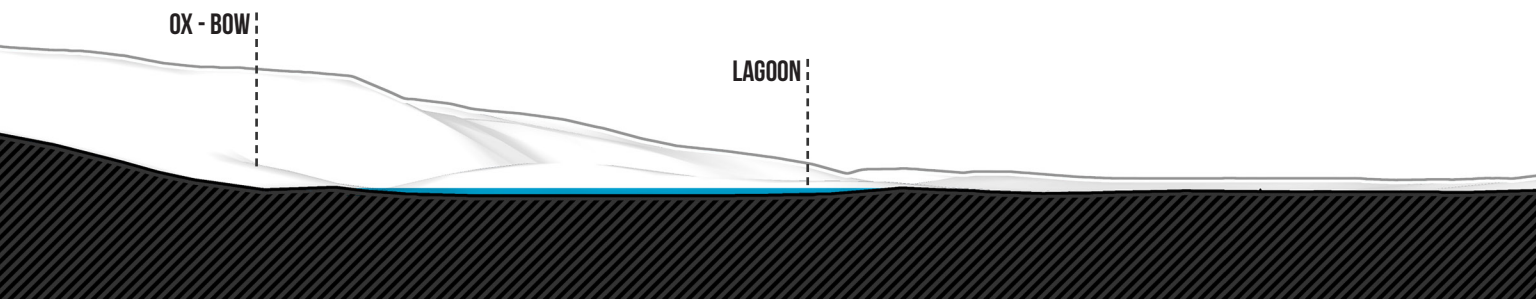
SECTION B | 1/8" = 1'-0"



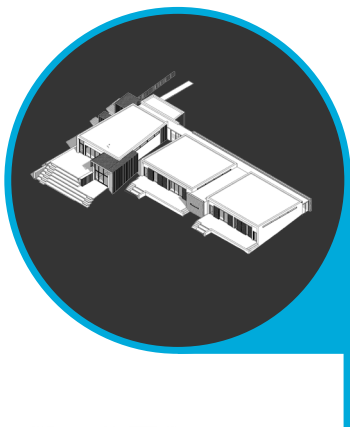
NORTH ELEVATION | 1/8" = 1'-0"

## 09.6 Hostel

The artist's residency of this site design, or Hostel as it is called, serves as a place where the artists of Ox-Bow can spend the night or the week in an open concept kind of bunker with common spaces and outdoor gathering along Lake Michigan. The hostel can house up to 16 people but has flexible spaces that can bring down the maximum capacity to 8 people. The hostel is meant to be a common type of place, but also offer space where people can practice their art in privacy as well as collaboratively. With an open concept living space, complete with a large dining table, a hostel is a place where people still have direct views to the water and can unwind and relax after a long day of working in the studio next door. Without disturbing too much of the sand dunes and beach grass, the hostel offers outdoors gathering spaces that are one with the building. The hostel is on the same level with the land and allows for intimate spaces where people can look to Lake Michigan and establish a relationship with the place as well as the people they reside within the hostel.







LAKE MICHIGAN

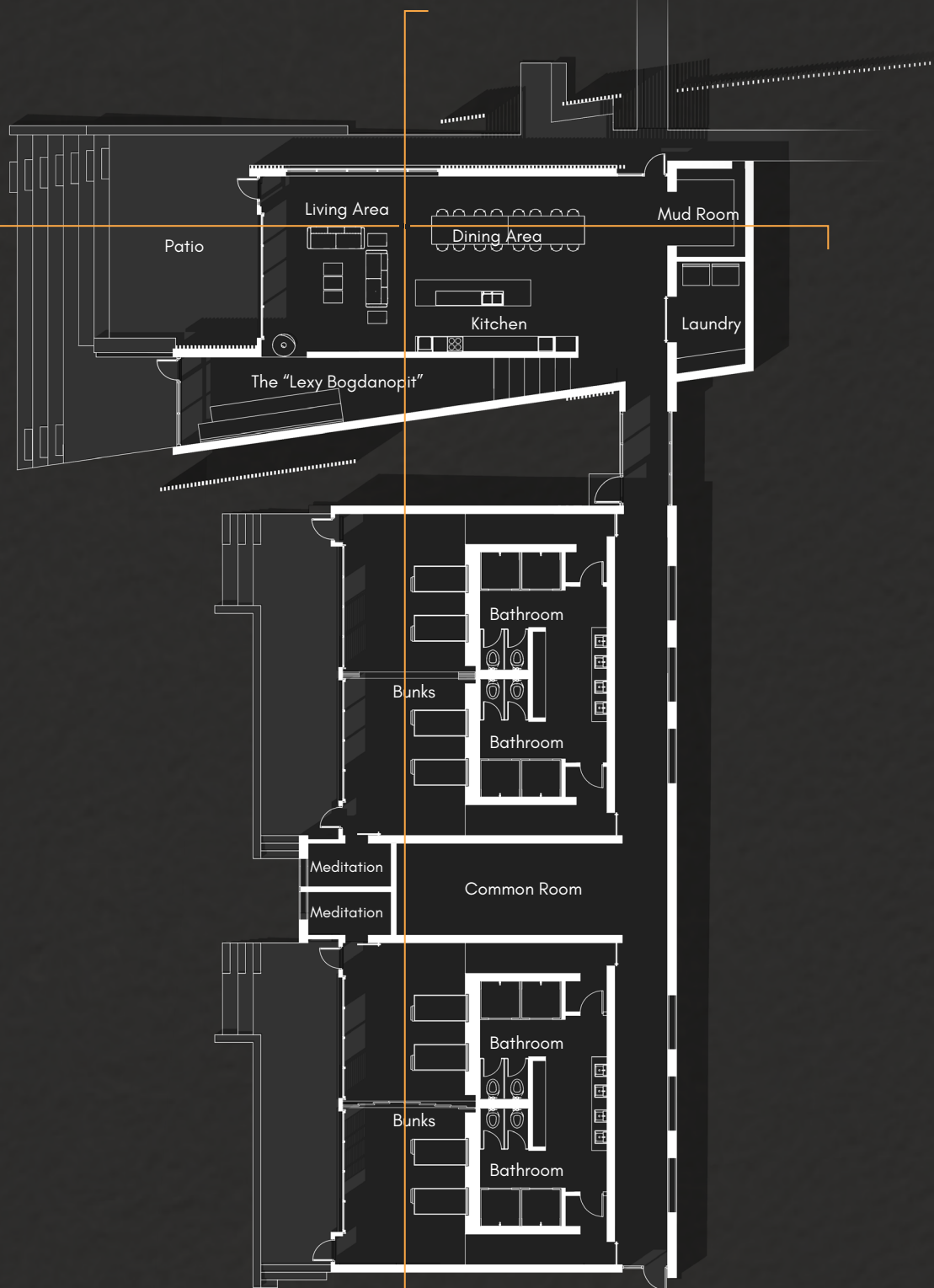


# SITE PLAN

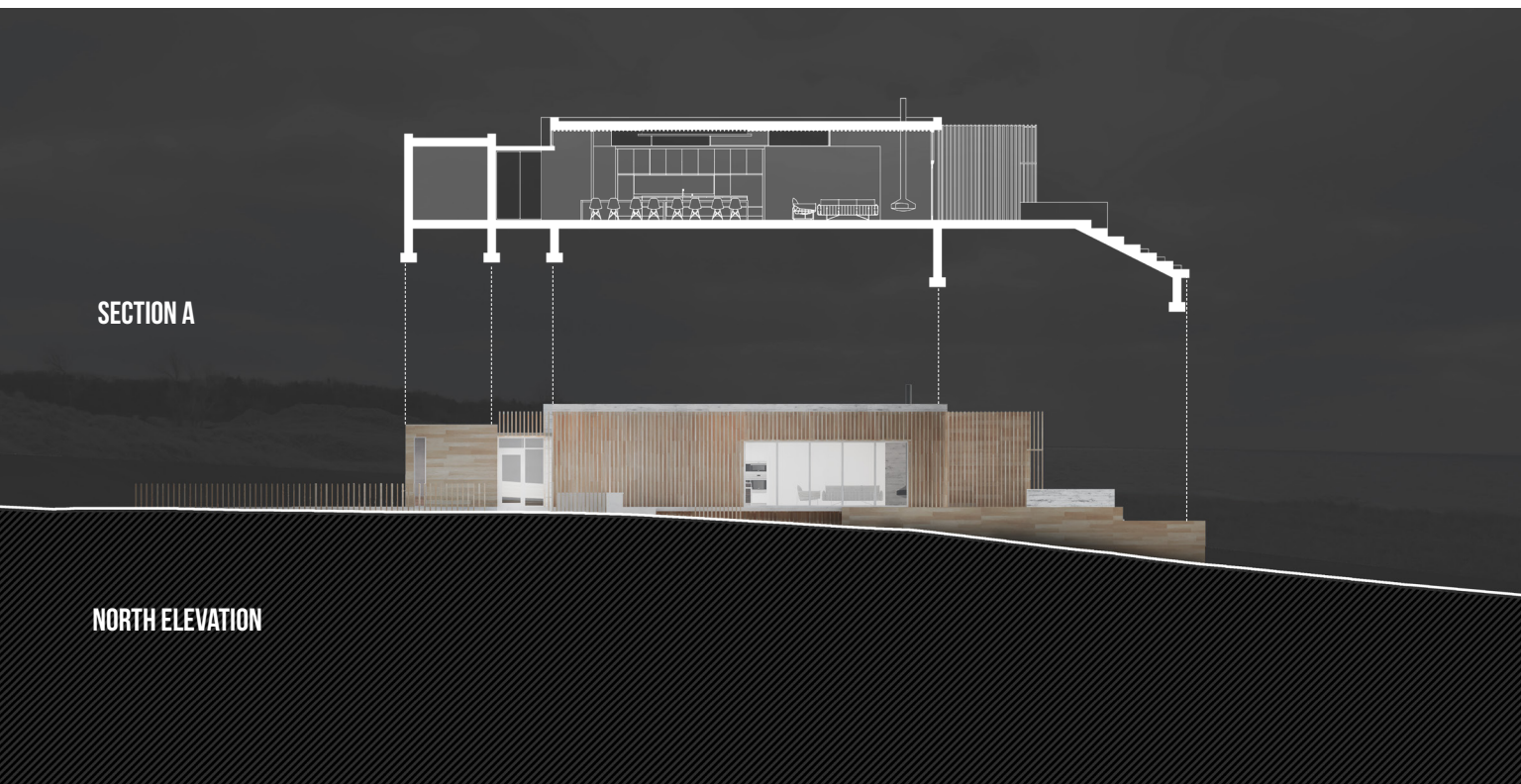
LAME MICHIGAN STUDIO | SITE PLAN



SECTION A







SECTION A

NORTH ELEVATION





COMMUNAL ROOM / LIVING AREA



SECTION B

WEST ELEVATION





## Adaptive use of Space

The hostel is not restricted to one kind of bedding arrangement. The bunk rooms can adapt and adjust to the demand of use. The bunk beds can move up and down making them a two-person bunk or a single twin bed. There are also partitions that can make one large room into two. The flexibility of these spaces is reminiscent of the diverse kinds of people that come through Ox-Bow every year. When the hostel needs to change to accommodate the artists that come to use this space, that possibility is available to them at their disposal.



# ADAPTIVE USE OF SPACE

Hostel room changes

Shading / Privacy  
Shutter and doors closed



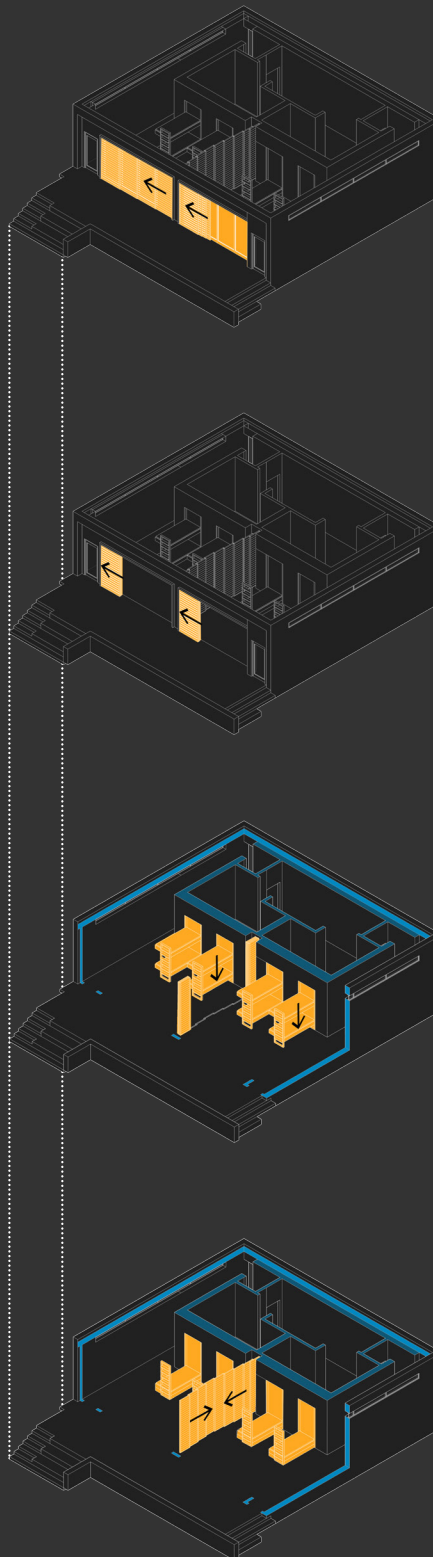
Indoor/Outdoor Space  
Shutters and doors open



Open community room  
1 Room  
8-4 Beds : Male and Female

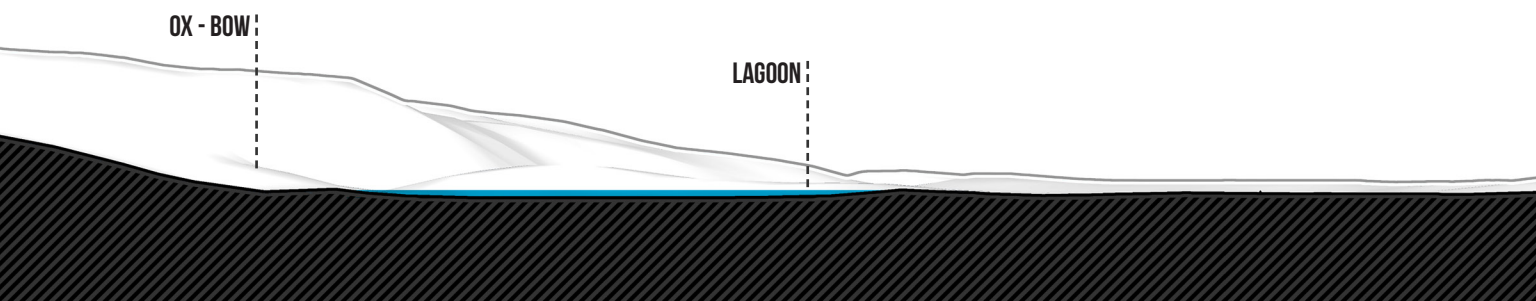


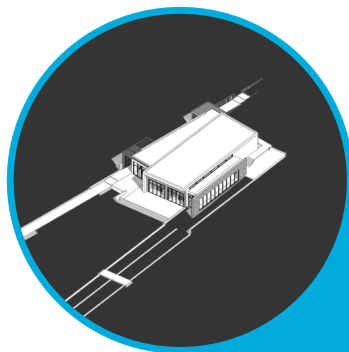
Enclosed private room  
2 Rooms  
2-4 Beds: Male and Female



## 09.7 Lake Michigan Studio

The new main studio that is located on the shores of Lake Michigan is where many of these established principles of “Blue Mind” come into play. The studio is located very close to the shoreline, but not too close where the harsh effects of Lake Michigan will damage the building. The studio is meant to be used by artists in a collaborative way, but there are also moments and places within the studio where individual work can take place. There is a break wall that extends out to Lake Michigan on both sides of the studio, and on one side the water can get up close and personal with the building as well as the people who will use the studio. In the middle of winter, the studio will be fully operational. The artists will also be able to work in an environment that is in a place of complete silence and solitude, allowing for the creative individual to have an intimate connection with the land along the water and allow themselves to express their passions and connect with their inner selves and talent in art.



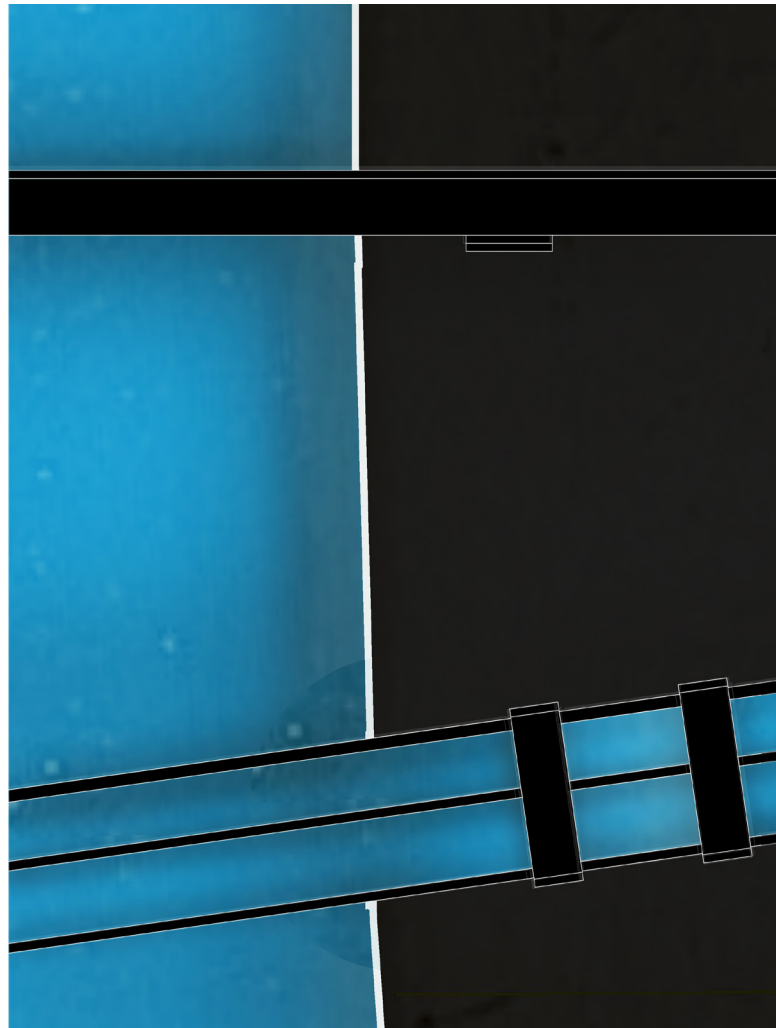


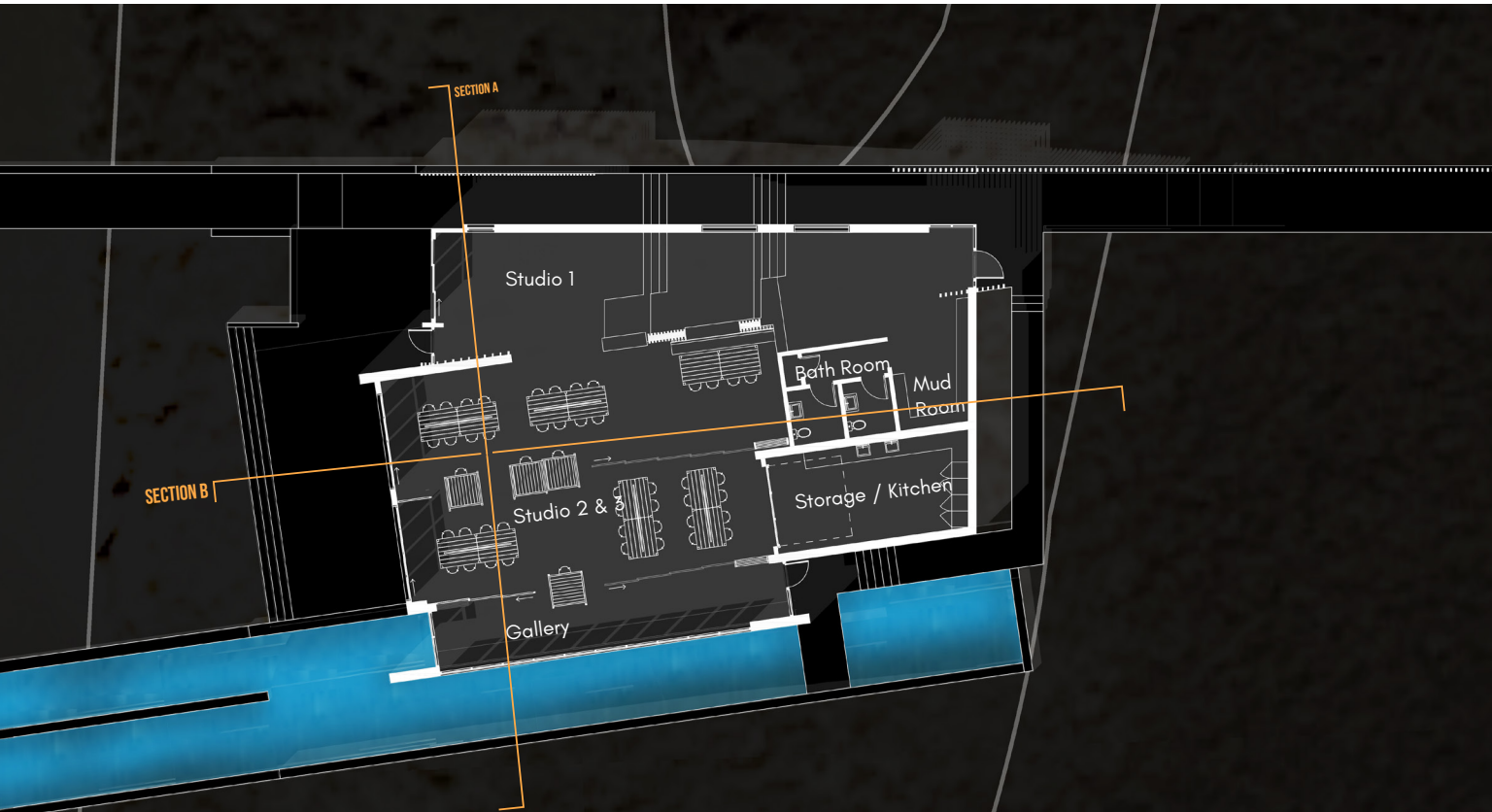
LAKE MICHIGAN



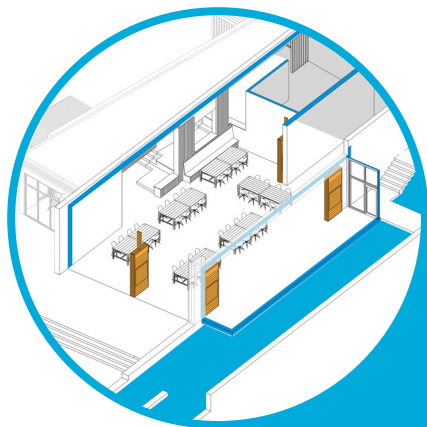
# SITE PLAN

LAME MICHIGAN STUDIO & HOSTEL | SITE PLAN

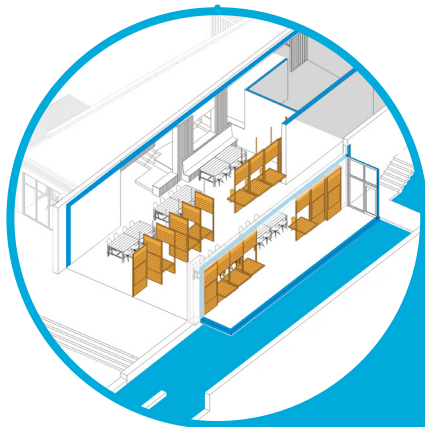




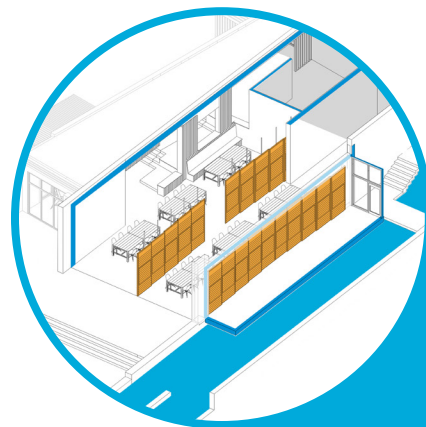




OPEN CONCEPT



DESK CONCEPT



CLOSED CONCEPT



## 09.8 Adaptive use of Spaces

Similar to the program of the hostel, the studio has spaces that are meant to be adaptive to the use of the artists that will use the studio. The main studio has a series of partitions that can be utilized for different functions per the user. These partitions can be used in many ways. Some of which include: a privacy partition, a pin-up board, a foldable desk, or they can be off to the side and allow for a completely open concept floor plan. However the artists decide to use the space is up to them, but the point here is that they can use the room, however they please, and it is not restricted to one function. The studio is influenced by the utilization of the artists, and the artists are affected by the studio and its proximity to the water as well.



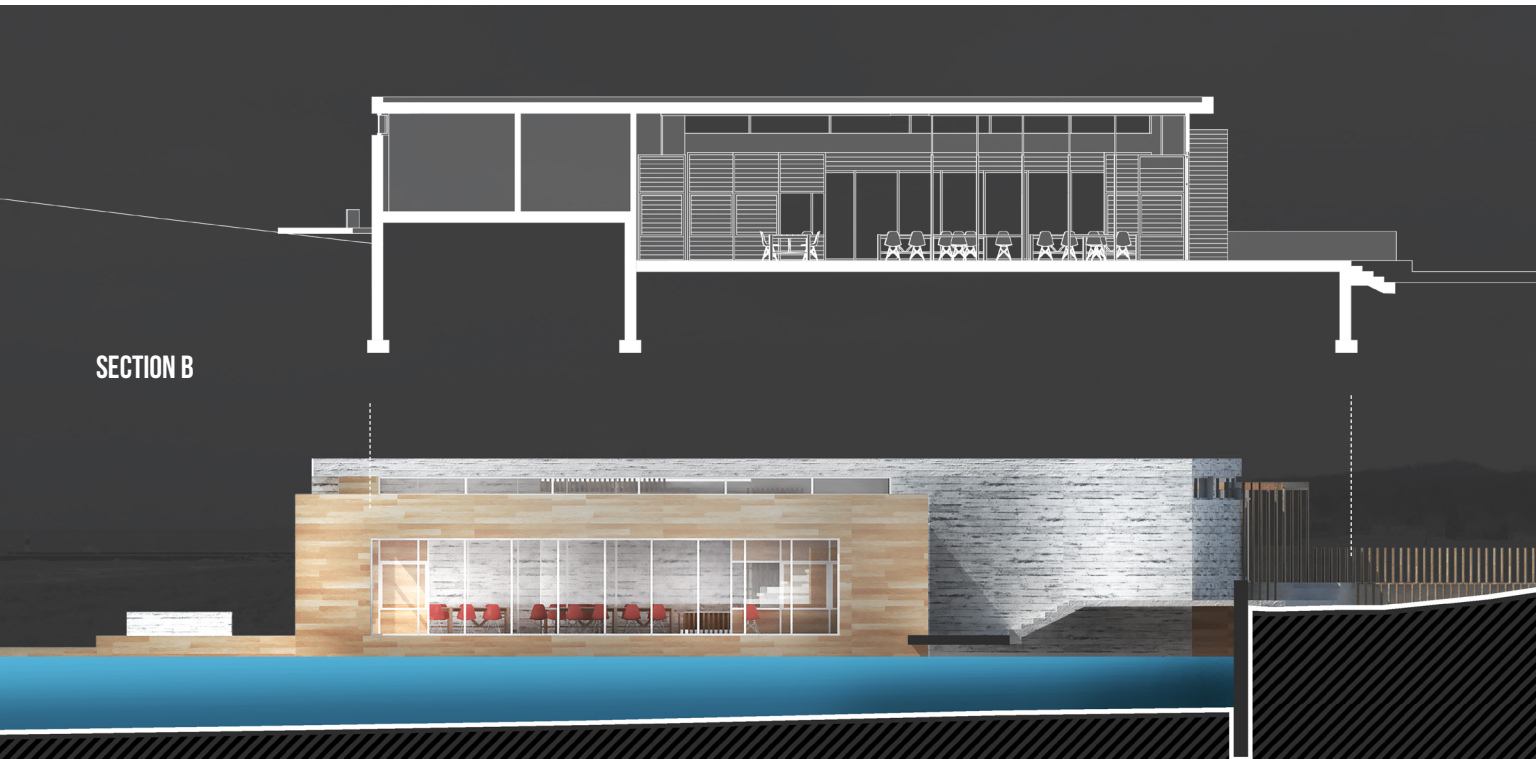
SECTION A

WEST ELEVATION





STUDIO 1



SECTION B

SOUTH ELEVATION





Mental Break



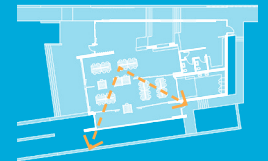
Meditation



Passion and  
Connection



Creative Mind

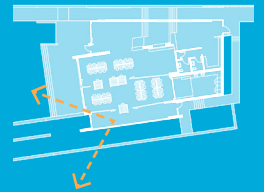
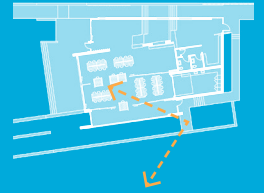


## 09.9 Wallace Nichols “Blue Mind” Spaces

The following spaces in the studio are moments in the building where the artistic individual or any user of the building can find places for their “Blue Mind” to flourish. The “Blue Mind” theory by Wallace Nichols talks about the ways that water can affect our mind in positive ways and affect our sensory stimuli. These spaces are highly dependent on the closeness to the water, and they can be used in the same kind of forms that Wallace breaks down the “Blue Mind” theory. They provide a mental break, meditative spaces, allowance for passion and connection, and the creative mind the flourish. How each of these specific spaces works with the “Blue Mind” is different, but they would be irrelevant without the sites abundant presence of the waters of Lake Michigan, in both the winter and summer months.

### 01. Inside / Outside

The artist studio can be very open in plan, but also provides spaces that can become smaller and more intimate. The movable partitions allow for this adaptive use of space, and the way the artists change them is up to the user. The most prominent element within the studio is the expansive number of windows and folding doors that allow for an indoor/outdoor room feel. The openness to the outside and direct views of the Lake allow for the users of the studio to feel as though they are outside or up close with the water. These views to the water and the sand dunes allow the user to work in an environment that is not overwhelming and puts the mind in a calm state.





## 02. Up Close and Personal

The moment one has an opportunity to sit and relax by the water is when the creative mind and a state of meditation can occur. The sounds of the waves crashing or the reflective characteristics of the water in this thin pool connecting to Lake Michigan, allow for a moment of pause to the mind. It is at this moment that the brain can be switched into the default mode; the mode of the brain associated with daydreaming, imagination, consolidation or memories, self-referential through, insight and introspection (Gregorise). This small moment located outside the studio can be used as a place for meditation, creating art, or a place where people only want to rest their mind. The closeness to the water in this space is vital, and it is what makes this area unique to the creative individual.

## 03. Intimate Space(s)

Much like the “up close and personal” space, this area just off the main studio is a place where the user can find an intimate relationship between the space itself and the water. The lake water gets very close and personal with the building at this moment. Even though the space is indoors, the visual elements of the water are very strong. It creates a space where one can practice their passion of art by using it as their personal studio and allow their brain to be in a restful state that is not overwhelmed with over-stimulated information around them.



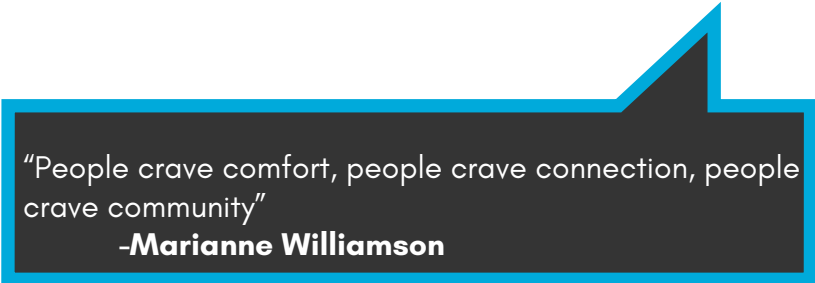
## 09.10 Future and Takeaway

A lot can be learned from how and why people go to Ox-Bow to express themselves in a natural setting. The reason people go to Ox-Bow is to place themselves in an environment that they are not used to and to change the way they think about things. As Shanna Shearer had mentioned while on my site visit, going to Ox-Bow may not always make people want to work in nature regularly, but it affects them in some way or another. Being in a landscape that is on the water affects people in ways that are powerful, and impactful to the way their mind functions. Much like the curriculum and practice of Ox-Bow, being along water affects humans in ways that cannot always be explained, but they reach us on a very personal, physical and deep level. The culture and curriculum of Ox-Bow are not completely altered or changed with these new buildings; it is instead being analyzed and added to see how creative individuals can interact and create things on the land along the water.

The future of Ox-Bow with these new buildings and architectural interventions in place will impact the way people perceive the school. The school will maintain its private and natural setting, but it will no longer be recognized as a place that is completely inactive in the winter months and can have a right level of activity year-round. This new level of year-round activity will coincide with the users who come to spend time at Ox-Bow. The new buildings and art studio will serve the school well by adding new contemporary spaces to its very rustic setting but placing the users in a site that is even more isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. This sense of solitude along the water is what makes the Great Lakes so unique at different times of the year, and if creative individuals can turn to the new Ox-Bow buildings for a place of pause and inspiration, then they will continue to motivate and inspire the creative individual who will use the space.



# 10. CONCLUSION



"People crave comfort, people crave connection, people  
crave community"

**-Marianne Williamson**

- .1** Statement
- .2** Final Thoughts
- .3** Special Thanks!





## 10.1 Conclusion

The overall processes of trying to find how and why people connect with the shoreline can be defined as why and how people visit, live, and dwell along the water or turn to it for inspiration and an outlook for self-reflectance and relaxation. There is a high demand for people to be along the water, and the interactions people have with water's edge can relate to the way people connect with places in general. People relate to places through experience and experience is achieved by interacting with places and spaces that make us feel a certain way. Of course, not everyone has the same kind of connection to the water's edge. In fact, there are likely more different connections than similarities, but the similar relationships that people have with being along the water are incredibly valuable when architects and planners begin to think about people's interactions with the land along water.

Studying how and why people see the Ox-Bow School of Art as an outlook to their creativity and education or hobbies as an artist, served as a vessel for ways that people interact with and find pleasure with being on the water and in nature. The site was a place where solitude is very prominent, and its proximity to Lake Michigan gave the potential for an opportunity to create a new means for the artists of Ox-Bow to interact with the land along the water. The end goal for exploring Ox-Bow and creating new spaces that were about connecting with water served as a tool and a chance to think about how people interact with water through architecture. In addition to this, these spaces were meant to explore how one can design a place on the water that can affect the way people create art while finding a chance to receive a mental break, be put in a meditative state, find passion and connection with the place, and allow their creative mind to connect with the water's edge.

The process of this thesis has taken on many roles. Starting out as a personal interest, this topic flourished into an investigation of what it means to connect with places that we find value. For myself and the type of locations and people this thesis considered, it was about an interest in the water's edge and how it has, can, and will affect people who interact with it. The hope of possibly continuing this study on water's edge is that we as architects and planners can create new spaces that allow for people to connect with the place along a very precious and captivating condition; the land along the water.

## 10.2 Final Thoughts

This thesis has been nothing short of an intellectual and influential experience for me as a designer and future architect. Throughout this process, this thesis topic is something that I grew to become even more passionate about; more than I could have ever anticipated, I believe it will continue to inspire and guide me as I begin my career. This thesis proved to be more than a project, it was an opportunity to investigate something I have always been passionate about and to apply the skills that I had already acquired through my years of architecture school with the new skills that I gained in my master's thesis year. What I have gained from this process will serve me well in the future, and I intend to continue with what I have learned by applying it in new ways to how I think, design, and see the world.

## 10.3 Special Thanks!

What I have accomplished these past five years in Architecture school I could not have done alone, and I am forever grateful to those that have instructed, mentored, and been there for me in my journey through architecture school.

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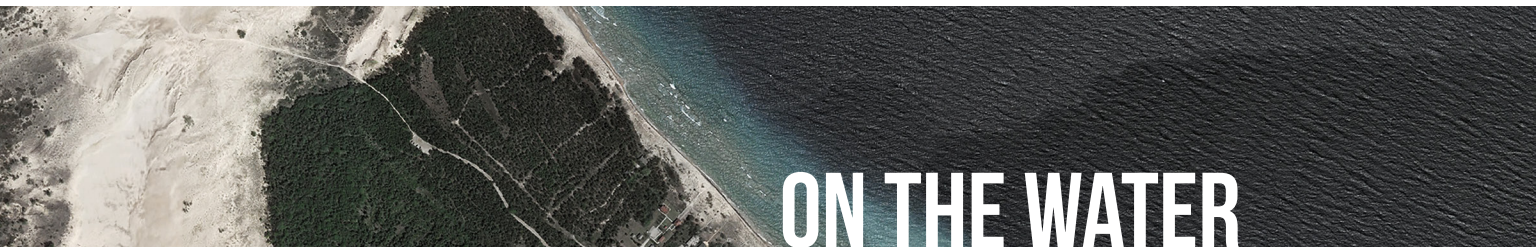
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# ON THE WATER

Thank you!



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