

Teaching Portfolio

Ali Reza Shahbazin

Ph.D. Candidate in Architecture



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

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

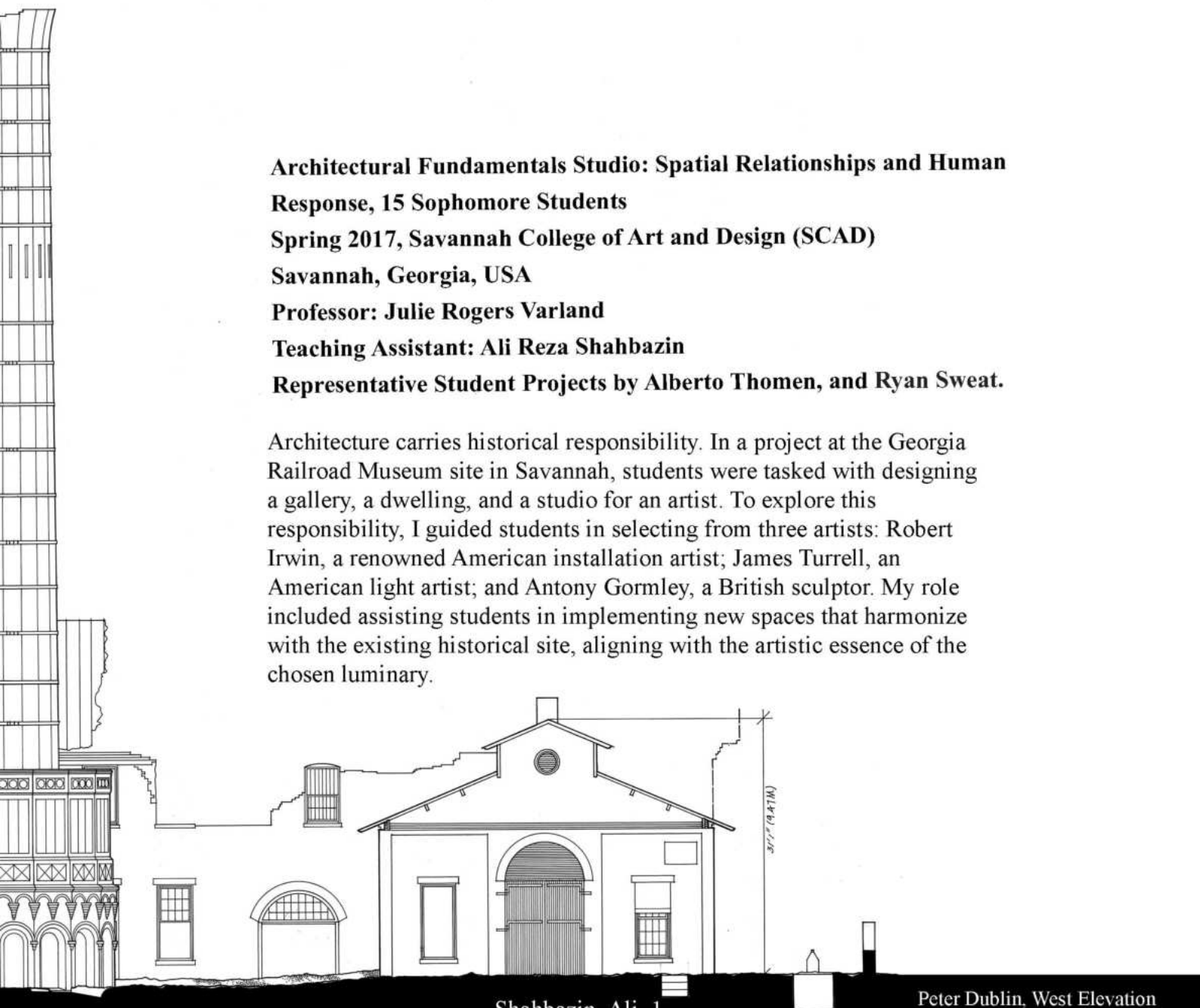
Savannah, Georgia, USA

Professor: Julie Rogers Varland

Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin

Representative Student Projects by Alberto Thomen, and Ryan Sweat.

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



Shahbazin, Ali, 1

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



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

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

Fig. 1

Gallery:

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

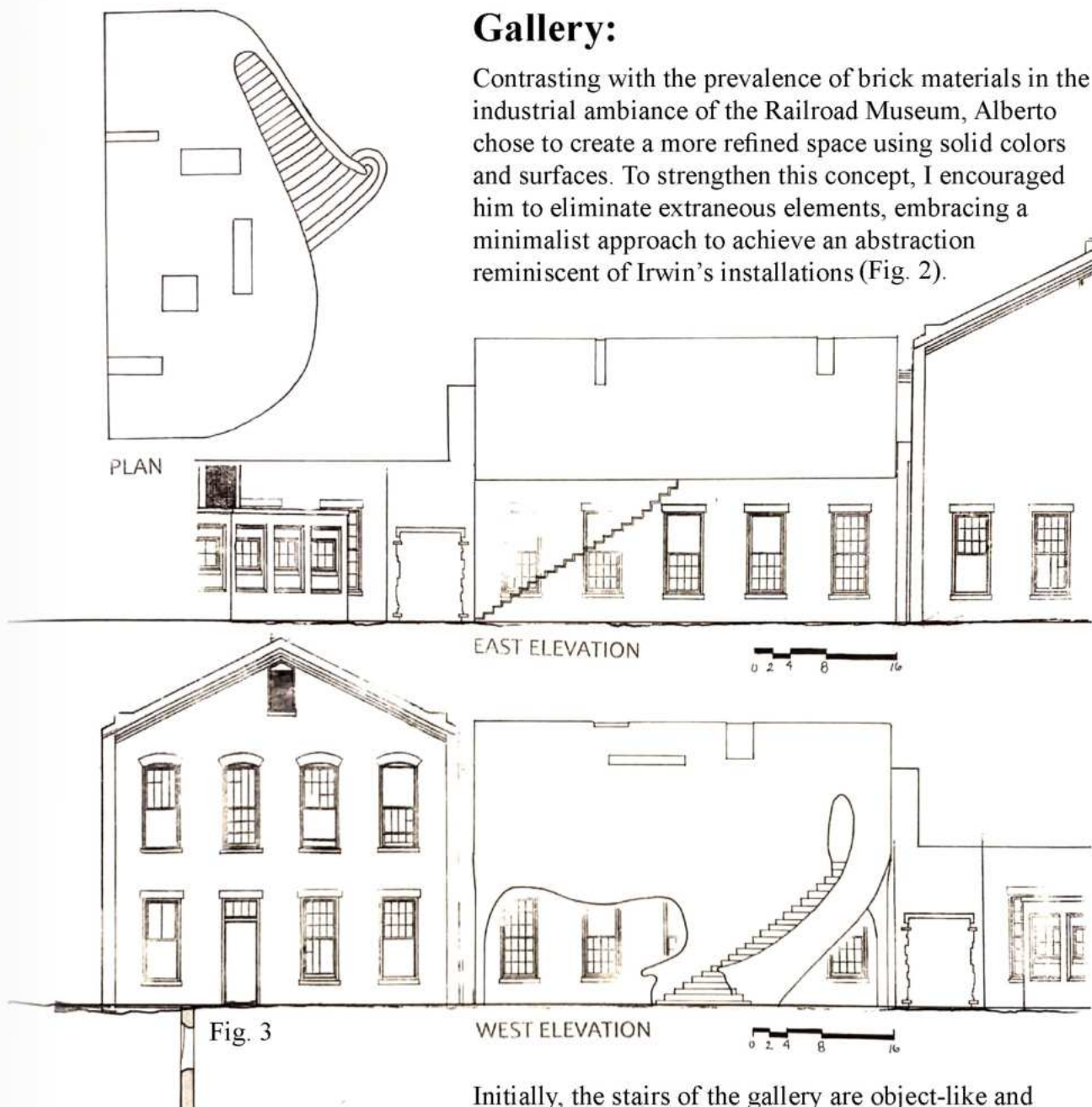
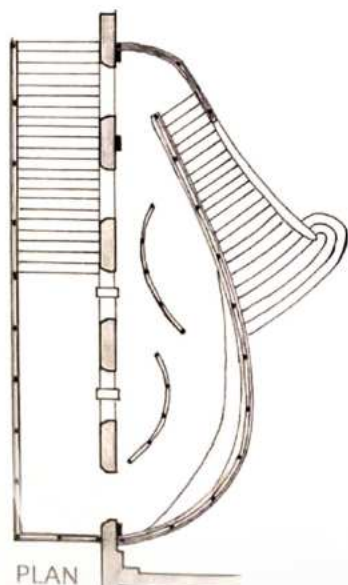


Fig. 3

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

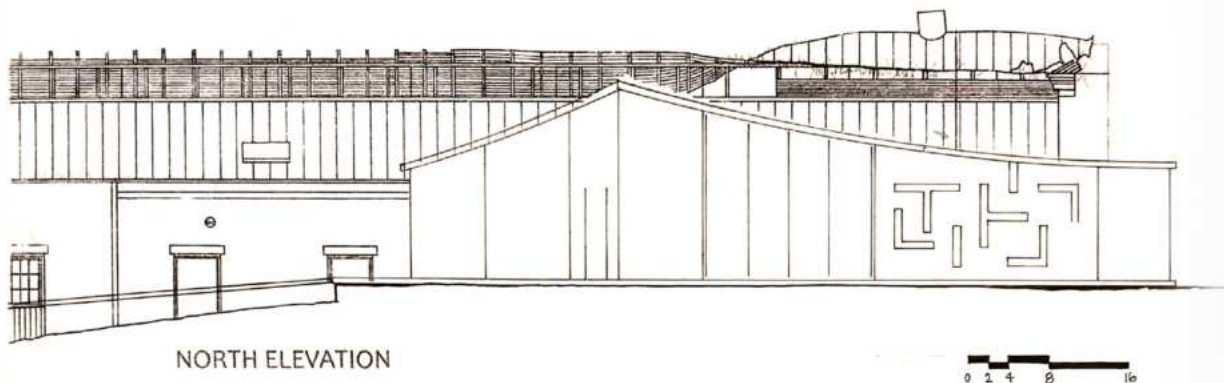


PLAN

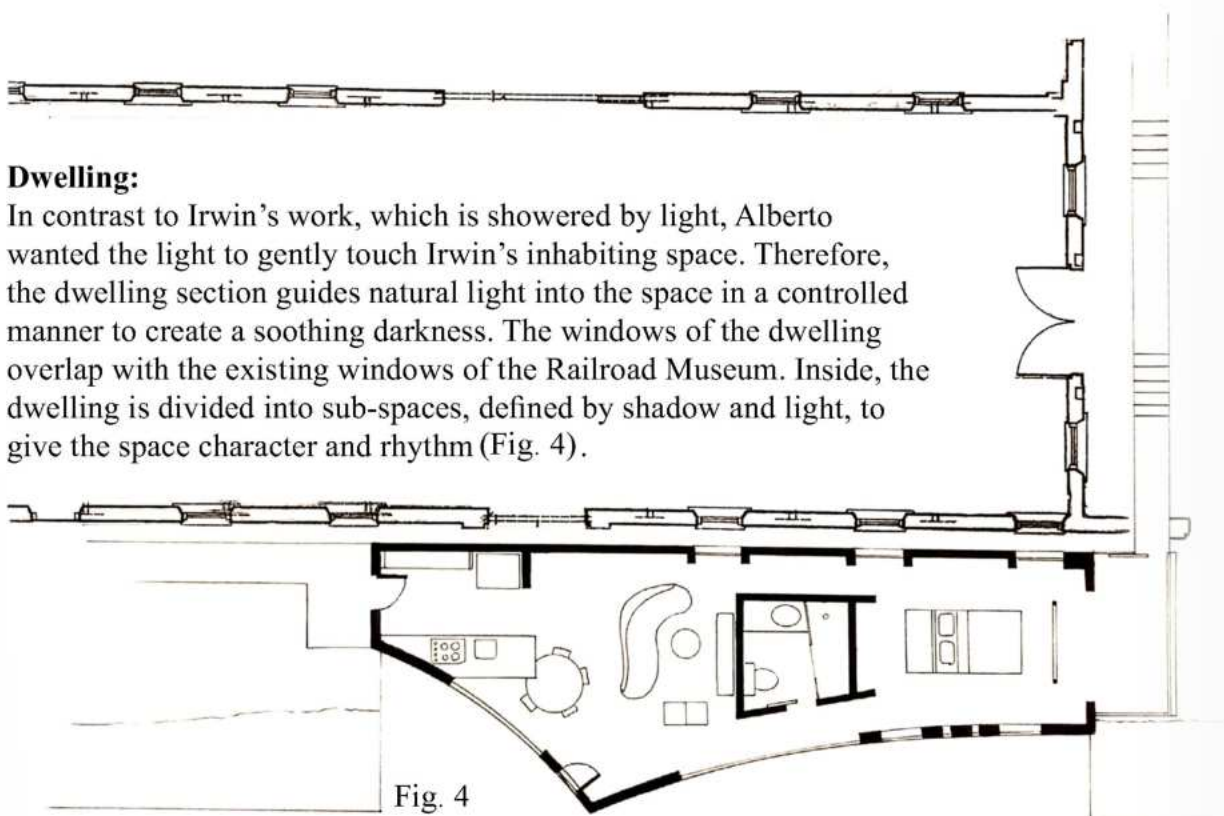


Fig. 2

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NORTH ELEVATION

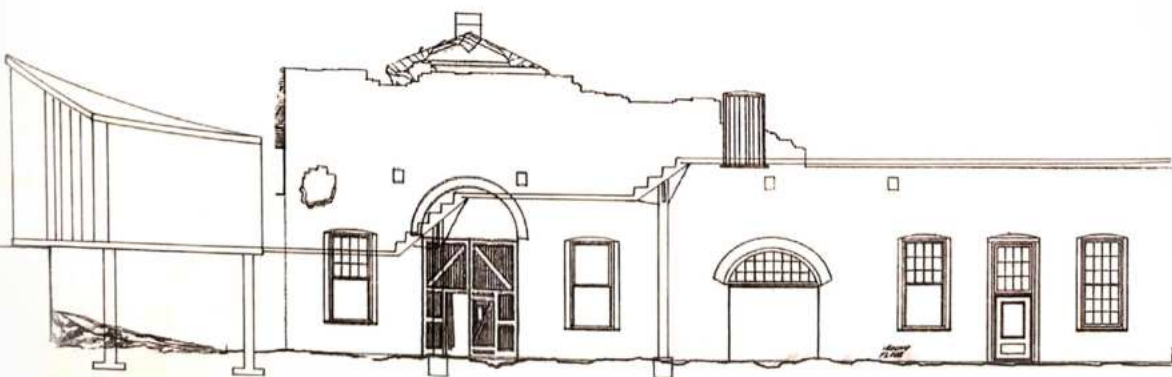


Dwelling:

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

Fig. 4

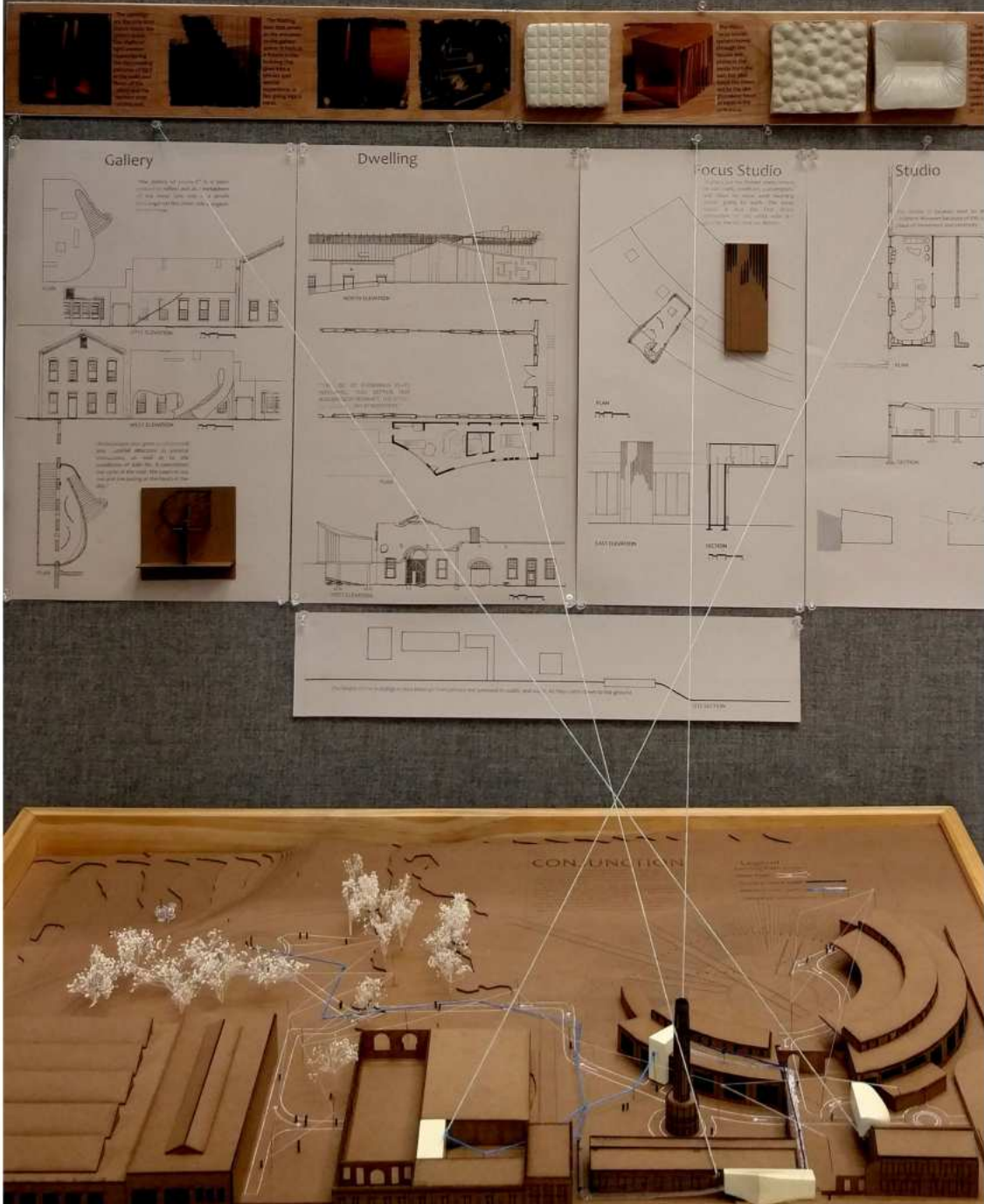
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Shahbazin, Ali, 4

Studio:

Alberto seamlessly blended his architectural vision with the rustic materials, bricks, and historical ambiance of the railroad museum. Notably, the art studio embraces the circular structure within the museum complex, preserving its distinct identity. Throughout the design phases, I motivated Alberto to envision his project as an architectural meditation inspired by Robert Irwin's compelling question: "What is more wonderful than our ability to perceive the world?"



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

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

Projecting Self

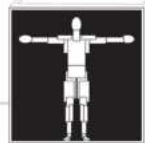
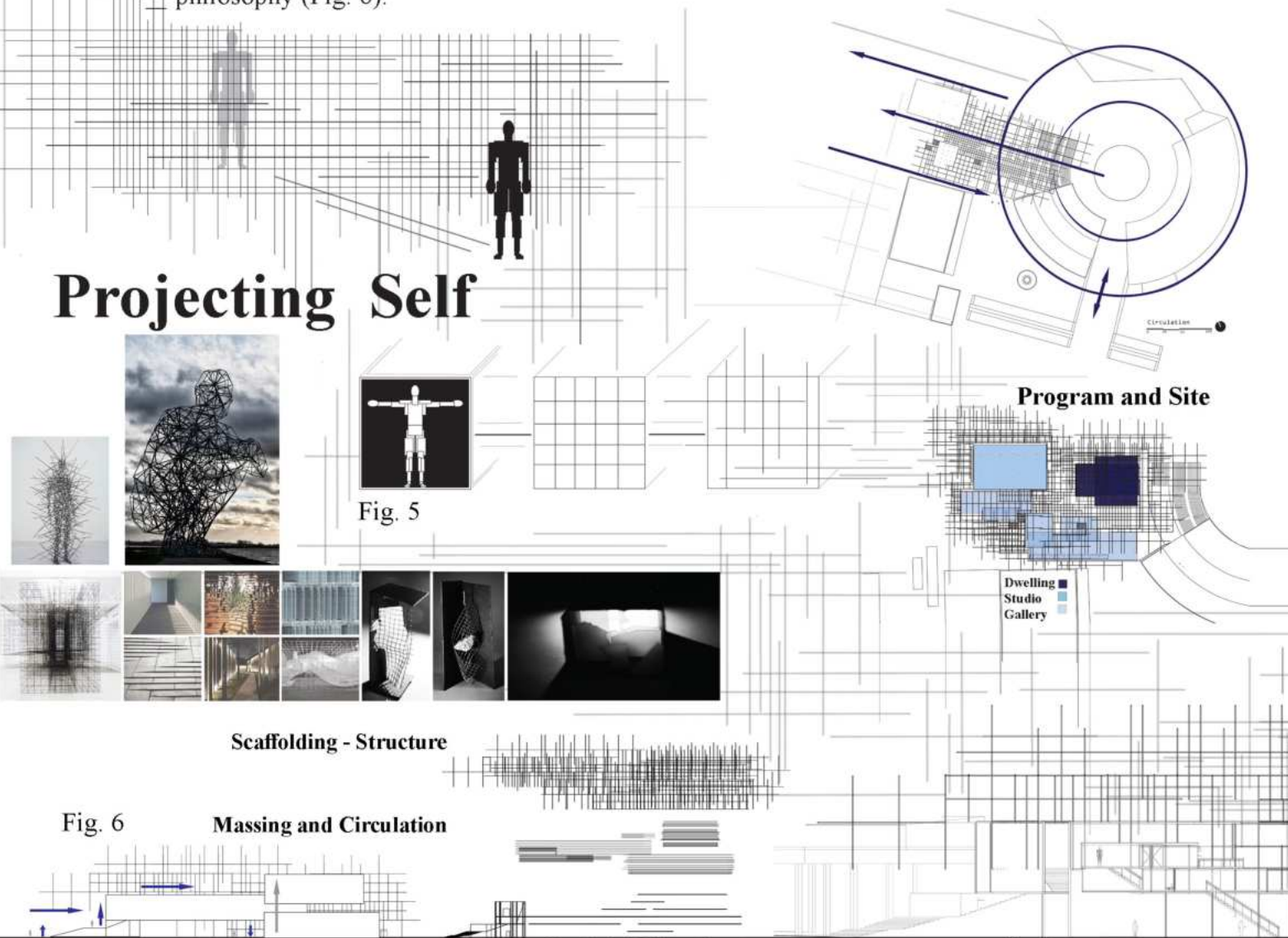


Fig. 5



Scaffolding - Structure

Fig. 6

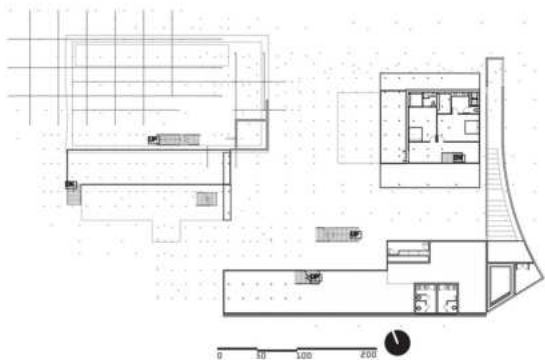
Massing and Circulation

Exploded Elevation

Section



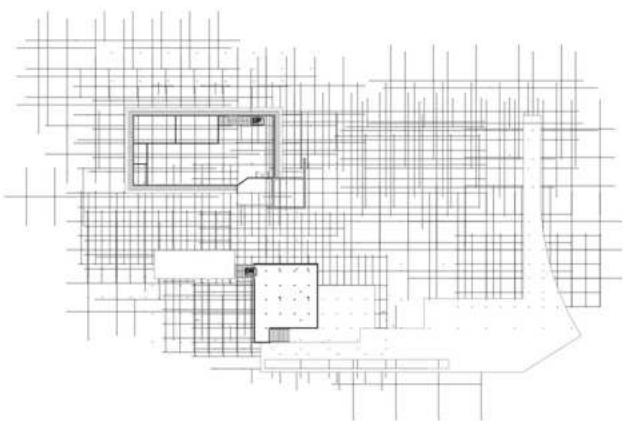
Shahbazin Ali, 6



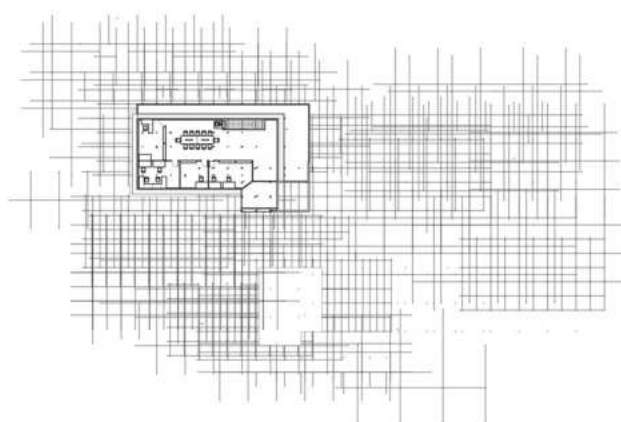
First Floor



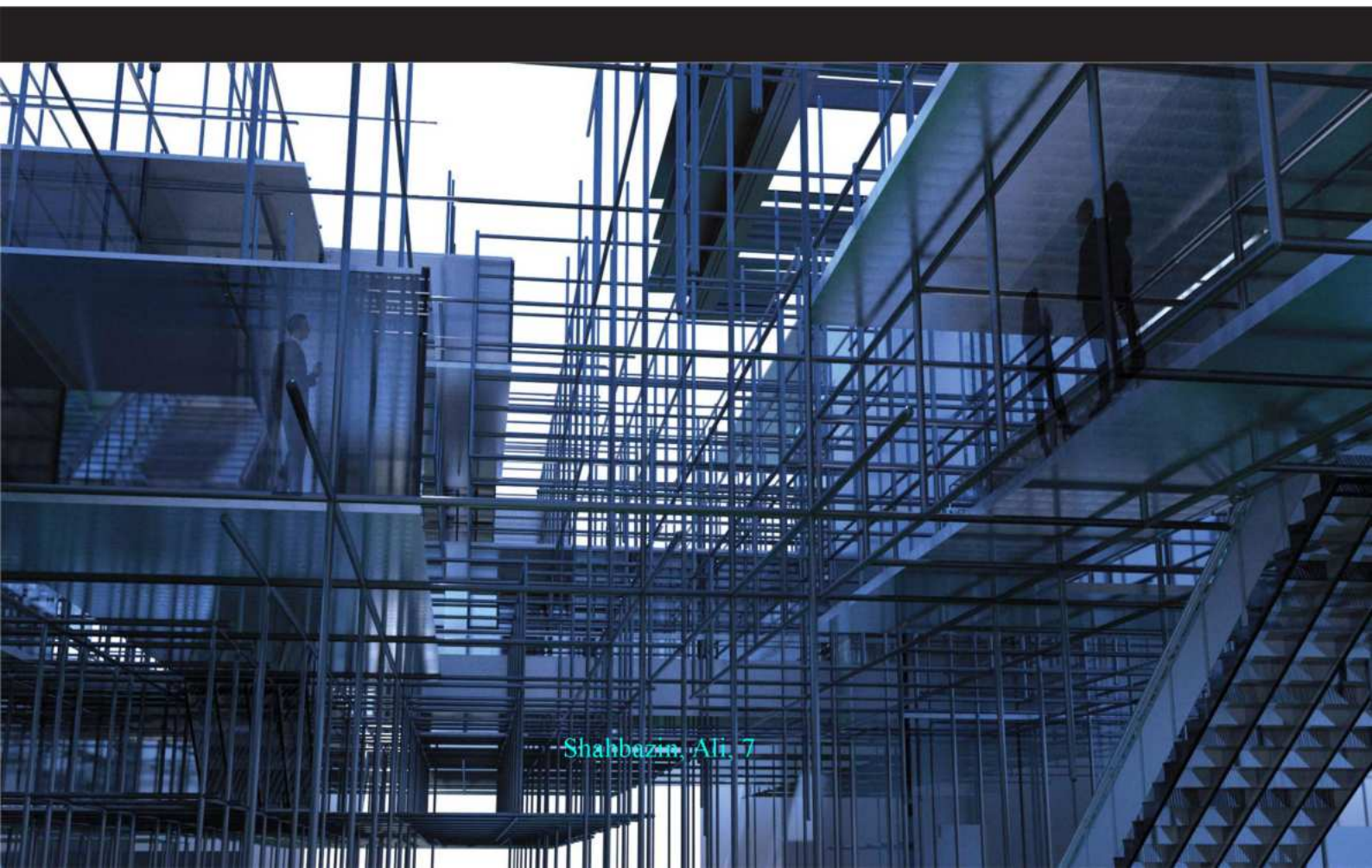
Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



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

Introduction

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

Assignment 1

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

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

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

Assignment 2

In the second assignment, I asked students to find a real place (site) for their Borges story to unfold. I articulated “place” for them as a meaningful space, enriched with human experiences. Students imagined themselves as a director or a set designer finding a location for a film or play (their Borges story) to be staged. Their selected story had to take place within a built environment; they were asked to bring the story and place together in a collage and reveal the spatial possibilities of the real place.

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

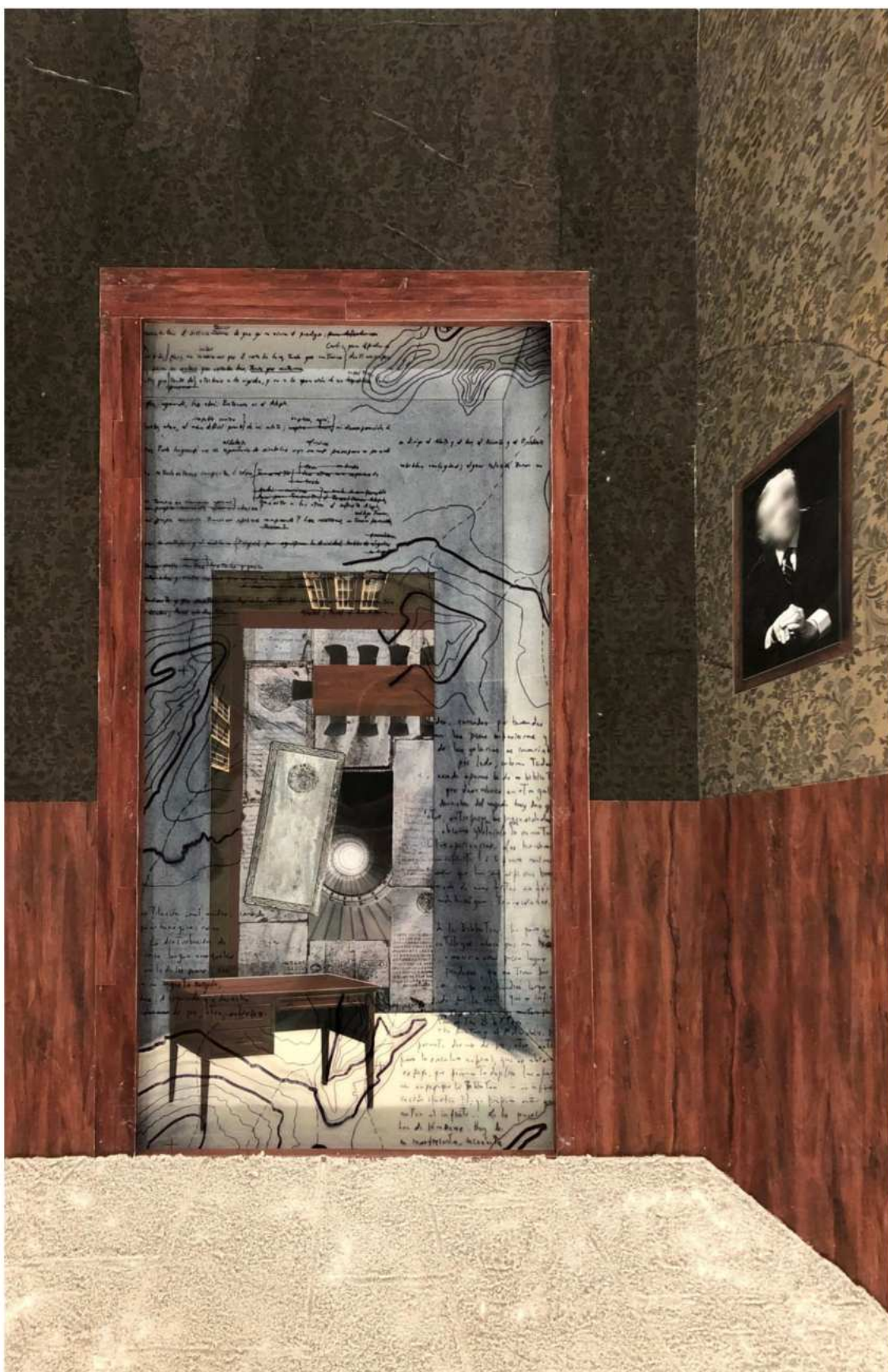


Fig. 7, Isabel Potworowski, Graduate Student, Assignment 1, 22"×33", Collage Techniques, Various Materials.



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

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

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


Final Assignment

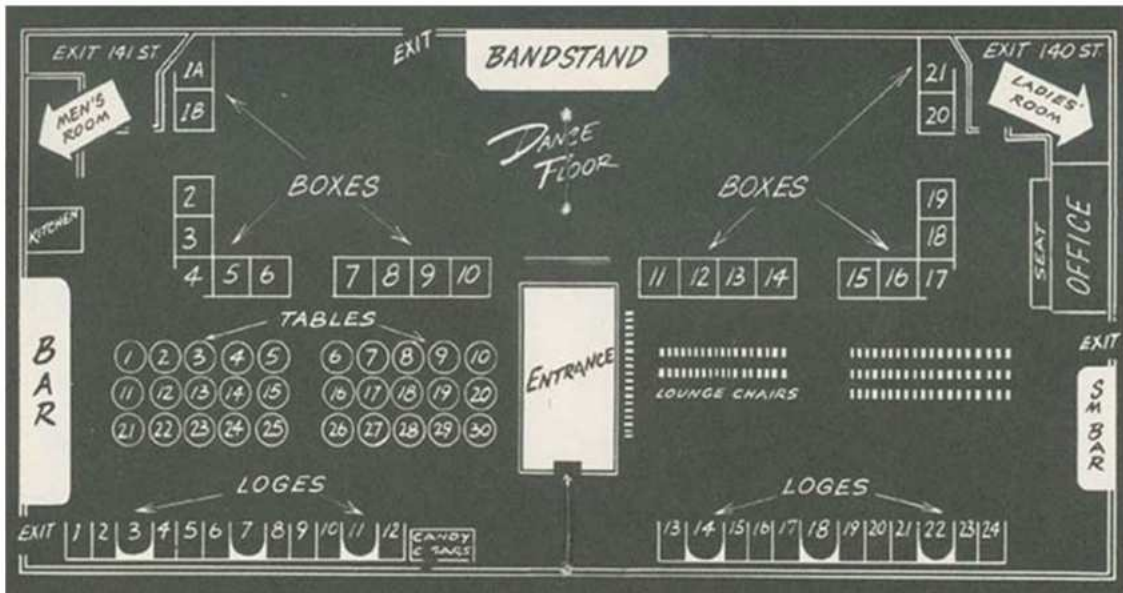
I guided students in refining research skills while nurturing cultural awareness. The final assignment resonated with the imperative of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, urging a central focus on Black lives within architectural thinking. The task involved crafting a 2000-word essay that explores the intersection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




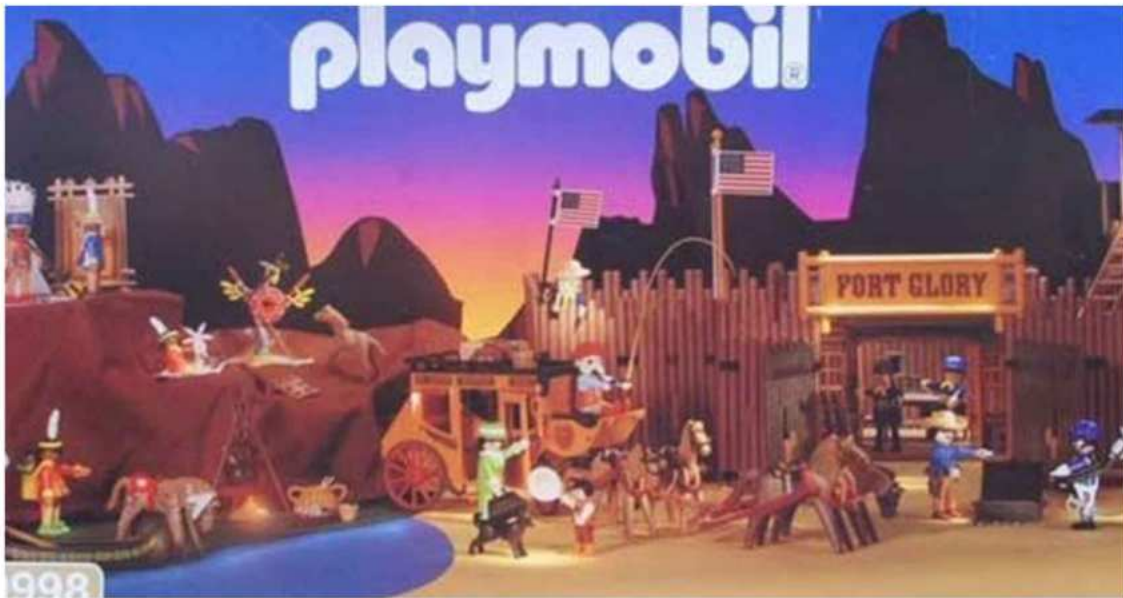
**“The Face of a Nation Divided:
Discrimination Immortalized Through the Monticello on the Jefferson Nickel”
by Sara Cipolla [📎](#)**



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




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



**“Toys build Empires:  How Toys Act as Tools of Architectural Colonialism”
by Hermine Demaël**



**“Race and Gentrification:  Investigating the Racialized History of the Los Angeles
Neighborhood Boyle Heights” by Ella Fortney**

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

Professor: Ricardo L. Castro

Teaching Assistant: Ali Reza Shahbazin

Representative Student Projects by Maxence Perrault, Nathaniel

Chavez-Baumberg, Sophie Howard, and Alexandra Alfieri.

Introduction

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

Midterm Assignment

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

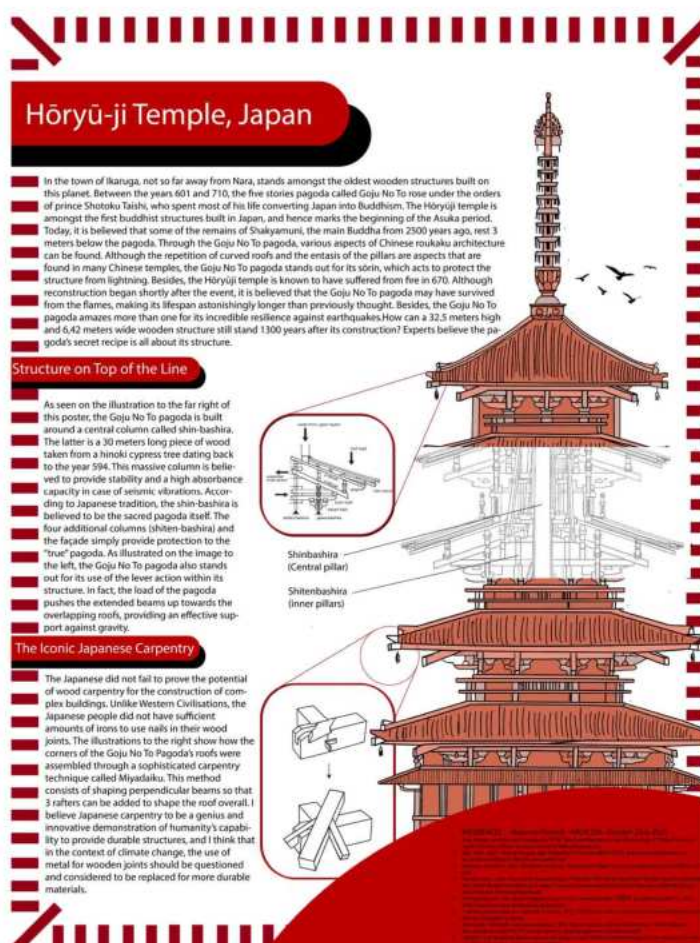


Fig. 9, Maxence Perrault, Poster Paper, "Hōryū-ji Temple," Digital, 17"×23", Fall 2020.

CUPOLA

Small text box with illegible text.

OCULUS

EYE OF THE PANTHEON

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

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

PORTICO

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

MAGRIPPA LFCOSTERTIVMFECTI

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

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

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

A GEOMETRIC WONDER

A SPHERE WITHIN A CYLINDER

SPACE AND SUMMERZAMWELT

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

PANTHEON

ROME

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

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

Final Assignment

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

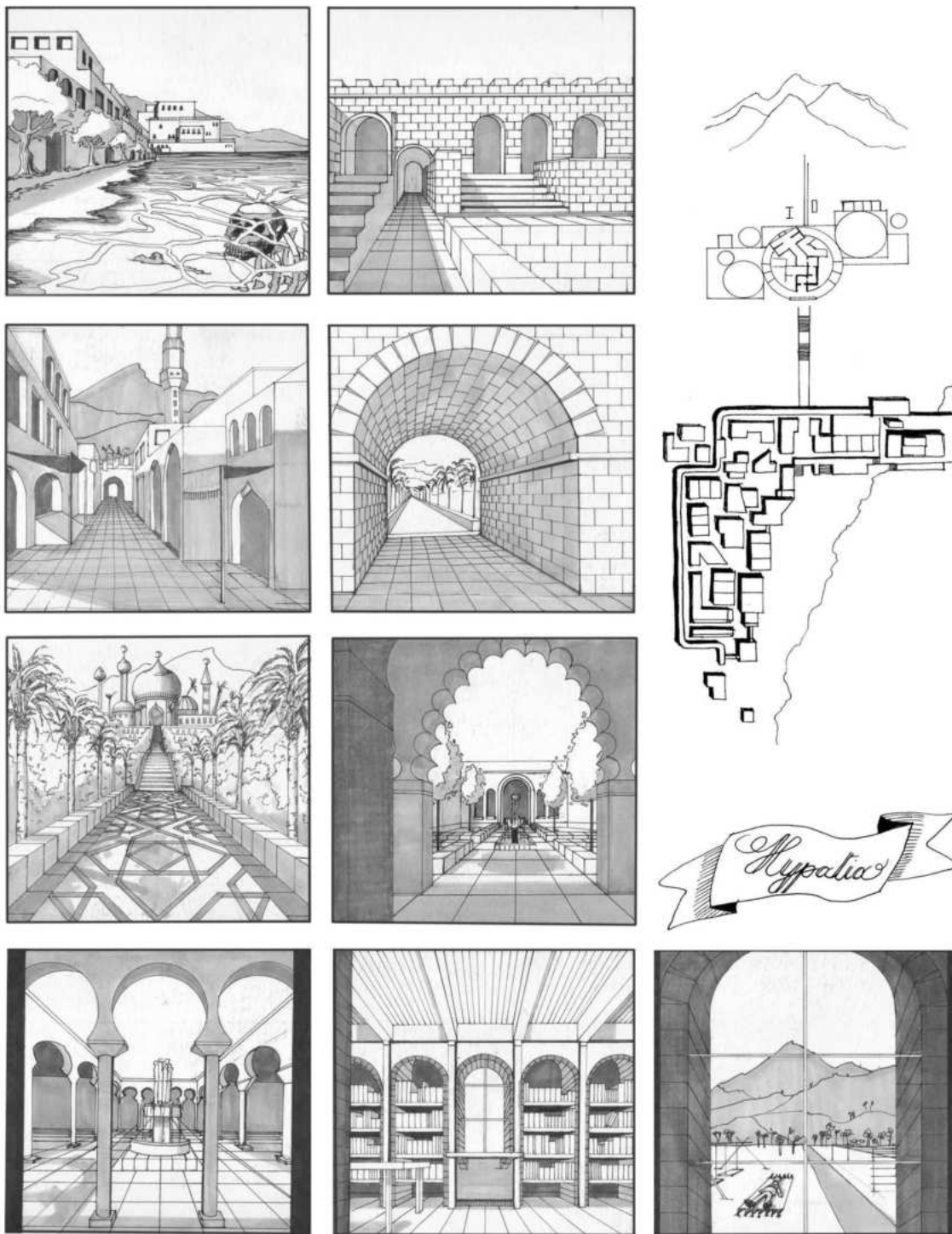


Fig. 11, Sophie Howard, *Invisible Cities*, City of Hypatia, Marker and Uni Pin Pen, 17"×23", Fall 2020.

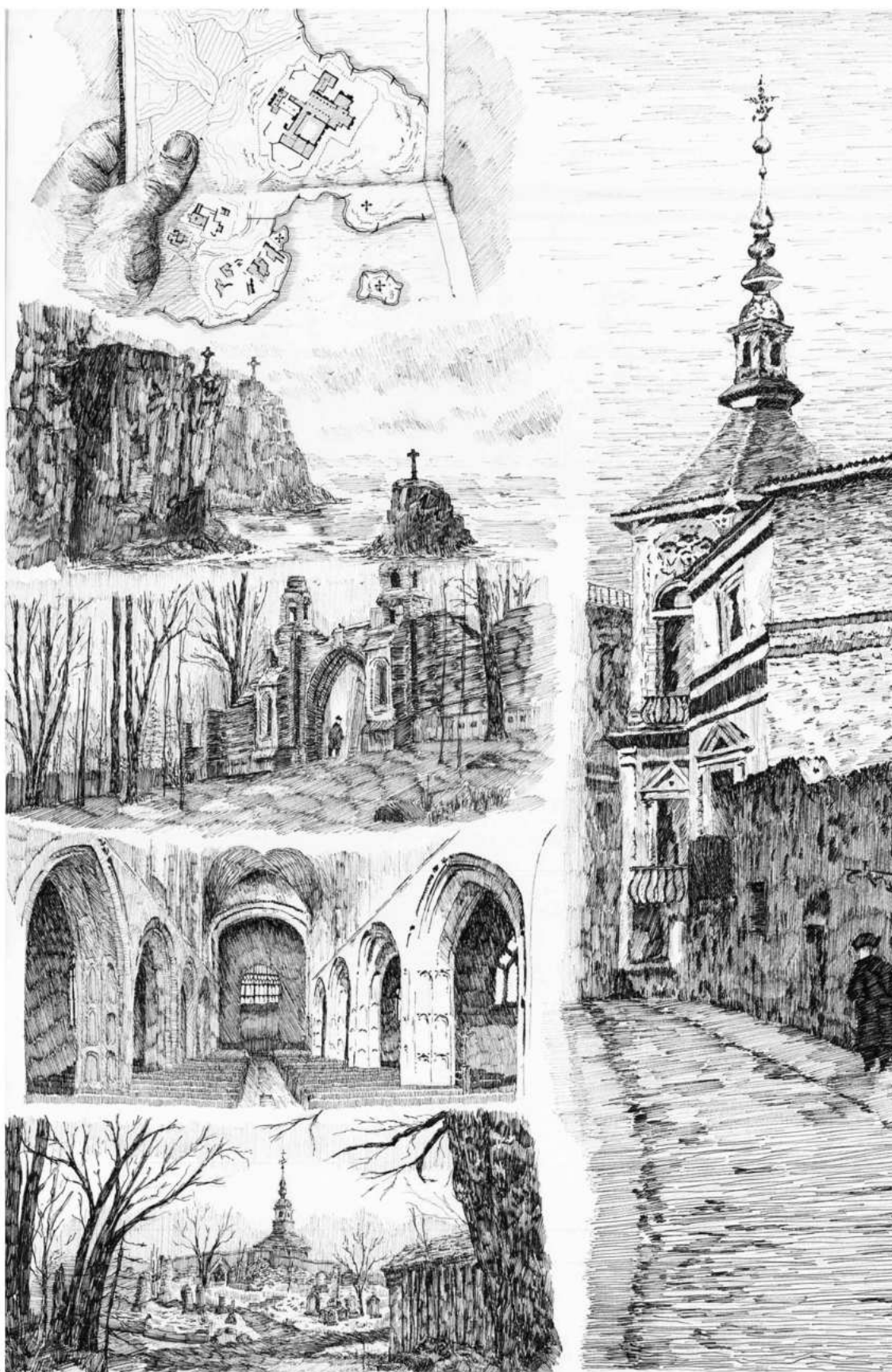


Fig. 12, Alexandra Alfieri, *Invisible Cities*, City of Laudomia, Uni Pin Pen, 17"×23", Fall 2022.

Architecture Crits

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
PETER GUO-HUA FU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

UI Winter Studio Reviews

Friday, April 14th, 2023

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

INSTRUCTORS

Theodora Vardouli ●
Vedanta Balbahadur ■
Samiha Meem ▲

GUEST CRITICS

François-Luc Giraldeau →Approximately Blue
→Frame Publishers

Latimer Hu →MakerHub Inc.

Naomi Julien →Provencher Roy

Daniela Leon →SvN Architects + Planners
→Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture

Julia Manacas →Julia Manacas Architects
→Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture

TK Justin Ng →SPACED AGENCY
→M.Arch Student, Harvard University GSD

Theodore Oyama →oyama

Eliza Pertigkiozoglou →PhD Candidate, McGill University
Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture

Cailen Pybus →Lecturer, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
→Lecturer, Carleton University Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism

Ali Shahbazin →PhD Candidate, McGill University Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture



PRESENTERS

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

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

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

Instructor: Ali Reza Shahbazin

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

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

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



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

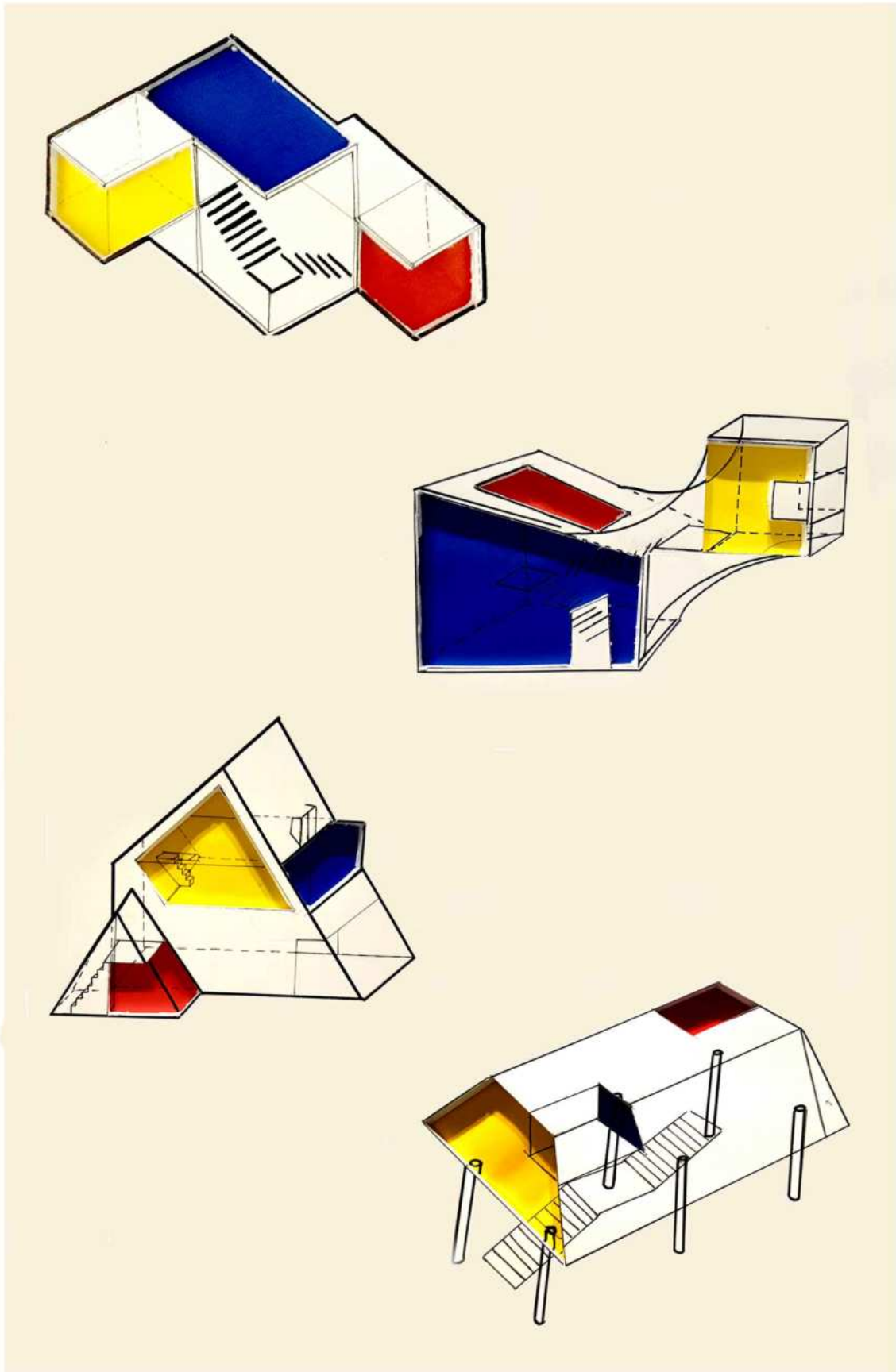


Fig. 14, Konstantin Schulenburg, Kha Hoang, Fouzieh Alhogayl, and Athina Dimakis, Highschool Students, The Pinchills Project, 2018.



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

