

PERSONAL STATEMENT

My father said, "...if you can get on this roof, count all the nails you hand me, and figure out the difference between the Phillips and the flat-head screwdriver, you will learn more than what any school could teach you today." That day, at four years old, and many days after, he would present 'life' as school. As I grew up I began to realize that his lessons taught me more than many years of school combined.

My journey has included a love for the arts, sculpture and non-structured self expressions, intertwined with a propensity towards meticulous attention to detail and craft. As an airborne paralegal in the United States Army, where I deployed and served for several years, craft could be evidenced in the way in which I rigged my rucksack for a jump. That is to say, that for me, craft is everywhere and a part of everything that I do. Craft is a way for me to realize purpose, intention and care in whatever I engage with. I finally realized that architecture was the answer that married everything about me that seemed disparate but *right*. It seemed as if I had always known that I wanted to be an architect. I'd always wanted to know how I could make the world around me more beautiful. I wanted to know how I could make a space sing to a person's spirit. I knew it was possible because I had experienced spaces that did the exact opposite, and were meant to do so by design. I would equip myself to change that. This is the path that I am on.

My ambitions are to share with the world what it has given to me. The depths of my inspiration come from my interactions in this world and with the people that are important to me. Each day I cherish the presence of my mother, husband, and my two young children; and am grateful for all of the people that have shaped who I am today. Where would we be if we only aspired to be something for the good of ourselves? Where would *I* be if the world hadn't pushed and pulled on who I was? I am able to pursue a path in architecture only because the people I love lend me their support and know how important this is to me.

I have made a commitment to this journey. A deep source of motivation is knowing that I will be a 'visible' force that allows children of color to see themselves as architects, or anything else that they had not yet thought that they could be. In many ways, it feels as though this path has chosen me. I have visions of building a new home for my mother that went without for so many years when I was growing up, and putting energy towards relief projects and initiatives around the world and in our communities.

One of the greatest challenges that I have faced has been realizing that the world is not as it should be. As I grew I learned that my father had been teaching me to be fearless and to reject being limited by my gender. In doing so, *he* was teaching me what the world should be, and preparing me to be a part of the very change that could make that world a reality. Architecture is not widely presented as an accessible career option to young people of color. This is not accidental as people of color have historically struggled to be welcomed into professional degree programs and associations. This, combined with the socioeconomic differences that many people of color face, adds to the challenges of being able to afford such programs. I brace for myself for the day when my GI Bill runs out, which will be well before I complete the Bachelor of Architecture program. Though I do not yet have a solution, I will not let it derail me - because for the built environment to truly be diverse and empathetic, it has to be built by a diverse group of people.

And I will be one of them.

There may be many others who are deserving of the scholarship, and some may need it even more desparately than me. I can, however, say with absolute certainty that if I am awarded this scholarship I will honor the example that Mr.Wesley has set, and continues to set, by finding heavy doors of my own to open for those that come after me. I am truly grateful that through this application process my life's path has already crossed with Mr. Wesley's. Regardless of the outcome, I plan to carry that connection forward with me. I've wondered what his life's story might entail, having forged his way through this profession at a time when people of color were literally still fighting to be admitted into colleges that would not accept them. Just the imagining of that story adds fuel to a fire within me that may sometimes burn dim from the pressures. This new source of motivation is already an award in and of itself.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

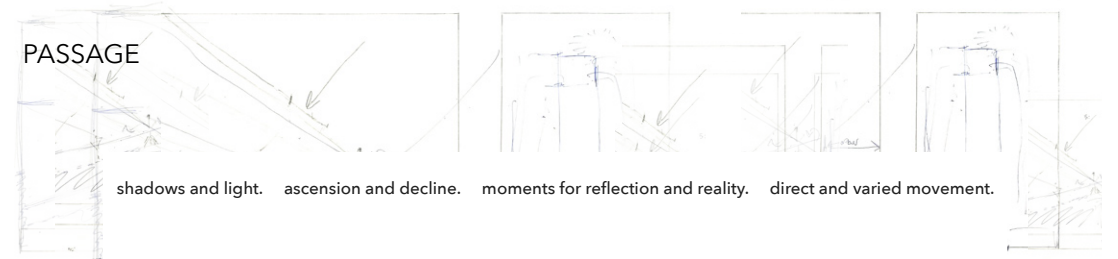


Kenya Lee Steward

kenya steward

Portfolio

November 2020



shadows and light. ascension and decline. moments for reflection and reality. direct and varied movement.

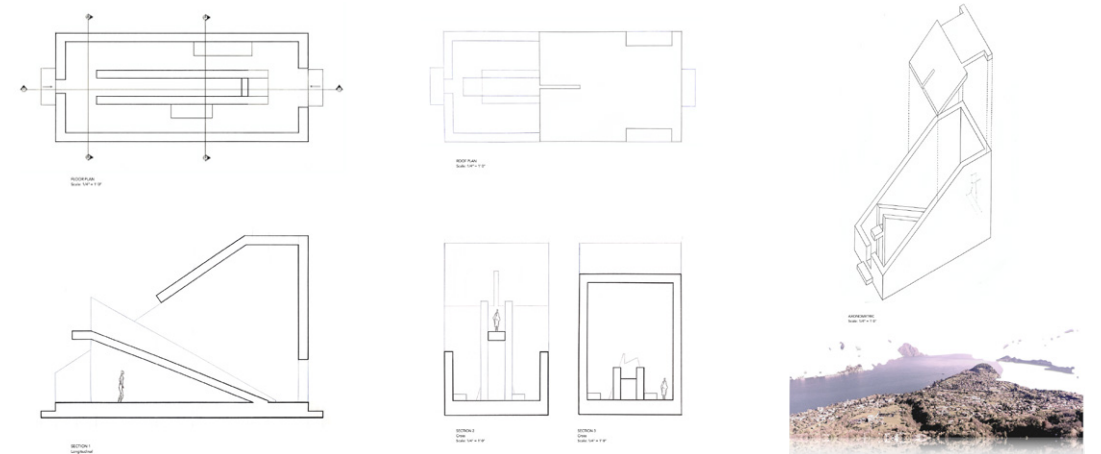
PASSAGE

shadows and light. ascension and decline. moments for reflection and reality. direct and varied movement.

We can see the journey through this passage as a metaphor for life. It can be a metaphor for the unprecedented times that we now face and a way to remind ourselves of the light. The structure reminds us of a fortress which can represent both protection or pending danger, yet half is in the dark and half is open to the light. When we enter our gaze is directed upward to the three ceiling apertures. They remind us that even in the darkness, there is light. We see that there is more than one path. We may enter into a circular journey, we may ascend on a one way path which we must also descend from, and we may enter a path where even the steps that we take are shrouded in darkness. We cannot see the end; it is a mystery.

On the circular path the linear rhythm of our steps are varied as the ground structures force us to go over or around, which, along with the interplay of shadows and light, mark transitions along the path. Along the path we soon reach the threshold of a dark tunnel. Here we must make a decision whether we will trust and experience a journey which we cannot envision. Without visibility we are forced to touch, feel, and listen more...and speak less. When we move back into the circular path we soon reach the threshold of the ascending slope; it is steep and full of pending light. A ray of light guides us and moves about through the roof, and light floods through the open half of the passage. The walls rise higher and envelope us as we progress, until they drop dramatically when we reach the crest, where we stop to reflect on the light, and on our position. After reflection comes reality, as with every ascension one must also descend, and begin again.

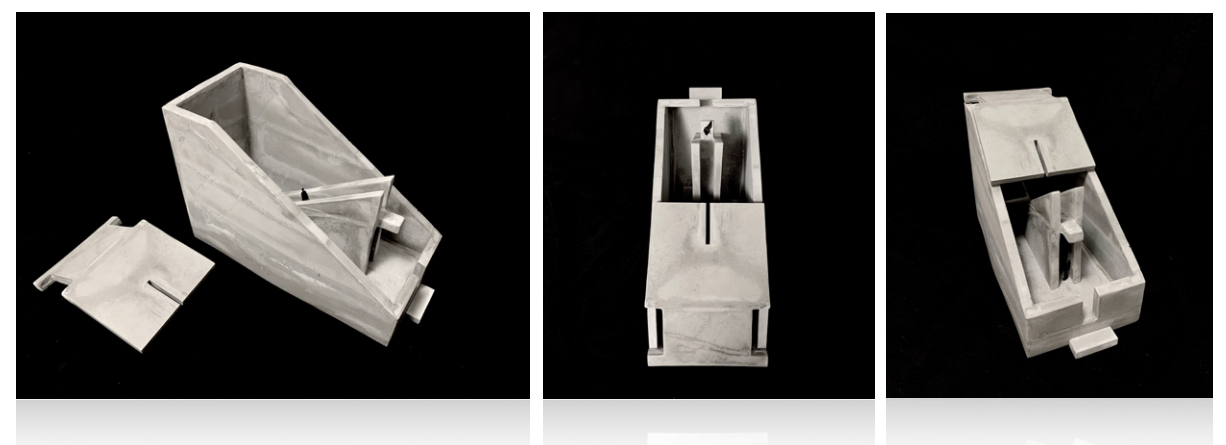
The shared personal process drawings communicate that the journey towards the passage, is as much a part of its narrative as the passage itself.



Passage + Wiggle composite image_ The passage model reaches back to the case study continuing to explore the ideas of undulation, axis, geometry, illumination, solidity, and protection; yet its identity is its own.



Passage + Wiggle composite image_ Illumination and moments of reflection



HYBRID BUILDING

Inherent in inhabiting a city is the complexity, beauty and tension of the density and underlying configuration and forces of the city. Site and cultural forces - such as history, culture, geographic constraints, built environment, movement, and climate - continually come together. The merging of these conditions are fertile ground for a multitude of spatial combinations, and even mutations, in architecture.

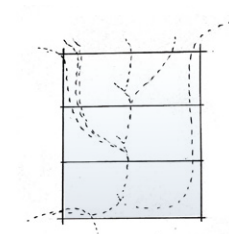
In this project, we examined these dynamics at the scale of a small hybrid building that housed a mix of inter-related programs focused on the dwelling, work and exhibition/retail space for a maker and a collector. These programs all needed to co-exist in one building and site, and we determined both their make-up and relationship to one another. Welcome to the space of the kombucha maker and collector.

HYBRID BUILDING

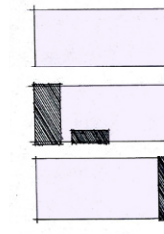
DIAGRAMS



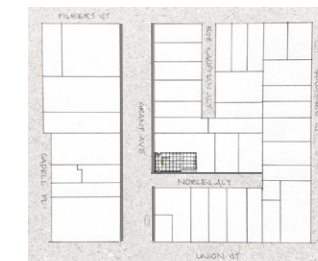
Axonometric_Circulation/
connectivity to **interlock** and
extend hybrid moments



Ventilation

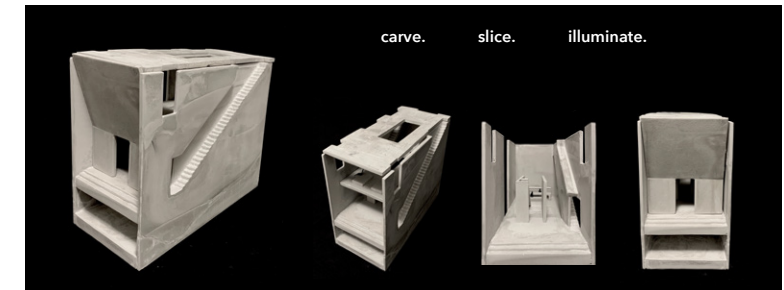


Parti/Program/Hybridity
(hybridity indicated in color)

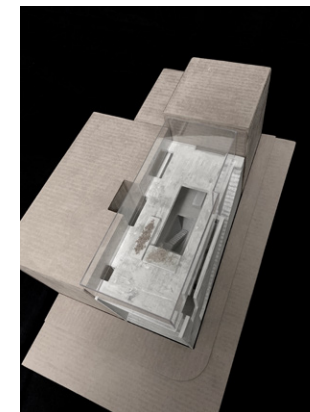


SITE PLAN + ROOF PLAN

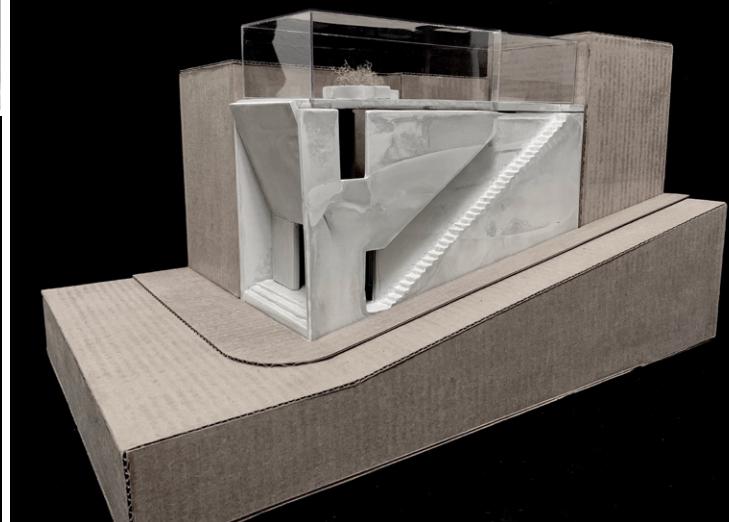
Scale: 1/16" = 1'0" 



Growth is not something that happens to you; it arrives in the midst of your production, your manifestations, your life...
Be prepared that it may be painful; yet if we let ourselves simply begin somewhere, revel in the process, collaborate, question, be humbled, and take risks, we can arrive at something precious which we may share with the world.
-inspired by *Incomplete Manifesto for Growth*, Bruce Mau



The light and shadow deliberately **distill** the ideas and purpose of the maker and collector in various moments throughout the space. The **ferment** is present in the rise of the stairs and the light wells which rise upward from the ground floor. The initial experience of the journey upward and through the garden is **back-slopped**, or added, to the journey downward into the space of the maker and then further to the fermentation chamber and collector's curations. The visitor is beckoned to partake in the process and elevate the present **hybridity**.



CASE STUDY

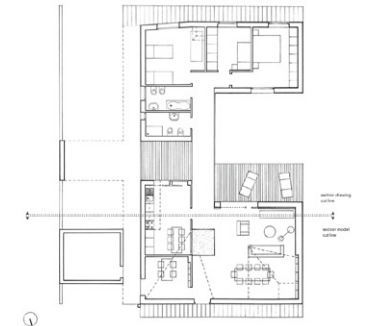
In this project we took on a precedent to intensely study, analyze, draw, build and diagram. It required that we understood the case study both as physical artifacts, and also as sites laden with potential for multiple spatial investigations and narratives, of which the precedent provides just one possible solution. A critical understanding of the past can hatch ideas for the future.

My case study was Wiggle House, by IfDesign. Within this project I was able to study and explore the architect's solutions to building a single family home within a dense urban setting whilst combining both privacy and the infusion of natural light and nature within the space.

CASE STUDY SNAPSHOT

Wiggly House
Architects: ifdesign
Location: Como, Italy
Date: 2015

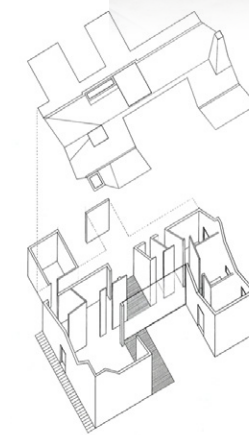
DRAWINGS + DIAGRAMS + MODEL



PLAN
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



SECTION
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



AXONOMETRIC
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

ILLUMINATION

THRESHOLD

AXIS

CIRCULATION

ARTIFICIAL
LANDSCAPE

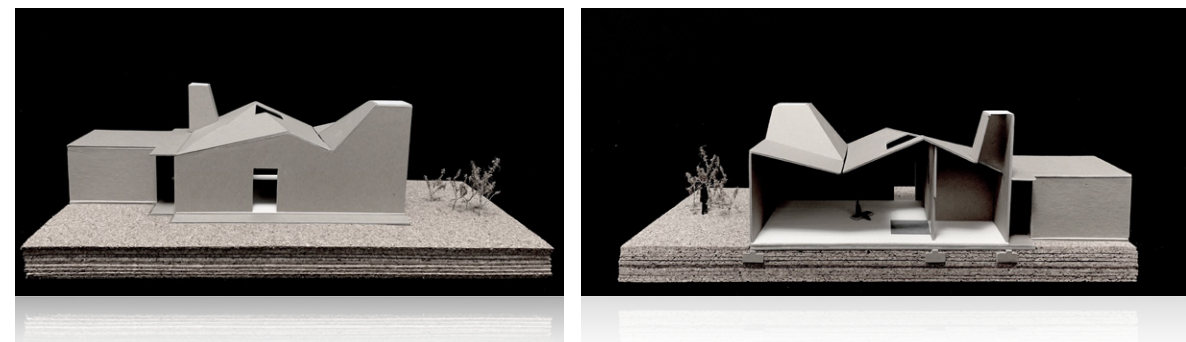
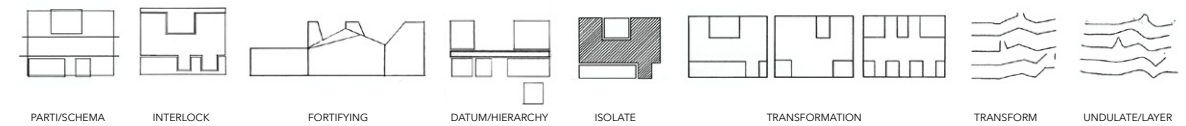
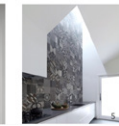
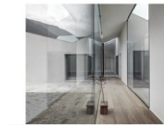
SHELTER

PROTECTION

SOLIDITY

UNDULATE

LAYER



TOOL DISSECTION

What are the dynamics of the reel? Draw and explore.

