

Sacred Ground

CRAIG BORUM

KARL DAUBMANN

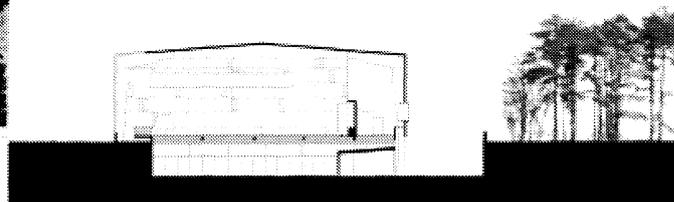
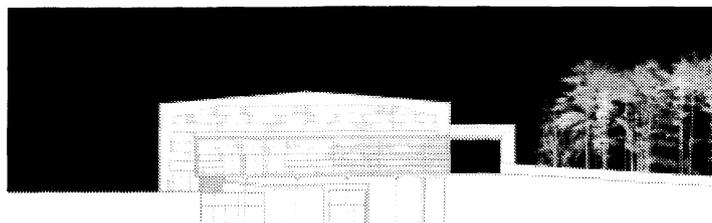
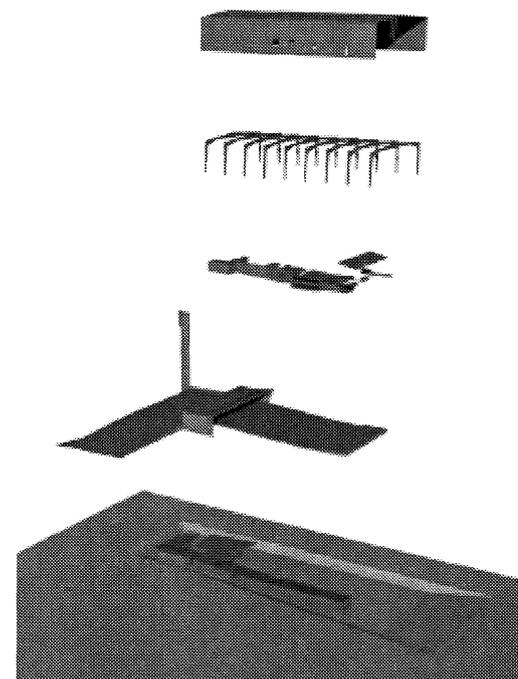
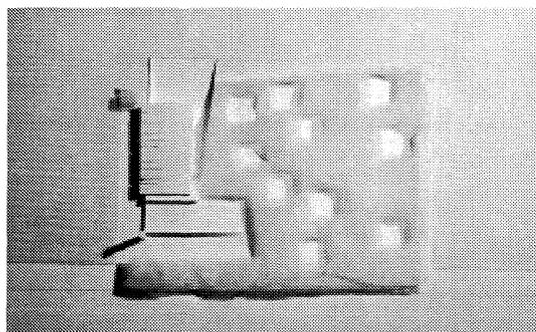
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The project for the pilgrimage Church of Our Lady of Gaudalupe, a competition sponsored by the church community, attempts to transform the rural, agrarian, Indiana landscape of the site into a sanctuary by fully engaging the terrain in the rituals of a pilgrimage church. One of the key issues, as defined by the competition brief, was that a large portion of the building be constructed by volunteer labor from the pilgrimage community to minimize the construction costs. The knitting of the church and the surrounding terrain was seen as the means to spatially fix a mark upon the land which could provide an orientation and sense of place in the otherwise undistinguished expanse of flat farmland. The site of the proposal was a wooded parcel in a seemingly endless sea of furrowed fields of corn.

The design of the church was approached through the exploration of the relationships and integration among three key elements: landscape, church exterior, and church interior. To create a connection between the building and the site, the landscape was manipulated in three simple operations. The first strategy was to preserve as much of the existing forest as possible and to clear all of the undergrowth from the site. This resulted in the carving of parking rooms from the tree canopy which would be wrapped by hedges and serviced by utility masts, providing water and fire for the campers that arrive during the pilgrimage celebrations of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The site of the building was then excavated to create for a tornado shelter in the lower level. A mis-registration of the excavation and church created two exterior zones, one for access and entry (to the side) and one for larger exterior gatherings (to the end). The larger exterior gathering zone could be occupied as an inclined seating area oriented toward an exterior pulpit. A prefabricated "butler building" was employed to enclose the most space for the least price. The church exterior could be constructed quickly using



standard parts by skilled labor. This allows the unskilled labor to finish the interior without having to worry about water tightness. The ends of the building would be enclosed with glass curtain walls, expanding the interior space of the Church into the landscape.

The strategy at work in the separation of the two scales of building provides the scenario for the rescue of ritual from the everyday

economic and utilitarian constraints that the “butler building” represents. Its singular figure becomes the baggy enclosure for a liner of highly articulated figural forms built through the community effort of the parishioners.

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