

Analysis + Synthesis: Building Process into the Design Studio

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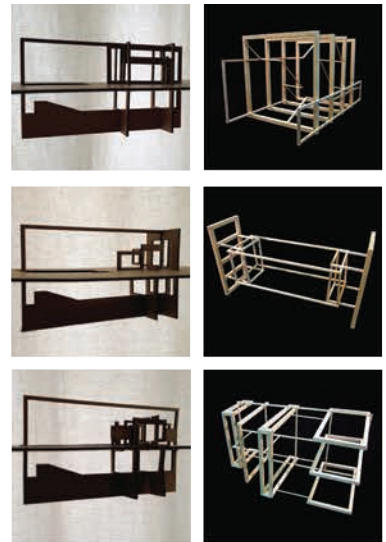
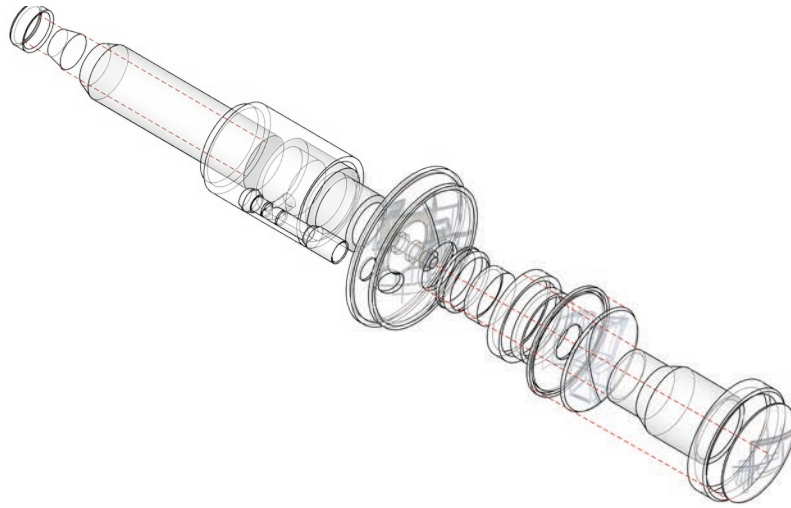
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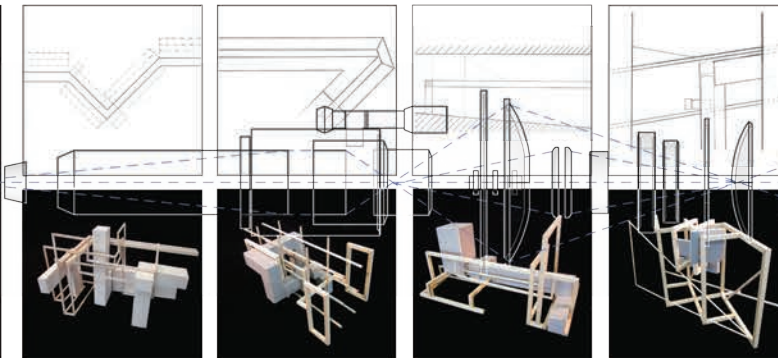
This project illustrates the examination of a generative process of teaching focused on analyzing and synthesizing information through making. Students were introduced to visual problem solving in a way that would enable them to gauge their interest in the study of architecture. As the students asked themselves, “Can I see myself as an architect,” we asked ourselves, “can we clarify the way in which an architect sees?” Each assignment was created to serve a dual purpose. The first was to function as a clarifying lens revealing new ways of seeing; this lens was embedded with the architectural lesson. The second purpose was to generate design. The teaching methodology intended to engage the student in systematically breaking down and building up information through the process of making. They disassembled and reconstructed their projects, each time clarifying a different aspect of architectural design. The purpose of this process was to explore the tenets of the built environment by altering what a student sees and how they learn.

The system of assignments was structured to move sequentially between analysis and synthesis. We understand analysis to be the breaking down of information to isolate a particular occurrence and understand it. Synthesis was undertaken by investigating the relationship between two or more occurrences within the same design. Individually, each lens or assignment was the instrument which enabled the students to see, digest, and represent a particular set of architectural conditions. Cumulatively, the assignments produced a compound lens, layering and transforming their relationship with the built environment. The product of each investigation was used as a tool for exploring the subsequent architectural idea. In one instance, the students were asked to construct an analog model from three distinct materials as a study of joints and connections. Upon its completion we asked them to reinterpret the model as a series of spatial sequences (illustrated in section) and paths of circulation (illustrated in plan). They laser cut and reassembled the space of the construct using these drawings. Students were then able to synthesize dynamics between material connections, spatial sequences, and paths of circulation.

This approach yielded an experience where the student focused on what they learned instead of what they made, without compromising craft. In this way they became accustomed to learning by making, seeing by analyzing, and understanding by synthesizing. They presented the product of each assignment as a tool for investigation, exhibiting a sophisticated level of comprehension. We found that students were able to retain and appropriate knowledge and apply it to subsequent lessons. While a level of clarity was achieved through each lens, it was the aggregation of these lenses that altered the students’ understanding of the built environment.



ANALYSIS + SYNTHESIS:



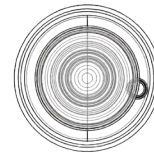
BUILDING PROCESS INTO THE DESIGN STUDIO

"The only true voyage of discovery...would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes..."
 —Marcel Proust¹

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¹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume 2, trans. Charles Kenneth Scott-Moncrieff (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2006), 657