

2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Honorable Mention



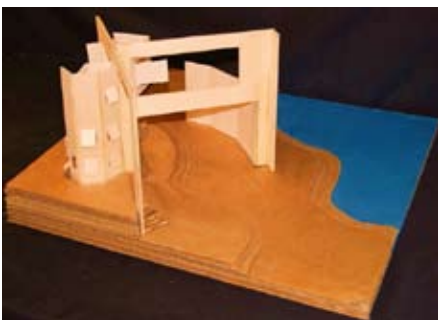
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Affirmations to affect: I'm following a path that will provide me with opportunities for creating tangible forms and articulations of ideals across the collective milieu. By obtaining a graduate degree in architecture and urban planning, I'll acquire the abilities to achieve my goal of the development of ideal forms, structures, places, functions within the built environment. "Ideal" for combining beauty with integrity: elegance of form imbued with pragmatic function and sustainable construction.

What follows are of some of the details that form the basis of my "personal paradigm": that which guides my educational directions, projects and vocational choices. The aim is to combine my graduate design education with the anthropological slant of my undergraduate work (psychology and sociology), resulting in the skills needed for sensitive application to the environments we inhabit.

An integral part of my studies will be to obtain a "critical consciousness" of the field, learning as advocated by Paulo Freire in his "critical pedagogy" paradigm. He stated



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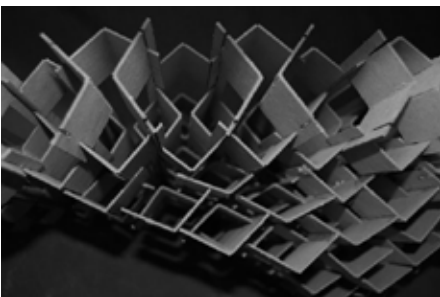
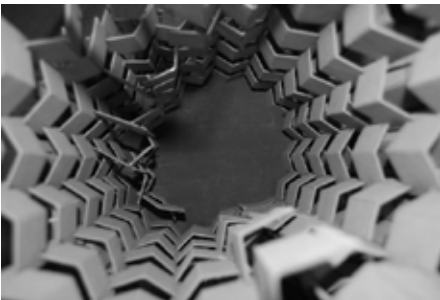
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Architecture

that prior to undertaking to revitalize a situation, it's imperative that one become immersed in the history of the current period. Such an erudite literacy enables deep understanding and insights as to what begot the present situation, as well as indicate what needs changing and the best ways to create comprehensive improvements. In architecture this type of immersion is warranted and involves many areas of study to best understand what makes for a success? A failure? I believe that applying this kind of critical consciousness to the study of architecture would serve one exceedingly well as a practitioner of it in the 21st century.

It was through the creation of a project called BikeSecur (2007) that I became aware of how much must be taken into consideration when trying to establish something to benefit people and the environment. Through this project I hoped to encourage the use of an alternative method of transportation by increasing the availability of indoor bicycle parking facilities within urban areas. Though it turned out to be more complicated than originally thought, the complexities served to further my understanding of the people, places and functions of cities and what it takes to invigorate change within these dense environments.



Like a hero of mine, Majora Carter, I want to further increase my knowledge and skills to support my passion for fostering sustainable improvements in the environment. Majora Carter did not set out to become a designer of urban life (her formal training is in cinematic arts), yet that is what she has become by having revitalized her native community of Hunts Point in NYC. What has been accomplished there is a model of urban revitalization that has been heralded around the world. Another source of inspiration is that of Mr. Will Allen, an urban "force of nature." His "Grow Power" organic urban farming enterprise in Milwaukee is an outstanding role model of urban and ecological revitalization. (Both Allen and Carter are recipients of MacArthur Fellowships.) I hope to replicate some of their efforts in my current AmeriCorps position of "Greenspace" Urban Farming Coordinator with Buffalo Reuse and demonstrate the importance of establishing sustainability and revitalization as priorities in the urban environment.

I am determined to be part of the design programs and teams that are striving to educate individuals with a sort of "renaissance" sensibility. In that they want to implement a multi-faceted approach in the development of the environments that harbor the world's population in a manner that is progressively egalitarian and sensitive in its affect. This is THE definition of what I, as an architect, will do.