tobie rain chan-kalin

INQUIRY into architecture

tchankal@andrew.cmu.edu        510.334.3061
http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/tchankal/architectural_inquiry.swf
Based loosely upon a knot whose solid-void relationship has been inverted, this gallery is set into an isolated cliff. The Duchamp is two sided, so it is glimpsed first along the entrance passageway, and then from the larger room. Untitled (Placebo) is meant to be interactive, so it is placed around Michelangelo’s David, so that to see David closely, you must wade through the candies. The stamp, a small piece, isn’t necessarily a destination on its own: it is placed in the sleeping area, which is a destination. The bible, a foundation of Christianity, is set into the floor. To access it, one must prostrate themselves, and kneel on the ground.
Designed around a concrete cast component, the building flows along axial lines. Inspiration was drawn from the Farnsworth's linearity and focus on the outdoors. This visitor's center turns the house 90°, so that the ceiling and floor become walls. This focuses views on path and journey while being formally similar to the house. Interior spaces break the linearity by being inset between the axes. Just as the walls themselves slide past each other, each wall itself is made of a series of components. At times the components slide apart, allowing for windows; at other times, they are tightly adjacent.
light museum annex

The light museum annex uses sparks of light to catch attention of passerby, and then to draw the user through the building. Users experience sparkles of light that catch their eye, which come from glass rods that transmit natural light, much like fiber optics. The user experiences contrast between successive gallery lighting conditions and the sparkling light in the main atrium, around which the galleries are arrayed. The light gallery is open to the sparkling light strands, which light the space despite being farthest down in the building. The dark gallery is removed from the sparkling atrium by a boundary of study and support spaces. The top-lit gallery is on the highest floor, and graduates from the bright atrium to a room that is lit by small glass rods embedded in the ceiling.
A series of multi-functional panels are first visible to passersby as louvers that allow the building facade to change from colored to opaque, open to closed. In some areas, the louvers react to wind and the L train so that they oscillate musically against the building. Inside the building, panels form walls that rotate and push along a track. In the performance space, this allows users to change one large space into smaller rooms. Stairs are horizontal panels that push through into other rooms, creating a variety of nooks, bookshelves, and seats. The panels vary from clear glass, to colored glass, to opaque colored on one side and white on the other. This allows the panels to be used in a variety of spaces while maintaining a visual and functional continuity.
Nestled in the trees above a creek along Nine Mile Run, the arts camp seeks to link visitors and nature through artistic explorations. The arts building hangs suspended above the creek, while a public bridge spans above it connecting one bank with the other. Users of the camp interact visually and materially with people walking above, the outdoor surroundings, and each other. The arts building itself focuses both outwards and inwards, simultaneously swooping out toward framed landscape views and converging in the center to encourage artistic interchange. A room at the center functions as lounge and communal workspace. It also has prominent shelves upon which students store their work; this acts as a rotating gallery of artwork from which other students can constantly find inspiration.
While the arts building itself focuses on person-to-person exchange of artistic ideas, the sleeping quarters and surrounding landscape provide opportunities for self-reflection and quietude. Dorm rooms are small cuts into the hill with views that look out onto the stream, and both stream banks are naturally landscaped to allow students to forge their own pathways as they look for inspiration. Overall, the bridge, arts building, and surrounding landscaping serve to provide a place where students may learn from nature through their artwork, conversations with other students, and solitary contemplation.
The library seeks to reunite the surrounding community. Intersecting spaces create opportunities for both interaction and exchange, privacy and reflection. It also helps create visual transparency throughout the building, an important feature in library design, and one that helps link the various programmatic activities. On a smaller scale, the bookshelves and building details accomplish the same goal. Bookshelves are backed with glass, so that the transparency of the surrounding space transforms with the movement of books; floor-to-ceiling shelves line the windows, angling at the higher tiers to modulate sunlight. At all scales, the building brings people together, a continuing resource for the community. The building’s continually morphing spatial interactions both maintain and create the knowledge and history of the area.
Due to the intersection of the adult, children, and teen spaces, each demographic is encouraged to interact with others. The children’s library pushes down into the adult library, allowing adults to look up into the children’s room and children to look down at adults. This also changes ceiling height, allowing for subtle changes in use. The roof of the children’s floor becomes reading nooks and a raised stage on the teen floor; a small raised platform in the children’s library forms a “room” in the split-level adult non-fiction area, defined only from the shoulders up. A learning garden, accessible from the teen floor, is also visible at eye level from the children’s library. As visitors move throughout the space, they have a constant understanding of how the rooms interact, yet their visual perception changes from one spot to another.
Without installing any physical objects inside the building, we altered the space by casting beams of light down the Great Hall of CFA. Three large differently colored mirror arrays outside the building reflected and focused sunlight inside the hall, creating conditions of light, color, shadow and overlap. A viewer inside the building would feel the heat of the sun, be blinded by the cascading light, and could track each sun ray, based on color, back to the individual mirrors. This series of noticing the light and shadow, tracking the beams, and revealing the source encouraged the viewer to take an active part in our installation.
museum analysis

The California Academy of Sciences was investigated through a series of drawings, both literal and conceptual. An 8 foot hand-drafted section brings understanding to the building and its figural connection to the San Franciscan landscape, while color drawings and a model delineate the personal connections museum-goers had to the old building, and bring to the new one. Lines reach out from the visitor to the most nostalgically significant parts of the building. The more important the space, the more thickly articulated, with colors in the drawing representing different spaces and gradient lines representing connections between spaces. The nostalgic areas are either aspects of the old building and exhibits that were kept, such as the facade, or parts that have strong ties to sciences specific to California, such as the rooftop depicting the wildflower-covered hills of San Francisco.
The exploration of the Frick Park site began with four photo essays: Space and Scale, which looked at the ambiguity of scale when looking at close-ups of stones; Materials of Water, which explored water as a physical object and as ephemeral movement; Railroad Movement Sequence, which looked at three parallel train tracks; Evolution of a Tree, which followed the life stages of trees at the site. During my explorations I found that essays overlapped, and that pictures could lend information to more than one topic. Just as nature is not easily categorized, neither were the photos. Hence the tiled board with movable pieces, which plays a role not only in showing the links we found from our images of Frick Park, but also allowing others to make their own connections. Viewers can create their own stories by rearranging the photo tiles. Thus the board becomes an ever-changing record of the site at Frick Park.
On a hillside in Frick Park, strands of rope seem to be strung randomly throughout the trees. Yet as visitors pass through the installation, their perspective of the strands changes, until they exit with a new awareness of its spatial qualities. Entering form above and walking downhill, the strands of rope begin at ankle or waist height, then seem to angle up into the sky as the visitor walks downhill. From within the installation, just as from above, the strands seem randomly placed, strung from trunk to trunk at unplanned angles. As visitors walk away from the installation, they are led to a viewing spot many yards away. From here, the order of the rope falls into place, delineating parallel, level strands. As they move further away, the strands fall once again into random chaos.