

Architecture Studio: 1st Year Spring

Spring 2012, CMU, Arch #48-105, M/W/F 1:30-4:20
 Class Website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-105

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 Off. Hr: M/W/F 12:30-1:00pm & by appt. in MM302

(2/12/12)

Project 1d: SHOP PROJECT: STACKS-STICKS-PLANES

ASSIGNMENT 1d: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT: (Due Mon. Jan. 30, 12:30)

Development: The next step is to develop your design ideas and design more rigorously. Allow the straightforward and simple solutions to evolve; avoid the generic, vague or convoluted! Remain inquisitive about the overall design, and the details.

Difficulty: This design development phase is often regarded as one of the most difficult and nebulous in the design process: to go from abstract and reductive nature of the initial ideas, to the full scope of the final project; to move from a good first idea to a rigorously worked out and precise design that addresses all the parameters in a sophisticated and yet “obvious” manner. There is no formula, or one way. There are no “bad ideas”: every idea can be developed. But avoid getting stubborn or overly fixed with any one decision. Recognize the danger of your project becoming over-worked, overly convoluted or complex, but also of “getting the answer” too soon, and not allowing yourself to understand variations on the theme.

Process: Keep working iteratively, allow the process to change your mind occasionally. This phase involves bursts of production, moments of “stuckness,” periods of intense critical reflection on process/purpose, bouts of additional research, and rigorous, deliberate action towards an increasingly known and clear goal. While losing yourself in the details of process, you must also step back to recall the overall intent, both of your design, the project, and the studio. Precise decisions need to be made; some opportunities realized and seized; others left behind for the next project.

Overall Composition: Look at the overall design, and be sure the pieces aggregate organically to more than the sum of parts. Consider shapes, edges, implied spaces, silhouettes, contours, sizes, relative scales, etc. All well-composed pieces should “take a stance” with regard to beginning, middle, and end: how your stand meets the floor, how it rises off this foot or foundation, and how it comes to an end at the horizontal display level.

Joinery Details & Assembly: At its core, this project is about assembly details as much as it is about creating a whole piece of furniture. Be sure to propose multiple ways to join materials in particular, detailed, and precise configurations. Develop “registers” or reasons for why and how pieces relate to each other. Do NOT just allow the pieces to be assembled casually or intuitively. Have a good reason for EVERY move. Work to “articulate” the nature of the joinery, be “expressive” about the forces of the connections, focus on an “essence” rather than on obtuse complexity. Consider “verbs” or operations such as stacking, framing, enclosing, opening, repeating, inverting, rotating, extruding, slicing, etc. Make each joint precise, with intent, and related to the other joints. Work with gaps, voids, and implied space as much as materials and the object. Incorporate issues such as the direction of the wood grain, the difference between end-grain and along the grain. Work on the proportions, shape, and character of the individual elements (blocks sticks or planes) you are connecting: why are they thick, slender, graceful, bulky, rectangular, curved? Be more conscious about how much things overlap, turn, or extend.

Assignment:

- For Monday make another wood model of the whole stand at 1:4 scale, and where necessary also larger (perhaps full-scale) detail models of assembly connections.
- Create shaded elevation drawings at a scale of 1:2 (half of full size)
- Create (exploded) paraline drawings or of the how the elements go together.
- Create a “storyboard” with words and images outlining your design process so far, as a way to justify how and why your design process is “about” your tectonic system. Sketch the intermediate designs that evolved in your process; show how your project evolved. Expose successful, unused, and failed iterations. Use writing to explain your thinking.

