

Convivial Spaces for Seasonal Artists

A THESIS

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BY

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“This is what you shall do: Love the earth and the sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people...and your very flesh shall be a great poem.”

...*Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
(www.bartleby.com/142/)

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Introduction:

Knife River, Minnesota

...discovering the **'found potential'** of a project through site, climate, context, program and an architectural order which is evocative of circumstance...

-john patkau

**Patkau Architects: Investigations into the Particular*



convivial spaces for seasonal artists
knife river, minnesota

For as long as I can remember fond memories of travel, family and an era when life was simpler have always been associated with water. Whether it was investigating a stream as a young boy or disrupting the vast calm by skipping rocks at the lake to pass the time on the family vacation, the constant movement yet static quality of nature's beauty left me both enriched yet unfulfilled. What is it about water that intrigues us so? Are we bound by it or is it the gateway to new adventures and experiences.

Perhaps some of the most impressive and ever present bodies of water in the world are the Great Lakes. They are a gateway to something greater; fed by the smallest stream they will always embodying the memories of growth and the changing of the seasons. When traveling along the North Shore on scenic 61, one may get just a few seconds to observe the Knife River, and its union with Lake Superior. That moment paints a picture of that journey of the river and its extension into the almost infinite horizon. It is the horizon that people seek when traveling along the coast. This notion of the desired view has had a large impact on the design process and how people relate and live in a particular landscape. The anticipation of the view in and around Knife River defined the restrictions and possibilities of the site in order to create a level point of understanding, a value above which something is true. The value of placement had a great impact on investigating the seasons, local and tourist, while keeping in mind that creating long term value for the native inhabitants of the area is a prime focus. The architectural aim was to create a convivial artist space that was reflective of the seasons, landscape and respectfully service the sort-term or long-term inhabitant of Knife River, Minnesota.

Chapter 1

View: The Journey Begins

This thesis journey began on a trip to Canada to explore the Winnipeg River in its entire majestic splendor. Visually, the miles of frontage create an almost seamless horizon set against the endless dotting of inlets and peninsulas, evoking unavoidable notions of being bound by the land. Identifying the change at this edge condition lead to a sense of displacement from a normal or more familiar vantage point, this was overcome when focusing on the horizon. In an effort to explore/recreate the thought process on the trip, plaster molds and photographic montages were made upon my return, but something powerful was lost trying to recreate the psychological effect that proved so powerful out on the water (figure 1.1 page 9). The montages helped to illustrate the boundlessness of water and to blur the sense of being bound by the water/land, and the models could not manifest the physical scale. Ironic that while seeking an understanding of the infinite, boundaries had to be put in place as organizational and programmatic guidelines to discover the found potential in the actual site. These boundaries come in the form of the edge condition and are reinforced through words, and their definitions.

definitions ** All dictionary definitions from www.merriam-webster.com*

thresh·old

- 1 : the plank, stone, or piece of timber that lies under a door : SILL
 - 2 a : GATE, DOOR b (1) : END, BOUNDARY; specifically : the end of a runway (2) : the place or point of entering or beginning : OUTSET <on the threshold of a new age>
 - 3 a : the point at which a physiological or psychological effect begins to be produced
- b : a level, point, or value above which something**

**is true or will take place and below which
it is not or will not**

bound·ary

**1 : something (as a line, point, or plane) that indicates
or fixes a limit or extent**

ho·ri·zon

1 a : the apparent junction of earth and sky b : the great
circle on the celestial sphere formed by the intersection
of the celestial sphere with a plane tangent to the earth's
surface at an observer's position **c : range of perception
or experience d : something that might be attained <new horizons>**
2 a : the geological deposit of a particular time usually
identified by distinctive fossils b : any of the reasonably
distinct layers of soil or its underlying material in a vertical
section of land c : a cultural area or level of development
indicated by separated groups of artifacts
ho·ri·zon·al /-'rI-z&n-&l/ adjective

com·mu·ni·ty

1 : a unified body of individuals: as a : STATE,
COMMONWEALTH b : the people with common interests
living in a particular area; broadly : the area itself
<the problems of a large community> c : an interacting
population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in
a common location **d : a group of people with a common
characteristic or interest living together within a larger
society** <a community of retired persons> e : a group
linked by a common policy f : a body of persons or nations
having a common history or common social, economic,
and political interests <the international community> g : a
body of persons of common and especially professional
interests scattered through a larger society <the academic
community>
2 : society at large
3 a : joint ownership or participation <community of goods>
b : common character : LIKENESS <community of interests>

c : social activity : FELLOWSHIP d : a social state or condition

time

1 a : the measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues : DURATION b : a

nonspatial continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from past through present to future c : LEISURE

<time for reading>

2 : the point or period when something occurs : OCCASION

3 a : an appointed, fixed, or customary moment or hour for something to happen, begin, or end <arrived ahead of time> b : an opportune or

suitable moment <decided it was time to retire> -- often used in the phrase about time <about time for a change>

4 a : an historical period : AGE b : a division of geologic chronology c : conditions at present or at some specified period -- usually used in plural <times are hard> <move with the times> d : the present time <issues of the time>

5 a : LIFETIME b : a period of apprenticeship c : a term of military service

d : a prison sentence

6 : SEASON <very hot for this time of year>

The words: community, threshold, boundary, horizon and time were selected after visiting the site for the second time. The experience of the changing of the seasons and the potential that the site endured as a visual and emotional extension into the landscape was captured in the investigation into the words definitions. Albeit simple, a definition of the most common word can nurture a greater understanding of place and time.

In an effort to fully understand the coveted view at Knife River and to what extremes this idea manifests itself in the built environment, I stumbled in to a city based on view. The city of Vancouver, British Columbia embodies the notion of view to the point of influencing how a city can be created. In my travels, no other city has been so ingeniously shaped by the natural environment. A three dimensional space, dictated by

the governing body, looms over the city as a shield against development (figure 1.2 page 10). These 'view corridors' preserves the site line to the natural landscape and mountain ranges that can be appreciated from the pedestrian level in the downtown core. Preserving these sight lines has influenced the planning of a city like no other. From creating unimposing glass buildings that are long and slender, to having a very precise idea of the utilization of space within the city grid, Vancouver illustrates on a grand scale how powerful view has on design in the built environment. On a complete opposite scale the view at Knife River is a focused moment ever changing with the seasons yet static on many levels.

li·men

limen transverse beam
in a door frame, threshold; probably
akin to Latin limus transverse.

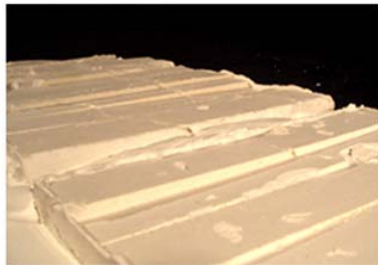
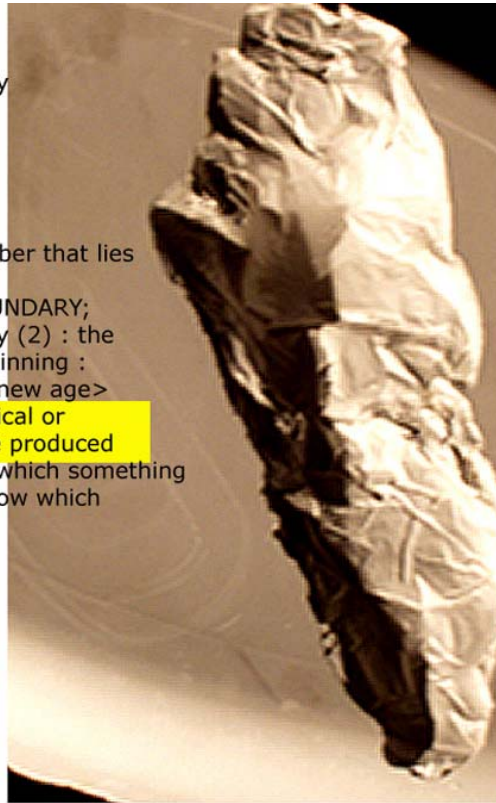
thresh·old

1 : the plank, stone, or piece of timber that lies
under a door : SILL

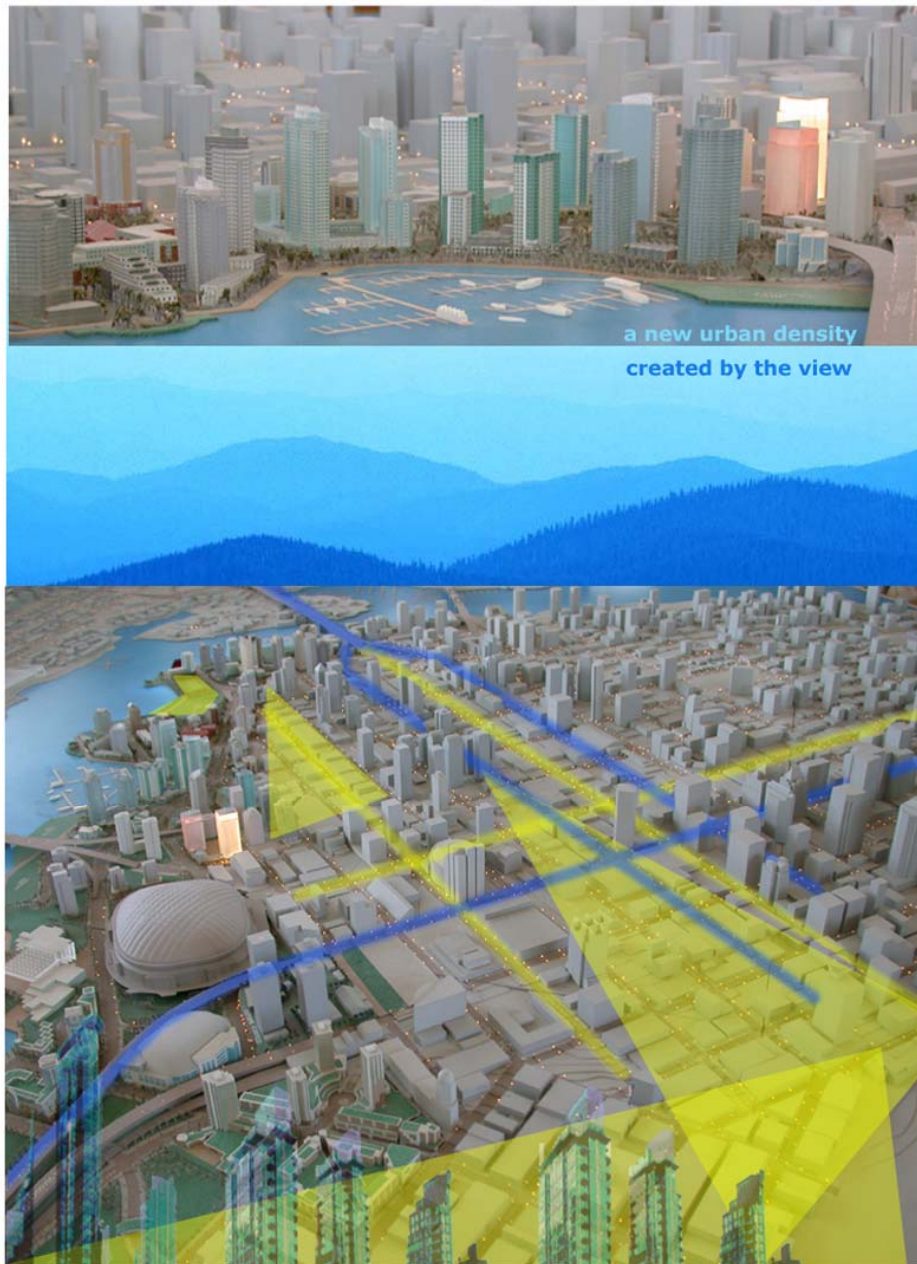
2 a : GATE, DOOR b (1) : END, BOUNDARY;
specifically : the end of a runway (2) : the
place or point of entering or beginning :
OUTSET <on the threshold of a new age>

3 a : the point at which a physiological or
psychological effect begins to be produced

b : a level, point, or value above which something
is true or will take place and below which
it is not or will not



winnipeg river, ontario



a new urban density
created by the view

dominated
by the view

vancouver, b.c.

Figure 1.2

Chapter 2

Horizon: *The Group of Seven*

Through countless discussions with peers and professionals alike, revealed Vancouver as a city understood through the extreme influences view can have on dictating orientation, scale and even building type. These progressions lead to diagramming the site and the views at the mouth of the Knife River with a strong focus to view (figure 2.1 page15). Settled 14 miles north of Duluth Minnesota, the Knife River community boasts dynamic seasonal change, consistent with the rest of the North Shore Region. The middle-income town is known for its delicious smoked fish, family history, boat harbor and jewel like quality. This community has a long history that goes back to the first days of logging and commercial fishing on the North Shore. In fact, the first recorded American total-loss shipwreck on Lake Superior occurred at the mouth of the Knife River in 1838 (Waters). In the past the village was an important stop for both of the major railroads that served the area. Today, Knife River remains a quiet village, but visitors and residents alike enjoy a public beach, restaurants, and excellent fishing. In addition to being a public boat landing, the Knife River Marina is a full-service operation run by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Waters).

Upon diagramming the potential importance of where to see and be seen at the mouth of the river, the obvious site for this thesis investigation on view is located on the south banks of the mouth. Located on the east side of the railroad tracks, sheltered between the highway and the coast of Lake Superior, the site takes advantage of the views out to the horizon while gently revealing itself while traveling along the major thoroughfare. Investigating the site and the immediate surroundings reveal the harbor

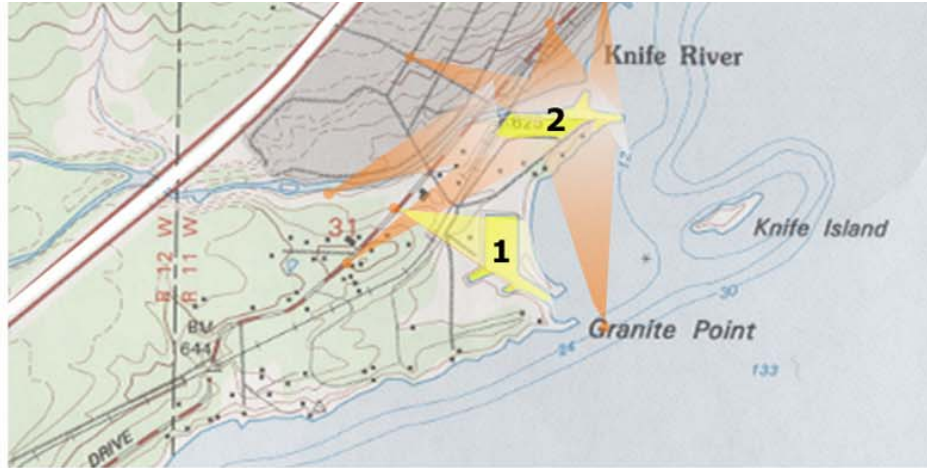
and public beach lying down the coast to be dormant, with an almost cocoon like quality in the winter, while deviously active in the summer. Each location, as well as the mouth of the river, has excellent views of Knife Island and the bird rookery that resides there. The island protects the birds from the grasp of the mainland as well as the boat traffic from the harbor, sheltering views inland. The experience walking the coast is a calming one. Each moment in the vast shoreline that provides a sense of place or shelter demands a pause, and a glimpse out to the even present horizon. Yet at each location, the range of perception is different. It is as if each experience is special, waiting for something to be attained with each presentation of the horizon. The dictionary definition of horizon provided a new direction of focus in artistic application of these feelings. There are innate similarities of the pictorial views of the Knife River to that of any painting of the North Shore. From the trickle of the river to the rage that stirs beyond Knife Island, the range of perception or experience of what may be attained is omnipresent.

ho·ri·zon

c : range of perception or experience d : something that might be attained <new horizons>

How does one capture, grab hold of or conquer beauty in order to best represent or reproduce the intensity of nature? The way a painter may capture the landscape versus what a sculpture may produce can be very different, and in the case of Tom Thomson (figure 2.3 page 17) and *The Group of Seven* (figure 2.2 page16) the range of perception on canvas changed the standards in landscape painting in the early 1900's. They were a

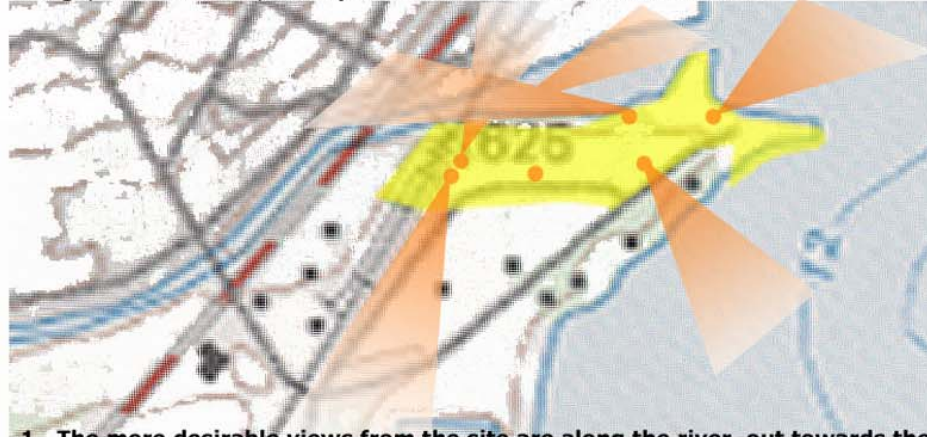
handful of Canadian landscape painters, with a representation diverged from styles of old, yet bound by the same subject matter. In studying the artwork from these gentlemen, one constant remained. The ever present theme of the horizon seems to have a stranglehold on the mood, composition and ultimately the telling of the story behind the paintings (figures 2.4-2.7 pages 18-22). No matter where set within the confines of the canvas, the placement of the horizon adds to the journey narrative that is so important in understanding the site at Knife River.



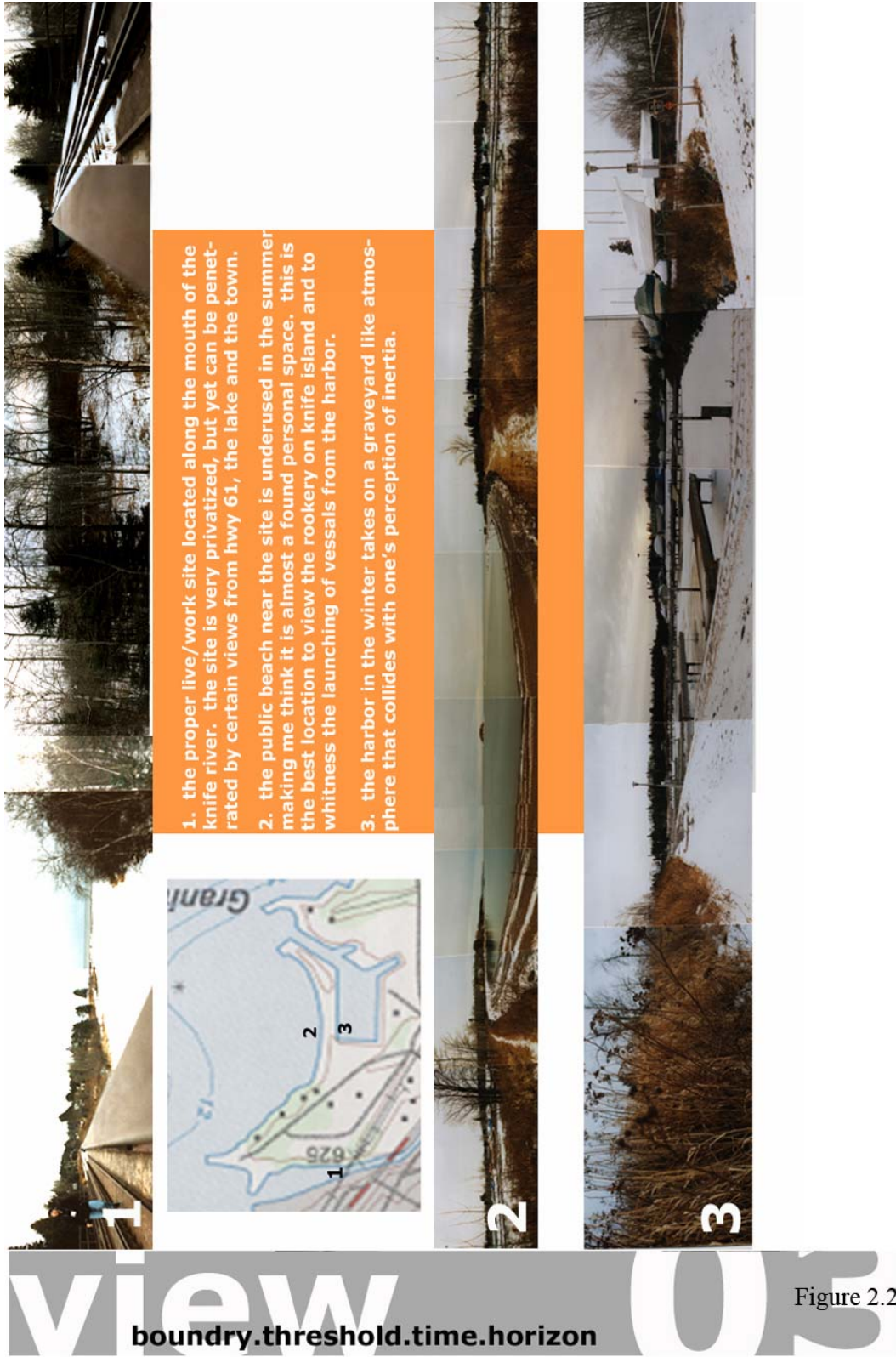
- 1. The local port serves as private storage as well as a public boat landing.
- 2. Should the site be as iconic for the town as the landing is?



- 1. Some of the more penetrative views into the site would come from the rail bridge, from the lake, and up on the west bank of the knife river.



- 1. The more desirable views from the site are along the river, out towards the horizon and down the rail tracks.





group of seven canadian landscape painters

Figure 2.3



Tom Thomson (1877-1917)
 ...is considered one of the most important
 and influential early Canadian artists.
 Together with members of the Group of
 Seven he created a distinct approach to
 portraying rugged Canadian landscapes.

1877 Thomas John Thomson is born near Claremont, Ontario, August 5. Thomson family moves to Leith, Ontario, in October.
 1898
 Apprentices at Kennedy Brothers Foundry (now Black Clawson-Kennedy), Owen Sound, Ontario.
 1899
 Tries to enlist in army for Boer War, but is refused entrance.
 Joins Ancient Order of Foresters; registers at the Canadian Business College in Chatham Ontario.
 1901
 Arrives in Seattle (after following two of his older brothers who were attending school there); studies for six months at the Acme Business College.
 1902
 Employed by Mering and Ladd, Engravers, Seattle.
 1904
 Returns to Ontario.
 1905-06
 Possibly studies with William Cruikshank.
 1907-08
 Hired as Grip Limited by Albert Robson.
 Meets J.E.H. MacDonald, the senior designer.
 1912
 Makes first visit to Algonquin Park with H.B. (Ben) Jackson in May. (Robson is the foreman in charge through Missisagi Forest Reserve (west of Sudbury) in August and September.)
 Moves to Rous and Mann Press, following Albert Robson, Franklin Carmichael and Arthur Lismer. They are joined by Frederick Varley.
 Thomson begins to work the first of his northern sketches into large canvases.
 1913
 Exhibits and sells A Northern Lake at the Ontario Society of Artists spring show.
 Summers in Algonquin Park; introduced to A.Y. Jackson by Dr. McCallum in the fall;
 1914
 leaves Rous and Mann to work full-time as an artist, with financial assistance from McCallum.
 Shares Studio One in Toronto with Jackson, in January and February.
 Exhibits Moonlight, Early Evening in Ontario Society of Artists exhibition and it is sold
 Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound, opens.

Travels by canoe to McCallum's cottage on Georgian Bay and back to Algonquin Park. Paints with Jackson in Algonquin Park in the fall; they are joined by Varley and Lismer. Exhibits A Lake, Early Spring at Royal Canadian Academy.
 1915
 Contributes to Algonquin Park to the Canadian Patriotic Fund Sale.
 Shares studio with Franklin Carmichael, then moves into shack, winter 1914-15.
 1915
 Exhibits Northern River and Split Rock, Georgian Bay in the spring at Ontario Society of Artists exhibition; the former is purchased by the National Gallery of Canada; the latter donated to the National Gallery by the Kitchener Art Committee.
 1916
 Possibly to Georgian Bay in October to measure McCallum's walls for projected murals.
 One man show at Arts and Letters Club in December.
 1916
 Exhibits Spring Ice in Ontario Society of Artists spring exhibition.
 Works as a ranger in Algonquin Park during the summer; travels the Petawawa River; returns to Toronto for the winter to paint The Pointers, The West Wind, The Jack Pine and The Drive.
 1917
 Returns to Algonquin Park in March; gets guide's licence; fishes with McCallum in May; visited by Frances McGillivray.
 Paints at least one work a day recording the transition of winter to summer.
 1917
 Commemorates the death of J.W. Beatty and J.E.H. MacDonald.
 Memorial exhibition of Thomson's work at Arts and Letters Club.
 1919
 Commemorative exhibition, Arts Club of Montreal.
 1920
 Commemorative exhibition, Art Gallery of Toronto.
 1967



shoreline



smoke lake



sunset sky



pine county

Figure 2.4

aj. casson



1. Emphasized by Jacques
2. into horizontal

Lowly terrain.
seems to be
represented. Dnf.
apparent.

Irregularity to
Espe's point and
canyons.

Figure 2.5

a.jackson



↑ Denser Sky
↓ Light Water

↳ the repetitive quality of water decreasing slightly on a cloudy day?

horizon line
Dipsy in Tide
has no curve of the foreground

Figure 2.6

g.morrison

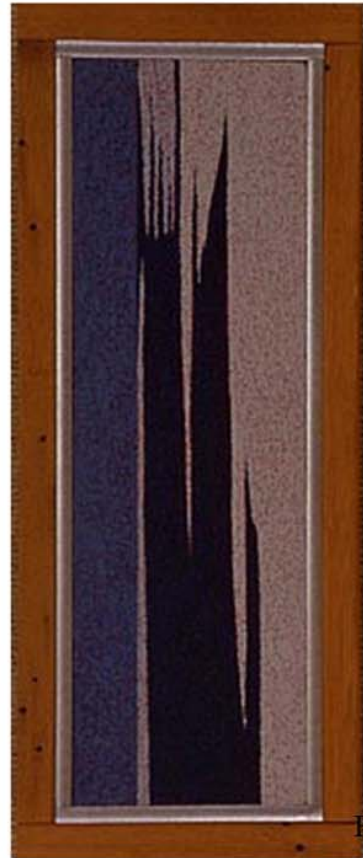


Figure 2.7

Chapter 3

Community: From Camp to Campus

Every person in the world has probably had the fortune at one time or the other of experiencing the benefits of community. Not in the sense of a yard and a picket fence, but rather in a moment of aligned common interests or direction in life. The people of Knife River and of the greater North Shore community share many common interests including the outdoors and the peace and quiet that accompanies the coast. When the tourists come in the peak of the summer months and the area is bursting with curiosity, the local inhabitants are scarce, to say the least. It is the winter months when the Knife River community emerges and displays the fellowship and social activities that make it special.

com·mu·ni·ty (*www.merriam-webster.com*)

d : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger

When investigating community and how great organizations start with an idea, it is usually a handful of driven people that set things in motion, the glass blowing institution of Pilchuck is a good example. Before Pilchuck became the authority in glass blowing education in the United States and the campus it is today, it started with a man named Dale Chihuly and some friends with a desire to experiment with the nature of glass (figure 3.1 page 26). Starting as a tent community in the 1960's, the group's focus was to quench the creative and educational need as well as nurturing their common desires through the experimentation of glass blowing. "...Some artists saw exercises in hot shop that were not about object making as wasting time and glass, but others embraced the spontaneity and unpredictability of glass 'events'" (Oldknow). Buster

Simpson, a one-time student at Pilchuck, illustrates the need for experimentation with their craft in order to fully understand the material they are working with. As the years went by and the word got out, the once small camp had expanded to a campus. No money is made here, no tuition for attending and no limitations to the extent of knowledge one can to gain. Today Pilchuck provides facilities for living, eating and socializing, but mostly for the intended purpose: providing places for like minded individuals to come together for experimentation in glass blowing.

When studying art and the communities that form around them, it is interesting to see how many different ways groups of people can come together to create something so powerful. In and along the North Shore, you see many galleries and shops dedicated to the production of artwork in some fashion. In educating like-minded artists, the Grand Marais Art Colony in Northern Minnesota has an impressive following. In the case of Pilchuck physical craft drives the draw of people, whereas at the Grand Marais Art Colony there is an impressive list of educators who flock there to create the nucleus for the greater community (figure 3.2 page 27). The same can be said for the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver (figure 3.3 page 28). Although more established as a machine of education, the institute lies on a little patch of land called Granville Island. The once industrial eyesore of the city burned to the ground providing a rebirth of a new kind production and trade (figure 3.4 page 29). After the smoke cleared artists took over the polluted land and used it to produce and shelter their trade. Now the

island has a market like atmosphere where people can stroll through the streets and see production on display. It is a wonderfully energetic space where ideas of art and education are always of utmost importance. On a smaller scale, photographer Jim Brandenburg's studio and home Ravenwood is an example of how art can evoke a community of buildings (figure 3.5 page 30). Brandenburg has a wonderful eye for nature. His photographs communicate a love for the outdoors as well as journey taken in past or present. This journey is evident in the layout of Ravenwood. With its' almost farm like out cropping of buildings, the site lends itself to have a rich photographic quality boasting with paths and connections throughout the buildings and grounds.

com-mu-ni-ty

1 : a unified body of individuals: as a : STATE, COMMONWEALTH b : the people with common interests living in a particular area; broadly : the area itself

<the problems of a large community> c : an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location d : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society <a community of retired persons> e : a group

linked by a common belief f : a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests <the international community> g : a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society <the academic community>

purpose:



"...some artists saw exercises in hot shop that were not about object making as wasting time and glass, but others embraced the spontaneity and unpredictability of glass 'events'."

...buster simpson

living:



dale chihuly

eating:



social:



* All definitions taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary

convivial places

Figure 3.1

2002 Art Colony Instructors

•**KAREN KNUTSON** began her journey in watercolor in 1985 as a traditional watercolorist. Today she passionately explores abstraction. A sought-after teacher and artist, her great love for the landscape of Lake Superior brings her to the Grand Marais Art Colony for the first time. She has studied watercolor with Karilyn Holman, Mary Ann Beckwith, Gerald Brommer, Nita Engle, Barbara Nechis, John Salinen, and Diane Faxon.

•**JANE LIEBER MAYS** received her M.A. from communications at the American Academy of Art with artist Hazel Belvo, prior to leading the to the Art Colony for many years. Jane Lieber Mays

•**GREG MUELLER** received his BS in Studio Art Montana State University School of Art. His for public participation and a dance collaboration spent 5 years as a studio assistant to Paul Greg. Greg is exhibiting a sculpture at Lake View Center in North Dakota. Greg's sculpture is influenced metal.

•**JUDY STONE NUNNELEY** is a printmaker, installations that reflect her interests in art, Canada, and Australia. Her college level teaching Professor at the Minneapolis College of Art and Master's degree at the University of Nebraska-L

•**JOE PADDOCK** is a poet, oral historian, and his passion is inner ecology, including studies in the prose book *Soil and Survival*, and his biography of wilderness preservationist Ernest Oberholzer, *Keeper of the Wild*, was published in fall of 2001. He has received the Loft-McKnight Award of Distinction for poetry.

•**STERLING RATHSACK JR.** has served as Education Coordinator for the Duluth Art Institute, lecturer at University of Minnesota-Duluth, and instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. He has exhibited widely in the upper midwest and is represented in collections in Sweden, the US, and Japan. One of his most recent commissions is an installation at the Gooseberry Falls State Park Visitors Center and can be observed on your way to the Art Colony! This past year Sterling had a major exhibit of historical narrative paintings, "In Siam", at the Duluth Art Institute and the Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery in Grand Marais.

•**ARNA RENNAN** lives and works as a painter in Minnesota's Arrowhead Region. Her previous training was in Oslo, Norway, at the National Academy of Art. Arna Rennan brings her unique plein air painting instruction to the Art Colony, returning for a third year. Her work is included in public and private collections in Minnesota and Norway. She is currently represented by Lizzards Gallery in Duluth and Art Resources in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

•**MARYANN WEIDT** worked as a children's librarian for 20 years before becoming a published author. She has written seven biographies for grade-school children in addition to the Minnesota Book Award winner *Daddy Played Music for the Cows*. She has been a featured speaker and teacher at the Southwest Florida Writers' Conference, a faculty member of the Antioch Writers' Workshop, and a featured speaker at the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators conference in Portland, Oregon in 2001.

•**JO WOOD** lives and works in a rustic log cabin on the North Shore of Lake Superior near Grand Marais. Her bead paintings are a celebration of place. Each piece is a meditation in which she stitches up to 200 beads per inch. She has been sharing her knowledge of technique and these tiny, shiny beads in local workshops for several years. Her work has been featured in *Lake Superior Magazine* and *Beadwork* magazine.

•**HAZEL BELVO** is Professor Emeritus of Minneapolis College of Art & Design. Her recent series of paintings and drawings "Women In The World: Visionaries and Survivors" explores the topic of women as agents of change and pillars of strength in our ever-changing world. Her "process method" of instruction is known nation-wide.

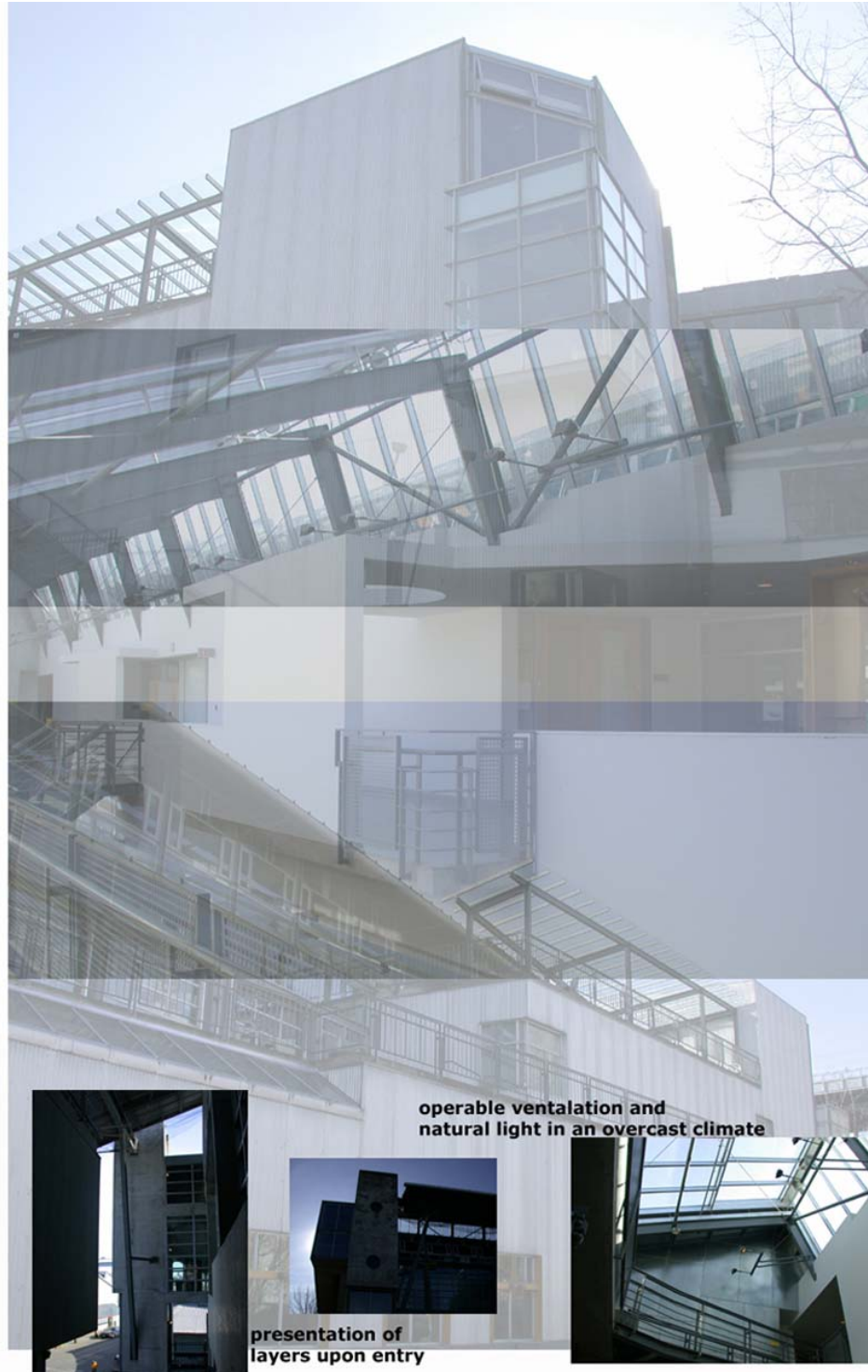
•**TOM CHRISTIANSEN**, metal fabricator and sculptor, lives in Lutsen, Minnesota, where he owns Last Chance Fabricating. Tom has a long history of working in fabricated and poured metals, both as art and ornamental design and is a graduate of the University of Minnesota. He has a number of functional and sculptural examples of his work in North Shore businesses and public locations.

•**EMILIO DEGRAZIA** taught at The Ohio State University before joining the faculty of Winona State University. He began publishing creative prose in 1973 and founded *Great River Review*, a literary journal, in 1977. With his wife Monica, he has co-edited the anthology *Twenty-Six Minnesota Writers*. He has conducted writing workshops on many topics for a variety of age and ability levels. In addition to fiction, he has written a few plays, and he hopes to be a poet when he "grows up."

•**JOHN FENN** playwright, is the author of the Twin Cities' classic, *A servants' Christmas* which is Minneapolis and St. Paul's longest running original play. He is a graduate of Harvard University and the University of Minnesota. Fenn's seventeen plays have had over four hundred performances in sixteen states. John Fenn is the recipient of a McKnight Fellowship in playwriting and a Jerome Grant with the Playwrights' Center. He has won three national playwriting competitions and is a Founder and facilitator of the Playwrights' Theater Project, Circle-in-the-Square Theater School, New York City. In addition, he has many other accomplishments and extensive credentials.

The mission of the Grand Marais Art Colony is to provide services to artists, promote art education, and nurture art in our community by providing an environment for creative excellence. GMA carries out this three-fold mission by: Offering workshops of high artistic merit for emerging artists, Sponsoring professional development workshops for self-employed creative people who want and need to make the commitment of time and resources necessary to advance their artistic career, and by Presenting free public events for the community and visitors, such as artists' talks, artist grant opportunity workshops, and artist networking opportunities

*<http://www.grandmaraisartcolony.org/home.htm>



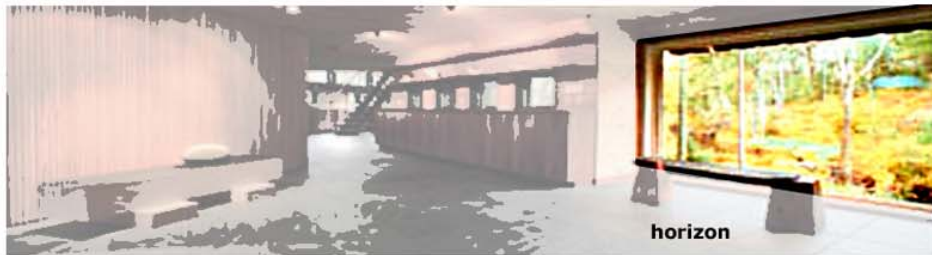
**emily carr institute
of art and design**

vancouver , b.c.

Figure 3.3



Figure 3.4



*<http://www.jimbrandenburg.com/home.html>

Chapter 4

Program

The project proposed is a *seasonal artist community* at the mouth of the Knife River up along Lake Superior's North Shore. Settled 14 miles north of Duluth Minnesota, the Knife River community boasts dynamic seasonal change, consistent with the rest of the North Shore Region. The middle-income town is known for its delicious smoked fish, family history, boat harbor and jewel like quality. This community has a long history that goes back to the first days of logging and commercial fishing on the North Shore. In fact, the first recorded American total-loss shipwreck on Lake Superior occurred at the mouth of the Knife River in 1838 (Waters). In the past the village was an important stop for both of the major railroads that served the area. Today, Knife River remains a quiet village, but visitors and residents alike enjoy a public beach, restaurants, and excellent fishing. In addition to being a public boat landing, the Knife River Marina is a full-service operation run by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Question: With the increase in commercialization of the area, how can building evolve in order to sustain dwelling and community 365 days a year along Lake Superior's North Shore?

The **one** thing about the Knife River community that tends to take precedence over everything else is my sensibility towards disrupting the fabric of this small village. People here have a strong sense of place with regard to the North Shore, and the area is not a tourist destination on the way to a state park, but rather where they live. The greater Knife River community is based on primary dwelling owners, but the population does increase in the summer. Different buildings house many different functions of the town,

common for smaller convivial groups. Restaurants have post offices, smoke houses have convenience stores and residences have galleries, all contributing to the dynamic feeling of the town. Another desirable aspect of Knife River is its location. Along scenic Hwy 61 it is a mere break in the rhythm of Lake Superior. The history of the North Shore is rich in trade and fishing, bringing the earliest of settlers to the area. Communities flourished in order to take advantage of the seasonal harvests. Now days the property along the coast of Lake Superior is all purchased based on popular demand and people's love affair with 'living' on the water.

Vehicle: A *seasonal artist community* at the mouth of the Knife River up along Lake Superior's North Shore.

The idea is to inject an artist community along the mouth of the Knife River to preserve and enrich the experience of Lake Superiors North Shore. The community adapts programmatically with the changing of the seasons, providing a primary focus on sustaining dwelling during the winter months. The main building on the site is formed from a melding of three programmatic desires:

1. Work
2. Gallery
3. Social/eat

The sleeping units are small, housing 1-4 people, providing comfortable, yet minimal resting quarters. These units are mobile, in order to move about the site based on the current occupants desires. The ideas behind the sleeping modules are:

1. A privatized retreat from work meant for reflection.
2. A mobile sleeping unit that would allow habitation, at designated points within the site, heightening the experience of the *edge* condition.
3. The ability to stretch out across the landscape in the summer and contract inward towards the main volume in the winter.

program

Main Volume

<u>Workshop rooms-</u>	3@600 s.f. = 1800 s.f.
<u>Gallery-</u>	1050 s.f.
<u>Eat/Social-</u>	2000 s.f.
<u>Entry-</u>	1200 s.f.
<u>Washrooms-</u>	3@150 s.f. = 450 s.f.
<u>Bathrooms-</u>	2@150 s.f. = 300 s.f.
<u>Kitchen-</u>	1050 s.f.

<u>Storage-</u>	400 s.f.
<u>3 season rooms-</u>	2@300 s.f. = 600 s.f.
<u>Mechanical-</u>	100 s.f.

sub-total-8950 s.f.

Guest Quarters

<u>Individual(mobile) cabins-</u>	6@200 s.f. = 1200 s.f.
<u>Stationary cabins-</u>	4@400 s.f. = 1600 s.f.
<u>Bath House-</u>	375 s.f.

total- 12,125 s.f.

Chapter 5

Architectural Precedents

“Discovering the found potential of a project through site, climate, context, program and architectural order which is evocative of circumstance” (Patkau, John). This quote has been of great importance in realizing what is important on the site at Knife River. Upon investigating their work, Patkau Architects really have an understanding of placement on the landscape. They set up boundaries and heighten the experience through this architectural order. It is almost as if the structures they create are vessels in and amongst this notion of boundary which provide a connection to the landscape through material and orientation. When one thinks of an architect that has a deep connection to the landscape, you may hear a name like Frank Lloyd Wright, but Patkau Architects take a different approach to site placement. Their minimalistic applied form is almost the antithesis of integral landscape design, but materials are where this firm has made a breakthrough. At the Casa Pynch and the Patkau House we can see two examples where refined materials are set in opposition to the natural surroundings of the landscape (figure 5.1 page 39). It is this conflict that makes these examples successful by simply defining the boundary as boundless. In the example of the Sea Bird school, Patkau has created a structure that uses the form in a way that mimics the surrounding terrain, acts as a deterrent from the elements and is clad with materials that deliberately weather with time and orientation (figure 5.2 page 40). The jagged mountainous form mimics the landscape in a way that creates a dynamic space for learning. Set in a valley, the school acts as a deterrent from the strong winds that would otherwise disrupt the small community. The building is clad with a monolithic swath of cedar that embraces the climatic severities of the site. With the ever-changing conditions of the sun, wind and rain we see that the

cladding will weather in a way that is as dynamic as the form itself, bounding and connecting the building to the elements of the site.

bound·ary

1 : something (as a line, point, or plane) that indicates or fixes a limit or extent

Another architect that uses the landscape and the boundless view of the natural surroundings to derive form is the Big Sur architect Mickey Muennig (figure 5.3 page 41). On a much smaller scale, this single-family architect defines his style by the emerging quality his buildings have. It is almost like two opposing landmasses have collided together to result in places that bloom from the vistas they inhabit (figure 5.4 page 42). Concrete and glass define the conflict between the grounded and porous nature of his buildings. Like a photographer framing the horizon, there are rarely any physical extensions in the architecture, only the view that captures the limitless nature of the site.

bound·ary

Pronunciation: 'baun-d(&-)rE

Function: noun

Inflected Form(s): plural -aries

Date: 1626

: something (as a line, point, or plane) that indicates or fixes a limit or extent

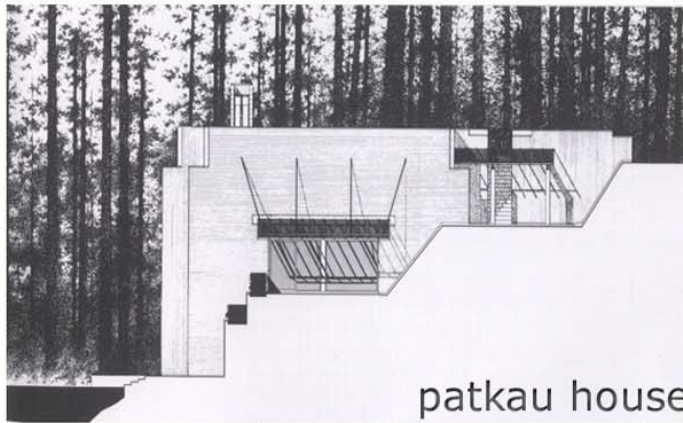


...discovering the 'found potential' of a project through site, climate, context, program and an architectural order which is evocative of circumstance...

-john patkau

patkau architects
the relationship of the particular to the general

casa pyrck



patkau house



* All definitions taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary

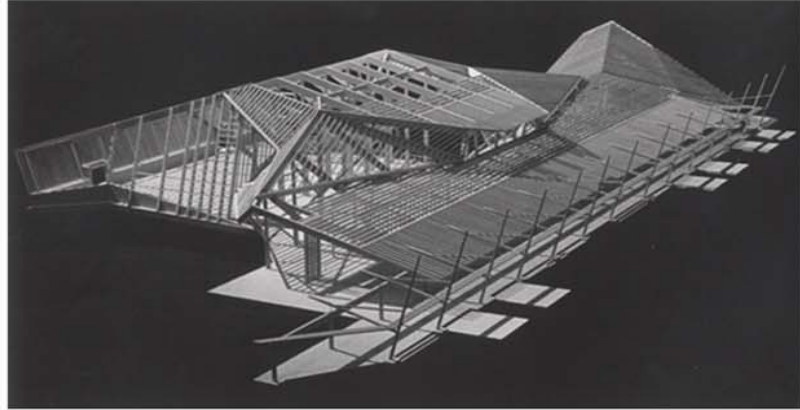
site

03

Figure 5.1

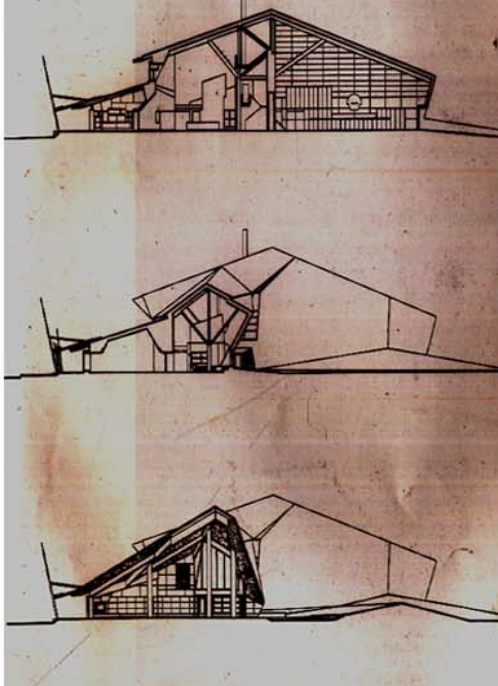
bound-ary

: something (as a line, point, or plane) that indicates or fixes a limit or extent



seabird school

patkau architects
the relationship of the particular to the general



...the school is created so it is a part of the community's commonspace. the form is derived from the surrounding terrain, and acts as a deflection device from strong winds. the monolithic cedar cladding creates inconsistent weathering, embracing the climatic severities.



* All definitions taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary

site

03

Figure 5.2

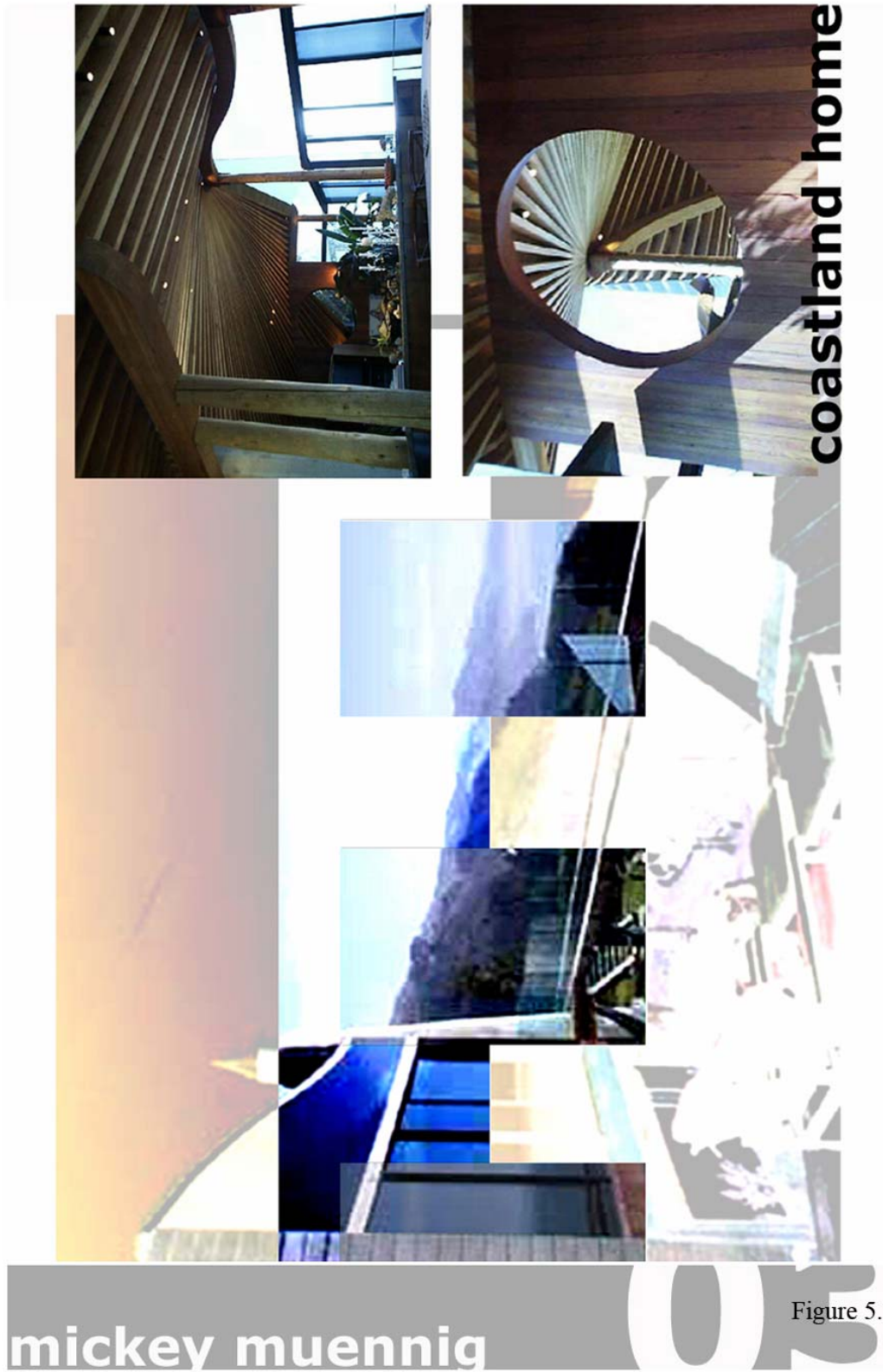
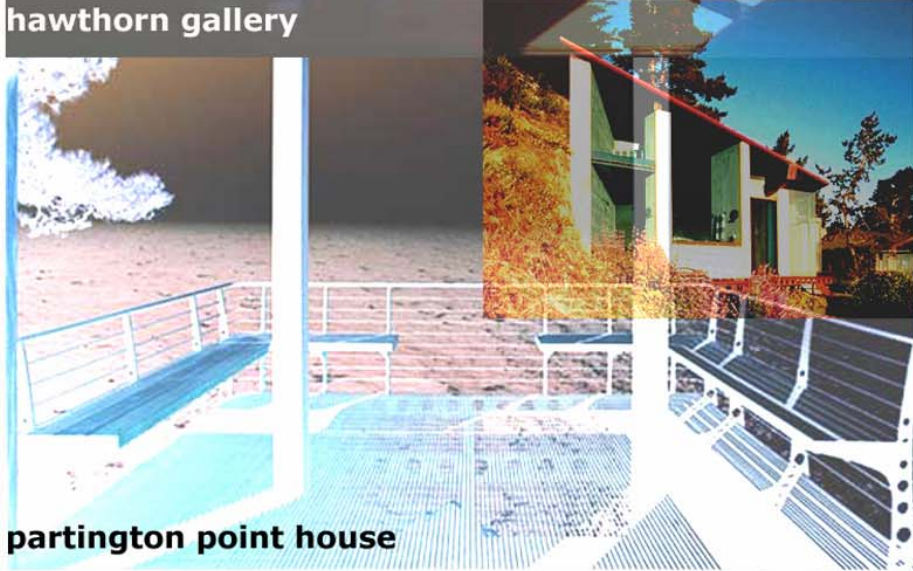


Figure 5.3



hawthorn gallery



partington point house

mickey muennig

Figure 5.4

Chapter 6

Time: Deriving the Form

When traveling to the site, and up the coast of the North Shore, time and seasons are very apparent. The drastic climatic conditions on the coasts of the Great Lakes can vary in a heartbeat, acting as a catalyst for seasonal change. As the canopies begin to turn colors and fall from the trees, the lake is gently exposed for inland viewing. Along with steadily decreasing daylight, cold creeps in like a dense fog in a harbor, until something marvelous happens. The ice forms on the river and gently breaks loose following the flow towards the stronger body of water. As time ticks away, the large shards of ice build up at the mouth like a ship stuck against the rocks against the tide (figure 6.1 page 46). Like a native mineral composition under a microscope, these shards create a landscape with a dynamic color and abrasive texture marking a point in time for the people of Knife River Minnesota.

time (*www.merriam-webster.com*)

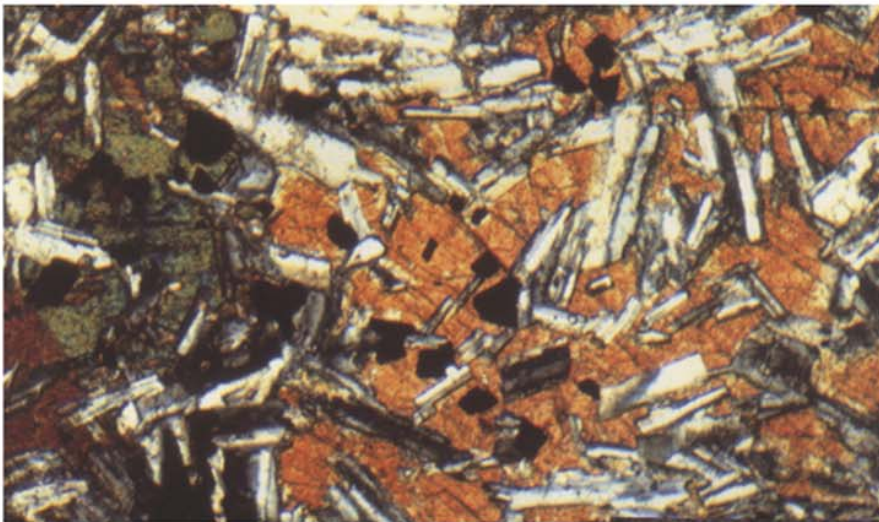
2 : the point or period when something occurs : OCCASION

Marked by time, this edge condition at the mouth of the Knife River illustrates the changing of the seasons for the community (figure 6.2 page 47). It is the end of the tourist summer months, and it is time for the local inhabitants to emerge and reclaim what is theirs. It is time for the social interaction of the community, routed in gatherings and the arts. The inspiration for the form of the building is based on this annual reshaping of the landscape as well as the community (figure 6.3 page 48). The form of the building, once sheltered from the somberness of summer, will emerge every season visually and programmatically for the people of Knife River. The jagged roof forms create an abrasive identity and icon for the town, visible in the winter and consumed by the

landscape in the summer. The convivial space is a vessel for residing and artfully framing the landscape.

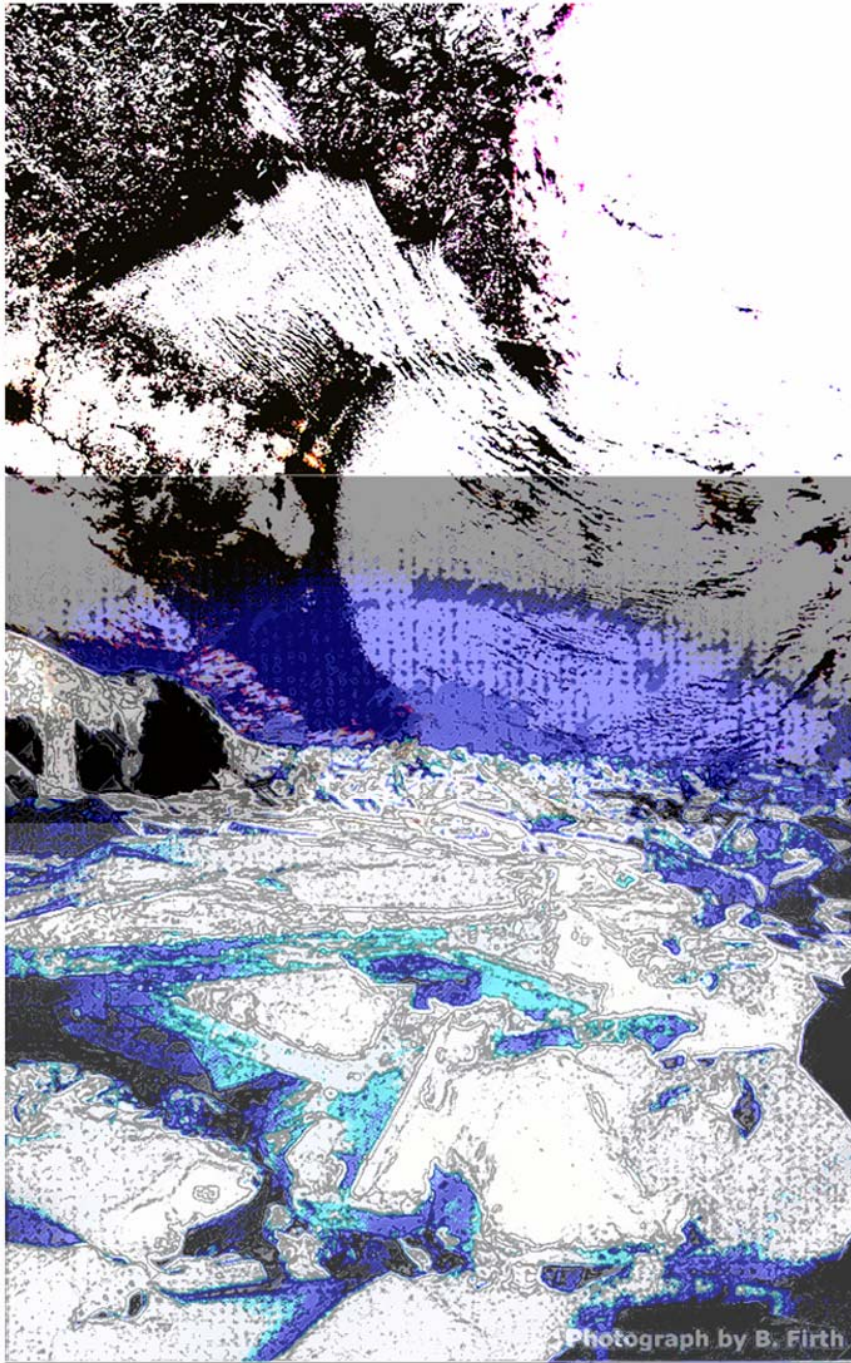


Photograph by B. Firth

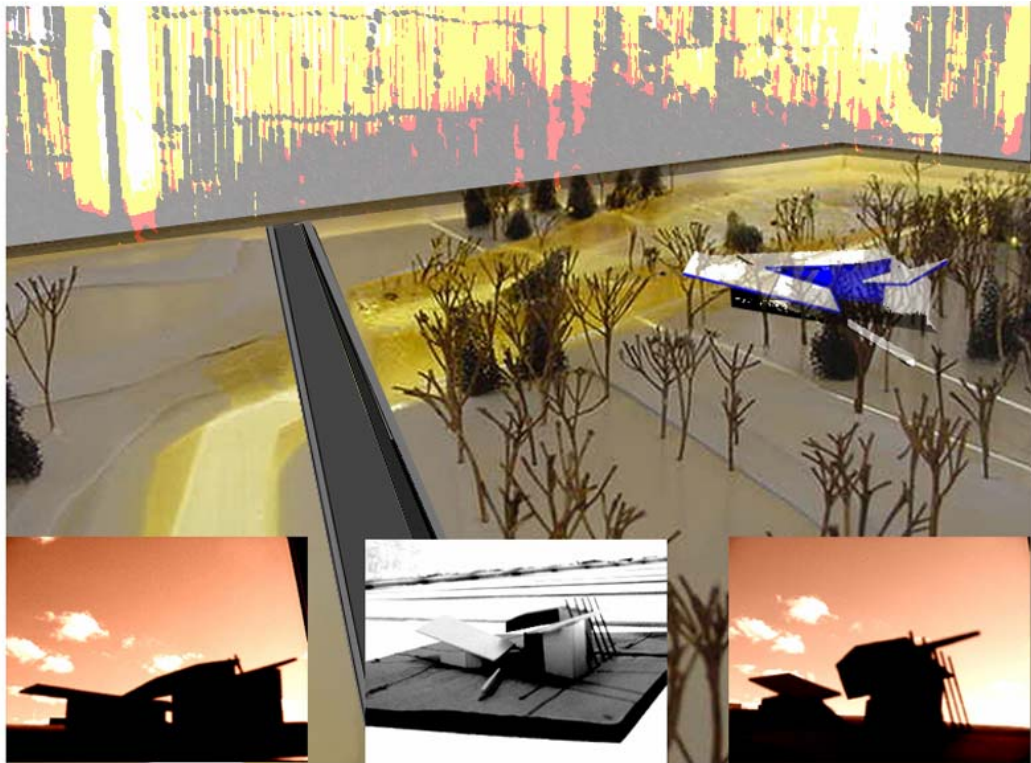


pyroxene

Figure 6.1



option A **03** Figure 6.2



The inspiration for the form comes from winters annual reshaping of the shoreline in and around the mouth of the Knife River. The constant build up of these jagged forms of ice create a drastic seasonal change in the landscape. With the change from fall to winter, this form will emerge into the landscape, until gradually masked by the birth of a new season.

Chapter 7

Site Analysis: The End Product

The idea is to inject an artist community along the mouth of the Knife River to preserve and enrich the year round experience of Lake Superior's North Shore. The community adapts programmatically with the changing of the seasons, providing a place for education of curious tourists in the summer, and communal residency for local artists in the winter. The main building on the site is formed from a melding of three programmatic desires: Work, Gallery and Social (figure 7.1 page 53). With a concentrated placement on the site, the building, along with the community emerges from the canopy in the winter months to be viewed along scenic 61 as a vessel to view the infinite horizon. With a birth of a new spring it will act as a galley and school for the patrons of the arts, providing insight into the surroundings as well as a history of the life on Lake Superior.

Upon diagramming and overlaying the site with information, the intersections that are not physically in the land start to emerge (figures 7.2-7.5 pages 56-57). Like the invisible cross traffic of boats in the ocean the point at which the program takes shape is evident. Three main frames of view define the nonphysical restrictions of the bank:

1. The mouth of the Knife River boasts a very strong notion of both the infinite and specific.
2. The train tracks have their own ideas of journey and give a safe separation from Hwy 61.
3. A privatized drive to the Southeast runs parallel to the coast, enabling a separation to the river.

The approach in your vehicle or on foot from Scenic 61 you approach from the west, winding on a gravel road until you rumble past the threshold of the train line that created dwelling here (figure 7.7 page 59). Ever conscious of the river and lake, you plunge through the canopy of trees you arrive on modestly scaled structure emerging from the earth, clad in metal, born of season and time. You are directed past the obviousness of the entrance to be placed in a location to start your journey back to the structure. Upon entering you stand at the axis of the building, the point of knowing. Bound by a roof profile that simulates the distant horizon, one is directed to the open gallery volume or the slight ramp that connects the studio apertures to the landscape. When descending from the entry into the main space, the union between Lake Superior and the Knife River is apparent at mid run of the grand staircase. Only then can you see the horizon. When you have reached the social space below the glazed northeast face of the building directs you outside to a retained patio framing the horizon. The ramp slope to the north upon entry gives access to the studio spaces. These descending apertures grow in height and depth, creating a specific perspective of the landscape to work in. The structure emerges from the ground, taking advantage of poured concrete bearing walls while acting as some cut extension of the earth and coupling it with a timber and steel frame to allow expanses of glass to capture the north light. The interior space is cold and raw, which will be transformed with the passing of the seasons and the tasks of the day. The social space can handle receptions of any modest crowd. Whether to eat or educate, the social gathering space is intended for flexibility for the people, with a focus on its location within the site, inhabiting the foreground of the horizon. The gallery itself is cut

off from the horizon and landscape. It is open, yet contained to be a flexible viewing space of what is produced in the studios.

The dwelling portion of this thesis project is a series of movable components that retract back into the main mass of the building in the winter and projects out into the landscape in the summer. The ideas behind these manageable sleeping/working quarters are that the individual artist can choose a location in the landscape, which is conducive for their own inspiration (figure 7.13-7.16 pages 65-68). Like an inland dock stretching out to the horizon, these units can serve the patron with more intimate experience of the landscape.

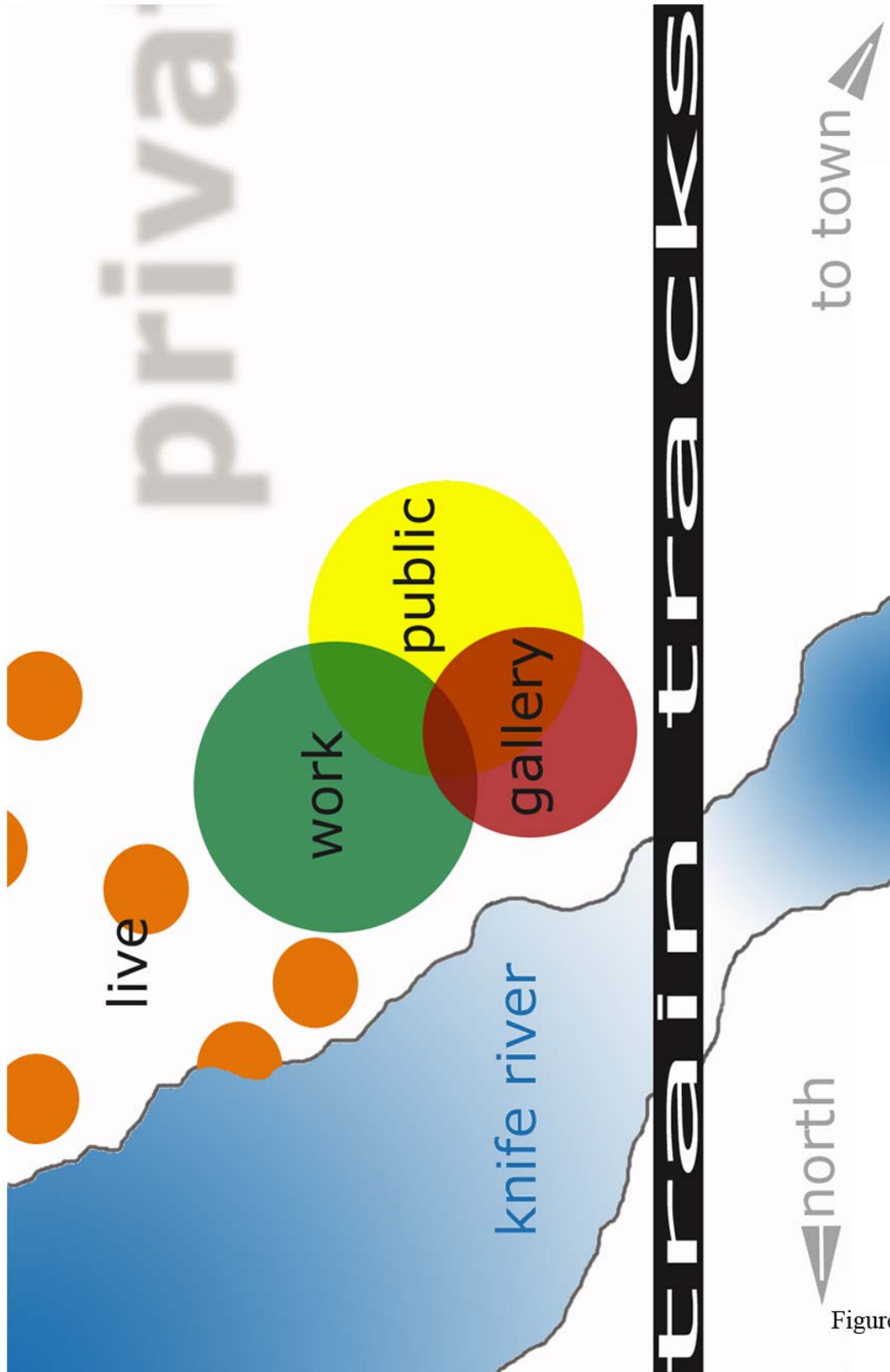
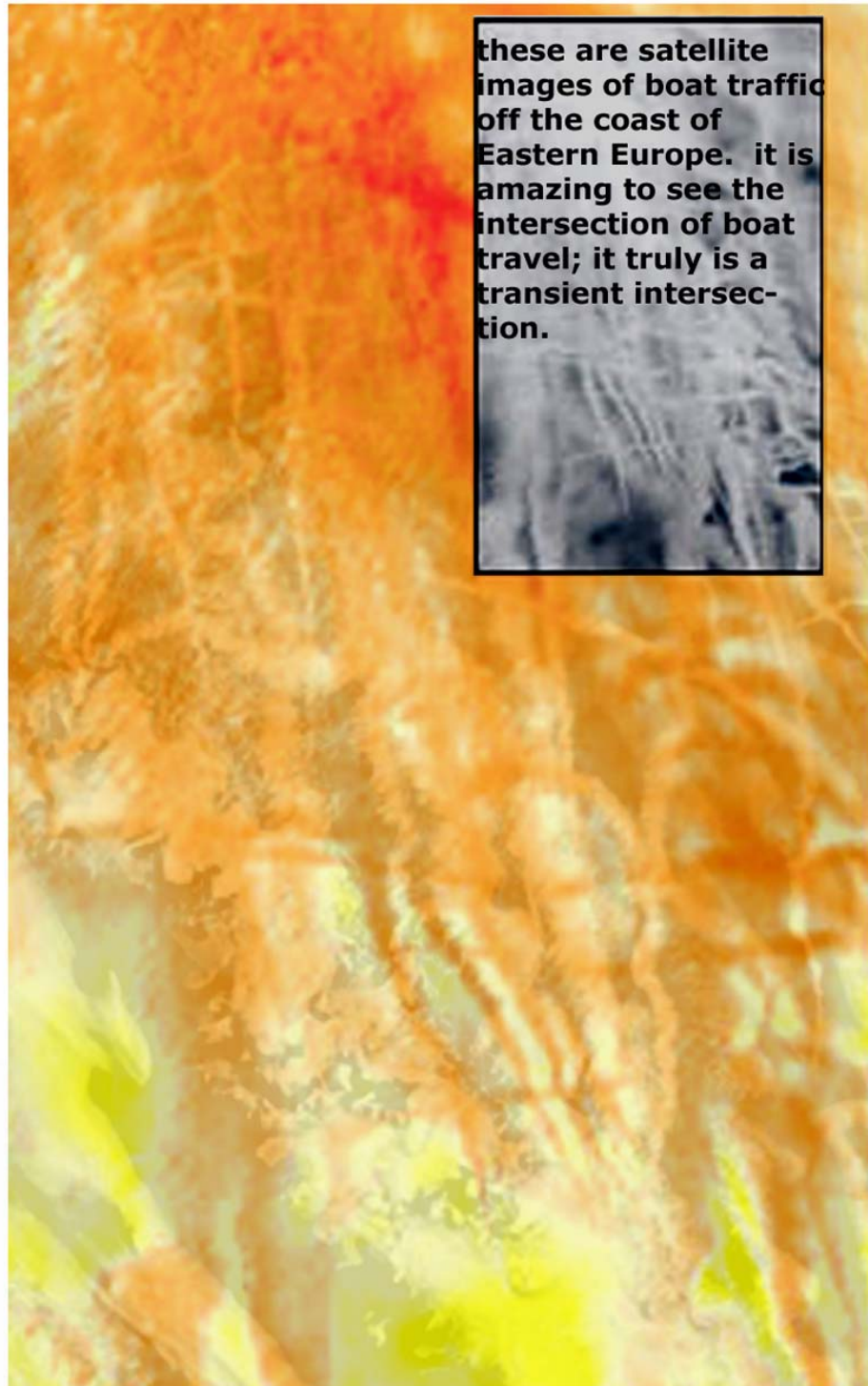
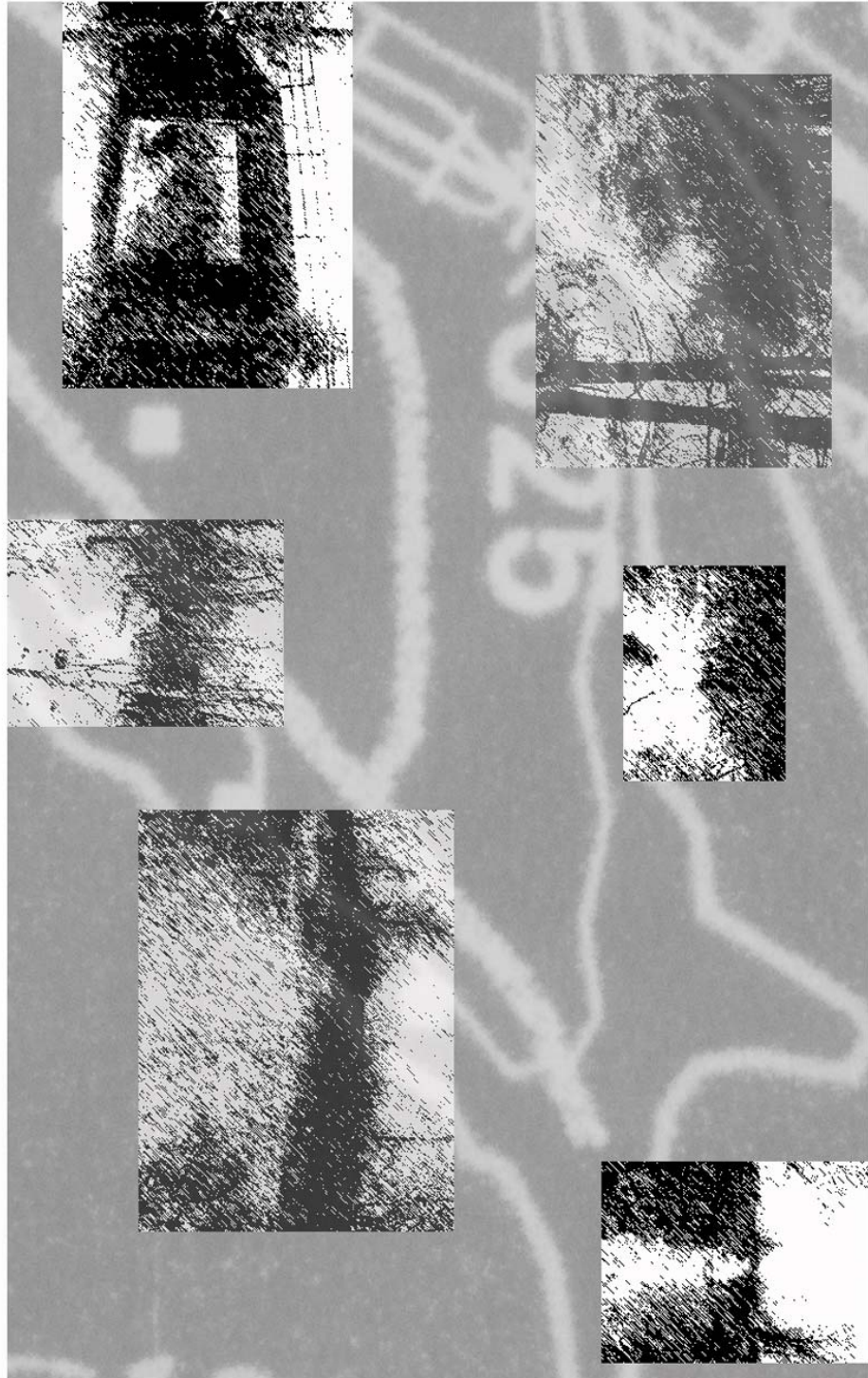


Figure 7.1



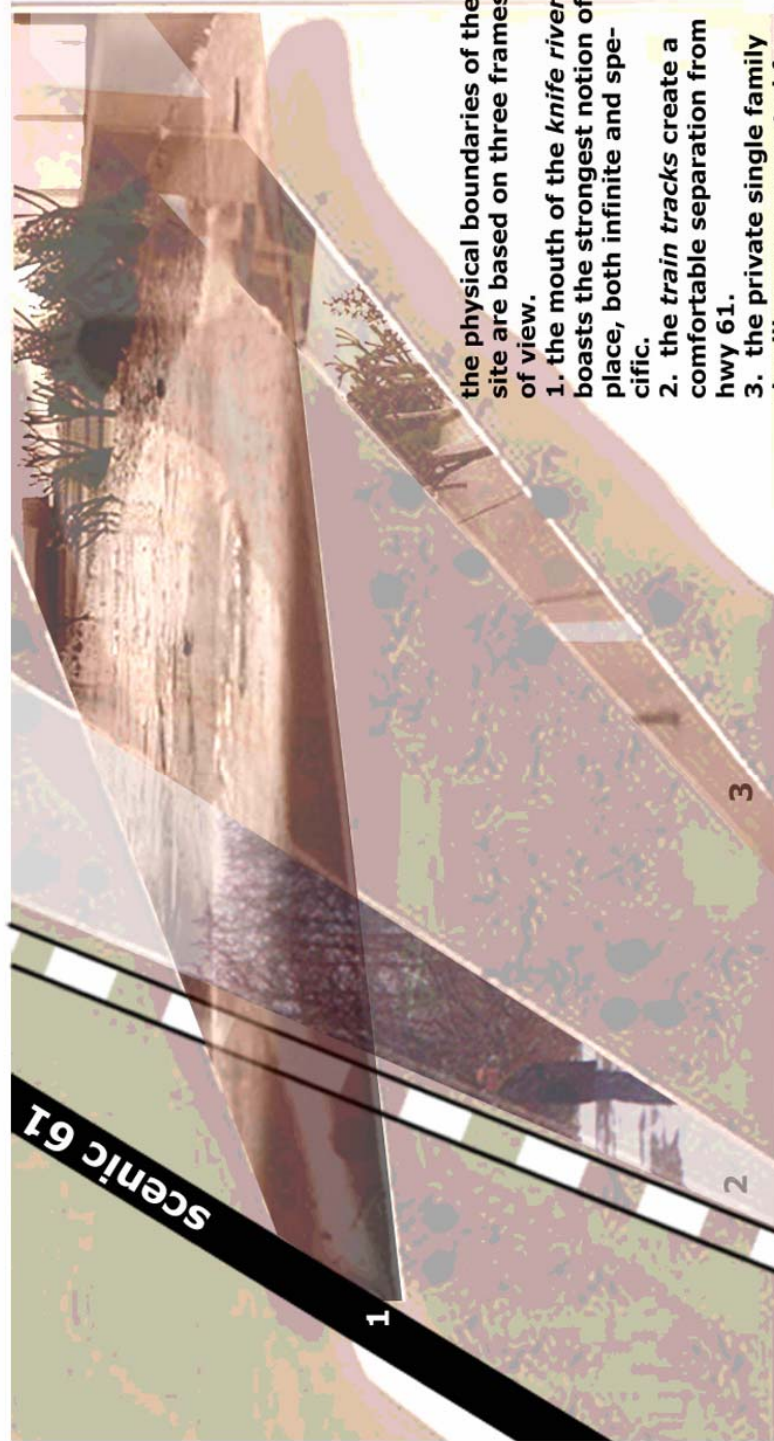
these are satellite images of boat traffic off the coast of Eastern Europe. it is amazing to see the intersection of boat travel; it truly is a transient intersection.

intersection 03 Figure 7.2





intersection **03** Figure 7.4



the physical boundaries of the site are based on three frames of view.

1. the mouth of the *knife river* boasts the strongest notion of place, both infinite and specific.
2. the *train tracks* create a comfortable separation from hwy 61.
3. the private single family dwellings are separated from the site by a *private drive* that runs parallel along Lake Superior's western coast.



...The anticipation of the **view** in and around Knife River has helped to define the restrictions and possibilities of the site. When traveling along the North Shore on scenic 61 one may get just a few seconds to view the Knife River, and its union with Lake Superior. This is the most important view to the site, because one can identify with the journey of the river and its extension into the almost infinite **horizon**. It is the horizon that people seek when traveling along the coast. This notion of desired view has had a large impact on the design process, with regards to how people relate to and live in the landscape.

Figure 7.6

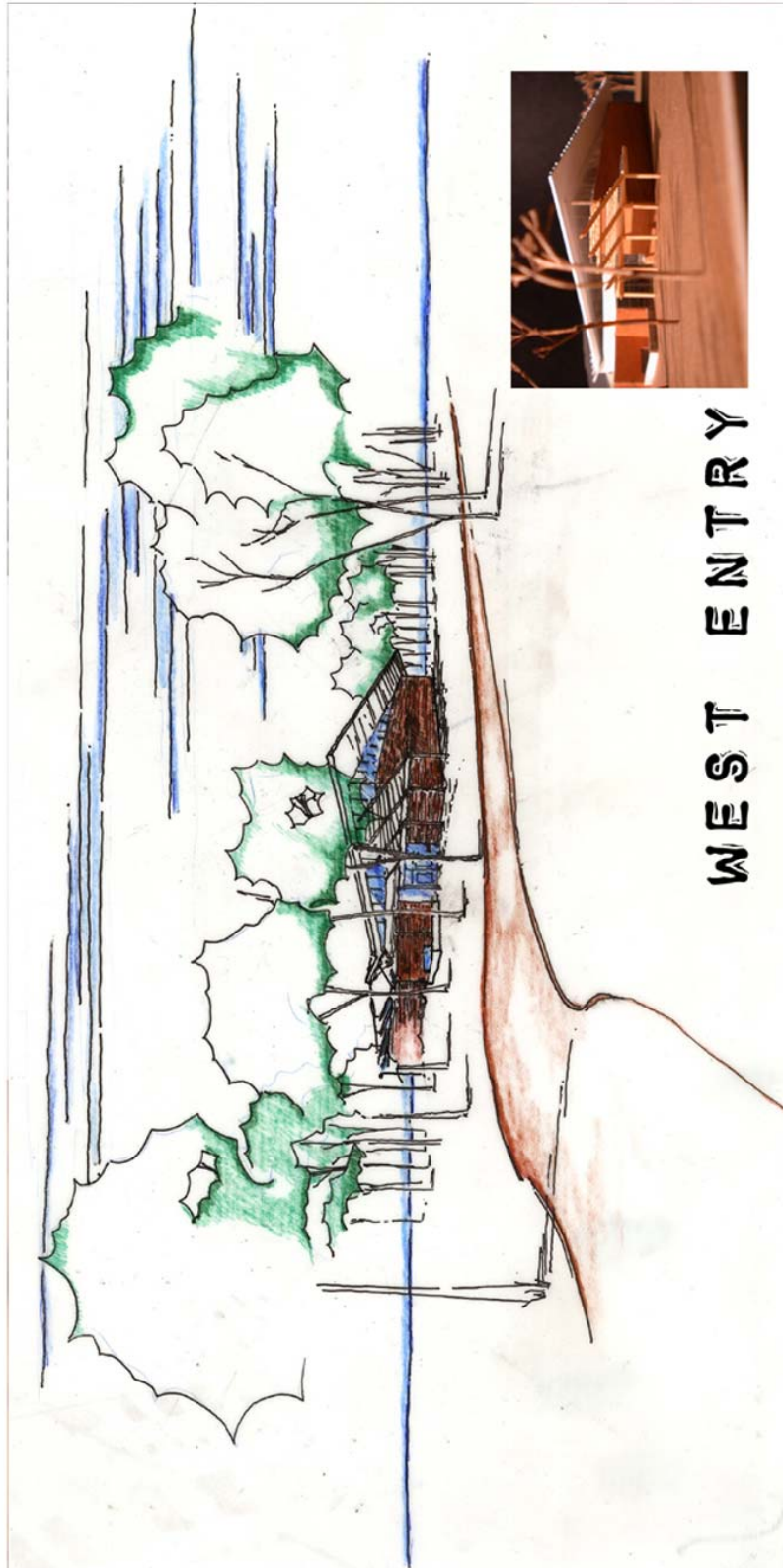


Figure 7.7

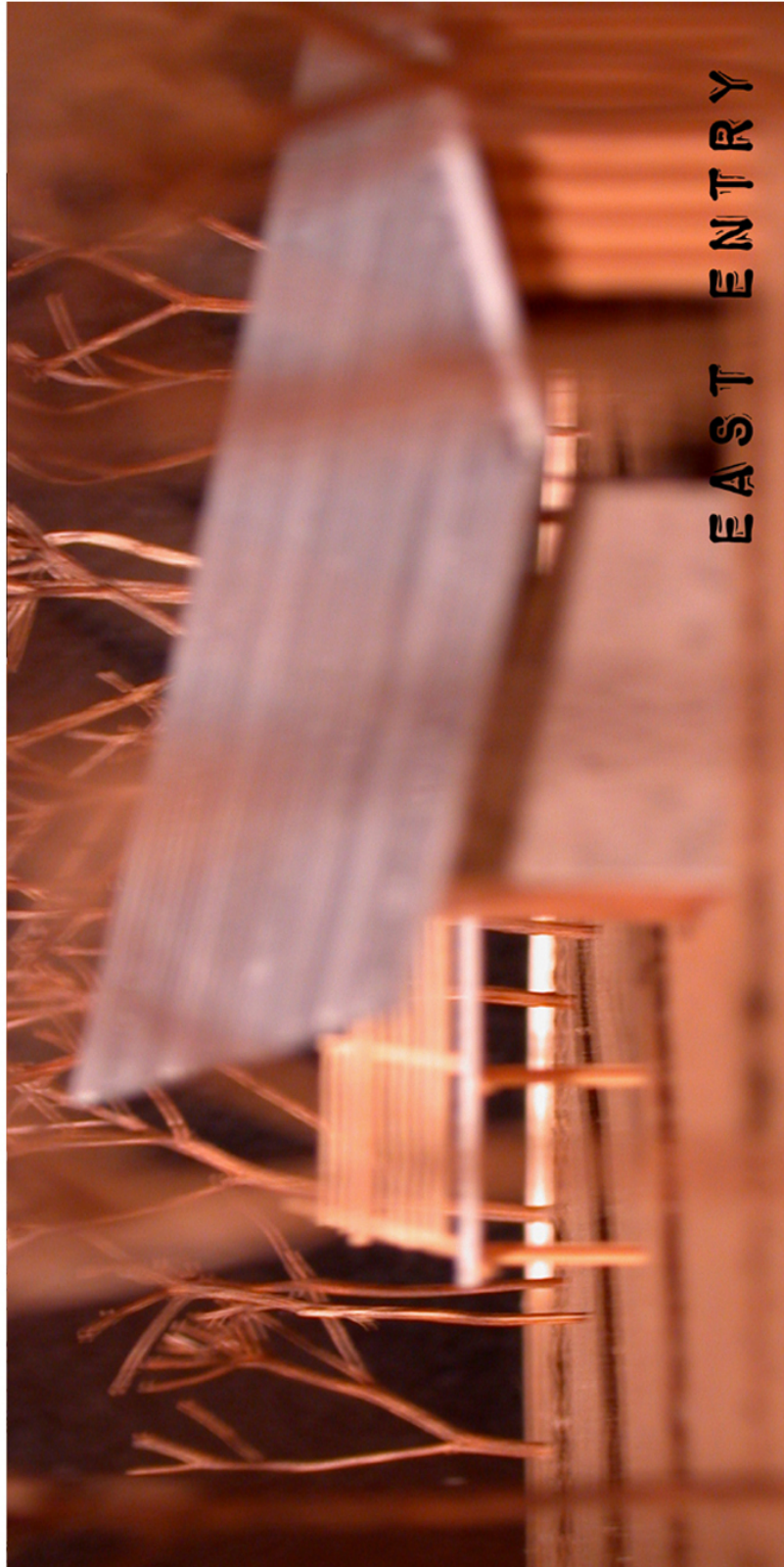


Figure 7.8

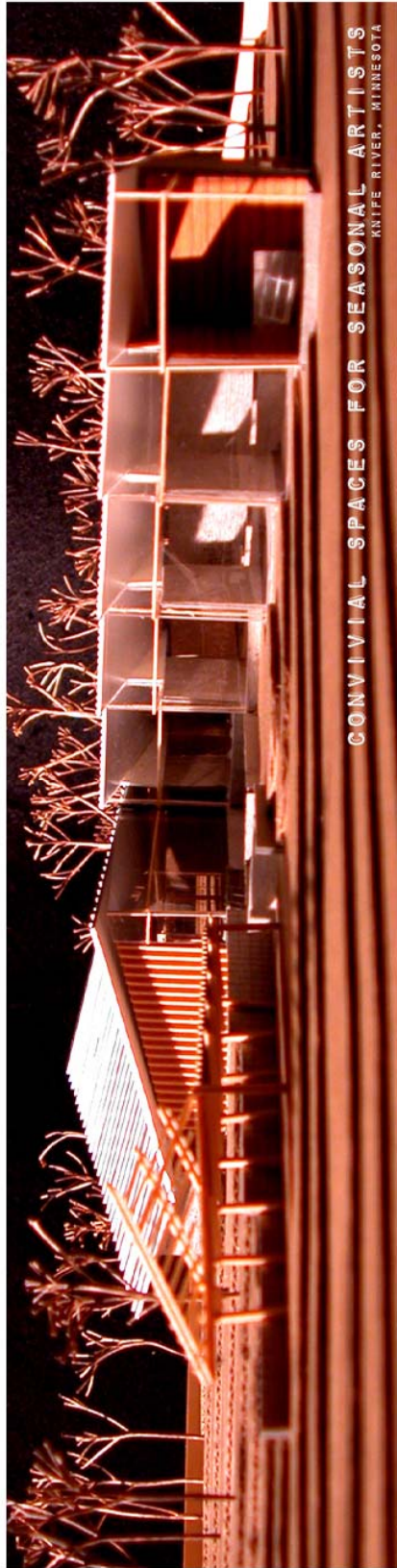


Figure 7.9

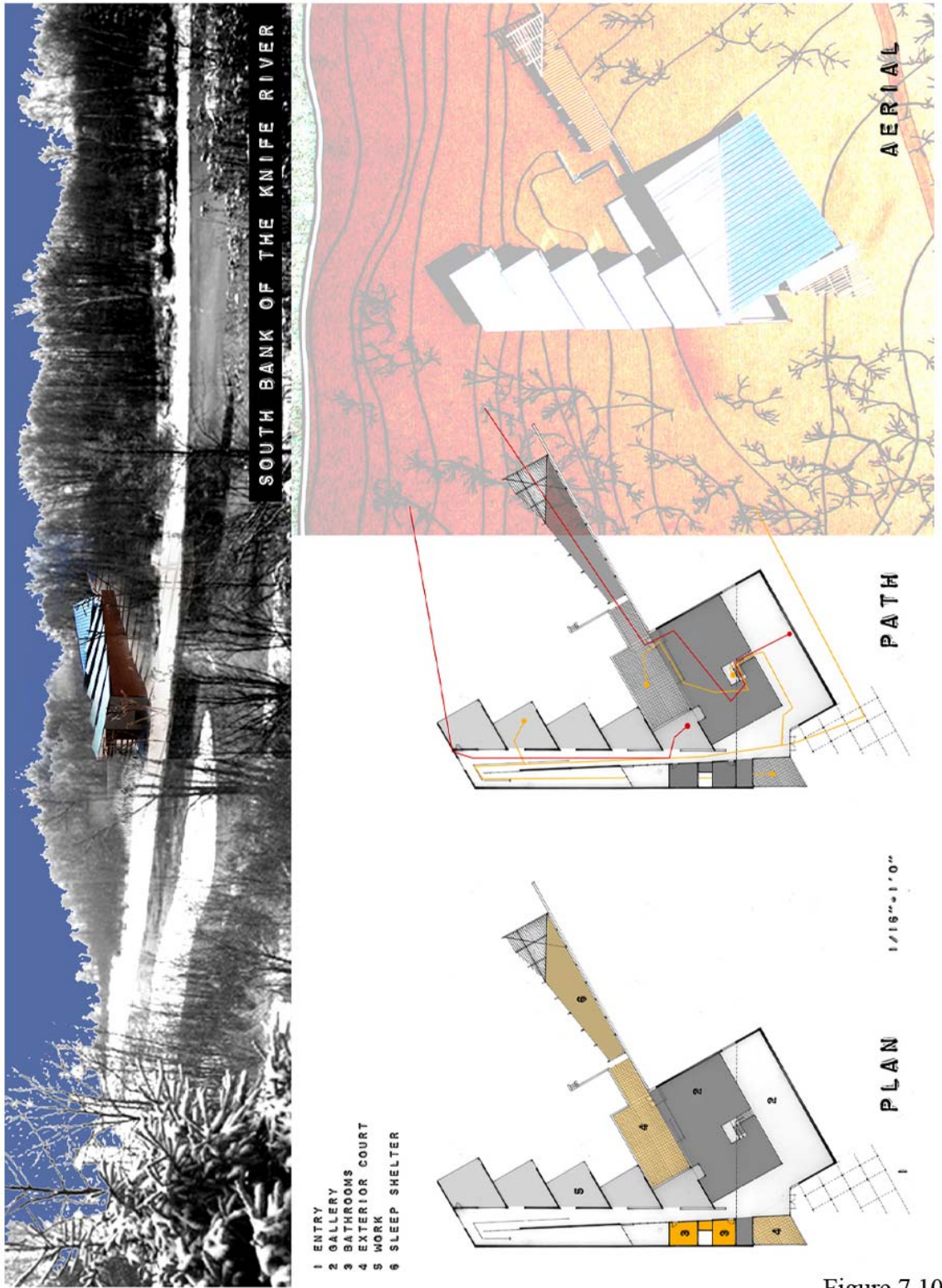


Figure 7.10

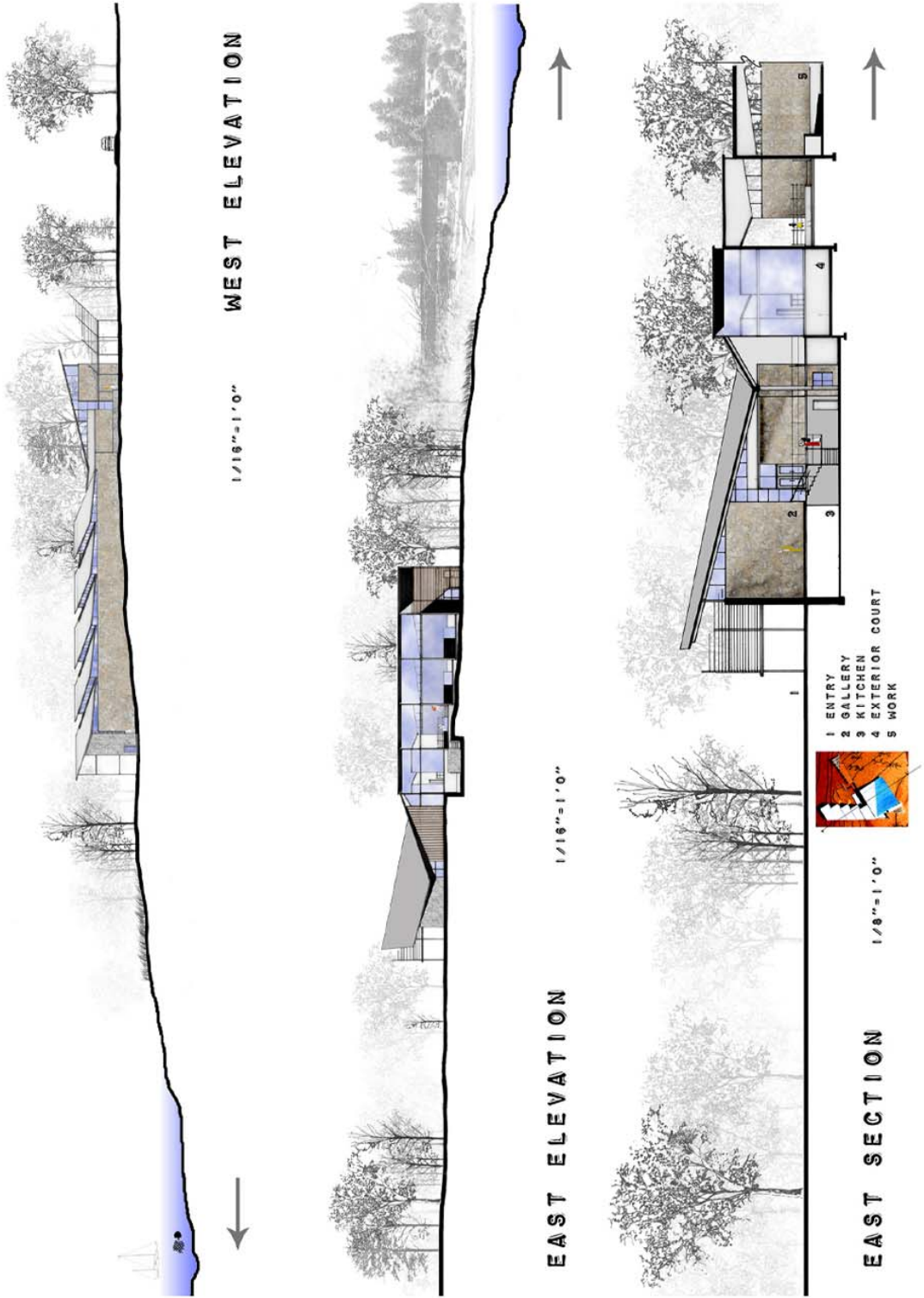


Figure 7.11

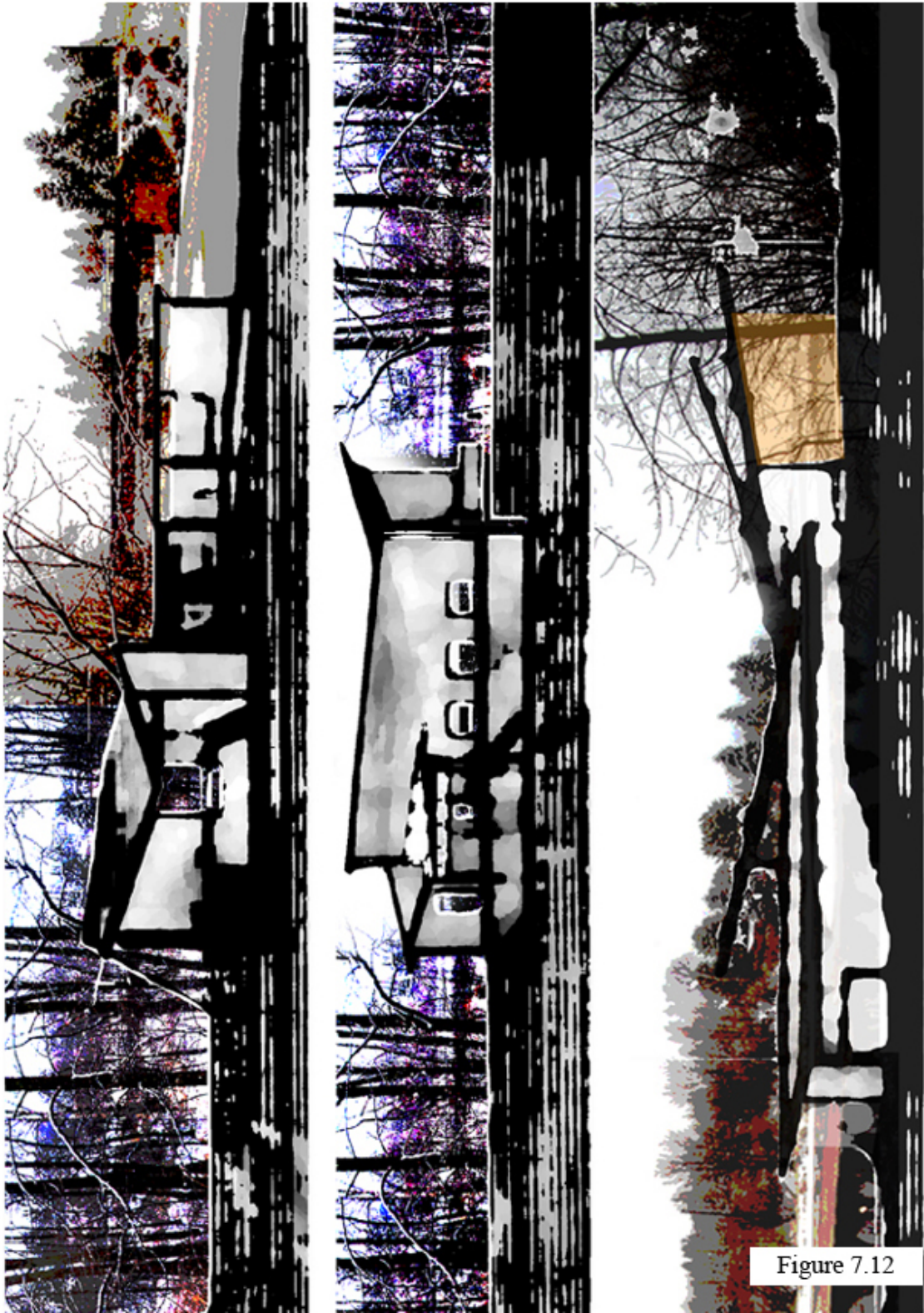
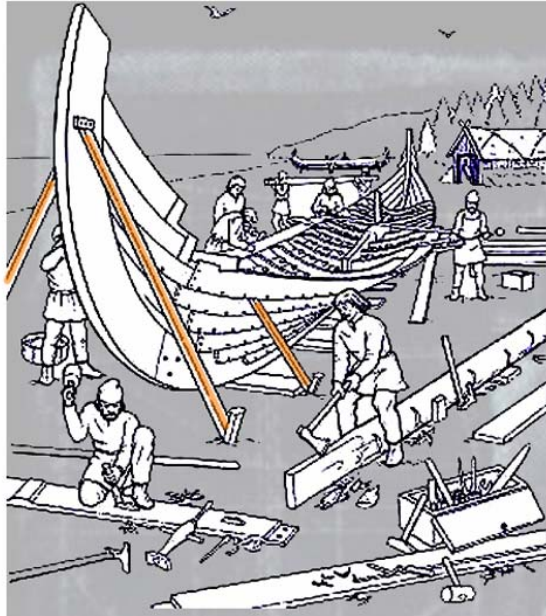
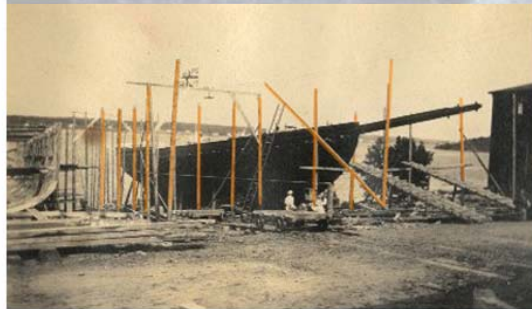


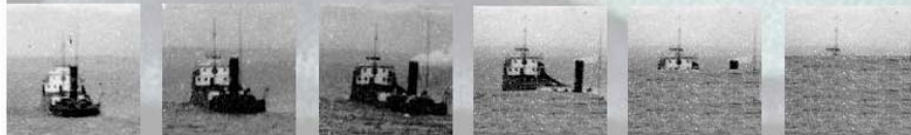
Figure 7.12



...Boat Building is an age old tradition passed on by extreme artisans and craftsmen. Some of the oldest and most elaborate construction was done by the explorers who traveled the seas. One aspect of old ship building that is intriguing is the vertical supports, used in framing the ships hull. Attached in order to have structural integrity during the construction phase, but they are also to ease in the launching of the vessel. The vertical elements in these pictures define the idea of inertia with regards to ship building.



...Shipwrecks have been a long standing part of Lake superiors history. It is said that the first total loss vessel in the great lake was at the mouth of the Knife River in 1838.



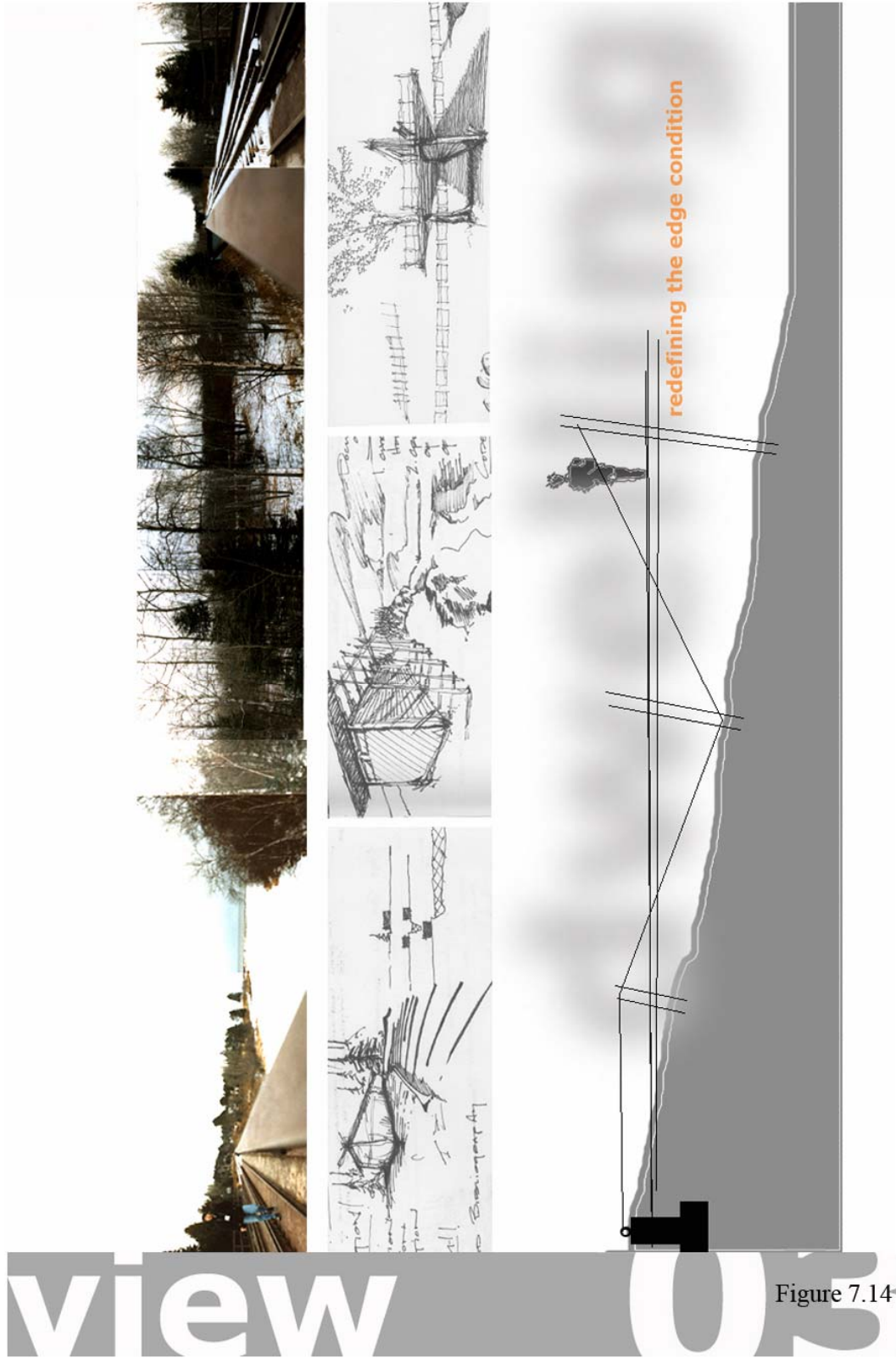
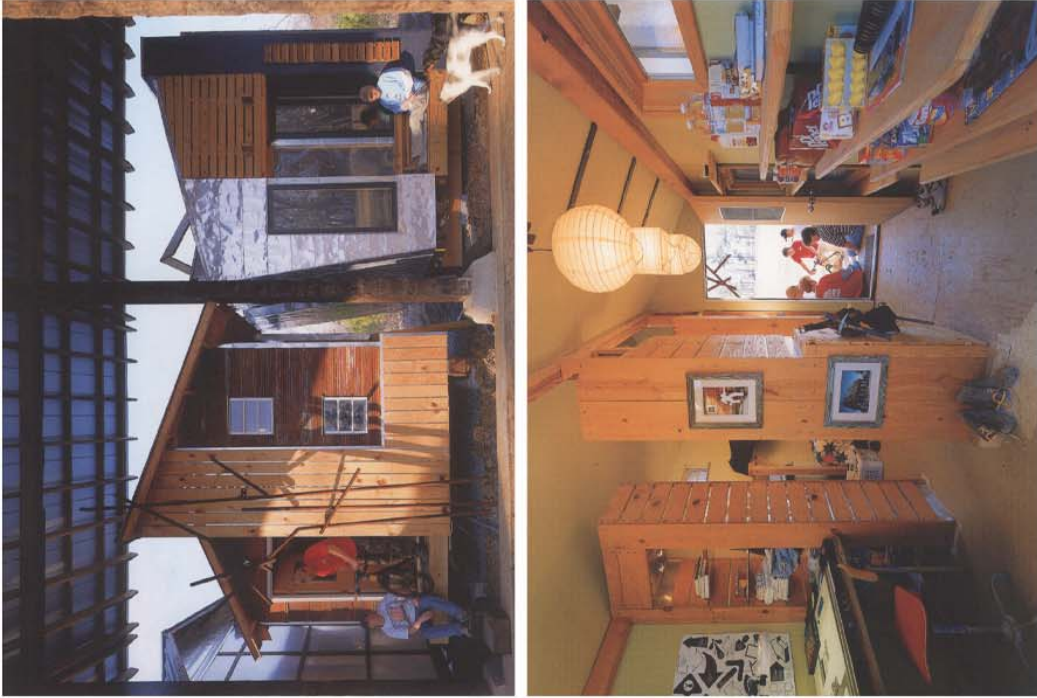


Figure 7.14



the edge condition

Figure 7.15



sam mockbee



Figure 7.16

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