investigating the rural vocabulary. Not only was my design becoming a reality, but I was better able to respect much of the sensibilities that are expressed by the seemingly unconscious design qualities of this vocabulary. The final assemblage of forms, materials, and construction techniques in the wall mirror represented a first hand look at my interpretations and their limitations.

The stool became my second experiment into vocabulary translation. The design for this furniture piece, like the wall mirror, evolved form the piece’s function. An understanding of construction techniques and material limitations allowed me to assess the alternative designs. Again, I constructed the piece to fully express the characteristic quality that I was striving for. The actual construction process, itself, stimulated my interest in the indigenous materials and form juxtapositioning that I was developing.

The other two furniture pieces, a chair and table, were developed in a similar manner as their predecessors with form, material, and construction detail the areas of interest. I was finding that the pieces that I was developing were beginning to exhibit a cohesive quality characterized by a visiting critic as representing, "a contemporary translation with a rural - Midwestern attitude.....". This label is probably the most accurate interpretation that I could give these experimental design pieces. Their character reflects both a traditional attitude and contemporary sophistication that I'm striving for in the architecture I am developing. These experiments enabled me to work at a level of detail that I could both manipulate easily and yet still express the character I wanted represented.
Design   Transitions

As the abstract of this thesis book states, there is an inherent attitude expressed in the rural vernacular that utilizes a traditional, unconscious design approach. The project presented in the following pages possesses these same fundamental characteristics; yet, like the furniture pieces in the preceding chapter, analyzes the aspect of abstraction and interpretation in the design process. The translation of these interpretations is the essence of my thesis study. What is it about the rural and small town imagery that I can do to reinforce their aesthetic charge? Much like the furniture design process, the translation process will entail a certain level of literal expression blended with an alternative response to contemporary innovation. The combination of these two design expressions will represent a cohesive community that respects contextual planning, but reflects a strong self-identity. The following pages will translate my interpretations and conscious design approaches of this aggressively rooted architecture into a cohesive and innovative representation of a regionalistic community.

The idea of community is a very strong, referential statement seemingly rooted within my design conceptions. From the suggestion of farmstead within our rural environment, to the micro-urban scale of the small town, there is an inherent coorelationship in context and form juxtapositioning. These fundamentally rooted solutions to environmentally based design issues, represent traditional and pragmatic translations of basic design approaches. My approach to a thesis project utilizes these precepts of community, contextual expressionism, and the attitude of self-identity, to investigate a design a design program. I wanted to instill these same community attributes within my design, so I focused my design on a representation of a small scaled, urban environment; a complex of structures. A group of buildings and interactive spaces could be manipulated and representative of a cohesive and identifiable community. The next step to begin the design process was finding a site for such a grouping of structures. Because of the strong rural influence that I was working with, I chose to utilize an urban environment to investigate both the possibilities of contrast and integration. An area that would evoke a sufficient urban environment was Indianapolis. After a long search, I chose a four block area located just three blocks northwest from the downtown circle. Located just North of Military Park of West Street, these four blocks
possess some rather significant qualities. Located along all sides of these four, unobstructed blocks are some very positive urban growth movements: the canal project is located one block directly East, the downtown proper is only three blocks Southeast, to the South is Military Park and the ever-progressing White River Park Development, to the North is a revitalized neighborhood viewed by many as the secondary downtown, and directly West and incorporated directly with these blocks is the IUPUI campus. Because of their prime location, these blocks can create a more fluent interaction between the university and the surrounding communities. With this as a foundation for the design project, I felt that it would offer some form of architectural program that could benefit the entire area.

The campus of IUPUI has an art’s school, the Herron Art School, that is located approximately sixteen blocks North of the campus proper. I felt these particular four blocks would be the perfect opportunity to both reinstate the school of the arts back onto the campus and provide a community related facility for the surrounding public. By moving the art’s school back onto the campus, there could also be a greater control from the university and closer access for the public. Programmed functions, such as an art gallery and theater, invite public interaction within the educational environment. The programming aspect of an art’s school also lends itself to diversity.

I chose to begin the architectural programming by investigating some stereo-typical art functions: dance, theater, and the visual arts. Within these guidelines, I established variations to explore the many alternatives of functioning relationships. I developed a school for the arts that utilizes both the scholastically based functions of studios and classrooms with the the aspect of interacting public functions. All of these activities would exist as separate entities within a cohesive, community complex.

The initial phase of my design translation process first begins with the function of the structure and is followed by the spaces characteristic to the function. I first organized all of the functional requirements into its specialized group, i.e. visual arts areas, and designated which of these functions would suggest a particular form or space. This approach left me with eight specific structures: a dance studio, theater, amphitheater, administration/lecture hall, student art studios, professors studio/loft, exhibition hall, and a clock tower. Each of these forms possess a particular feature that distinguishes it from any other, but they all are complimentary to one another. The overall visual attributes of form, the material palate, and construction methodology, all evoke the same traditional attitudes of the structures originators.
Dance Studio:
The dancer's environment should be one of uninterrupted and visually charged. The barn, with its large uninterrupted interior spaces, was the form that I chose to model the dance studio after. The design, with its elongated gable form, draws from a simple arrangement of space; a central circulation spine loaded on either side by dance studios. The arrangement of a lean-to shed form, along the South facade, also evokes the additive nature of the farm architectural vocabulary. A large, public oriented lobby invites and intrigues the visitor, while allowing them to passively view into the main dance studio. This area also contains the instructor's offices, but they are located overlooking the lobby from the second floor. A grand, centralized stair is a focusing feature within the building providing both circulation and landing areas for looking onto the main dance floor. The first floor also contains the lockerooms, rehearsal dance floor, and storage areas. The main dance floor is recessed into the first floor to help distinguish it's prominence. Practice studios are found on the second floor, along with more storage area. Another feature which is interesting in the building is located in the exposed truss ceiling along the circulation spine; large, repeated skylight forms. They were inspired by the ridge vents often located on farm structures. There are also, located along the second floor studios, clerestory glass panels to allow light into the studios directly from the skylights. One feature that will appear in many of the other forms, is the utilization of the sliding-track barn door.
Theater/Auditorium:
This particular form probably involved a majority of my design investigation. Located on the corner, focused towards the community's activity center, the form and its relationship to the surrounding spaces and forms was vital. It's orientation must respect the two street axes and the central public square, yet exhibit its own unique identity. First looking at a theater's form and spatial characteristics, the design suggest a clustering of forms and materials to elaborate upon certain areas of interest. The basic spaces suggested: the lobby, orchestra, stage, backstage, and dressing rooms, were what I used to organize the design. Beginning with the public oriented lobby area, I desired something that was distinctive and yet extremely pragmatic. I chose to punctuate the lobby space with a linear spine form. The lobby, itself, is a simple open space which is punctuated by both this linear circulation form and the theater proper. The orchestra and stage spaces are enclosed by a simple gabled form which is terminated behind the stage by a large, rectilinear form. This form encloses the backstage, storage areas, and loading dock. An attached lean-to shed form on the West facade of the theater encloses all of the dressing rooms and offices. The large curvilinear wall, located along the front of the theater, acts as a filtering device from the theater patrons and the highly energetic street corner.

Administration/Lecture Hall:
This building directly works in relationship to the other structures and acts as the art's school headquarters. Again, a linear circulation datum is the organizing element within the buildings design. The building is primarily comprised of two distinct forms; a gable form that predominantly houses the lecture hall, and a large shed unit which encloses the professors and administrative offices. The structure maintains a visual focus on both the inner-courtyard between it and the adjacent student art building, and thru a slatted screen onto the public square.
Student Arts Studio:
Much like the dance studio, this particular structure was derived thru a pragmatic look at functional integrity. The form's inspiration was derived from the basilican barn style. A linear, centralized circulation spine orients the art studios and supportive spaces in two linear adjacent bays. The public oriented spaces, i.e. exhibit space and administration, are located near the front entry and focus upon the public square. The second floor circulation walkway, located on the western end of the building, has a unique character of overhanging the entry to provide an intriguing rest area. This is quite similar to the overhanging area located on the theater building. This building utilizes the sliding barn doors to offer variable entrance opening sizes to accommodate variable needs. This form also utilizes an exposed wooden truss ceiling within the circulation corridor.

Exhibition Hall:
This structure probably represents both in function and orientation the most public associated form of the entire complex; next to the clock tower. The organization of the building was relatively simple with a long gallery space that has bays subdividing part of the gallery into smaller exhibition spaces. This gallery space utilized the idea of a light and permeable glazed wall along one side, while contrasting that with a thick, opaque stone wall on the other side. Along the East side of the gallery space runs a wall of glass, while in the subdivided exhibit spaces there are light-chimneys to illuminate art work. This gallery space is enclosed under a large barrel-vault. The gallery space is terminated on either end by a large monolithic, rectilinear form that encloses on the North end the lobby and on the South end storage area. The North end rectilinear form exposes on the facade the curvilinear, barrel-vaulted geometry thru a relief technique.
Artist Studio/Loft:
These forms probably possess the most literal representation of a farm archetype; the shed. The organization of the form is very simple with a simple subdivision of the form into six equal floors; each apartment is three floors in height and offers a studio loft. These units would be used by visiting artist, so that they might live and work at the university. A corner of each unit is utilized for stair circulation, and there is an externally placed catwalk for the upper unit tenants to use as their means for access to their unit. Every unit minimalizes window area on three sides, but fully utilizes one entire wall for glazing. This glazed wall looks out onto the amphitheater and the campus.

Clock Tower:
This structure, though not as important functionally as the other buildings, does evoke a strong community identity to the school and surrounding neighborhoods. This form acts both as a centralized, focusing element within the art school, but also is represented as the anchor to the Eastern end of campus. Symbolism is stressed in the form's design. Utilizing an elevator translation, the materials and vertical accentuation distinguish the structure's references. This form ties all of the other structures together by it's centralized orientation and it's honest translation of aesthetics.
The four block site, itself, has some interesting attributes that I applied to my design scheme. The design organization involves the planning gesture of a small town and its imagery. Because of the orthogonal nature of the site's street layout, I chose to apply a literal interpretation with regards to form and spatial structuralization. For instance, the arts complex grows out of the centralized town square planning scheme. This format was utilized to elaborate upon the street intersection of the site. I applied my own interpretation of the town square by skewing a new road near this intersection to advocate movement and interaction. This skewed path also creates an island space which I've chosen to place the clock tower form to assimilate the qualities of a town square; vertical punctuation with a sense of community identity. The surrounding corners adjacent to the tower, with the exception of the amphitheater block, are also in reference to images expressed in the small town, i.e. businesses surrounding the town square, with regards to thier screening elements. I felt that I could envoke an enclosing character by manipulating vertical screens indicative of the downtown business facades around the square. These screens are represented by the curvilinear, glazed tile fronting the theater building, and the vertical, slat screen shielding the administrative and student studio structures. These screens also act as filtering agents, with respects to public and semi-public spaces.

Another aspect of small town imagery I developed within my design, is the idea of heirarchy and density. Within the small town, these two particular ideas seem to co-exist. As you proceed further into the town, the architecture becomes taller, more dense, and publically associated. I approached the organization of this arts school with these in mind, and developed a planning scheme that reflects both the heirarchy in density and vertical punctuation. The suggestion of architecture and/or built environment is expressed by both the isolated artist studio/loft on the South end of the site, and the exterior scultural space at the extreme North end of the site. These two forms not only suggest the beginnings of a built environment, but act also as gateways into the complex.

The skewed axis is elaborated within each of the four blocks either by a screening element or an element in the structure is oriented based upon that angle. The exhibit hall, administrative/lecture hall, and theater all exhibit the skewed orientation. This uniformity enhances the overall identity of the school and reflects an alternative to orthogonal urban planning.
Conclusions

This thesis has transformed from just an interpretation of my day-to-day environment, into a designed community that expresses both my literal interpretations and adoptive transitions. The design suggest it's fundamental beginnings, but through innovative adaptations, offers the viewer "a contemporary translation with a rural-Midwestern attitude..." Has this entire exploration and translation been nothing more than an expression of Regionalism? An "ism" to succeed our past design influences? If so, perhaps these investigations are valid perceptions into our immediate environment that is progressively becoming overlooked. This backyard, traditional architecture is worthy of an honest interpretation and needs even a more intensified investigation that I could only touch upon. If my project would stimulate someone to take another look at this seemingly forgotten tradition in our environment, then the thesis will succeeded in it's influence.
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Bibliography