The passage. the couple in the next hotel room?

We provide paths of converse whether or not wanted be aware of the possibilities of the passage.

Sound invades our privacy as much if not more than all other forms of information. Thin walls, poor construction, mechanical ducts, poor space locations and the activity within the space all help noise to invade our privacy. Privacy is more than being out of view, but being out of sensual stimuli contact. Sound is the only sensual stimuli which can go through matter (walls, etc.) by vibration and interfere with one's space.

Noise transverses matter and intrudes on one.
abstract.

The hidden. it's a secret?

Immaterial privacy.

We all have private items which we would like to keep private. Our mind has a container in the subconscious for such things if they have been negative and traumatic. There is a need in the architecture to provide such places for all kinds of hidden objects and entities.

for somethings should be lost or forgotten everyone has something hidden.
Abstract

The refuge. nothingness?

we seek when suffocated
when truly alone
physically, spiritually, emotionally
refuge.

A place of solitude. Someplace to be alone
with oneself and do what one wishes.
Everyone needs this important privacy in
their lives when wanting to withdraw from
the public realm or from themselves.

a state of reality with material
and immaterial
nothingness?
only one knows the answer.
The next few pages are photographs and sketches of the final installation as a whole. Because of the size of the piece and the constrictions of the space it was in, the entire project could not be caught on one image. I hung black construction paper along the edges of the space to help keep natural light from flooding the space and leaving me with no control over the lighting in the installation. The darker quality of the environment helped the concept of privacy and created some apprehension for some to enter the space.

installation seen from outside architecture bldg. without paper hanging.
Study model of installation.

Built installation without paper hanging.
entry view of installation.
clothesline view of installation.
under cube view of installation. looking towards entry.

tilet side of installation. cube to the left.
the commitment or entry to installation.

view towards cube or refuge within the wall.
detail inside the wall.

view of bed over the wall.

view under the bed.
View at back of cube, inside of wall.
detail.
detail of light source in cube.
detail under cube.
the cube with interior light source on

the cube with someone sitting inside.
detail of falling wall at the cube.

detail of shingles next to cube.
Slide projected on outside of cube.

Light source inside the cube.

Slide projection from inside the cube.
the covering or clothesline view.

bracing of leaning wall detail.
top of entry detail.

black paper being torn down to reveal another view.
There are issues for which I would have liked to worked out with respect to the final resolution. First I feel that the project created a nice space that invited participants and encouraged them to engage the pieces. The issue of text and if I needed it and how to use it was not quite worked out completely. I felt that I needed it so not to leave the participants without any information besides the built piece, but the way I used it and the method of attaching it could have been better. The other major issue for me was the level of cohesiveness of the concept and whether the observers could understand the concepts involved and why I was doing what I was.

some classmates helping to tear down paper.
The installation surrounded by the once enclosing paper.
Private Objects

On page 28, I described being bogged down by the current installation design and dropping that and spending a few days thinking of privacy in terms of objects and furniture. On this page are some of the quick conceptual sketches directly from my sketchbook. As I looked back at previous studio and extracurricular work I have done, I could see some early hints of privacy in their concepts so I have included some of those on this page as well.
In trying to give a name to this portion of my book I waivered over a few options. "Conclusion" was an inappropriate choice for it has a "this is dead and buried" connotation and "reflection" has one that screams "back in the old days" and neither best describe my intentions here. So I selected the title of "Stopping Point?" This book does signify a stopping point to my academic exploration into poetic qualities and privacy and it is the closure needed, but the question mark follows the title for the exploration is not finished. The academic phase is done, but the professional phase is just beginning. The goal for this phase is to create a built environment for real clients that integrates what I have started to uncover in school and plan to explore in further detail now. Whether it is privacy or other poetic needs I ultimately resolve, will come out naturally during my journey. My ultimate goal is to open the eyes of our society on an achievable scale, to the possibilities, opportunities and need of poetic spaces. (I know, this seems more like a utopian goal, but I love challenges.)

The next step in my journey is to develop "architecture," so I started to find more information that may help me make this transformation from abstractness to concreteness.

Rarely are design awards based on the experiences of the building's users, but on the basis of glossy photographs. (Sommer 5)

Why do most if not all design awards not take into consideration the experiences and needs of all the users? Receiving awards on the design in functional, aesthetic and contextual areas is fine, but buildings are more than this. Good architecture is produced by an architect that takes all of the clients needs (functional, aesthetical, psychological) and integrates them into the designer's own strong design integrity. There can be no lapse in either of these elements if great architecture is the goal.
Architecture can be conceived of as great hollow sculpture or timeless unchanging form whose existence is an end in itself must be discarded. (Sommer 5)

We are not designing only pieces of public sculpture but places for people. I know I did not have to state this, but if more architects believed this, they would design nicer places for people.

The blinders need to be taken off of not only the clients.

In further inquiry into the built environment and its possibilities I discovered the following.

A couple theories in environmental psychology I follow and believe to be relevant are the behavior constraint theories and the ecological theories.

The behavior constraint theories focus on the real or perceived limitations imposed on the user within the particular environment. According to these theories the environment can prevent, interfere, or limit the behaviors of its inhabitants and results in some loss of control or perceived loss by the user. (Rodin 1978)

The ecological theory is central to the belief of the organism–environment fit. Environments are designed or grow to accommodate certain activities. These behavior settings, as Barker termed them, are evaluated in terms of the goodness of fit between the interdependent environmental features and the behaviors that take place. (Barker 1963) For example, while in a classroom you would expect the activities to be note taking, listening, lecturing, and writing and you would probably not expect to find dancing. I believe there is merit in both of these theories and their attempts to explain the relationship between user and environment. The understanding of user and environment should be central to any attempt at designing an environment. It is also true that it is not a necessity the environment dictate the activity or function of the space. The environment is more than an antecedent of behavior; it is a place of opportunity for a variety of possible futures. We often actively choose to
Humans are cognitive beings and thus define and give meaning to environments with respect to their role in them.

As I stated in my discussion on containment (pg. 02), we take advantage of our environments in various ways. Now I am trying to take the fact that we do take for granted our environments and begin to bring the environment back to our awareness, so it is no longer taken for granted. In my own experience and probably most people's, privacy is not taken for granted for there generally is a lack of it in today's society. Keely and Edney asked subjects to construct models of houses that would promote privacy or social interaction.

Privacy models had more rooms, corridors and external wall surfaces.

While the social-interaction houses had a greater visibility among rooms and fewer external wall surfaces. (Keely 1983) The participants had no training in design and the results reflected their views of privacy.

We adjust our levels of privacy through our verbal messages, gestures, body posture, body orientation and eye contact. What if the architecture could adjust in the same ways? John Archea states that the arrangement of the physical environment regulates the distribution of the information upon which all interpersonal behavior depends, this physical environment is construed as a mechanism for regulating the flow and appearance of information. (Archea 1977)

Possibly architecture can act as an actual mechanism of privacy with the user actively participating in the manipulation of the architecture and thus their privacy. To some extent this is done today with curtains and blinds in windows, but this is not the solution I am thinking of. The architecture can change to meet one's
Human architecture designed like shoes and clothes to fit not only the body, but its "space bubbles" as well. (Scury)

No matter how my continuing exploration ends up and what it manifests itself into, there is one area of some concern.

Man will be spending more of his life in spaces he does not own or control, we must understand how he can maintain feelings of privacy and individuality in nonowned space. (Sommer)

How will users engage and interact with this new mechanism of privacy? Will they accept it? To some extent, what we consider beautiful we accept and appreciate. I searched for studies and information in this area and found an interesting study by Berlyne. Why is it some consider a rolling meadow dotted with country homes beautiful and a metal scrap yard ugly? Berlyne identified four basic collative properties of environments or characteristics of the environment that cause us to compare present settings to previous settings we have encountered. The four properties are: complexity refers to the degree of variety of the elements of the environment, novelty is the extent to which stimuli not previously encountered are present, incongruity concerns the extent to which the environment contains stimuli that do not seem to go together harmoniously, and surprisingness is if the environment contains elements we do not expect. Berlyne has found that aesthetic judgements are more positive at intermediate levels of the four dimensions. (Berlyne 1974) If we judge too much or too less of the dimensions it is seen as distracting from the beauty of an environment. And I would argue that the less beautiful a scene is, the least likely users are to favor it or appreciate it.

What does my thesis and the information I have found mean to designers? To be honest, I do not yet know. I think it is something for which each designer must find out for him or herself and integrate in their design. One thing I do know would be beneficial...
to the profession, individual designers, and the society as a whole is post occupancy evaluations. These provide invaluable information for the designer and may allow them not to make the same mistake twice. A comprehensive evaluation including interviewing users would help to provide the designer insight into his or her design and what works and what does not. The evaluation would also start to ask how well the building meets the users needs of aesthetics, function, and of a psychological nature. Completing an evaluation like this could take a great deal of time, but would provide the designer a great amount of information, which could be damaging to the ego. As I mentioned earlier, we are not only creating huge pieces of sculpture but places for people and to not know what they think of the building and how well your design actually works, is to design in ignorance.

One learns from his or her mistakes and by not knowing what those are, one does not learn anything.

Well it is time to put an end to this rambling. As I said somewhere earlier, I did not attempt to create "architecture" as part of my thesis. For the past five years I have tried to figure out what architecture actually is and I have no complete definition of it at this time. I am trying to decide between the idealist and realist views. Is architecture an idealist art where the mind can experience through imagination, spaces and places represented in drawings, paintings and models, or is it a realist art where architecture is only the three-dimensional full scale space capable of being experienced physically by someone? In a realist perspective, my thesis could be seen as the creation of architecture through my full scale constructed pieces, but my pessimistic view of human nature allows me to not believe in the idealist view because of the lack of most humans, outside of design related fields, to effectively visualize in the mind space that is drawn on paper. Why try to experience space through "paper architecture" when you can walk through a full scale design. This is the underlying simple reason I have undertaken the thesis I have. Architecture is an experience of space... Thanks for coming along.

Inhabitated space transcends geometrical space

-Bachelard
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Appendix

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Qualifications and Background

This proposal is an exploration of what makes space poetic. I have been interested in the topic of poetic space since my architecture research class in the fall of 1994. The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard has written about space and what makes it poetic. I have looked at the works of various artists that have used the medium of the box as a container of small environments with poetic qualities.

I am continuing this exploration into the poetics of containment as the subject of my undergraduate architecture thesis through the end of April 1996. I have had considerable experience in model-making, presentation rendering, design, creative projects, and research throughout the four-plus years I have been in professional training in architecture. Through my educational projects and some personal ones, I have had some experience in the construction of furniture and creative objects. Some of my creative works that have been exhibited are: a birdhouse done for my third year design studio exhibited at the Architectural Center in Indianapolis (March -April 1994), and a light fixture design exhibited along with other students’ work at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago (June 94- June 95). Published works include the birdhouse design in the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture News (23:8 April 1994, p.3) and a poem, "The Changing Moonlight", in the Famous Poets Anthology (Hollywood, Ca.: Famous Poets Society, 1994.)

I have completed a professional internship with the architecture firm of Schmidt Associates, in Indianapolis, from January through the middle of August of 1995. During this experience, I created various renderings, drawings, and models for numerous building projects. I was also employed at Indiana Stone Works limestone mill as a designer/draftsman for the summers of 1993 and 1994, where I was introduced to some production and fabrication aspects of the science of building.
Boxes of Containment: An Exploration in the Poetics of Containment

Project Design

Statement of the Activity and Background Information

This proposal is to fund the construction of a small habitable space, that I plan to construct either inside the architecture building, or preferably outside of it. The design of this space will stem from a series of explorations, already begun, into what makes a space poetic, or what gives it the capacity to touch someone emotionally. This construction will be about eight feet by eight feet square in size, and it will be located in the environment so that passers-by can interact with it. The construction will, of necessity, be temporary. I plan to erect it in early April and dismantle it at the end of the spring semester.

The earlier explorations will be done through model making of the various components of poetic space. These components of space will become a series of models that will be constructed throughout the spring semester. This series has already begun, starting with the construction of an identity box for myself. The information gained from these will be used in the design of the final phase, the habitable space, for which I am requesting funding.

This exploration is influenced greatly by Gaston Bachelard. Bachelard has written in The Poetics of Space, about how our homes and places have shaped our memories, thoughts, and dreams. How space can affect our emotions through these lines, makes it poetic and more than just a place to exist. Some of my explorations are based upon topics discussed in his writing, and from these I have engaged in writing poetic passages that try to develop and put them into my own words. I have also started to further develop his ideas into poetic topics of my own with which to explore. Some of his topics of space I will be exploring are nests, hiding places, and thresholds.

A nest is a familiar intimate place where a person can feel secure and warm. Everyone has their own nest, whether it be the corner of an attic or your favorite place to read. The nest is a personal territory defined by means that lets its inhabitant deny or admit whomever he or she wants into that space. It provides a person with the security and intimacy to be free from others.

A hiding place is a place where things can be hidden away psychologically. For example, a little girl goes into a closet to release her pain. She tells of her suffering for it to only be known by the clothes hanging there and the walls containing her. The closet becomes more than a place to store clothes, it is a place of storage for her emotions. Only
the girl knows of the emotional containment within the closet. We all have a need for our secrets to remain secret.

Thresholds are special components of containment that allow us to enter into a space and can provide opportunities of anxious anticipation and curiosity. We all might of passed by a door that was partially open and wondered what was on the other side. While passing through doors all day can become routine, everyone has had a special threshold for which passing was not that simple.

In an earlier project this semester, I tried exploring these ideas of nest, hiding place, and threshold in a small summer home design and later in a place to celebrate the passing of the sun through the sky, which is adjacent to the home. I will be bringing these and other ideas to full scale rather than model scale in the final inhabitable space that I will construct in April.

Bachelard also talked about boxes as containers having various aspects of our lives in containment. A lid of a box is a threshold. Opening the lid can lead to unexpected treasures or hellish discoveries. "Boxes are very evident witnesses of the need for secrecy, of an intuitive sense of hiding places." (Bachelard 81) Boxes have a power over us that pulls at an internal string drawing us to open it and see what it beholds. If this box is locked, it thus plays a dual role as a psychological barrier and an invitation to thieves. If the box has no lid we easily can see its contents, thus satisfying our curiosity, but if it has a lid, "there will always be more in a closed, than in an open box." (Bachelard 88)

To imagine is sometimes better than to verify what is inside of a box and ruin the mysteriousness. Boxes can contain images or emotions. These possessions are put into the box mentally, and if the box is opened by anyone other than the owner, it appears empty and there will be no realization of the importance of its contents. A box used in this manner is a hiding place, like the closet, but differs in that it cannot be inhabited physically. These emotions are put away psychologically in a box, never to be opened again, keeping them from our conscious.

The containing of emotions is an intimate use of the box. Drawers, wardrobes, and chests are boxes of our secret psychological life. Drawers and wardrobes contain personal items that are not meant for just anyone to see. These containers are very private and in containing these private objects, are intimate. The most intimate of these boxes is the casket. The casket does not only contain a body but, psychologically contains a whole world: one person's entire life. (Bachelard 79) Since what the casket contains is vast and endless, the intimate space is infinite. Jean-Pierre Richard said, "We shall never reach the bottom of the casket."

Bachelard's ideas of space can be seen in various artists' work, in what is called box art. Their intimate
expressions are done within small box constructions. One similar construction is a series of boxes decorated to contain
the identities of middle school children in the Boston area. The project was coordinated and carried out by the artist
Annie Silverman. The idea of the identity box is a container that tells a story of someone's identity and life. The telling
of someone's identity is an intimate act and the box is the medium for which the person shares their intimacy with others.
The telling of one's identity is sharing emotions that are normally kept secret, in which, the secrecy a box contains can
thus be opened and released for all to see. By placing their identity within a box, the participant sees their identity clearer
and this explanation is given a greater impact and can be understood by others.

Placing objects and identities within a container can have a greater impact than if they were in their original
environment. Marcel Duchamp's philosophy is, that by selecting an item, removing it from its traditional setting and
placing it in a totally new environment, the object has a great impact through being seen entirely in a new context.
(Mogelon 17) By placing objects or environments within a box it creates a miniature space to be inhabited mentally,
which can make us see clearer what is there. The artist Gordon Wagner represents mystical, almost surrealistic imagery
in his boxes. "His environments are like scenes on the stage of a miniature theatre where mind dramas are preformed."
(Meilach 11)

Our lives are dramas played out within containment, as if we were within boxes. Boxes can contain miniature
environments that speak of our lives within space. The spaces we inhabit are full of emotion, imagery, identity, and
intimacy much like the ideas of the box that I have mentioned. The physical experience we can have of thresholds, nests,
and hiding places can be represented within a box, for us to look at closer and see more clearly what we don't realize in
our spaces.

My thesis is the exploration of these and other aspects of our containment. I will be constructing a series of such
interpretive pieces with various medias based upon Bachelard's ideas of threshold, nest, hiding place, identity,
imagination, and other topics of containment that I am developing. Most of these pieces will be contained within boxes,
as the box is the context from which the pieces will grow. With the information gained from the smaller explorations,
I will design and construct a small inhabitable space, inside or outside of the architecture building, that will allow
people to experience it. This proposal is for the funding of this final inhabitable space. I'm currently working on an
identity box for myself, and from there I will start to build the box series explorations. My thesis book will document
the project from start to finish and it will be made available for future student reference in the College of Architecture
library.
Significance of the Goal Addressed

The knowledge that I gain from the box series constructions and the inhabitable space will have a lasting affect on my own design work. In the future, when I design buildings for my various clients, I will work into the design, the ideas I have started to look at here in school. I plan on this exploration lasting well beyond my graduation and into the years of my professional practice. I feel that all spaces and people can benefit from the ideas that Bachelard wrote about years ago, while I am trying to develop these into new design possibilities for today.

Architecture is a business, the goal at some level is to make a profit and stay in business. While on my internship, the realization of how architects and designers work was made more obvious to me. In the business world, architects design for clients and are typically controlled by money. I feel that most architects, in business oriented firms, do not have the time or will to look at the spaces they are designing in terms of their poetic possibilities. Still a student, I have more freedom in the work I do, and I hope that my fellow students will look at what I have done and gain some insight from it and take it into their student and professional work. I, not only want my fellow designers to gain knowledge, but the people interacting with the inhabitable space to try and understand what I am doing. I hope that this exploration into the poetics of space will yield insight into space, that is not typically thought about by its users, and will open their eyes to some of the possibilities, benefits, and negatives to our lives in containment. I feel that if someone looks at my work and gets something from it that they can develop in their future work or it entices them to look at containment differently, then my project will have been a success.

Methods, Timetable, and Resources

My methods are simple. I will be designing and constructing the initial scale models from various inexpensive materials using the facilities of the College of Architecture and Planning's woodshop. All financial and human resources will be of my own. I plan to devote two weeks to each of the initial pieces. After this series is complete, I will use the rest of my time until April, for the design and construction of the final inhabitable piece that will bring together the discoveries from the earlier explorations. Funding is being sought for the materials of this final piece. The last of April will be spent putting together my thesis book that documents the entire project.

My thesis presentation, in the middle of April 1996 will include an exhibit of the entire series of constructions and written prose I have done of the exploration. This information will be presented to a group of professors and students. After this presentation, the thesis book will include everything relating to my project, and this as well as a series
of slides documenting my work will be available in the architecture library for future student reference.

**Budget Narrative & Itemization**

I am requesting funds for the construction of the final inhabitable space, while the final design is not yet known, I know the approximate size and thus can estimate the amount of materials. The final construction will be a small inhabitable space, approximately sixty-four square feet in area, located near heavy pedestrian traffic for all that pass by to see. I am also requesting funds for slide film to document the project, which will later be given to the library for future student reference.

**Budget Itemization**

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</table>
Bachelard, Gaston.  

Meilach, Dona.  

Mogelon, Alex.  
November 28, 1995

Keith Clark
1014 W. Wayne St.
Muncie, IN 47303

Dear Mr. Clark:

Congratulations on the approval of your proposal to the Undergraduate Student Grant Competition! Your award is in the amount of $200.00 and is to be used towards supplies associated with your project. A journal voucher is being prepared to transfer the funds from the undergraduate research account into a special designated account (#2-24542) within the Department of Architecture. Enclosed you will find guidelines explaining how to expend your grant funds. Please contact your department administrative coordinator to obtain the proper forms and for assistance in expending these funds. As soon as the journal voucher has been processed, your funds will be available for use. Please remember that the funds must be spent by June 30, 1996. Any funds not spent by June 30, 1996 will be transferred back into the undergraduate research account.

One condition of the award is that in the event any intellectual property is developed from the project (such as patentable inventions or copyrightable works) it is necessary for these to be disclosed to the University Patent & Copyright Committee through the Office of Academic Research & Sponsored Programs.

Your acceptance of this award will be noted by your signing and returning the enclosed copy of this letter to Ms. Stacey Myers in the Office of Academic Research & Sponsored Programs at your earliest convenience. A final report on the project is required and is due in the Office of Academic Research & Sponsored Programs on or before September 1, 1996 (suggested final report format enclosed).

On behalf of the University Research Committee, let me wish you continued progress in your research and creative efforts.

Sincerely,

Maude Jennings

Maude Jennings, Chair
Creative Arts Committee, and
Assistant Professor of English

Acceptance of Award:

Keith Clark 12/1995
Signature Date
(Please return to Stacey Myers in the Office of Academic Research & Sponsored Programs)
"We who know the signs of the metaphysical alphabet
know what joys and sorrows are present in a portico, on a
street corner within the walls of a room or inside a box."
Gioia de Chirico

26 October
Seattle

Keith,

I got your letter the other day. Unexpected, unmarked mail from Muncie always makes me nervous. Before opening the envelope, I nervously speculate as to which aspect of my past is catching up with me, since the letter turned out to be academic rather than social and/ or financial. I breathe a little sigh of relief.

I’m flattered that McCreary should think I could tell you anything useful, and actually I think I might be able to suggest some possibilities to you on the theme of boxes, so I am going to try to scrape together some thoughts and invent some spare time to respond.

Box has been an idea of particular interest to me since almost exactly the time you are at now-fourth year of the design curriculum. Myself and a friend wanted to put together a little magazine to blow our little horns and make something attractive to ourselves. We found that a number of our friends were interested in contributing something, so we went ahead with it and produced a little fanzine which we called Box. I suggested the name for a number of reasons, which you could say summarize my thoughts on the idea of box:

05. Architecture is boxes. Boxes are what architects make. This works in two directions:
(1) As a criticism, along the lines of your comment about empty modern boxes that fill our cities, and (2) as a non-judgmental way of suggesting an essence of architecture - a reduction of architecture to a relatively minimal description of its nature. The first use as criticism is a common and largely truthful assessment of the profession of architecture in the late twentieth century. The second use suggests a direction which builds architecturally upon Bachelard’s Poetics as well as upon de Chirico quote at the head of this letter.

23. Boxes is architecture. Boxes are miniature rooms. Quite simply, a box is a room too small for a human to occupy physically. But the box contains space and this space can be occupied mentally by a human, in the way that an observer can imagine being in a house by looking at an architectural model of it. The box then, even if it is small enough to hold in your hand, is a space which others can occupy and therefore is potentially a site of architecture, which is why I would consider the idea worth study.

36. Boxes contain and what they contain is not always a rational assembly, you can put different things together in boxes (a controlled environment for chemical re-actions), things which, in combination, may be volatile, or enigmatic, or beautiful, or all of the above to paraphrase Breton (or one of those Surrealists), the chance encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine in a box.

28. Box is loaded, box has suggestive (suggestion box) connotations, and a vast array of alternate meanings, from the everyday to the pornographic to the violent, soap box, pine box, black box, television (postmodern man’s favorite neurological architecture yet another season), etcetera.

To my mind those are the basic ideas, with the additional footnote to bear in mind that in those cities, full of empty modern boxes, there are people living in cardboard ones. Beyond the basic ideas, I have a number of suggestions which I will make to you. The number is ten.

Absolutely Number One: Joseph Cornell. If you take one piece of advice from me, take this one. If you do a project based on the idea of boxes and you do not know the work of Joseph Cornell, you will look like a fool and you will also miss the opportunity to expand your mind and your thinking about architecture, in a big way. Bracken Library had in my memory several good books
about Cornell, so you should go check them out. I'm disappointed that no one has told you yet to look at Cornell; what are they teaching back there? You have to know about this guy, the Art Institute in Chicago has a fantastic collection of Cornell's collaged boxes, and they are beautiful and phenomenal to see. Your research grant should include the cost of renting a car and staying in a hotel, so go and paint the town red, take friends, and go see these boxes at the Art Institute. They also have a good de Chirico painting.

while you're in the art section at Bracken, look up a couple other people. None of them is as closely tied to the box idea as J.C., but there are connections and in general they are people you ought to have been made to study by now.

Two. Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp is one of the keys to the ultimate project of launching your brain into inner space with some hope of navigation skills. He collected his notes for his masterpiece, the bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even (1915-23) into two publications, the 1914 box and the Green Box boxes figure in actual and metaphorical ways throughout his work. Reading your letter reminded me of Duchamp's bulb of woe (with hidden noise) (1918), which is an unopenable box (a bulb of woe), the hollow center sealed with bolted metal slats containing an object known only to one of Duchamp's patrons. You can hear it rattle, but you don't know what it is.

Three. Kurt Schwitters. Schwitters hasn't really got any overt connection to boxes, but any architect looking at collage and assemblage processes ought to know who he is.

the next 'suggestions' are going to sound suspiciously like 'criticisms'—hope you're ready.

Four. you live in a very complex and very fucked-up world. If you are going to make social statements with your architecture, you need to think long and hard about what you believe in terms of society and the architect's role in it. Your description of the four "altars" (the religious term is "altar") and the connections you are making (you are making a pun) is chilling to me, as an anarchist who has heard about five minutes' worth of Rush Limbaugh's radio show, and I've heard you heard a lot more. That portion of your letter brings up for me my central annoyances with the society I live in, and it's all very confusing. So I'll just go point by point with your description of the boxes you intend to construct to represent your four chosen topics (or gods, to continue the altar metaphor):

"Family" to talk about the "deteriorating American family" is quite simply to talk in clichés in a world doomed to the brink of exhaustion by overpopulation and obscene abuse by humanity, the deterioration of family values in America, whose small populations use a stunning proportion of the world's resources, is symptomatic of larger and more crucial affections. "Family" as an idea is important, but "family" as a soundbite, political tool, and god to be honored, is bullshit.

"Food"—the big mac box is the lamest thing I've ever heard, are you in a hurry or something? Think about what you want to say, and don't stop at the first dumb metaphor that comes into your head: as far as capitalism goes, you're in it up to your neck and you vote for it every fall at the ballot box and every day at the store. If you don't like it, why aren't you doing something to destroy it?

"Employment." Aarrgh. Why is employment in your pantheon of gods? Someday you are going to be dead, is a life of 'employment' what you want to experience between now and then? And is it not 'employment' which causes homelessness, welfare problems, and sickness? It is a socioeconomic system which requires employment as the necessary payment for food, shelter, safety, and health, which system is that, I ask?

"Future." You didn't offend me here, but it seems like a copout to have a locked box to represent the future. It's like in those movies where fantastic possibilities abound but then you discover that it was only a dream. My advice to you is pick a less dramatic topic.
the future pretty much suggests itself all the time. anyway, if the box is locked, does that mean that we can't put anything into the future? are you a determinist too?

Five. if you went leaving boxes lying about in most cities outside the united states, you would be in deep shit as a suspected terrorist. it always amazes me how sheltered americans can be too bad that it is only an unintentional metaphor in your proposal.

Six. Modernism. your mention of Tadao Ando is a good sign. what i said above, part being about regarding architecture to its poetic essential. Tadao Ando is a wonderful example of the secret seems to be that when its non-didactic essence it becomes i guess. Ando himself is a modernist. his work builds strongly on the work of Louis Kahn and le Corbusier who themselves made modern boxes which were not empty. Mies van der Rohe, Pierre Chareau, Frank Lloyd Wright, Adolf Loos, and many others made modern boxes which are poetic, beautiful. modernism is a problematic thing, and not without serious flaws, but it is not as bad as it has been made out to be. watch out for the other side of modernism: that which is about darkness and humor and sensuality and chaos. dada is a good start, but even corbu might have been an occultist.

Seven. Postmodernism. if the simplistic characterization of modernism is 'empty,' and ignores a significant voice which is not empty (such as dada), then the simplistic characterization of postmodernism is 'decorated,' and similarly overlooks various undercurrents which are less superficial. the postmodern label as applied to architecture tends to indicate the historical pastiche approach illustrated so exasperatingly by michael graves and the like. however, in any other discipline the term suggests a way of thinking that does not ignore modernism but questions some facets of modernism, including functionalism, rationalism, the value and measure of progress. and your empty locked box, the guaranteed existence of a future, ideally postmodernism suggests that we can question and modify our concepts about the world that the modern era leaves us with in a way that allows us to make something out of it, like maybe a future. then we can get a real name, like Box World.

Eight. Craft and Rigour. okay, you want to place boxes in munich, that is a great idea. make the boxes yourself out of wood, out of metal. out of things you pick up in the alley. learn how much concentration it takes to make a box that looks good when it's finished. one of the biggest problems of architecture is that architects dont make the building, workers who had nothing to do with the design make the building, there is no creation on the job site. only construction emphasis on cost. anyway, make these boxes very carefully, because i think such things can work if you do them right. you can change the way people think about the city around them, which is what architecture students always say they want to do, but which architects seldom do in practice: choose the sites carefully, and think about what you want to say to someone who is curious enough to engage your little intervention. if you communicate something made and stupid to them, you have wasted your time and theirs (and mine writing this) and above all, make them beautiful. thesis year might be your last chance to explore your own ideas and not those of your employer.

Nine. Down with the Society of the Spectacle. your quote on packaging really annoyed me. if i follow your instructions to substitute "building" for "package," i get this statement, which you say "correlates to architecture... beautifully":

"a building should enhance the value of its contained product and impart that impression, either directly or subtly to the consumer."

the "product" which is "contained" by a building is the life of human beings. certainly the life of human beings is something which the architect should strive to enhance, but to call it a product and suggest that there is a consumer for it and then to call this a beautiful statement about architecture is one of the more bizarre things i have come across in my life. if you think the quality of your human existence is a commodity that you can purchase through employment, no doubt then, you are part of the problem and not part of the solution. i myself like the statement if you think there's a solution you're part of the problem.
Ten. Nothing is True; Everything is Permitted. repeat this to yourself incessantly.

good luck, if you found what i had to offer interesting, and/or your study of box takes you anyplace incredible, i would be interested to hear about it. i also hope i haven't offended you; obviously you are bright enough and dedicated enough to be bothered to write a letter about what you are pursuing, and i suspect you are well-intentioned. but as a friend of mine is fond of saying, we are at the end of history, complexity and contradiction abound not only in architecture and not only in our society, but in reality itself. it is a weird world and there is a lot of potential for making it whatever we want it to be. architects have some part of the making, and so it is a very serious matter at some level.

sincerely,

[Signature]

monte antrim
Total Numbers:
2x4x8' = 70
plywood 4'x8'x3/8" = 1
gyp. bd. 4'x8'x1/2" = 7

Break down of pieces and amounts.

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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Amount/piece</th>
<th>Total Amount (Actual Cost)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2x4x8'</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>23.04(23.04)</td>
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<tr>
<td>plywood (4x8x3/8&quot;)</td>
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<td>white burlap</td>
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<td>1.78/yard</td>
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<td>nails</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>light fixture</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5.00(2.09)</td>
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<tr>
<td>stl. angles</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>12.00(8.61)</td>
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<tr>
<td>lag screws</td>
<td>2(5&quot; lg.)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.00(1.48)</td>
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Subtotal: 93.73(66.92)

Leaning Wall

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<td>2x4x8'</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>screws/nails</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>20.00(2.33/4.74/8.70)</td>
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<tr>
<td>air duct (2'x8dia.)</td>
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<td>1.17</td>
<td>3.34(5.66)</td>
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<td>air diffuser (4x10)</td>
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<td>3.64(4.91)</td>
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<td>extra</td>
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Subtotal: 107.06(101.42)

Thick Wall

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Subtotal: 98.51(63.51)
## Misc. Materials

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<td>zinc washers</td>
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<td>light bulbs</td>
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<td>5.00(5.26)</td>
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<tr>
<td>light fixtures</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>15.00(17.88)</td>
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<td>delivery cost</td>
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<td>10.00(4.00)</td>
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<td>bolts</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5.00(7.85)</td>
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<td>1.97/2.48</td>
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<td>misc.</td>
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## Tax Totals

- Indiana sales tax @ .05%
- **Subtotals**: 379.84(336.27)
- **Tax total**: 18.992(16.88)

### Final Budget Grand Total (as of 3/1)

- **398.83(353.15)**

### 10% addition/subtraction of total allowed

- **39.88**
- **+/-39.83**

### University grant reimbursement

- **200.00**
- **199.48(353.15-199.48)**

### The projected total of my cost

- **153.67**
Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house. - Bachelard.