Little Raven
A Community of Living for those affected with AIDS
Denver, Colorado

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Little Raven
A Community of Living for Those affected with AIDS

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LIFE

finally being me
MOM AND DAD
truth
ROBIN, TIM, TAYLOR, AND ???
hope
TERRI, DOUG, AND SHELBY THE PUSS
support
HEIDI
humor
JMARK
love
WALTER AND WALTER
ambition
GOD
spirituality
JAN, ERIC, SHAWN, BILL, AND KATHY
acceptance
TANA AND JANINE
the color of light
BARBARA PEABODY
a space to scream
"KEVIN"
life over death
L&DGA

gaining a voice
OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.
opening my eyes
WORLD AIDS DAY 1995 AND THE QUILT
memories and helium
UNCLE TOM AND UNCLE KEVIN
role models
VOICES THAT CARE
red ribbons
VORTEX
spandex
COFFEE BREAKS
now and then
THOSE WHO HAVE LEARNED TO DANCE IN THE LIGHT
another family of friends
THE DARREN MILLS GROUP AND JACK'S CAMERA
a wish for the CURE

Little Raven
Abstract:

A Always

The Little Raven Community of LIFE is a dynamic, new approach to creating a healing and life-promoting environment for people Living With AIDS.

I In

My Thesis began with the premise of creating a "living" space to deny death. In addition, it expanded and evolved to create community, fellowship, and life-sharing.

O Divine

The community grew to accommodate 28-30 houses of life, an AIDS research/treatment facility and community center, retail spaces, a monorail station, and a greenway link to the city. All of this is to occur in Denver, Colorado... "the best place I've found thus far in life."

S Safety

- Rod Collier

Little Raven
"And to my surprise, instead of dying— I was reborn. I knew to the core of my being that I had healed myself. I was in a state of grace, a place of total love and forgiveness. I was bounding with energy."

--Tony Petzel, person living with AIDS

This thesis is no longer just a project; it is now a fully integrated part of my life. I can no longer separate who I was from who I have become. Deciding to work with HIV and AIDS as a thesis topic was never a question for me, but growing as a human being was a wonderful unforeseen discovery along the way. I have become so closely coupled with those who are infected and affected with the virus that it is difficult to separate their emotions from my own. To say that I have developed as a person because of what I have done is a gross understatement; my life barely existed before January of 1995.

I was so very fortunate to begin in January of 1995 with the reading of a dynamic book called *Voices that Care* by Neal Hitchens. It chronicles personal accounts of persons living with and dying from AIDS. I used this as a jumping off point-- I dove in without realizing just exactly what I would likely be encountering along my path of exploration and discovery. I quickly began to accumulate books, studies, videos, and personal accounts of People with AIDS (PWAs) and AIDS-related issues. I rather quickly was evolving my thoughts and aspirations of what this thesis was to encompass. I was initially wanting to create an AIDS hospice, but the very premise of a hospice is that it is a place to die. I was adamant about creating a place to live-- something a hospice was incapable of doing. The hospice matured into a retreat. The retreat evolved further and became a community of living.

In addition to the community having a life of it's own, I also wanted there to be an alliance between a research/community center and the living units of the inhabitants. This interaction between the two areas was a step towards giving additional power to those who are infected. This was to promote a positive living environment where the resident would feel an active
part in furthering his/her own life. There was also to be close proximity to other neighborhoods, cultural events, and civil amenities. I wanted this community to become one more thread in a city’s overall tapestry— not only was it to have its own color and texture, but it also was to be a vital link in creating continuity in the way it is woven within the city.

I had developed all of these notions during the Spring of 1995, but I was still lacking a key element for my explorations in my thesis; I needed a site. I was initially thinking of the San Francisco area, but I was unsure of where and how to find a site.

Then in the latter part of the Summer of 1995, my life began drastically changing. After the unexpected end of a very long and meaningful relationship, I used my thesis as a stabilizing entity. I further enveloped myself in my creative and analytical research— thus neglecting any outside stimulus. Finally realizing that I had withdrawn from everything and everyone, I threw my world for a loop and purchased a one-way airplane ticket to anywhere. Denver, Colorado happened to be my retreat from it all. On the plane ride out, I began to realize the parallel nature of my recent life to that of a PWA. Although I wasn’t physically threatened, everything I had come to know had suddenly been yanked out from under me-- I was falling, and fast... ...I again let my thesis become my parachute. Although there were voices that cared coming from all around me, I just didn’t know from where. Denver became my shelter; my oasis from my shattered dreams. I knew that Denver was healing me, so I knew that it would become my site (and eventually my home).

I dishearteningly returned to Ball State University and Indiana; my heart was pulling me back to Colorado. My Uncle Tom and Kevin in Denver were very involved in the local AIDS organizations, and were, perhaps, a driving force in my own “leap” towards community interaction and service. Open Door Community Services, Inc. in Muncie allowed me the wonderful opportunity to work with and help HIV/AIDS clients and activities. In the process of reaching out into the arena of HIV, I was actually helping myself. As my research increased, so did my

The human and the divine, the solar and the lunar, day and night, conscious and unconscious, female and male, adult and child, all worlds are actually one, dimensions of one another.... The knowledge of this... is the fruit of wholeness. 
Rachel V.
volunteering and involvement with Open Door.

I still hadn't found an exact site, but now I knew I wanted it to be in Colorado. I finally couldn't resist the pull to Denver any longer, so I ventured out there for field trip week—Once again I was "home". I found my dream site the day after I arrived— I spent more than a week and a half discovering more than I could have ever imagined. I visited organizations, such as the Colorado AIDS Project (another CAP), professionals, firms, and hospices. The hospice visits were a striking blow to my thinking and hopes. I do not want to condemn hospices— they do exactly what they are designed to do, which is let people die. I wanted to go in the opposite direction of a hospice and further a life through the strength of a community. With all of this, I now had a positive new direction and a newfound zest for my own life.

Leaving my "haven" behind, I immediately returned to Fort Wayne, Indiana for an AIDS Task Force Dinner. I was again amazed at the sense of community that AIDS can create. My work with Open Door also advanced to the point of creating a lot of involvement with the rapidly
approaching World AIDS Day on December 1, 1995. Being part of the organizing committee gave me new ideas, contacts, and perspectives.

We, the Committee, had tried to secure the use of a nationally known electronic presentation from New York City. However, being short of the thousand dollar price tag gave me the idea to create my own slide presentation—the "Electric Quilt" was born overnight. All 150+ slides were a personal experience, voyage, or emotion of what I had encountered throughout the past year of my HIV/AIDS affected life. Then, finally, at the World AIDS Day Conferences in Indianapolis, I was confronted with the most divine sense of living that I had ever experienced. Listening to a fellow participant speak tore through all of the many books, sketches, poems, meditations, stories, and lectures from the past year. He touched my heart in a way no one ever could—I was finally living. I could answer my own unanswerable question of "What Is LIFE?".

Life is being everything...
"It casts its fearful shadow across the morning sun and terrifies us with its sometimes ferocity. They reach through the shadow to find the sunlight and become reflections of its radiance."

--O’Brien 1992

"What is Life?" As I had stated, this question was an initial stumbling block to me because it meant something different to every person. How could I as a designer create an atmosphere that allows each person to experience life differently, yet still promote life for all? This is an idea which is very difficult to put into words, so trying to convey all of my thoughts and meanings is very difficult. There is so much life and living with HIV/AIDS.

One of the first things that I rapidly became aware of was that the affected person can almost instantly see life differently. There are several steps that each person experiences on their own, but the one constant is the intensified view of the surrounding world. I say this because every form of their senses seems to be heightened and strengthened to a level which few people will ever know. It is the realization that they are faced with a life-threatening disease that forces them to view the world they are experiencing more profoundly.

To choose life is a person’s own prerogative, yet I believe it is possible to encourage life by creating a positive living environment. Spaces can interact the same way that people do, and it is this constant interaction which will allow the residents to become a community of living.

People are all different, yet these residents all have one major commonality among them— they or a loved one are HIV positive. There are many different phases to the progression of this disease, yet the underlying cause is still the same. It is this link which will create a bond that cannot be broken. A family will emerge to promote a support system— there will always be someone to help, encourage, or promote a living attitude.

At the Indianapolis Worlds AIDS Day Conferences and seminars on December 2, 1995, I was confronted with someone who no longer wanted to live. "Kevin" had so much talent,
care, and intelligence to offer the world, but he was living in an environment of isolation and loneliness. To him, life had lost its meaning. He stated, "I'm waiting for Death with open arms. It is the only positive in my life." I immediately began to convey the fact that there were others who had faced the same dilemma that he was encountering. I expressed what I was trying to do with my thesis, and he was excited by the idea. He realized that there were others who would come together to promote a more positive life. I felt elated as he walked away with a smile on his face—maybe the first he had experienced in quite some time.

I actually was fortunate enough to meet back up with "Kevin" in a later lecture that day. With a warm hug, he stated that he was glad to have an ally. This lecture was focusing upon using the mind as a healer; although it is impossible to heal the HIV virus that is causing the disease, it is possible to alter the course and direction that the disease takes. Positive thinking, reinforced with endorsement of others, can help to create an almost illness-free life. Lucy McCosky from Heart Rays, Inc. of Indianapolis was the leader of this
very interactive lecture, and she stressed the need for a positive living environment to allow the person to achieve good health.

Lucy also went on to discuss the group called "The Loving Circle" and how it uses meditation, visualization, laughter, sharing, and caring to help foster the mind as a healer. I realized that a lot of what she was saying is what I had envisioned for Little Raven.

The many books, films, and articles that I utilized to help me along this journey of exploration have been immensely helpful. Creating an understanding of what individuals go through with this disease would have been impossible without them. I evolved my visions of what Little Raven became from visits with AIDS clients, from reading needs assessments, and from becoming involved in my own community.
Maintaining a sense of individuality and independence has remained from the conception of this thesis. I had always viewed the residents as living in single, detached dwellings, but I evolved my thoughts to include duplex, triplex, and row housing prototypes. I linked all of the living units into a neighborhood, then the neighborhood was linked to the community. I wanted the feeling of a small village or town within the greater metropolitan area of Denver. The 28-30 units are representative of the houses of a community, the community center is the gathering place, and the shops represent the commercial zones. The interaction between the housing, the retail, the open spaces, and the community center became one of the key factors in creating an identifiable neighborhood.
Sharing the Healing Space

We are all made by relationships with other people.

-- Carlo Carretto Summoned by Love

In today's society of stigmas and separations, it is very important that this AIDS retreat become an identifiable community. One of the first questions I asked myself was, "Why would any person living with AIDS want to come together in one place." In all of my varied research, I have always held to the idea that there would be a place to share the healing. I immediately discovered that there is a large percentage of people with AIDS who want to come together with others who are experiencing the same events of life. After all, it is logical that like-minded people will endeavor to find each other. I am not trying to create a community of segregation or isolation, but instead a healing place with interaction to the surrounding neighborhoods and city.

"I want to be here" is a key phrase in successfully populating the community. The choice to live has to begin with the individual. This an essential aspect of making this

Opposites can come together to create a wholeness for the quest undertaken because of a desire which leads to a discovery that you become divine and have faith in life to be one with all things.

-- R. Collier 12.1995
togetherness work. I don't see this as a place for those who have given up on life, but instead it is filled with those who have begun to view life with an appreciation that few others will ever know. The feeling of togetherness would permeate the public spaces. The individual living units have various degrees of private and public spaces. The transitions from very public to very private is subtle and personal; with each person defining the limits themselves.

The neighborhoods within the community will each have their own similar language and vocabulary. At the same time, however, there will still be an underlying strength of the combined community. I feel that there will be small "families" forming within the different neighborhoods. As one person's disease progresses, the others support and pick up where that person is not capable of continuing. They give their strength as a combined effort. Maybe this is too "optimistic" of a view for society on a whole, but after being in the AIDS community for over a year I have felt it. I know it exists. They radiate strength beyond anything I have felt before. Their courage seems
immeasurable.

I have also been aware of how this disease progresses in HIV infected individuals. This made it necessary to allow each living unit to progress along with the disease. I DO NOT want a person to have to move out of their home as the weakening disease proceeds along. I, again, view with optimism that the caretaker would be able to "visit" the inhabitant. They could be stationed within the community center or the research facility, and they could be summoned from that location. The living units are also designed in a manner where they can grow to accommodate the required machines and various apparatus that is needed in the latter stages of the disease. The caretaker can also be positioned in the units, or perhaps within different neighborhoods.

With the way that this project and thesis has developed, I have found that I have grown in every form of the word. I feel that this space is somewhere where anyone would want to live; it just happens to be specifically designed for HIV/AIDS affected persons. The underlying feeling of life and living would naturally cause others to radiate to the spaces contained within the overall complex. It is this "attraction" which would allow the increased interaction with outside citizens and groups. The recreational nature of the site furthers this idea.

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You who are the source of all power
Whose rays illuminate the whole world,
Illuminate also in my heart
So that it too can do your work.

--The Book of Runes

I've discovered I'm a strong and capable person.
I can handle almost anything except being alone with this.

--Keith Gann, person with AIDS
Both the Stone of Harmony and the Stone of Uncaring can be the Drums that set the Rings of Water into Motion Within the Dance of the Medicine Lake.... If the people Care for One Another, then the Rings of this Dance are Harmonious.

—Gymeyohsots Storm

models: jmark hannon and rod collier
photo courtesy of: deanna root
Finding a site... and then some

"I've done it! I've gone and fallen in love with my very first site! I think the location not only stole my creative heart, but also captured the main characteristics of what I've been dreaming of."

-From my sketchbook 9.24.95

After visiting Denver, Colorado early in August of 1995, my initial thinking of where this proposed community of living would be located was greatly affected. I had originally been thinking of the San Francisco Bay area, but the sense of candor and sincerity of Denver amended my vision. I was amazed at what the population of this sprawling metropolis by the mountains was doing in support of those who have become infected and affected by HIV. There were programs already in place to support my proposal with a vast network of loving and caring for people living with AIDS.

I was determined to discover a mountain oasis on my second journey to Denver, so I set out immediately in search of the perfect site. Finding the site was purely by accident; I was driving to visit another area when I stumbled upon this gem within the city.

The site was a vast, open space when I got out of the vehicle, but it was the sound of rushing water that arrested my interest. As I walked along the stark, sparsely covered lot, the sound intensified and mutated. The brief stroll ended with sheer delight; along two edges of the site there were flowing streams and waterfalls. I was immediately and steadfastly in love.

With this being the first space I had discovered in my quest, I felt somewhat obligated to continue the search for an even better location. However, I couldn't pull myself away from this space. There was something mystical drawing me here. I began researching the site at the new Denver Public Library. The Cherry Creek...
confluences into the South Platte River on the western corner of the site. It is bordered by 15th Street to the east and by a railroad line to the south. It also has small secondary street, called Little Raven Court, dividing the site into two segments. This site is adjacent to the Confluence Park and the Cherry Creek Greenway. This link to the pedestrian/bicycle/rollerblade traffic was another decisive feature.

There are two existing structures on the corners of Little Raven Court and 15th Street. These two buildings from the early 1900s are both standing in excellent condition. There was no doubt that neither building was to be demolished within my planning. One is currently used for artists studios, while the other is a storage facility for the local utility company. Also on the site is an existing power transfer station at the river junction, but this eyesore is surely destined to be relocated due to the renewed interest of this area for public use.

Downtown Denver is a mere 6 blocks away (less than a half mile) from the center of the site, and this proximity to shopping, culture, and medical care was also one of my characteristic requirements. There is an amusement park on the other side of Cherry Creek and Speer Avenue, which also creates wonderful sounds of laughter and merriment. The new Coors Field baseball complex is visible to the east, and Mile-High Stadium is directly to the west. To the south is the Auraria Campus (Denver University, Denver Metro, and Community College of Denver) and also the cultural complexes of Denver. All of these features are located within a half mile radius of the site.

The train lines that bordered the site initially frightened me; I had
assumed that they would be noisy and distracting. Yet after experiencing the slow, quiet trains, I enjoyed the low hum and pulsing tranquility that was emitted in passing. My research discovered a no-horn blowing policy and strict 15m.p.h. speed limit.

Another striking feature was the pivotal point of the site between the residential areas to the north and the lower downtown area to the south. This site would allow for an interaction between the two different zones.

Disease can be seen as a call for personal transformation through metamorphosis. It is a transition from death of your old self into the birth of your new.

--Tom O'Connor, person with ARC
This old historic building on the corner is to help define new entry and associate with the new spiritual chapel. It will house the library and bookstore.

This beautiful building is already functioning well as an artist's studio and real estate office. There are to be little, if any, modifications.

warehouse building suitable for flea market

small unsafe building scheduled for demolition

historic train depot. The last depot of a train empire that stretched from coast to coast. To be refurbished and upgraded for use as a specialty store and farmer's market
Above: The old historic train depot. It is abandoned and waiting for a new use and life. Right: The warehouse across the street. Not the most attractive structure, but it does have possibilities. Below: The Forney Museum and Parks Department building at the confluence of the rivers.

Below: The front facade of the abandoned train depot as seen from the site. It sits very regally over the vast open space—remembering when the space was full of bustling, festive life—as it will be again. You can see the street lowering to go below the tracks.
Above: Entry to Eich's Amusement Park. Right: The edge of the site sloping into the South Platte River. Left: Overlooking half of the site from Speer Avenue. Below: The view from the amphitheater located across the South Platte River.
"Locations and times—what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, makes me at home?" Forms, colors, densities, odors—what is it in me that corresponds with them?

--Walt Whitman 1860

The site is very exciting and diverse in its activities and characteristics, but it also has a rich and varied past. Knowing the history of the site has caused a tremendous spiritual attachment to this sacred space, and also gave me clues and archetypes to follow on research and development.

For thousands of years the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River was held in high regard by nomadic Native American tribes. They settled and shifted on the site for ten millennia before the "first" settlers even entered the area now called Colorado. Then in 1857 gold was discovered in the river beds of the creek and a boom town of Denver emerged nearly overnight. Native Americans and settlers coexisted for almost a decade before fear and misunderstanding created tragedy. In late November of 1864 a renegade
The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transiency, or change. That everything changes is the basic truth for each existence.

--Shunryu Suzuki

militia of enlisted men stormed through the site and massacred an entire Native American culture--men, women, and children. The once sacred land was speculatively given over to transportation--the trains were coming. The chief Little Raven and his tribe were erased forever--or so they thought.

A network of tracks and stagecoach lines crisscrossed the site. Later, the automobile would also leave its scar. With an outcry for river cleanup and additional recreational spaces from the citizens of Denver, all but two of the train tracks were removed in 1993. The rivers, neglected and polluted for decades, were finally cleaned, revitalized, and rebuilt in 1994-95. The sanctity of the land has once again been returned to nature--waiting for the next phase of its life. Hopefully the new generations that will inhabit the space will not be treated with the same fear and misunderstanding which created tragedy 130 years ago. Denver is wanting this type of development built--they are waiting with open arms. Little Raven has risen from the site with a new vigor and vitality. His life is continuing on in others.
The Bridge of Hope

I began with the sounds of the site from the beginning of time to the present. The site itself has endured and lived through some very trying and desperate times of history. There has been joy as well as pain. I knew as I read the rich and intricately detailed history of this area that there was an almost mystical healing quality that I had never encountered prior to this point. I wanted to explore this in a different way than I ever had done before, so I chose to experience the sounds of its history. This 15 minute audio experience helped me to better understand what emotions had been encountered throughout the years, but it also gave me one more level of understanding about what this place was going to become.

I had developed the "Electric Quilt" specifically for World AIDS Day, but the images were directly linked to how I was feeling--there were many different perspectives of living with AIDS represented in the 150+ slides. I tried to gather pictures, personalities, and emotions that could evoke a response in the viewer and myself. As the images projected onto the buildings across campus on December 1, 1995, I was
The Life of man is divided between walking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. But transcending these three states is superconscious vision — called the Fourth.

--From the Upanishads

captivated at the "living" quality of the images as they danced across the different textures, colors, and planes of the numerous academic buildings. Each slide took on a personality, a life of its own, as I changed locations and positions across the campus. To me, the campus had never before been so illuminated with personality and life.

I also began exploring imagery of what I was picturing within my mind. These mental sketches became more solidified through the creation of "The Roller Coaster of Life", which contains the earliest notions of form, vocabulary, and emotion of the evolving community of Little Raven. This four panel composition was inspired by the loops and twists of a roller coaster, but it also shows how life has many periods of ups, downs, and twists. I used this imagery as a building foundation.

The site became a newly found tool in discovering how emotions could influence form. I took words and superimposed them onto the activities, sounds, contours, and functions of the site. The composition of the words as they twisted and flowed together further affected what I was envisioning for Little Raven.

The next "phase" of my
development was the exploration of collages. I began with a specific emotion and tried to create a collage that would represent that feeling. I began with "hope." I was quickly amazed by the fact that it was nearly impossible to represent just one emotion--they were linked to other feelings and emotions too strongly. The collage quickly became three emotions: despair, acceptance, and hope bridging the other two. I attempted, unsuccessfully, to bring this element into the third dimension, so I continued the next collage exploration. Fear was born; with it came loss of individuality and rejection. Then shock came about, but it, too, was linked to acceptance and rejection. The emotions were interconnected--like I wanted the community of living to be.

I began drawing perspectives of the site from photographs that I had taken. I next created three dimensional spacial analysis of the different spaces and areas of the site. It was lacking the connection to the emotional qualities of the collages, so I took on a fresh idea of combining the two things together to create one drawing. I took images from the collages and redrew them onto the perspective of the site. Their

Accepting
the
possibility
of
death
honestly
and
completely
frees
up
a
whole
lot
of
energy
to
live.

--Keith Goen, Person Living with AIDS

Panel 3 "Roller coaster of Life"
Those who have died have never, never left.
The dead are not under the earth.
They are in the rustling trees.
They are in the groaning woods.
They are in the crying grass.
They are in the moaning rocks.
The dead are not under the earth.

-- Brad Plopp
"They are part of..."

Panel 4 "Roller Coaster of Life"

placement was based upon emotional qualities of the images and the site. A
new type of site analysis was created. However, I was still working on too broad
of a picture, so Pam told me to focus down on the site. I decided to take a
closer look at the powerful area that had drawn me to the site initially-- the
confluence of the two rivers. For this area, again, I drew a perspective
looking towards the site. This also was explored through the bubble diagrams
and three dimensional site analysis. Next came the imposition of the
emotions from the land. I chose this time to use only images from my mind. A
new type of drawing dealing specifically with emotion and site emerged. However, Pam told me once
again to focus within this new drawing more.

From this rendering, I chose the existing bridge. This wooden structure
had crossed the river for decades, but lacked an emotional quality that the
drawing had given it. Therefore, I chose to explore what feeling could be
evoked by crossing the chasm between the two sides of the river. I created the
"bridge of hope". This was accomplished through a model-- on one side was envisioned acceptance,
and on the other was despair. Hope was used to “bridge” the two—just the same way as my original collage based on hope had done. The “bridge of hope” used an “intuitive” vocabulary, which actually evoked the imagery of two hands— one reaching out from each side. The analogy of these “reaching hands” was needed to further explore how I wanted the link between the two to be exemplified. Do they fully touch or is it implied? This process of exploration, to me, was very successful and exciting.

Therefore, I moved to another area of the site and began a similar process over again. This time I chose the two existing structures on the site. They seemed to me to be a main entry or portal into the community, so the imagery that evolved was based on that event. The structures also seemed to be lacking the continuity to the rest of the community that they once had. The demolition of the train lines and adjoining buildings had left them disconnected and voiceless. I knew that I wanted to reconnect them not only to the community of Little Raven, but also to the greater community of Denver. I chose, once again, to further identify and focus on the idea of entry...
and connection. The next drawing was formed from these notions.

Even though drawings were being created at a tremendous pace, I knew that this phase of design was forcing me into the next stage of development. I believe that it was this point that the reality of Little Raven had already been actualized. The emotions were there. The imagery was there. And, I believe, the feeling of life was there.

There are ebbs and swells of life just like a river.
We want to create hope for the person and acceptance in the hearts of the people. We must give hope, always hope and remove the bitterness that is harming them when they are being avoided by everyone.

--Mother Teresa on AIDS

exploration of "Hope"
exploration of "Individuality" / "Fear"

exploration of "Shock" / "Acceptance"
I began with the sketch of the existing site. Then, I began to superimpose three dimensional diagrams and site analysis onto the sketch. This approach still seemed too pragmatic, so it was at this point to attempt something totally new and foreign to me...
...I was able to pull images from my earlier collages and place them upon the sketch. An emotional site analysis began to appear.
The first experiment was too broad to fully explore emotional relationships to the site and community. Therefore, the next sketch was localized to the confluence of the two rivers.

The sketch was done from across the river looking toward the site. To the right you can see confluence park, the existing bridge, and the tower from Ellitch's Amusement Park.

I once again completed another type of three-dimensional spatial analysis. This time, however, I tried to interject the emotional quality of the elements and site features.
This drawing was able to show a sense of rebirth, protection, and hope.

This collage was created solely from the emotions and images within myself. "The discovery of the site"
The bridge was derived from the emotion of hope. It bridges the gap between despair and acceptance. It became the "bridge of hope."
The existing bridge is straddled and enveloped by the new structure. It was derived with the analogy to the grasping hands. Each side is reaching for the other. To cross the bridge is to experience a sense of hope -- I hope.
This third site sketch is of the two existing structures at the corner of Little Raven Court and 15th Street.

There was Death.

The buildings have had their context, their history, and their sense of continuity pulled away.

They turned their back.

Now there was rebirth.
This drawing did a lot to show me how the sense of entry was expressed, and how the buildings were struggling with their own sense of identity in an unidentifiable setting. My goal was to create an entry vocabulary which reconnected them to a context and neighborhood.
This emotion analysis drawing was created from focusing further into the sense of entry.
Deep as you go
Deep as you go I'll follow
Deep as the water goes
All the world is hollow and dry
But you and I go down
You and I go down
Far as you want to take me
Far as your eyes can see
Leave the world alone in the sky
You and I go free
You and I are free
Don't save me
Don't lose me
Don't wake me
You let me
You release me
Let me drown
Take me down

Promise to take me with you
Promise to let me go

You are swimming
In deep water
Without allowing
Fear and panic
to cause you
to drown

---David Bennett

All the world is waiting to see
As you and I go down
You and I are free

Don't save me_
I want to be completed
I want to disappear
Take me down
Take me down
Let me drown

Somehow I need to love you
More than I need to breathe
I can feel you leaving the ground
I will follow down
You and I will drown

Don't save me_
---Oktober Project
Little Raven Rises Once Again

Is this not life's purpose —
to know that you belong,
that you are safe and eternal,
to know that in your spirit reality you
are already one with God?

— Emmanuel

With only four weeks remaining
until final presentations, I was
determined to move these explorations
into a more architectonic vocabulary.
I constructed a model of the northern
area of the site, and I immediately
began linking the different areas
together. Sketches were beginning to
be created of a specific vocabulary
and emotional quality based on earlier
explorations. I took these forms and
further refined an image of Little Raven.
The Bridge of Hope was linked to the
existing building on the corner, and a
new area emerged between the two.

The spiritual quality of this area
was further defined by the creation of
the spiritual chapel, which overlooked
the reflecting pools and bridge of hope.
I further emphasized the spiritual quality
of this space by surrounding it with the
wall of remembrance. This wall is to
contain the names of those residents
that have died within the Little Raven
Community. It allows a person to live
forever through the memories and
permanence of their name etched into
the stone wall. As you rise the stairs
from the end of the bridge of hope into the
community, you are confronted with the
curving, rising planes of the
remembrance wall. You are also
confronted with a choice of directions
around this spiritual place. The sound
of rushing water is pervasive
everywhere.

With less than one week
remaining before presentations, I was
still without a solid notion of what the
living units were to become. I had been
exploring, for weeks, the spatial
relationships and interaction of the
inhabitants and the units, but I finally
started constructing a solid, defined
form and vocabulary. This was done
by focusing in on one area of the site,
which was in direct conjunction with the
bridge, the river, the spiritual spaces,
and the newly formed reflecting pools.
Within these five units evolved a form
and vocabulary of the community of
Little Raven.
With an amazing cascade effect, the rest of the site evolved in a similar manner. There were distinct neighborhoods within the overall community. Each neighborhood had a link to the others, the rivers, creeks, and the reflecting pools, and to the spiritual chapel and Denver's greenway paths along the rivers. Little Raven Community of Living had risen from the explored emotions and the site.

The southern part of the site was still left relatively undeveloped, but there was still a developing feel to it. The schematic level was in its formative, but there was a definite exploration of ideas forming. This area had a defined level of emotional and relationships that were occurring and relationships that were occurring and relationships that were occurring.

This initial plan sketch was beginning to explore the freeform nature of the site and the relationships to the other units.
should further enhance the interaction with other communities. The development between the community center and the northern portion of the site will contain mixed-use retail spaces and living units. There is an additional neighborhood of living units and an underground parking facility which services the retail shops, the community center, the research facility, and the living units.
Joining hands in the circle of abundance and love
We are blessed and we prosper wherever we turn
We receive what we want and we share what we can
Joining hands in the circle of abundance and love
--Joshua Leeds and Louise Hay

Vocabulary Sketch
exploration of plan relationships and shared spaces. The process began by drawing each entry vestibule. Then the relationships to the rivers, the other units, and public/private spaces were explored.
If I can just love you because here we are, then you are free to grow as you need to grow, because none of it's going to change my feelings of love.

-- Ram Dass

Vocabulary Sketch (view from river looking up towards bridge of hope)
As the model was begun, forms began to evolve and a richer vocabulary was defined. The links of the public spaces to the private spaces were more fully defined. An excitement arose from the rapid nature of building this model, and this allowed me to see how this neighborhood would tie into the next--each neighborhood had a vocabulary within the community.

You can see how the axis from the bridge of hope ventures through the site to affect the building on the corner. The spiritual chapel was developed to give a new entry into the existing structure. The building will house a library and bookstore with the chapel flowing through and over the space. This strong axis also became a grid of trees to unify the site on another level.
The corner now has a new element to reach out to the community. It also is redefined as an entry into Little Raven. This entry, into the community and into the building, further emphasizes the fluidity of the forms within the traditional context. There is a new vocabulary within the old. New life arose from a dying structure. The bus stop has also been reconstructed to link itself with the community--specifically to the reflecting pool and remembrance wall.
View from South Platte River towards the chapel and community.
Interior of one of the living units.
View from Little Raven Court towards bus terminal, chapel, and intersection.
My Screams are Music

My body has been talking to me for years. I just have to learn to listen.

--Bob

There has always been one space that has remained constant in every design scheme that I have done: The Screaming Space. In Barbara Peabody's book called the Screaming Room, she dreams of a space were she could go to relieve her pent up fears and emotions through screaming. As I talked with clients and caregivers, they were very interested in such a healing, therapeutic space. In my research and reading I discovered a similar space that was actually built and used for a women with terminal cancer in New York. Using the written description as a design impetus, I refined my emotional imagery dealing with such a space. The spaces vary from small and enclosing to spacious and roomy. The construction of each is of natural materials, such as stone and wood, being laced with piano wires and other resonating materials. Therefore, as the person inside screams, the frustration is redistributed to the exterior via the
Your distress about life might mean you have been living for the wrong reason, not that you have no reason for living.

--Tom O'Connor, person with ARC

Vibrations of the resonating materials. In essence, the inhabitant's frustration in redefined as a soothing element for the surrounding spaces.

The therapeutic qualities of this type of space would be immeasurable, but the ability to help others through it's space is an additional bonus. I can imagine the soothing sounds of low resonating pulses and vibrations-- a human wind chime.

Each different neighborhood would contain a pair of screaming rooms located within the overlook or similar feature. One screaming space would be small and enclosing, while the other would be larger and more open. The inhabitants of each neighborhood could allow themselves to alert others of their distress, thus further encouraging another level of social support.
Simple Statement:
—It's me
it happened because it needed to
no longer am I pure...
...but now I'm complete
eternity wasn't too long for me to stop
I wanted it
I needed it
I got it
and now it's forever
afterall, it's just a simple statement
—It's me
"Until the Cure" once heard "Cure"

The cure for what? me

for loving someone

for happy finding

for strength encouraging

for expression Life?

If I had the Cure ... ?? ?? ?? ?? ??
This is not an ending. This is only the beginning chapter of a much greater purpose. I would love to have had another month, year, or lifetime to continue this piece of myself. I feel, completely and sincerely, that the work that I have begun will never end. I can carry the lessons I have learned with me for as long as the memories remain. Some of the people that I have met along this path of discovery are gone now, but their life will live on in my memories, in my writings, and in my heart. They have allowed me to open my eyes to another dimension of my own life. My goal now is to continue to see more, do more, and experience as much as I can before I stop living in the material sense.

This sequel should and will continue, for I have only begun something wonderful to now it grows on its own.

Thank you to all who have helped me to see the color of light, to dance in its radiance, and grow beyond limits.

Rod Collier

Little 58 Raven
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