

Undergraduate E-Newsletter

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The Art of Folding

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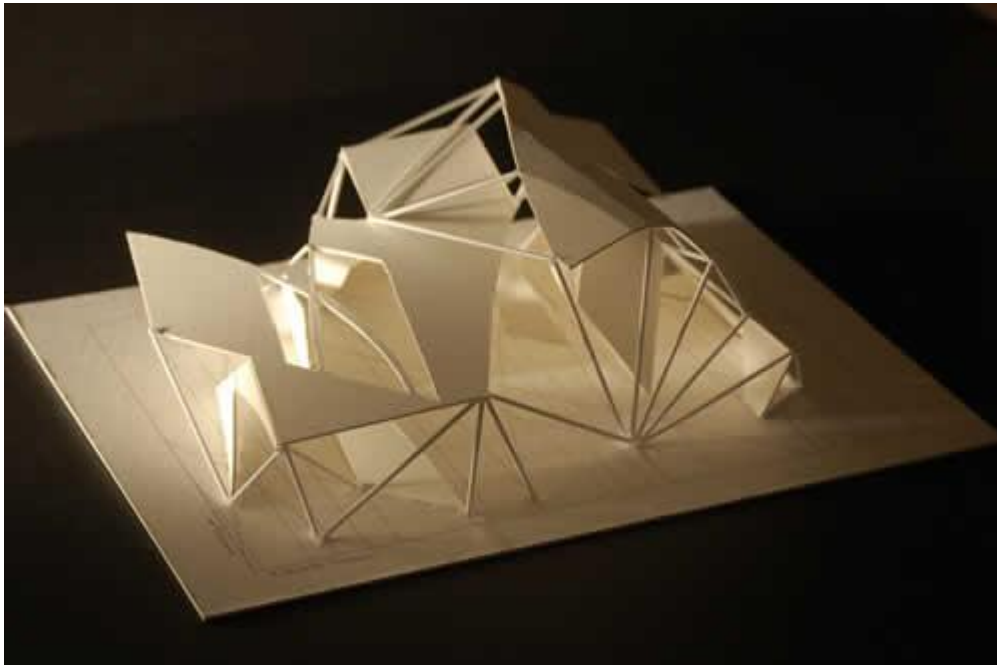
What comes to mind when you hear the word *folding*? Perhaps you conjure the image of someone folding a letter to mail, or perhaps someone engaged in the art of origami. The point at hand is that *folding* can be associated with many things, but architecture, at least in the minds of many, is not one of those things. This having been said, one might imagine my surprise to discover that in the Architecture Studio held this past fall, I, a student with a deep appreciation for the architecturally historic, would be endeavored to *fold* a building from a mere sheet of lined paper. “Blasphemy!” I cried. Surely this exercise in contemporary theory would fly in the face of all that Vitruvius, Alberti, Laugier, and Ruskin had taught me about beauty and proportion... or would it? It was at this impasse that I saw the opportunity to grow academically in a way that had not previously been possible. Of course the concept of *folding* was contemporary, but underneath everything were the defining principles of beauty, proportion, and harmony between solid and void, the principles that I had come to know and revere.

The primary goal of the Studio was to focus on the needs of a revitalized Hazelwood. It was the job of those involved to determine first the needs of the community and then set forth to create a space appropriate to house them. Walking the streets of Hazelwood, I found myself photographing the ruins of a once vibrant neighborhood and looking at the vacant lots in a manner consistent with that of an archaeologist. To me, these extant buildings were the sacred relics of a past long-forgotten; ruins which I vowed to not supersede with a design solution that failed to, at least in some way, acknowledge its predecessor. These structures, most dilapidated and forgotten, formed the core of my personal design ideology.

Using concepts such as distances to the nearest historic structures, plans of Hazelwood’s most prominent buildings, and the rhythm of the storefronts of the only intact commercial block along Second Avenue, I was able to construct a contextual map of site influences from which my design solution would spring. Setting forth on a journey that would span in excess of 300 hours, I extracted, refined, and refined yet again the plans, sections, and models of a Police Station and Medical Aid Center, an Urban Market, and a Café with attached Gallery and Performance Center. At a purely personal level, my outlook on architecture, especially the role of the contemporary, has changed as a direct result of the Studio. In no way do I mean to suggest that one’s life will change forever as a result of having been a studio participant, but I make no effort to hide my belief that with these new studios, the Architectural Studies Department is headed in the right direction.



Café/Art Gallery/Performing Art Center, Justin Greenawalt
fall term design studio, 2007



Urban Market/Cooperative, Justin Greenawalt
fall term design studio, 2007



Police Station/Medical Aid Center, Justin Greenawalt
fall term design studio, 2007