

2010

Virginia Society AIA

Prize

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Prize

- student design competition
- 30 year history
- held each January
- four schools
 - Hampton University
 - University of Virginia
 - Virginia Tech
 - Virginia Tech WAAC
- one weekend

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Prize

- Create a structure for visitors to Belle Isle, a wild overgrown island on the James River in Richmond
- Site of the largest prison in the Confederacy
- Not a traditional visitor's center, but "a space for the personal narratives arising from individuals' experience of the island"

2010

Virginia Society AIA

Prize

Jury

Jane Wright, FAIA

Kirk Train, AIA

Melissa Vaughan, AIA

Honorable Mention: Shane Dunlevy, Virginia Tech WAAC



cnc
form
work

image
cast into
concrete
panels

the tourist pavilion will be the first structure seen upon arriving on belle isle from the suspended foot-bridge. the pavilion is set in the water with the hope that as the tides change and the river flows, time will become etched on the materials of the work. In this way the new building will begin to gain the character that the ruins possess on belle isle. strong materials and construction was chosen so that the design would not be wiped away, but it would be persistent. the piers are of brick masonry with rubble infill and concrete is used for the information. the order of the design is based off the 16 sites on the isle. two images will be cast into concrete panels in the 8 niches. photographs can be transformed into vector information so that a CNC machine can carve the form work, and the image can be one with the concrete. again the design seeks to last. the signs existing on the isle will be taken from their sites and bolted onto the piers as labels for the images. it seems that the site wants the everything to turn to dust. my hope is that this pavilion will obtain the melancholic beauty that is



DEEP WITHIN THE HEART OF RICHMOND,
 THE SILENT MARKS AN ETERNAL SAND DUNE STILL LOYAL TO THE
 LAWS OF THE NATURAL WORLD. WE ARE PULLED INTO THE UNMARKED
 FILE. AS IT TUMBLES IN DARK CONTRAST AGAINST THE FABRIC OF
 THE CITY. UPON OUR ARRIVAL, WE BEGIN TO SEE THE TRACES OF
 THE CITY AS IT HAS LEFT ITS MARKS ON THIS PLACE OVER TIME. AS
 WE TRANSITION FROM THE CONSTANT CHIRPING OF CITY LIFE TO THE
 MEANINGFUL RHYTHM OF THE SILENCE, WE CAN'T HELP BUT QUESTION THIS PLACE, AND WHAT PLACE IS.

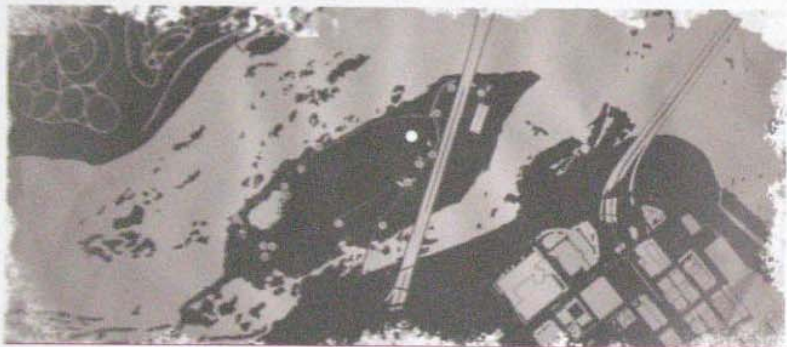
THE PROJECT PROPOSES A CLEARING, A STRIPPING AWAY OF THE
 LAYERS THAT WE HAVE ATTACHED TO THE IDEA OF PLACE. WE BEGIN
 TO PEEL THESE FORGOTTEN PIECES AWAY, LOOKING AT THEM FROM
 THE INSIDE OUT, AND WHAT WE FIND IS THE CONCEPT OF PLACE—
 WHERE THINGS HAVE OCCURRED, ARE OCCURRING, AND WILL OCCUR. WHILE
 THESE ARTIFACTS OF OUR EXISTENCE WILL DEGRADATE OVER TIME,
 THE IDEA OF PLACE WILL REMAIN.

AS WE DISASSEMBLE THIS IDEA OF PLACE, WE OURSELVES ARE
 ASKED TO PEEL AWAY THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE CITY. BOLDLY, WE
 WALK THROUGH THE GARDENS AND WALK THE WORKSPACES. WE MOVE
 SIMPLY IN OUR ANKLES DESIRE TO DISCOVER. UPON
 ARRIVAL, THE DESIGNED SPACE, LIKE A PROMISE, UNFOLDS IN THE
 ELEVATED CURVE OF A STRUCTURE. IN THESE SPACES, WE CAN CAPTURE THE
 EPHEMERAL. THE DUSKY LIGHTS REMINDS THAT MARKED BY ALL TOO
 QUICKLY. A PLACE TO LEAVE OUR MARKS OF TIME, TOO SOON TO
 BE WASHED AWAY AGAIN BY THE JAMES RIVER.

Honorable Mention: Emilia A. Baker, Virginia Tech Blacksburg

Best of School, Virginia Tech WAAC: Jacob Linn

A95



Belle Island. A collection of ruins. A cemetery of Architecture. Only bones remain. The traveler approaching from the North is confronted by a new structure. A monument in the open field. Entering through a single door, the traveler discovers a museum of found objects. Things of the past. Railroad spikes. Smooth river rocks shaped by time. This place is many things. It is a columbarium for artifacts. A sanctuary. On the path, the traveler discovers an object. At the end of the journey, it is brought to the monument. Time continues and the columbarium itself becomes a ruin. But it is more than just a ruin. It is a collective memory of Place. A memory of Belle Island.

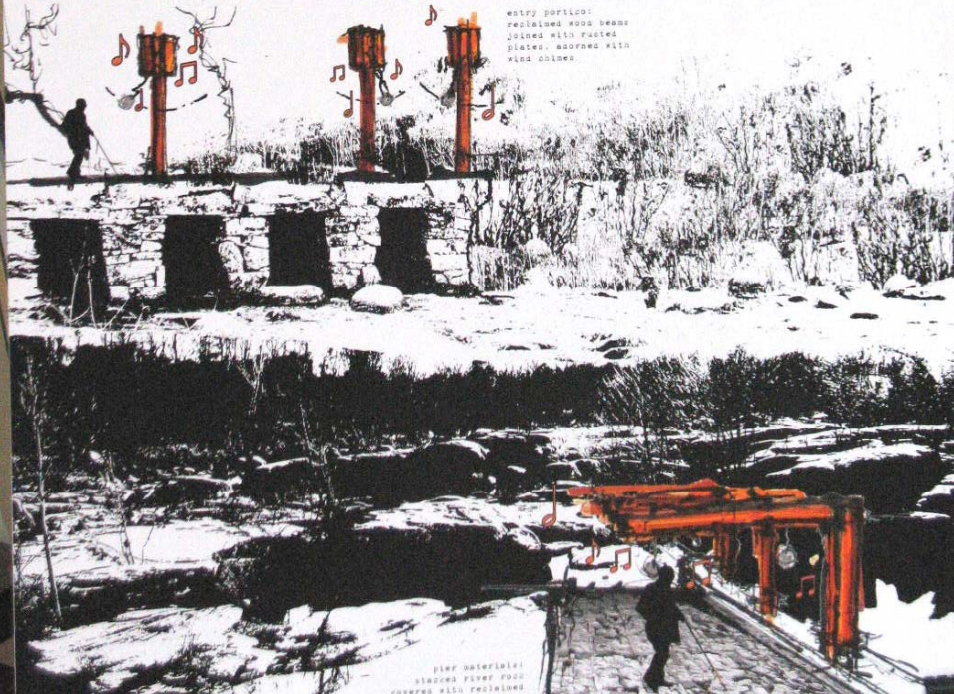
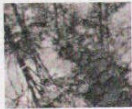


sensory of war

My Grandfather used to tell me stories of his stay at Belle Isle, a prison camp for Union soldiers, during the Civil War. He was one of the few survivors of the camp after the war ended. He told me the few moments that brought joy to him there, purposely leaving out the details of P.O.W. life. He told me in the summer he would lay on the huge river rocks to soak in the summer sun. The cool of the river would run between his toes. He had to march in the fall and feel the crunch of the leaves beneath his bare feet. The smell of pine reminded him of the cold breeze to come. The winter winds would sing between the cracks of the prisoner's barracks, bringing a chill felt right to the bones. His favorite was the spring when the smell of sunflowers sprinkled the air, carrying with it hope of freedom to come. He said these experiences brought comfort to him during his time of imprisonment.

I had to visit this Belle Isle that my grandfather spoke of. I walk under the foreign freeway above the isle, hearing the cars speed by as I pace along the smooth wooden path, a few steps off of the bridge and the crackle of the leaves beneath me whisper. I smell the breeze of the river. As I draw closer to the sound, I'm greeted with chimes in the wind. I feel the heat of the warm sun, then the cool, and then the sun again. The rhythm of the shade guides me closer to the water. The texture of the wood pier pierces the sole of my shoes. I'm here, at Belle Isle. Though I'm sightless his stories as a P.O.W can still be felt on this weathered pier.

to express is to drive, and when you want to give something presence, you have to consult nature.
-louis kann



entry partition:
reclaimed wood beams
joined with racted
plates, adorned with
sind chimes.

pier deck/liner
stacked river rock
covered with reclaimed

Best of School,
Hampton University:
Mark Paulo Ramos Matel

