

APPENDIX 2

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843-3137

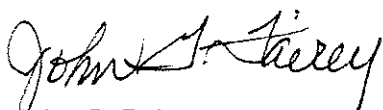
13 December, 1987

Michael Jordan, Associate Professor
College of Architecture, Sutton Hall
University of Texas
Austin, Texas, 78712-1160

Professor Jordan:

Enclosed please find a description of our interdisciplinary Freshman Design Course, "Form and Imagination", together with photographs of projects produced in that course. Because of the nature of the course, we felt that discussion of a single project would be less effective than a discussion of the entire series. We are aware, however, that you may choose to discuss only one project from the series. We are also aware that the photograph of the grey-value perspective study we have included is perhaps not of sufficiently high contrast. Therefore, we are having it reprinted on rush order and will forward it as quickly as possible. If you have any question about our work, please do not hesitate to call us.

Sincerely yours,



John G. Fairey
Department of Architecture



Vivian Paul
Department of Architecture



Jennifer R. Goodman
Department of English

FORM AND IMAGINATION

"Form and Imagination" is a jointly-taught, interdisciplinary Freshman design studio. A semester-long sequence of interconnected problems, the course introduces a variety of formal design concepts, technical skills and media, and develops visual perception and self-awareness. "Form and Imagination" stresses the importance of art and architectural history, music and literature as resources for the designer, and underlines the complexity of the process by which ideas are transformed into images.

The design studio process, supervised by Professor John Fairey, begins at the start of each semester when every student writes an autobiographical paragraph. Based on class discussion of these paragraphs, each student selects a word describing a mood or emotion that characterizes his or her personality. Professors Vivian Paul and Jennifer Goodman suggest sources of inspiration in architecture and art, literature and music. The student must then express his or her word in a sequence of design exercises, each of which must convey visually the word's meaning, introduce the student to new formal and technical problems, and incorporate a new medium.

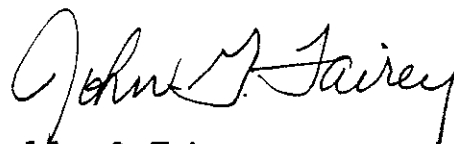
Four projects form the semester's work. They are all simultaneously highly structured and loosely defined, challenging the students to see, to cope with changes, to make decisions, and to think "in totality". While working within the constraints of each individual problem, students are encouraged to search widely in the history of art and architecture and other media for sources of inspiration. They are required to discuss with the class those examples that they consider to be important for their word.

The first, the most highly structured, is a figure-ground study in pen and ink (Figure 1). Using a grid and a limited number of

prescribed shapes (a circle in a square, a diamond in a square, or parts thereof), the student must equalize the relationship between figure and ground. The second project (Figure 2) is intended to illustrate relationships between three-dimensional form, negative space, and light. Students must create the impression of wide, deep, three-dimensional space within the confines of a ten-inch cube. The positive forms within the cube must also be cubes (that can be extended to form rectangles) of varying dimensions, constructed from white two-ply museum board. The students must light their cube in ways that enhance the meaning of their words. The lighted cube is then photographed, to demonstrate the relationships between positive form, negative space, and light. The cube replaces an earlier version of this problem, a low relief executed in paper (Figure 3). The cube, with its defined boundaries, has proven to be more effective as a medium for exploring positive form and negative space. It permits us to explore the relationship between form and light. Finally, it provides a better transition to the third project (Figure 4), a grey-value perspective study in pencil that introduces implied space. In this altered arrangement of the problems, the cube becomes the point of departure for an interpretive drawing that further expands the impression of space. We have discovered that a hands-on, direct exploration of the third dimension permits the students better to understand two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional space. The fourth and final problem (Figure 5), the development of a living environment, introduces the student to site planning, interior space design, and model building. It must continue to reflect the feeling and meaning of the student's word, while at the same time meeting the needs and personality of a specific client.

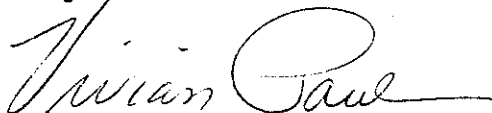
Each of these problems has been effective, particularly in their current order, but the process continues to evolve. We would like to

add explorations of color and texture, and we would also like to broaden the interdisciplinary experience still further by involving a musician and a lighting specialist in the design studio.



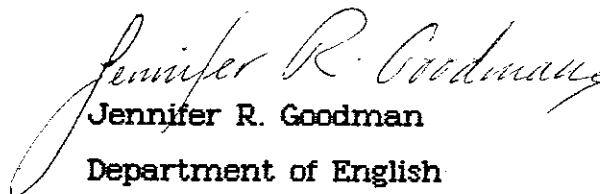
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