STAGE CENTER ALBERTA
ARCH 281, FALL 2005
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3 STUDIOS COMPLETED
1. THRESHOLD
2. LIGHTBOX
3. ALBERTA STAGE 1
4. ALBERTA STAGE 2
5. FINALE: STAGE CENTER
Design a spatial threshold representative of an important transition in life.

Education is a thicket of imposing obstacles and decisions. Though paths to the destination are obscured by and time and events, there can be little doubt as to its nature: move forward at all costs. Conversely, while there are many acceptable paths, there is only one satisfactory resolution: graduate. Hopefully you can figure it out from there.
Creating natural lighting for a stage is a tricky proposition, given the theatrical necessity of separation from distraction. Thus, my exploration focused on opaque, subtle lighting that wouldn’t interfere the show, and rather add an ambiance suitable to a wide variety of events. Interwoven wood creates thin, complex patterns as well as an unobtrusive glow. Pictured right is how such a treatment would look under the bleak, overcast weather typical to Portland. Below portrays brighter conditions. Whether this is practical for a rainy climate is another matter given the great number of small perforations. It will probably prove more appropriate for an outdoor theatre than an interior performing space, where even its modest permeability may prove to be an obstacle to theatrical success. Time will tell.
Design a community theatre for the Albina district in Portland, incorporating a public garden, classrooms, and theatre for 150.

On a site bounded on three sides by barren wall, it quickly became clear that most spaces would need access to the southern edge fronting the street. Earlier solutions, pictured right, focused on creating separate blocks for the theatre/lobby and office/classrooms. The theatre is placed in the darkest corner of the site while the lobby and office/classrooms are placed along the street to present the friendliest possible face to the community.

The final solution involves sinking the theatre and devoting the rest of the ground floor to the lobby and associated services. Offices and classrooms are clustered around a rooftop garden, while a highly visible path leads from the garden to the street. Success ultimately lay in creating a green canyon connecting the street to the heart of the building. The program elements connect to one another across the same space, making the theatre a whole with the public domain.
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As the organizational form cements itself to the site, articulation of form and space becomes the most pressing issue. The principle issue is reconciling the two introverted portions of the program, classrooms and theatre, (right side of each picture) with the increasingly vertical, extroverted lobby (on left).

Much needs to be done to improve the bland conditions of most interior spaces, and ideas for improvement are abundant at this stage: Solar controls, poetic landscape form, vestibules, varying column thicknesses, a basement addition, technical detailing of theatre and classroom operations, facade unity through roof forms. Excitement builds with specifics.
Execute your vision for Alberta Street.

And so a theatre takes shape. The lobby mediates between the busy street and introverted worlds of the classrooms and theatre. Final design emphasis rests upon this organization and tailoring the spaces to the specific needs of their users. Much thought went into the technical aspects of theatrical productions, followed closely by the comfort of the children.