A PLACE OF WORSHIP

Some of us are drawn to mountain tops, Some to caves, others to forest clearings. For each person there is a place of alignment. Sanctuary has no further purpose. Being there is reason enough.

Frederick Lehrman, The Sacred Landscape

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For those who seek sanctuary closer to home, this place of worship in Eugene is designed to provide an invitation to cross the threshold of the ordinary and experience a world beyond the everyday.

This studio offers the opportunity of immersion in a cultural experience that is new and unfamiliar. Each student will research a religion that they know little about. Their investigations will include learning the basic tenets of the religion, becoming familiar with the rituals and their symbols, participating in a service, talking with the faithful, and studying buildings throughout history that support the practice of that belief system. Students will then design a sanctuary that aligns itself with the religion they have chosen.

The spirit of this place will be one of repose and celebration. As a sacred building, it must be both a house of prayer/contemplation for the individual and a home for a community seeking to share common ground. Its users will connect both with the sacred and each other.

Of all the architectural means of expressing the presence of the sacred, perhaps the oldest, simplest, and most eloquent is the use of daylight. Within the (8,000-10,000 square foot) program, the use of light as a material of construction will be a primary focus of study.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site for the project will be located on or near the University of Oregon campus.

DESIGN ISSUES TO BE STRESSED

• Crossing the threshold from the ordinary to the sacred. Practically speaking, there is no single point (or line) in space that defines this separation. There are many opportunities, on the scale of a site or building, to reveal the transformative possibilities of entering a place of sanctuary.
• Using daylight to shape physical space and to impact personal experience. An initial and ongoing conversation between the building form and the presence of light is critical to creating a design response that is both meaningful and evocative.
• Accommodating religion’s private and public dimensions under the same roof, and doing this in harmony with a cohesive overall site plan.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND WORKING PROCESS

• Quick and sustained immersion into design, with weekly project goals. As a working methodology for initiating and giving definition to a particular area of focus, expect that five or six studio sessions will be devoted to in-class charrettes, with structured time available for immediate feedback.
• Two midterm reviews.
• Class field trip(s) to a place of worship outside of Eugene.
• Use of resources (people, places) within our community to explore an unfamiliar religion.

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