

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
A4104.004.2014: Studio IV; Spring 2014
Robert Marino Studio

Dance Vessel
Amagansett, NY

Vessels

We will be working with vessels this semester. Vessels are commonly thought to be boats or ships upon the sea, or closed forms to hold liquids. We will consider the potential for the vessel to define architectural space, keeping in mind that the vessel also is the beautiful method of transport to a different place, perhaps allowing a transcendent change in our lives. As a holder of people, the vessel brings us together in unpredictable ways.



Carlo Scarpa, Murano Glass Vases

History

The easternmost end of Long Island has only just recently become a popular recreational adjunct of New York City. As was the case everywhere in the new world, it was initially a place to gain a foothold, a place for survival. Through most of its history it was a seafaring territory, most easily gotten to from Boston Harbor, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, or Cape Cod. It was land surrounded by the sea, yet blessed with very fertile alluvial soil. Its inhabitants were just as apt to be of the seafaring as well as the farming type, able to gain their livelihood as did their Native American forbears, through a balance of fishing and farming.

Things have changed. It is now a place primarily appreciated as being one of the last remaining natural environments within a 2-3 hour drive of New York City, and as such it is primarily a place of recreation. The tensions generated by change are evident. One of the most interesting current political discussions involves the theories of land use and preservation: How should the natural environment be used? How much of, and of what type of business establishments should be supported? Are there alternate uses of public land that are more in keeping with open space preservation?

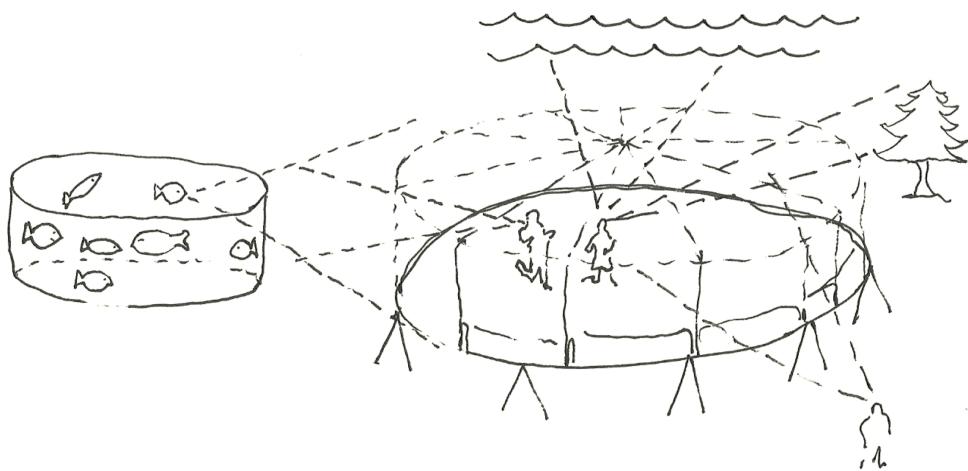
Site: NY State Preserve, Gardeners Bay, Amagansett, NY

The dance vessel is located on the site of a former fish processing facility on Gardner's Bay, on the south fork of Long Island. The site is presently owned by the State of New York with an intended use as a state park.



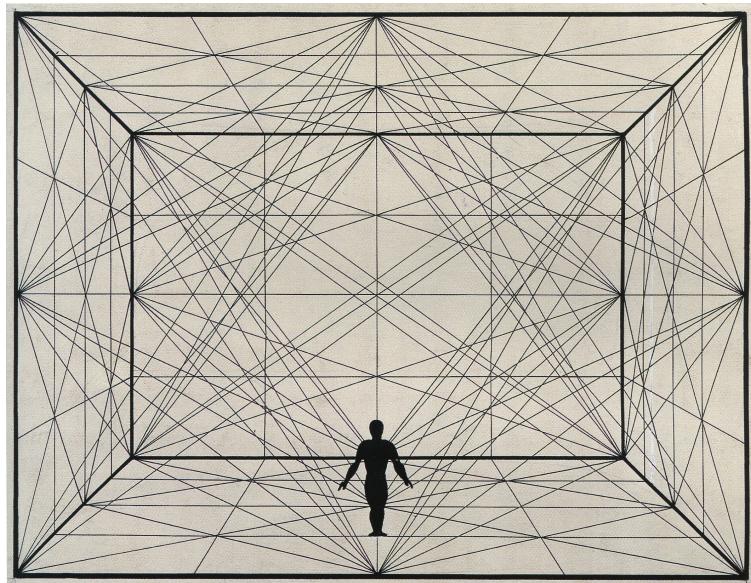
*Site, Gardner's Bay, showing neighboring fish farm,
"Multi Aquaculture Systems"*

The dance vessel is adjacent to one of the last remaining commercial endeavors on this portion of the south fork, "Multi Aquaculture Systems", a marine aquaculture corporation operating a modest fish farm. The program suggested, the dance pavilion, is very much a response to the typical development prevalent in the region: The construction of expensive single-family houses for private individuals. Instead, the dance pavilion is meant to establish a public place that stimulates interest in the immediate region in a physical, shared way. The site is contiguous with other NY State properties, a continuous expanse reaching from the immediate site to the Atlantic Ocean.



Project

The fish at the neighboring fish farm are held in a series of vessels, carefully contained, on their way to growing grounds in the long island sound. Our site is adjacent to this commercial activity, will host a vessel of a different type; a public facility for outdoor dancing. It is to be understood that this facility is also a vessel, at once a place of confinement and a place from which to observe the unusual natural surroundings, and most importantly, a place to create the density of human interaction necessary for a "public experience".



Oskar Schlemmer, Mensch in Raum

In many ways, our studio project concerns the evolution of change on eastern Long Island. In a continuum of constant change of use, how is the architect to balance her/his efforts towards new necessities? How can we negotiate between the Native American's distaste for the ownership of Nature, the pioneer's will to survive and conquer the environment, and an advanced capitalistic democracy's need to overlay Nature with commerce? The architect has the opportunity to choose a direction.

Research

Initial research for the semester shall include, but not be limited to:

Various forms of marine life, particularly those that make closed forms, or vessels, as described by D'Arcy Thompson. The Atlantic Ocean.

Dune movement as exemplified in "The Walking Dunes", (to be visited.)

The principles of marine architecture.

Boatbuilding methods and materials.

Vessel types as related to material and technique.

Fish farming.

Dance Movement and notation.

The history of the American dance pavilion.

Method

Initial tactile research will be conducted concerning the concept of vessels.

A Short Reading/Viewing List:

Sydney Pollack, They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (film), 1969

Ashley, C. The Ashley Book of Knots

Mathiessen, Peter. Men's Lives

Thompson, D'Arcy. On Growth and Form

Beston, Henry, The Outermost House