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**THE FRAME OF REFERENCE STUDIO:
ANALOGY AS A STRATEGY TOWARD CREATING IDENTITY**

**SKETCH PROBLEM 2
TECTONIC STUDY OF A WALL**

The Poetics of Architecture
from *Mask of Medusa*, by John Hejduk

I was interested in the poetics of architecture, in that which only the architect can give.

Everyone else can give everything else, but it's the only thing they can't give that interests me. I'm not an ambiguous architect; I deal with fabrications, with clarities.... the forms are there, they don't have double meanings, they're singular, any one should be able to look at them. The wall itself is the most "present" condition possible. Life has to do with walls; we're continuously going in and out, back and forth and through them. A wall is the quickest, the thinnest, the thing we're always transgressing, and that is why I see it as the "present," the most surface condition. The painter starts with the real world and works toward abstraction, and when he's finished with a work it is abstracted from the so-called real world. But architecture takes two lines. The architect starts with the abstract world, and due to the nature of his work, works toward the real world. The significant architect is one who, when finished with a work, is as close to that original abstraction as he could possibly be... and that is also what distinguishes architects from builders.

PROBLEM:

Design and construct a tectonic model of a wall as a fundamental entity of architectural enclosure.

The architectural floor plan is often regarded (rightfully in many ways) as the most significant of the various types of representations that the architect at her/his disposal. However, the professionally habituated architect, in the act of producing buildings often seals and arrests space performing an act "from above". The normative practice involves drawing double lines (lines with thickness representing walls with thickness) extruding them up in space, capping them also in the vertical dimension only after which certain critical questions are asked including:

How does the interior and exterior relate and flow into each other?

How do the form and the materiality of the element of enclosure (In this case wall) set up a specific dialogue between the two worlds it delineates.

The uninspired and limited view of the wall is that it is a mere act of harsh separation of inside from outside. It is far more promising and poetic to see the act of making a wall as moment of defining specific spatial relationships.

The physical object that you made in sketch problem will become a source and reference for this next problem. This "object" that you have created embodies many conditions: both tangible and intangible. The directly physical and measurable aspects are inseparably interwoven with its qualitative and intangible aspects. You should be interested in both as frames of reference toward this next problem.

Whereas the previous exercise challenged you to creatively combine and form something from a basic (industrial) element that is repeated, this step asks you to create a basic architectural element of enclosure: moving toward more explicitly toward "building", a wall. From a scale-less assemblage we will move toward an abstracted architectural element that has dimensions and reference to human scale.

PROCESS:

There have to be two parallel tracks in this design/ research process:

1 > Begin making study models (standard model making materials)

2 > Begin also listing various properties that you find embodied in the first object that you have created. Generate a list of words and phrases to help form and organize your thought. Remember that you were asked to be conscious of the characteristics of **form** and **materiality** of basic building block that you used. Now analyze your completed objects in these terms again and look for conceptual ideas:

Are there inherent actions that make the form: twisting, cutting scoring, folding, stacking, penetrating etc.?

What dynamic qualities does this object possess? What sort of gesture does it make? How do you see it in terms of weight? How permeable is the form and how consistent is this aspect with its perceived sense of weight?

The objective of this exercise is to create an architectural element that has great potentials to combine to create form. The final idea from this effort will act as a source and model both literally and analogically and will be incorporated into a building design project.

FINAL PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

Final model: 3/4" scale of a wall approximately 16' long and 12' high. Final presentation will be on Friday September 12.

Pointers/ Criteria: **Establish a concept for the element.**

Use the object as a source: look for physical/ formal, experiential and analogous conditions. The element does not have to be flat, vertical, straight and rectangular (although it could be all of these). Neither the form of the wall, nor its thickness is pre-given. Consider how it will influence and also connect with other elements (other walls roofs, floors).