

# PORTFOLIO





■■■■■ IS A YOUNG CREATIVE MOTIVATED TO PUSH BOUNDARIES THROUGH MULTIMEDIA ARTISTRY. HER PRACTICE TAKES A VARIETY OF FORMS, SHIFTING FROM 2D TO 3D AND ANALOG TO DIGITAL. ■■■■■'S WORK FUNCTIONS WITHIN AN ARCHIVE THAT DEMONSTRATES FLUENCY IN ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN, PHOTOGRAPHY, PAINTING, AND CRAFT. SHE HAS A TALENT FOR MERGING HER STRENGTHS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISPARATE TOOLS SUCH AS COLLAGE AND VIDEO TO DEVELOP, DISMANTLE, AND EXPLODE COMPLEX IDEAS. SHE OFTEN USES REPETITION AND ITERATION THROUGHOUT HER CREATIVE PROCESS AND REALIZED WORKS AS A MEANS TO ESTABLISH COHERENCE AND WEAVE ASPECTS OF HER TECHNICAL PROCESS TO TELL ONE STORY. THROUGH REPEATED EXERCISES OF CONSTRUCTION, DECONSTRUCTION, AND RECONSTRUCTION, ■■■■■ ULTIMATELY PRODUCES MULTI-FACETED WORK THAT IS SPECULATIVE AND CURIOUS. ■■■■■'S VOCATION IS INFORMED BY BOTH HER ART HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND. HER PRACTICE IS BEST DESCRIBED AS EXPERIMENTAL AND FUNCTIONS TO CHALLENGE CONVENTIONAL NORMS TO HARNESS NEW PERSPECTIVES.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

MATERIAL NARRATIVES

WOMEN'S WORK

CHILDREN & ARCHITECTURE

THE JAPANESE HOUSE QUESTION



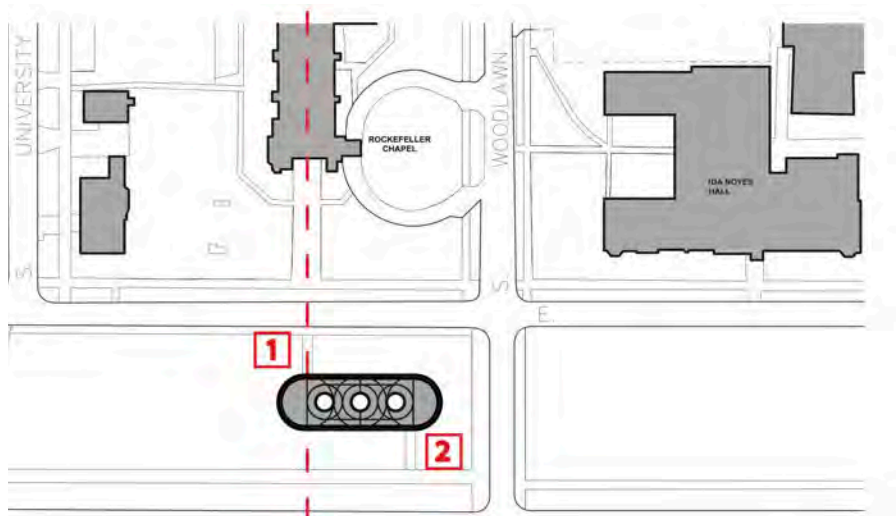
# MATERIAL NARRATIVES - PAVILLION

Elizabeth Desir, Irene Ryu, and Jefferson Reyes Diaz

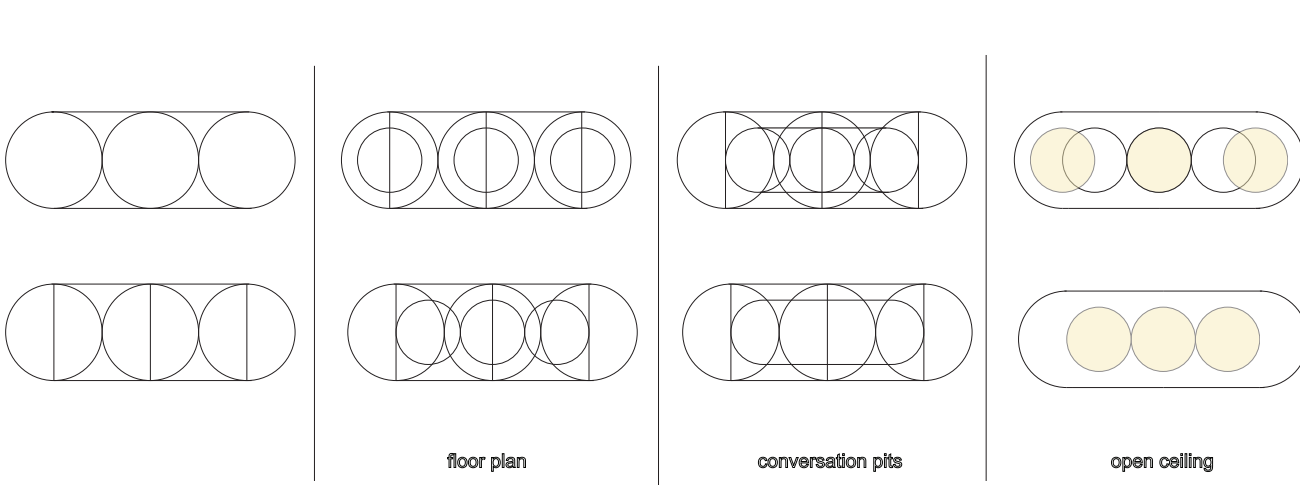
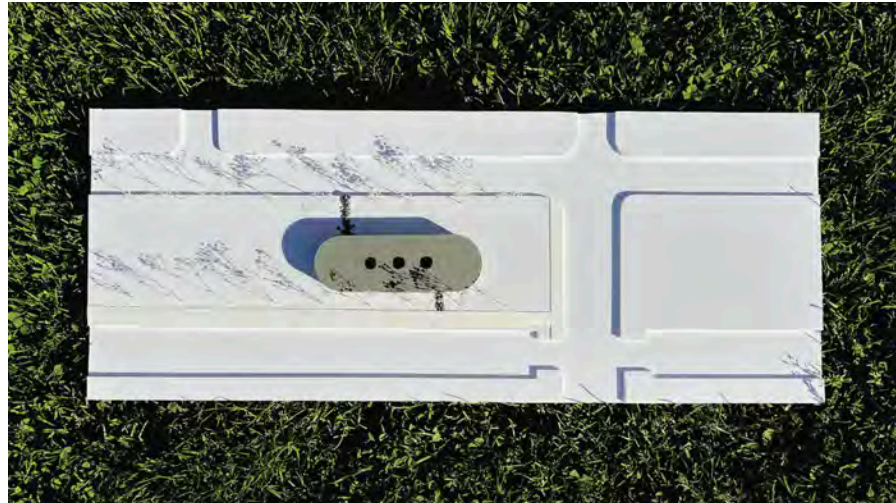


The Material Narratives studio course sought to encourage students to explore architecture and design through the foundation of materials. How are built spaces realized through materiality, and what social, emotional, aesthetic, and environmental purposes do chosen materials serve?

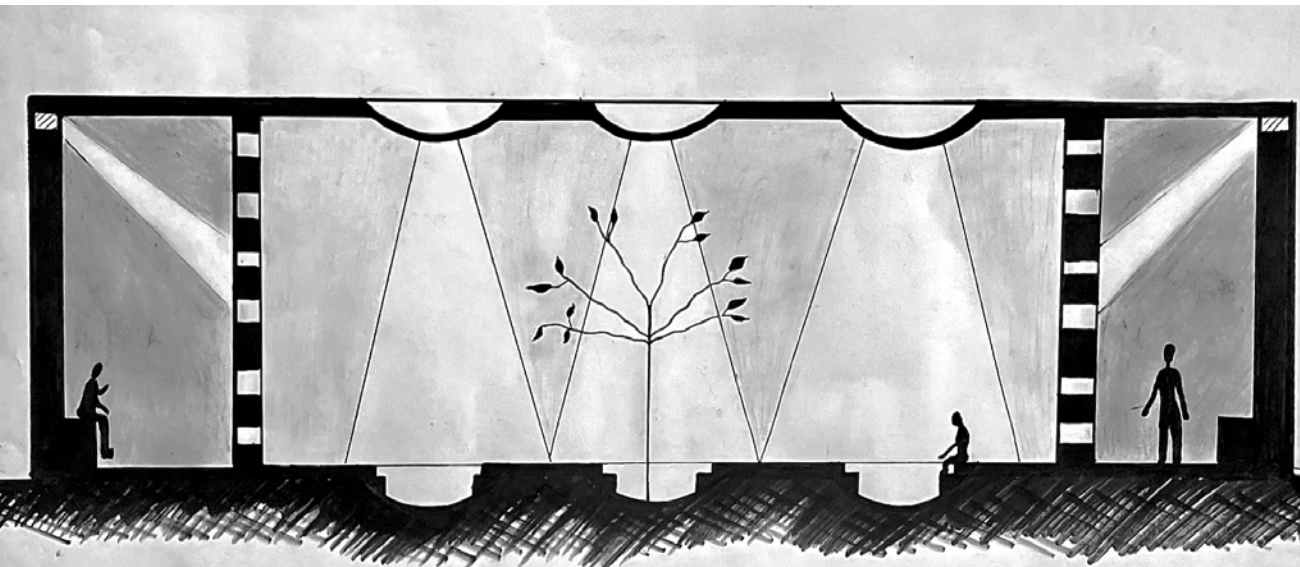
Tasked with designing a Pavilion on the University of Chicago campus, on a site of our choice, our student groups were encouraged to tell a story through our design processes – with each detail justifiable in reason.



Our site was situated across from the University's Rockefeller Chapel. Given the proximity and connection, we knew we wanted to include some features of the chapel within our Pavillion Design. One of the aspects we enjoyed most was the meditative solitude synonymous with churches. Given the site's connection with Rockefeller, we wanted to draw out themes of intimacy and serenity. We had the desire to mimic the ambiance of a sacred space where people, mainly students, could congregate- a space we felt our campus lacked.

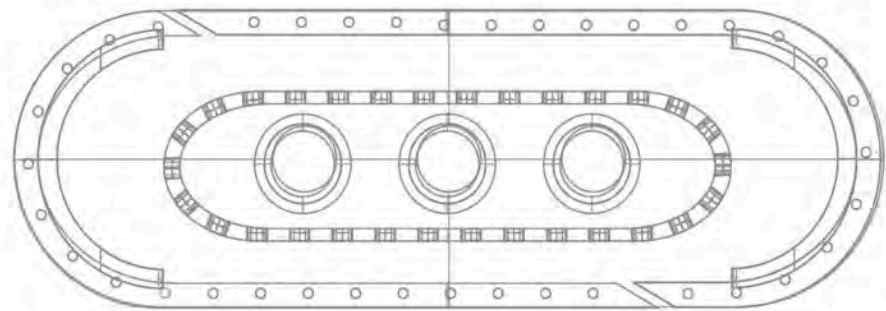


When designing this circular motif kept reappearing. It seemed to communicate exactly the kind of intimacy we wanted this pavilion to have. We liked the idea that circles were cyclical– that when meandering through this space, one could begin and end in the same place. We also like the fact that circular conversation pits would allow people to physically gravitate toward each other. We wanted to avoid artificial lighting, so open ceilings that mirrored the pits, also felt like the perfect way to let light filter in and all-natural elements permeate the space.





Pavillion Plan Drawing



Since materiality was also so important to this project, our choice of materials was our way of thinking about how texture and color can affect the ambiance of a space, opening it up to sensory and visual experiences.

Stone is smooth to touch, and with our desire for a monolithic space, it ensured a comforting, inviting, and relaxing experience. We also included cutouts in the walls of the centered room as a riff on the design of privacy screens present in confessionals. These carved-out bits in the stone would also allow for optimal sunlight to counteract the enclosure of our space.



Because we felt it relayed the monolithic aesthetic as well as the choice of material the best, our final model was 3D printed utilizing Rhinoceros. Printed in intricate parts, the final model featured a removable roof that could be lifted to reveal the interior space.





## WOMEN'S WORK

"Women's Work" was a studio course that addressed the long history of practices that had been relegated to women with scrutiny placed on their skill sets. Predominantly classified as "craft," these practices included aspects of weaving, pottery, sewing, needlework, and knitting.

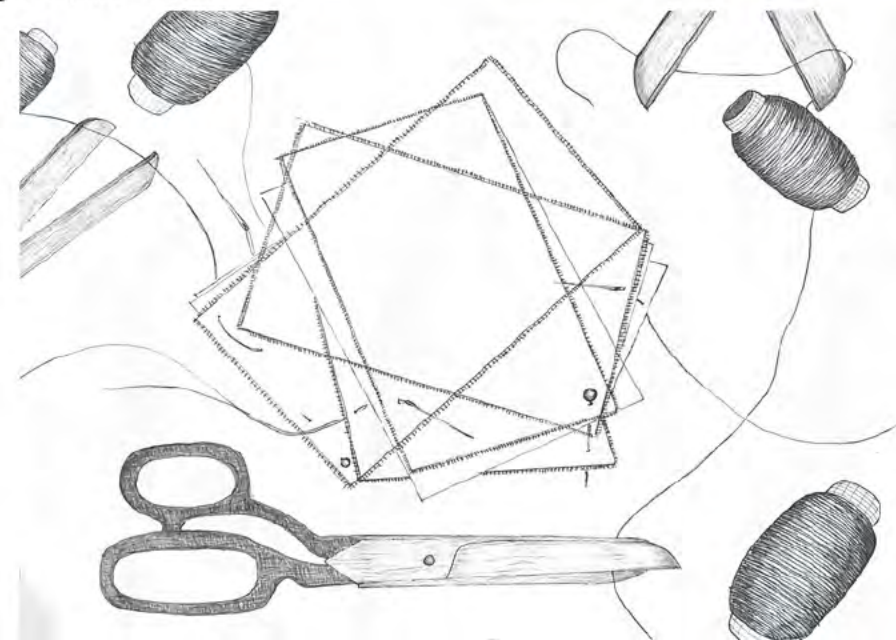
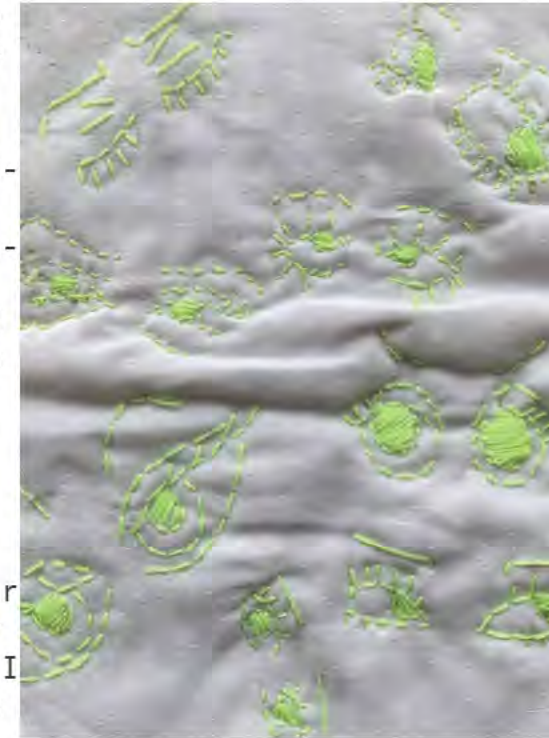
With each practice, I was challenged to think critically about how female craftwork had been undermined and the exclusion of women artists within the fine arts. The gendered aspect also made me contemplate my position as a woman immersed in the art historical canon and how I could use this knowledge to challenge and subvert traditional notions of gender and artistic practice.

Though I often struggled to work with each medium, as made clear throughout the documentation of my work, overall, the course provided me with a deeper appreciation for the power and significance of traditional "female" crafts.

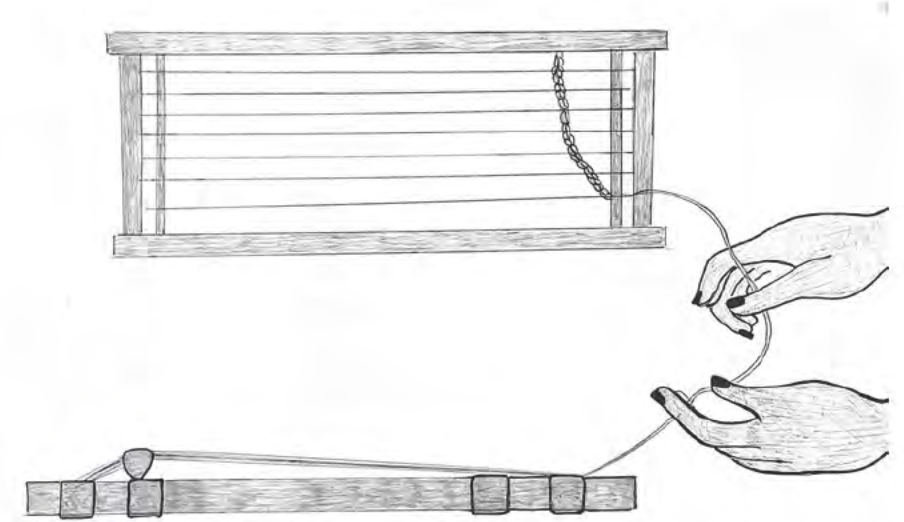
(Find background photo that's fitting)

## OBJECT: QUILT

With my quilting, I went into it knowing I wanted to create an unconventional pattern. I think people's gazes can be very telling, as they can communicate whether someone is uncomfortable, intrigued, confused, etc. and I think that fascination was what inspired me for the pattern I chose to create. For inspiration, I looked at different pictures of women's eyes and gazes, drew them on the fabric, and proceeded to sew. Out of all my crafts, this one was by far my favorite turn-out. I truly love the color of the thread I utilized and the way that the design came out.



## WEAVE



For my weaving, I wanted to keep some aspects of the same color story while also playing with different yarns. At some point in my process, however, my design began to shrink at the sides, most likely because I began to tighten my wefts too much which explains the shape. The weaving progress often reminded me how indelicate I am with my hands, as I had to train myself to use the tips of my fingers to complete my wefts, which often made them cramp because the gesture felt so unnatural to me. Overall, although weaving was not the craft I found most difficult, I did not love the way my piece came out, and if I were to go back I would go for a more cohesive pattern/color scheme.





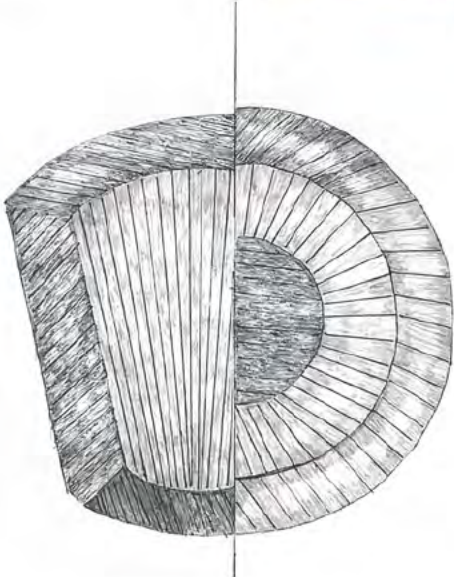
OBJECT: SINGLE THREAD

Single-thread knitting truly challenged me with counting, which beforehand I had sworn was a skill I learned in grade school, but alas I was wrong. However, throughout the process, I would so often lose my stitches that I had to restart about three times before finding a consistent rhythm. What had interested me about the craft, however, was the fluid X, Y - like pattern that the yarn would create as I went on with stitching each loop, which I attempted to mimic in my collage/drawing with the typed letters. I had originally created another at first (I threw it out unfortunately) but I did not think it communicated what I wanted so I recreated it, adding pieces of different kinds of intersecting yarn to the edges to sort of point to how much I restarted the process with different yarn each time.

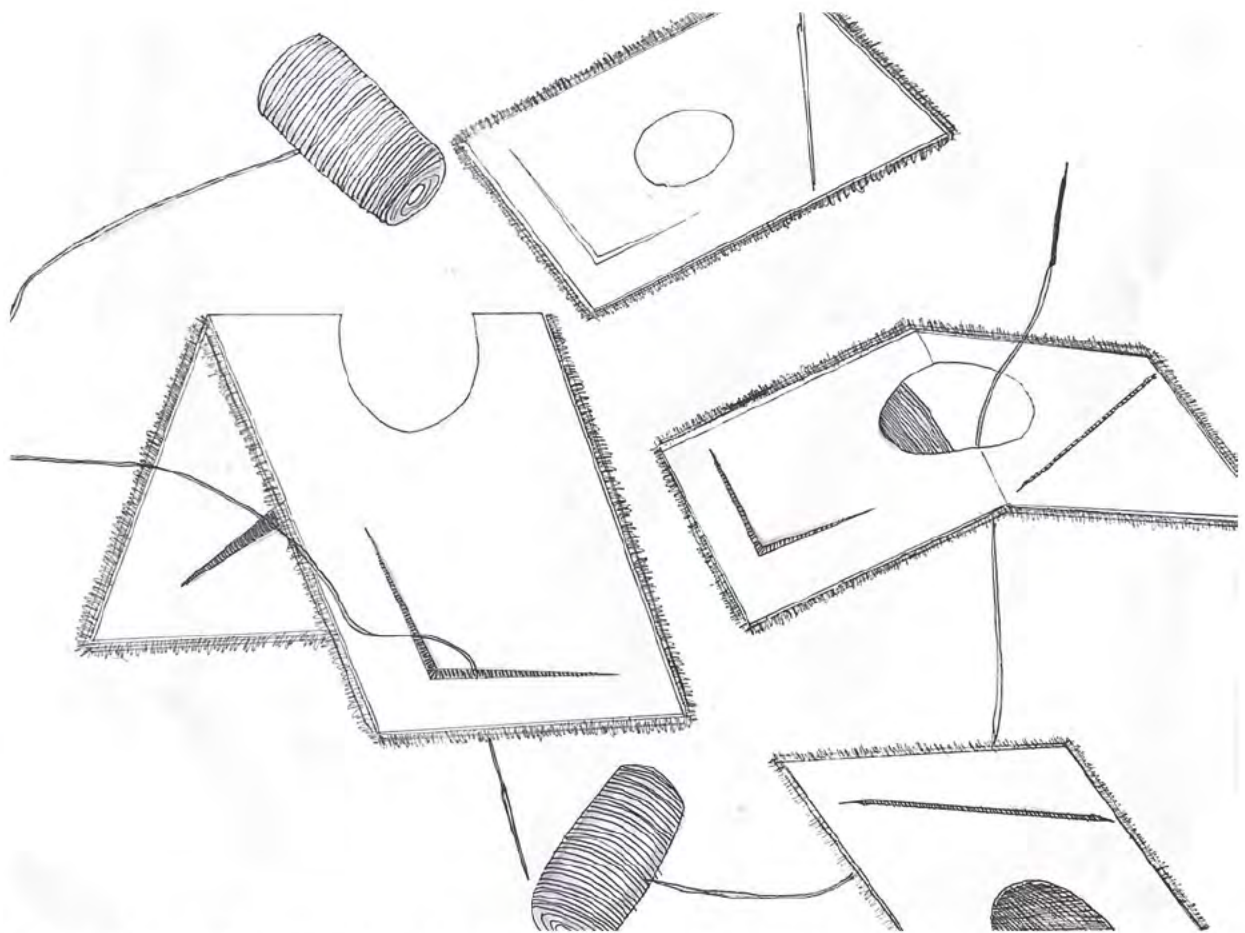


SOLID BODY

Clay was by far my favorite medium to work with, most likely because it felt to most intuitive to me. Growing up, I always enjoyed working manually with my hands, whether that meant drawing or creating models for science or art class. Though the final cup was still imperfect, for my drawing, I tried to work in section and plan to demonstrate my interest in the materiality of the vessel.



OBJECT: MEND

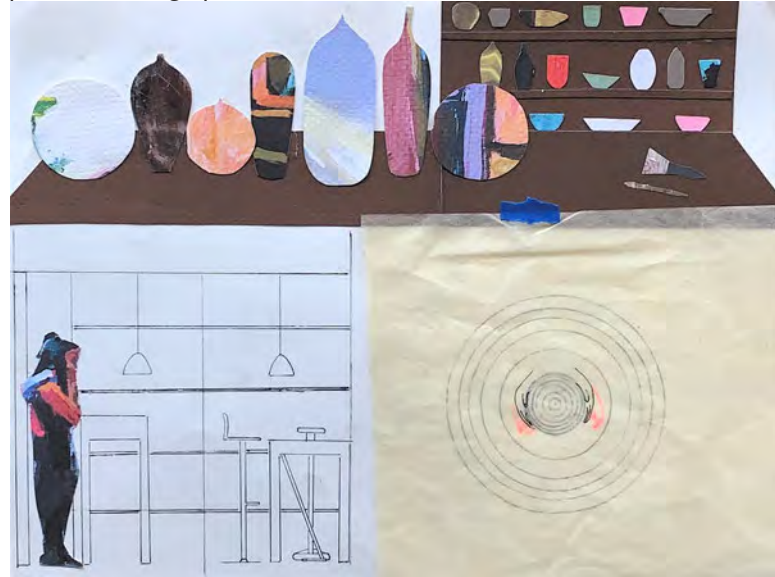


Mending, though deceptively the most simple of all the crafts, took me much longer than expected, and I found it actually quite trivial trying to patch up the hole in the cloth. In my sketch, I sort of documented my process by attempting to enclose that part of the fabric in a way that would interlace the thread similar to the process of knitting. Still, however, I began to struggle once more with the ability to be delicate with my hands. The motion of inserting the needle in and out of the fabric, this time in a grid-like manner was super sloppy for me, and it frustrated me that I could not mend neatly. This to me also proved to be a kind of metaphor for how I often become discouraged when I cannot “fix” or have control over the outcome of things I care about. It made me think of all the things, material and immaterial, that I often struggle to mend in my life- things that the women in my life seem to get right each time.

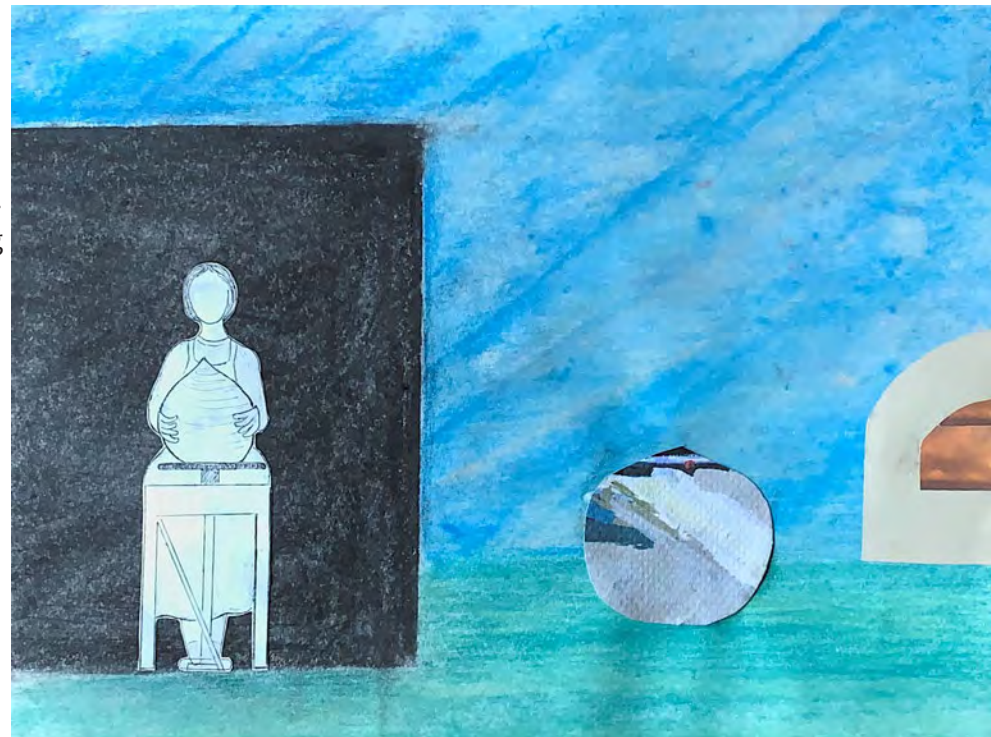


# TOSHIKO TAKAEZU- (WORK)SCAPE

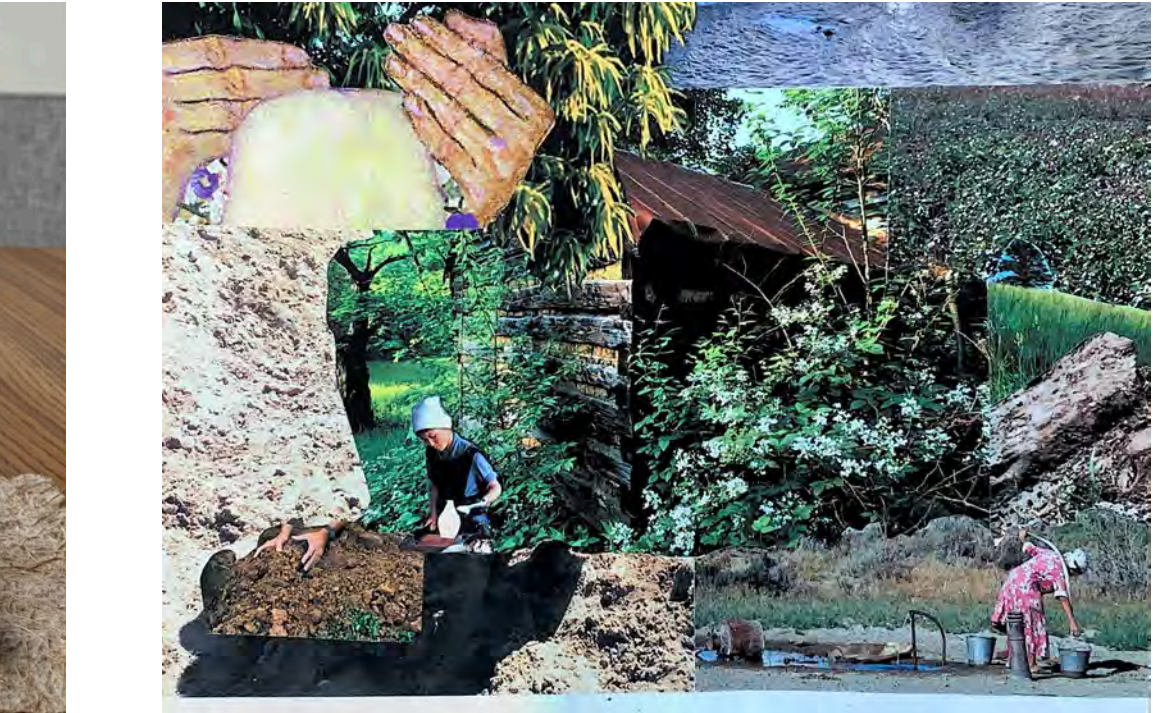
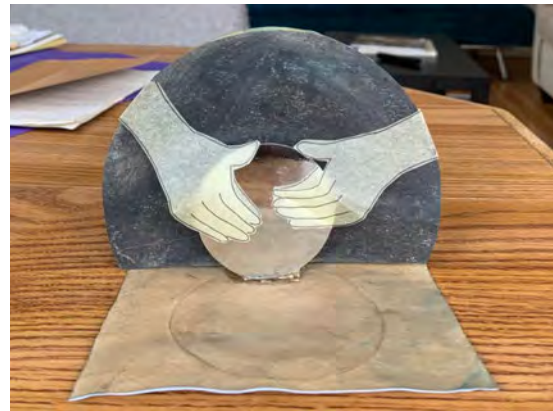
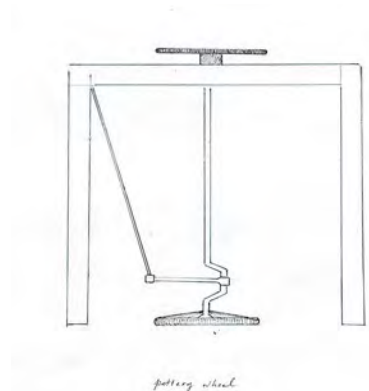
Toshiko Takaezu was a Ceramist, painter, and textile artist whose works were directly influenced by her cross-cultural upbringing as a Japanese-American. The aesthetics of her life's work would meld abstract expressionist motifs with Zen Buddhist beliefs that valued pottery's projection from nature. Takaezu did not limit herself to making traditional vessels. Her experimental vessels pushed the boundaries of form as she would play with anthropomorphic shapes, crafting robust tree-like cylindrical vessels, some of which scaled to over six feet in height, or sometimes construct works on a smaller scale in porcelain utilizing the interesting shapes of acorns or melons. Some of her other experimental works would include bronze castings and the creation of "Momos," slitted open vessels with dark interiors. However, throughout her career, Takaezu's most popularized works would be that of her rounded closed-form vessels, distinctly her "moon pots," whose non-functional sealed openings that protruded in a nipple-like way, would attribute these works more to the likes of sculpture. Contrasting their rigid thought-out structures, Takaezu's ingenuity was also embedded in the way that she adorned the surfaces of these vessels. Utilizing a freeing, chance-like approach to glazing inspired by abstract expressionist painting. The artist would teeter back and forth between dripping, splashing, pouring, and brushing the surfaces of these vessels, only allowing the final pieces to reveal in color post-firing procedures.



When I initially thought about Takaezu's space I knew I wanted to create something that was enclosed and dark; taking inspiration from her moon pots and momo vessels. However, I had a difficult time visualizing this space in a 'practical' way, and in my initial design (pictured to the left) I think this uncertainty comes through most.



Because I found it hard to visualize the interior space, I decided to work backward, thinking critically about the surface she'd be working on in order to inform myself more about this 'space.' My charcoal and pastel drawing was a breakthrough for me. I was able to realize Takaezu's isolation in this dark meditative room where she would create one vessel at a time and then take said vessel outdoors to commence her glazing process.



My final Tectonics collage and model were directly inspired by Toshiko's interest in Zen Buddhism and pottery's connection to nature. Though she didn't discuss her thoughts on it much verbally or in writing (that I could find) it was an integral part of her practice and self-discovery as the daughter of Japanese immigrants. When I did some research into Zen Buddhism and pottery, I was able to find a quote by the artist Kenneth R. Beittel that stated how he would utilize the practice:

"Once while unloading my outdoor stoneware kiln, in which I had just fired a half-year continuous work, I began to place the pieces on the ground, amid leaves and grass, on back into the woods. I wanted to see whether the one presence— that of place— could absorb the other presence— of the pots. And could the presence of the pots affect that of the place? A synergy, synchronicity of art and place where we as humans can dwell more fully, in our cultural garden of Eden" (Excerpt from "Zen and the Art of Pottery")



# CHILDREN & ARCHITECTURE- BLOCKS



The Children & Architecture Course aimed to re-kindle a childlike sense of wonder through architectural design targeted toward children. The main project of the course dealt with creating a set of wooden blocks that kids could potentially utilize in a play setting. My design was inspired by the planets as someone who was always fascinated with celestial objects as a child. I was intrigued by the idea of trying to produce eight perfectly smooth wooden spheres that would come as one planetary set. However, as a woodshop beginner,



Each sphere seemed to have its quirks. The shaper tool had caused these small crater-like bruises that ultimately made them look more like potatoes than perfect smooth spheres -- like I originally planned. However, the uniqueness in texture gave me a new appreciation for the convoluted process I had undertaken to produce the blocks in the first place.



My final blocks were plagued by the difficulty of transforming a cube of wood into a sphere. There was no true methodology behind the design process; rather, it became an issue of trial and error. How much cedar material could I chip away until I had a geometric ball, and how much material could I then sand until its surface became as smooth to the touch as I'd wanted it?

It was a process that necessitated a lot of sweat and patience; however, the reward was having children get a sense of the tactile nature of these blocks, as a testament to the original design's minimalistic ambiguity and its resulting appeal to the imagination.





# THE JAPANESE HOUSE QUESTION (work in progress)



The Japanese House Question was a course that aimed to address the increasing depletion of the Japanese population and the mass volume of empty homes that began to surface throughout Japan as a result. The challenge was not to find a solution to the problem but instead contemplate new ways in which these homes could continue to exist through a transformative or regenerative process. With limited access to information and photographs of my assigned empty home in Suginami City in Tokyo, Japan, as well as the added obstruction caused by the growth of creeping wire vine on its surface—a total redesign proved to be difficult.



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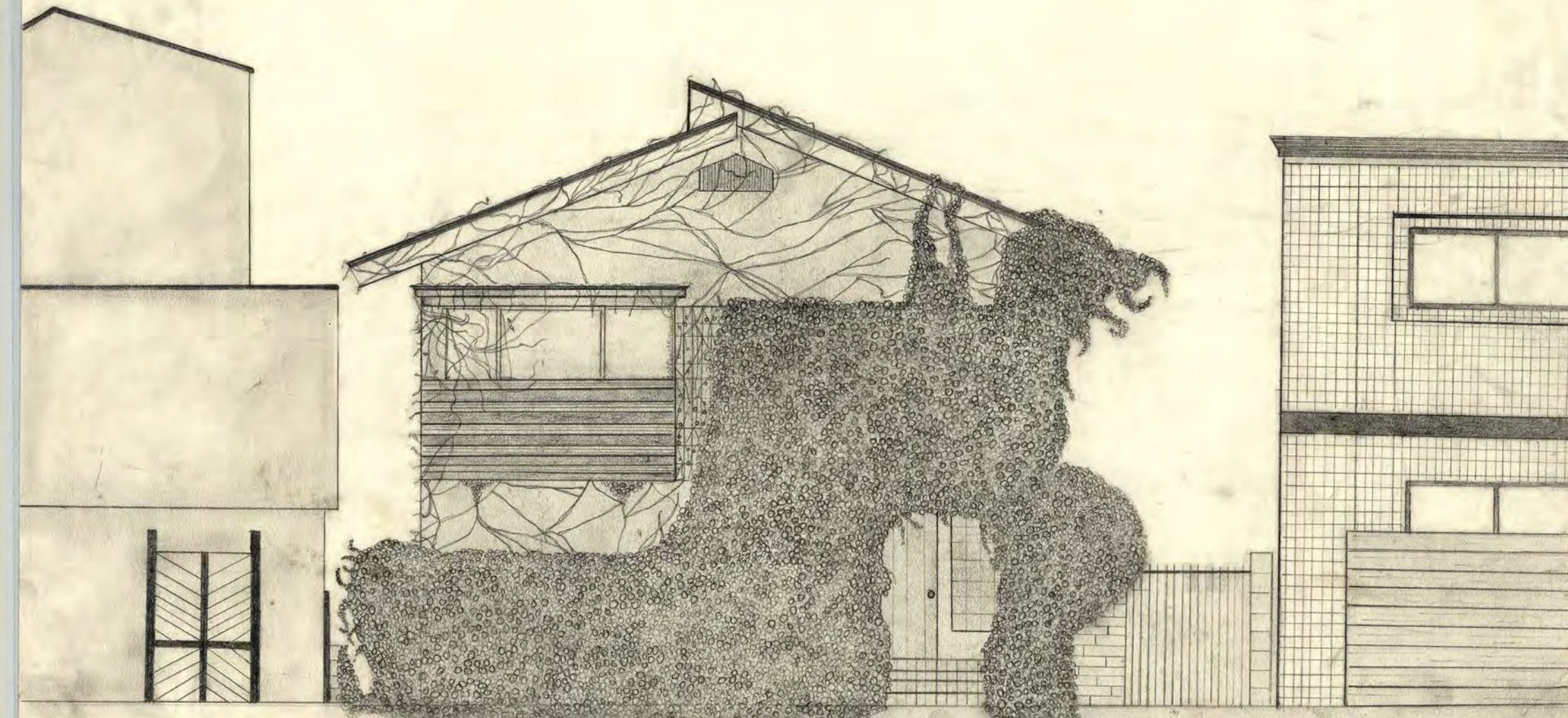
Unable to work around the invasive green that seemed to relay a desire for the home to remain concealed, I first tried to brainstorm a sort of transformation that would catalyzed through consumption. My early sketches consisted of a small series illustrating how I imagined the creeping wire vine would eventually swallow the home whole—pressurizing its already brittle foundations until it collapsed once having relinquished itself to the wire vines' domination.

However, what also interested me about this project was the underlying question of what it meant for this home to be distinctly Japanese. I thought of what might live inside, what objects, dimensions, and layouts? What made this home so different from the familiar Chicago dwellings where I lived? The more I asked myself questions like these, the more it sparked a desire to relocate the home and entirely upend its setting.





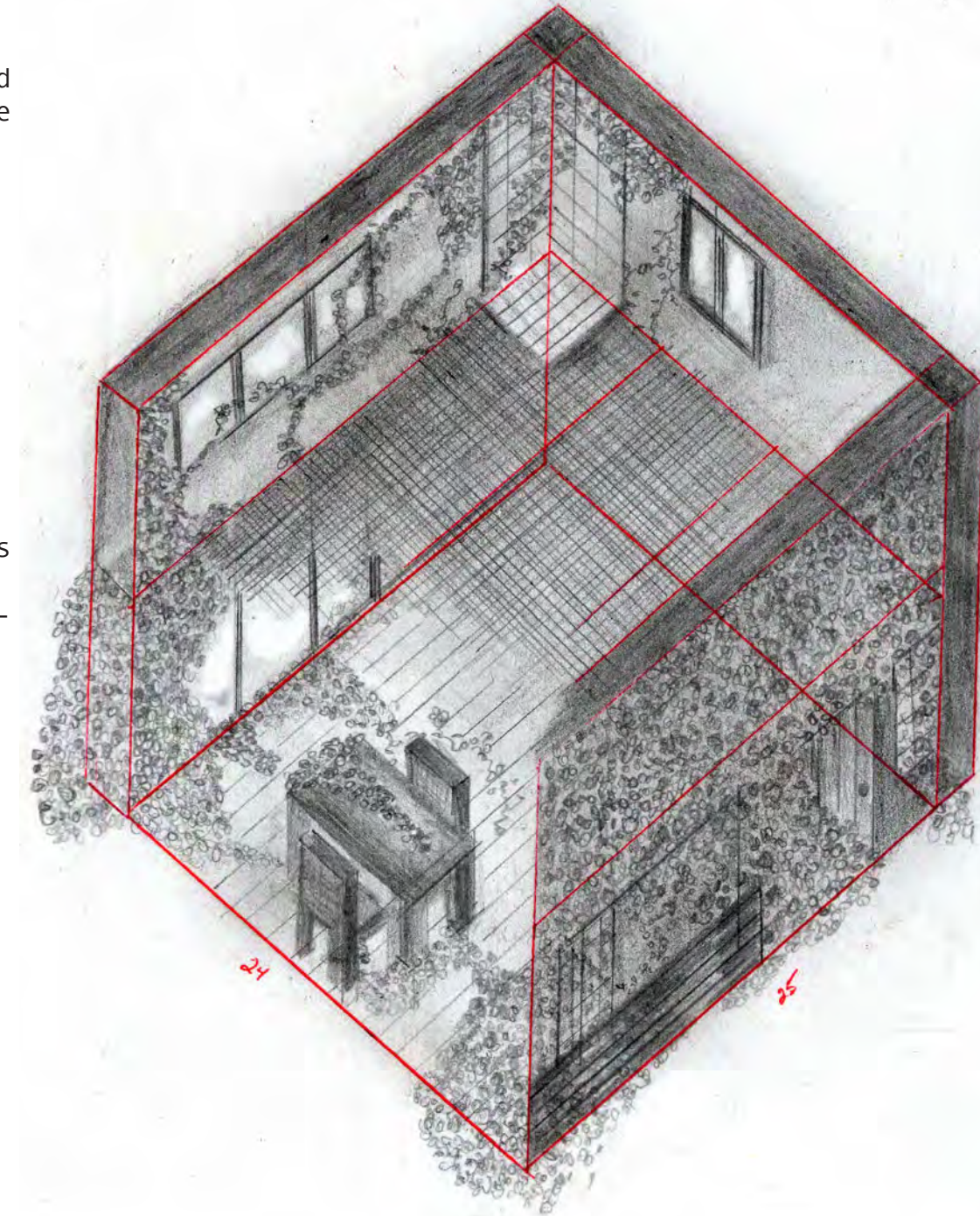
Elevation Sketch, Suginami City, Tokyo, Japan



What would the Japanese house become if its surrounding context had suddenly changed? How then did its domestic setting become that much more fascinating? What if its outside had also found its way in somehow? How did this home continue to sustain life despite human absence?

There was so much I wanted to uncover about this interior space, this home's core, so I wondered: Was there a way to frame it through the leaves? And was there a way to probe its internal structure respectfully?

Sketch view through window



Sketch view through window 2

In the West, it can often be difficult to receive some level of privacy in public settings. However, in Japan, people are usually socialized to avert their gaze in dense social contexts, as well as in times of discomfort or embarrassment. Thus, it becomes a social responsibility to provide privacy or to make the seen unseen. With an interest in how this home also played with privacy, I thought of the ways I could facilitate a meaningful interaction between the East and West without the air of exploitation that often comes with putting something, in this case, a Japanese home, on display.



Elavation drawing of house on display in Galss Box w/ scafo-  
ling to look through windows

MAP DRAWING/SKETCH SHOWING RELOCATION

Detail of condensa-  
tion through glass

Detail of dirt buildup  
and grass on the bottom  
of the display box



