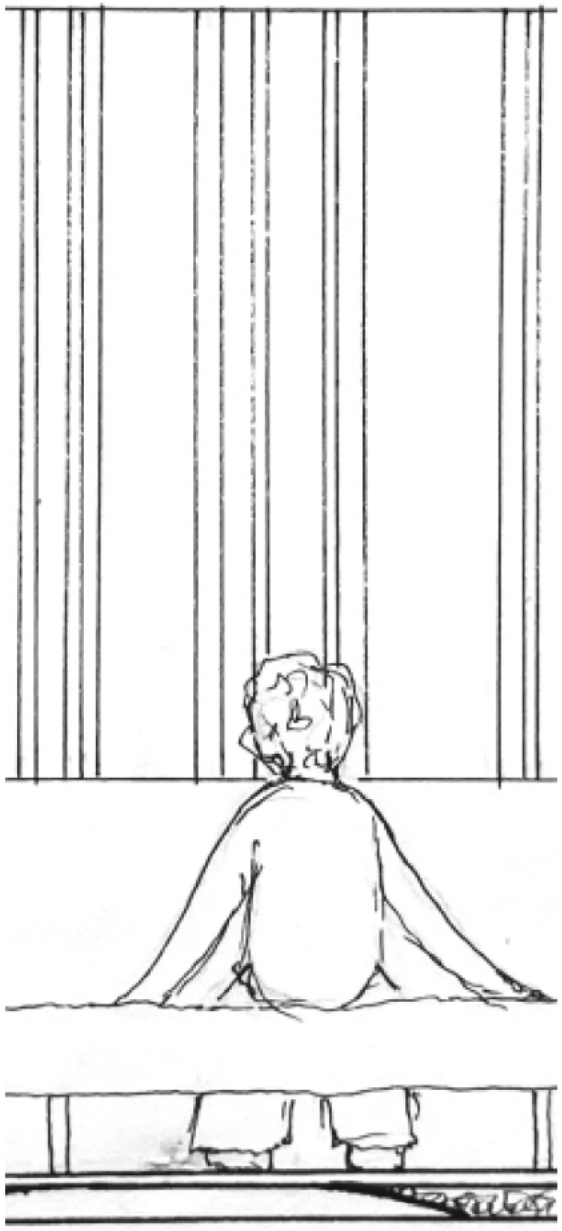

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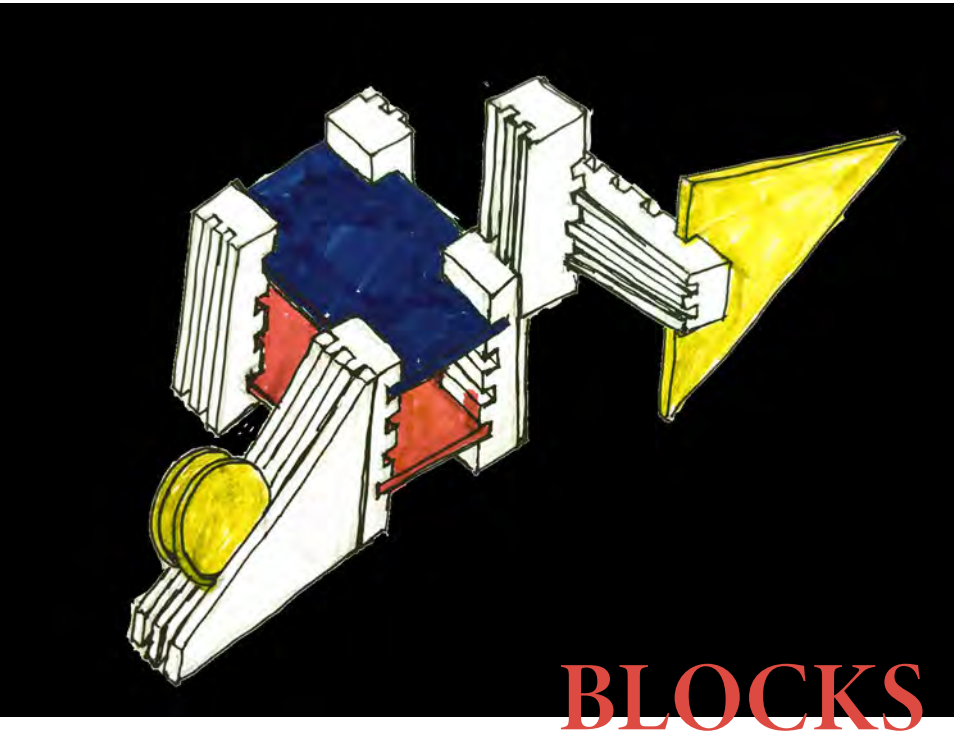
[redacted] was born in New York City two minutes after his twin. His father, a sound artist, and his mother, a film editor turned novelist, are both collectors of junk. He spent his early years looking for frogs, which he largely failed to find on the streets of Brooklyn.

At college, he attempted ecology, biology, engineering, geophysics, environmental science, and physics, before stumbling his way into architecture. Along that circuitous path, he decanted yeast, imagined microscopic ecologies as grids of black and white squares, looked for interesting things in complicated things, tended to eelgrass and sea slugs, and flattened all mountains on earth.

Through these explorations, [redacted] has developed a fascination with the complexities of material, biological, and architectural systems. He is interested in the patterns of interference (both constructive and destructive) that arise when these systems interact. He seeks to translate and document these interactions, to design for them and through them, and to design new systems and therefore new interactions. He is interested in processes across temporal scales - from the shutting of a mussel, to a child's play, to the formation of rock from ancient reef.



BLOCKS

For students at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

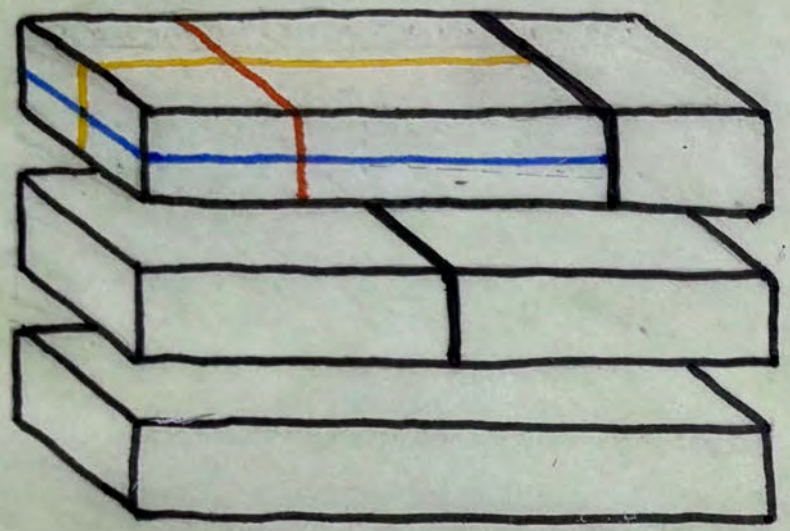
As a child, the blocks I most enjoyed playing with often had some kind of mechanism for joining and fixing together. I liked the idea that whatever I created was shaped by some force other than gravity, that I could generate forms which would be impossible, unlikely, or unstable, if the components were only able to rest against one another. However, most of these tools were proscriptive in a way that frustrated me, as many toys made for kids are. There was often a single discrete joining mechanism, as with MAGNA-TILES and Lincoln Logs. I set out to design a set of blocks which contained in their structure a variety of continuous joining mechanisms.

My process harkened back to my play with blocks as a child. I was fascinated by exploring the bounds of a fixed system – in this case a set of tools, rather than of blocks. I spent my days at the Dado-stack, and with inspiration from traditional wood-joinery, got the know the machine and iterated through grooving systems. The machine itself, inspirations from my childhood, and inspiration from the childhood of others, shaped the dimensions and weight, the tactile and visual nature of the blocks.

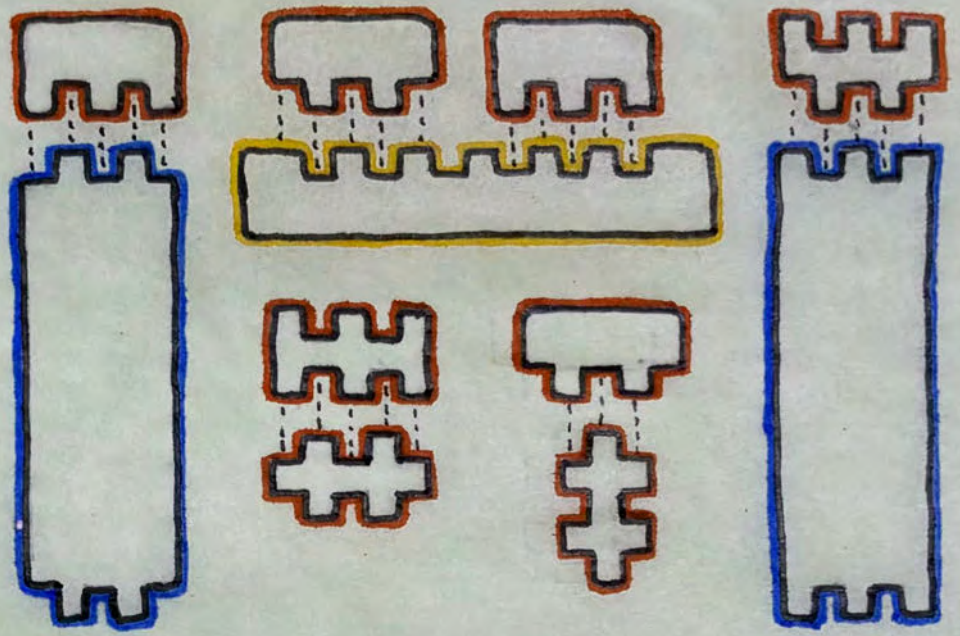
These blocks were designed for a class called Children and Architecture, and for our midterm, we brought the blocks into classrooms at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. The three year olds and seven year olds discovered methods of joining the blocks I had not considered or designed for, and built structures with methods and intentions I could not have imagined.

Making an internal face groove on the dado stack

Making an internal end groove on the dado stack



■ 1/8" = 1/2"



Block scales and grooving mechanisms

A

B

C

D

A

B

C

D

Constructions from various block types. Imperfections in production opened up new modes of play. Part of the tactile experience is exploring the variation in fit among the many permutations of block combinations – some slide and slot easily, some with friction, and some require force.

[Photograph of students at UChicago lab schools playing with blocks]

PALMISANO PARK

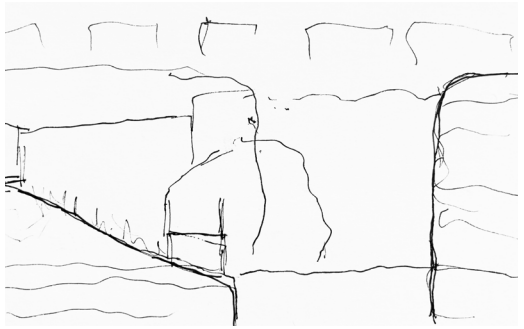
A topography over time

Chicago, built on old lake bottom, is remarkably flat. If there is some topography, it is likely to have a story - a motley set of strange intentions and explanations. A part of a course, a classmate, Rose Aceves, and I attempted to tell the story of one of Chicago's rare topographical features - Palmisano Park.

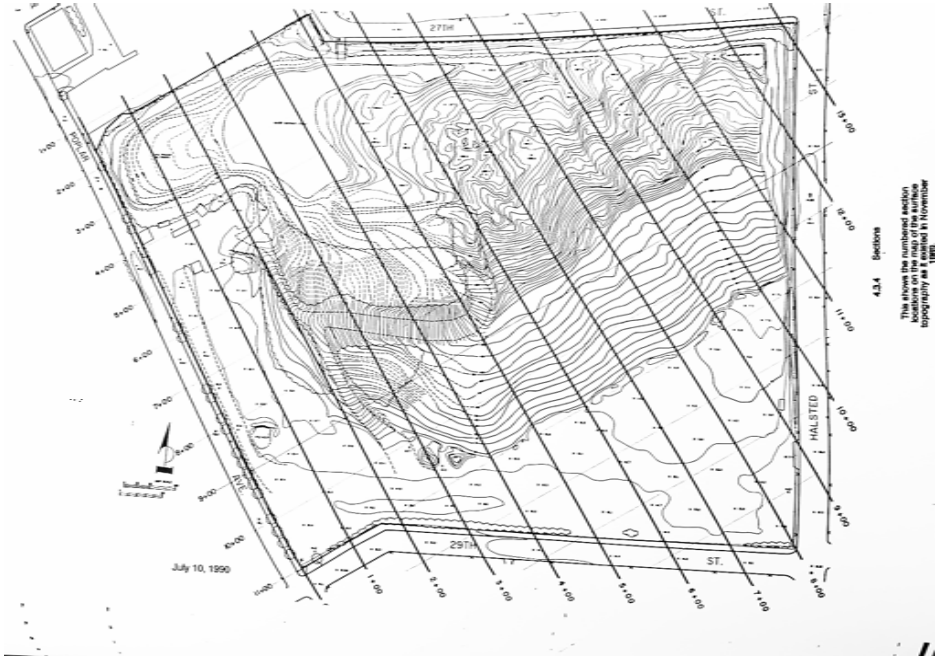
We wandered, drew, climbed, played, excavated fossils from the rock walls with our hands. We inspected municipal and engineering reports at the library, and delved into the history of the Silurian Dolomite on and in which the park lies. We began to piece together the historical and topographical layers of the place - both those we could see and those below our feet - through sketches that we passed back and forth and drew over with trace-paper.

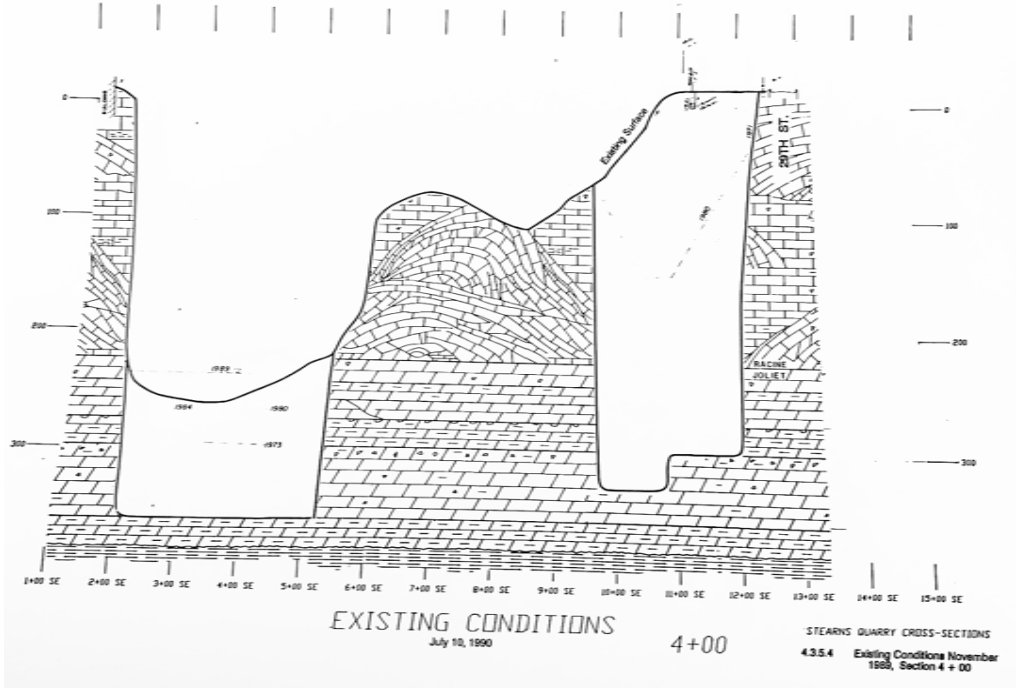
We had set out to tell the story of a hill, but by the end, our explorations had delved 400 feet below street level, and the contour of the hill itself was barely noticeable in comparison to the park's previous topographical guises. The land had once been water, a home to prehistoric squid, these squid (and other creatures) had later been excavated in the form of rock, used to construct the surrounding city, and then dumped back into their previous home in the form of rubble and fill. Our site had been a sea, a quarry, a deep pit amidst dense dwellings, a trash-heap, a park.

The project culminated in two section drawings, one done by each [redacted] and I, which attempted to capture the dynamism of this topography's history. The drawings were heavily informed by the process of exchange, and yet visually distinct.

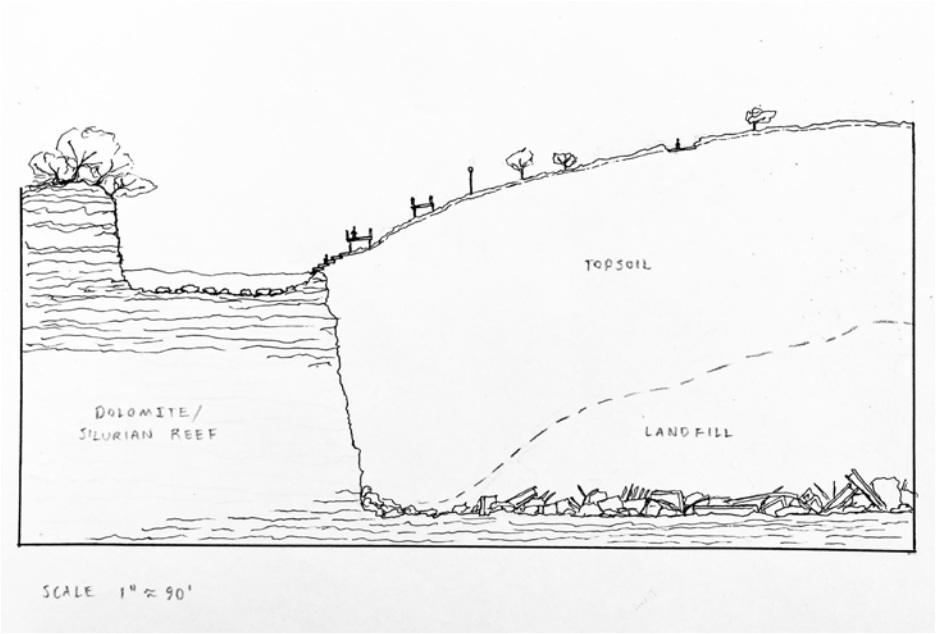


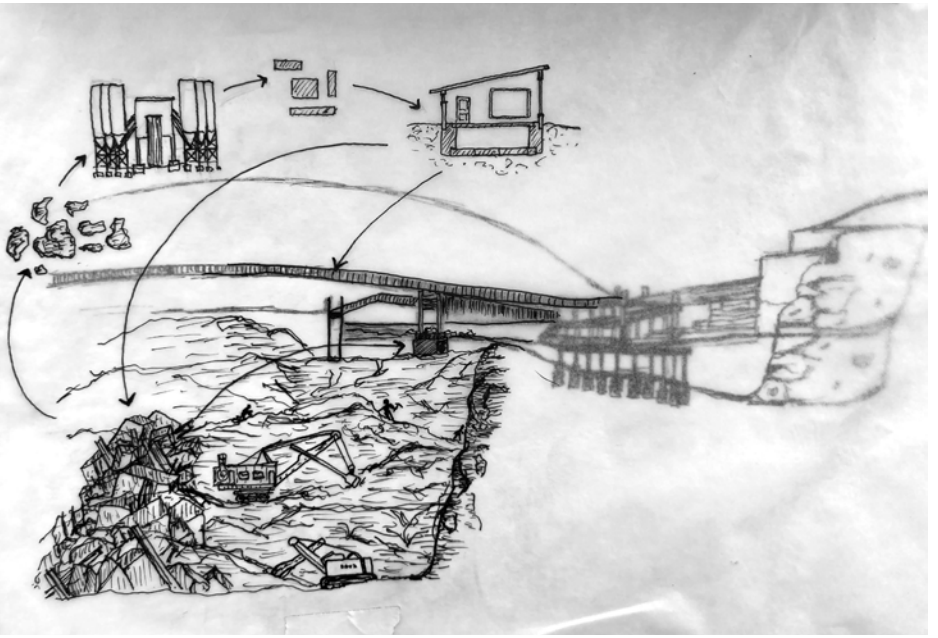
Watercolor and pen sketches completed during explorations of the site, as well as photographs taken of the park's Northwestern corner, including one of many fossils found in the exposed dolomite quarry wall.

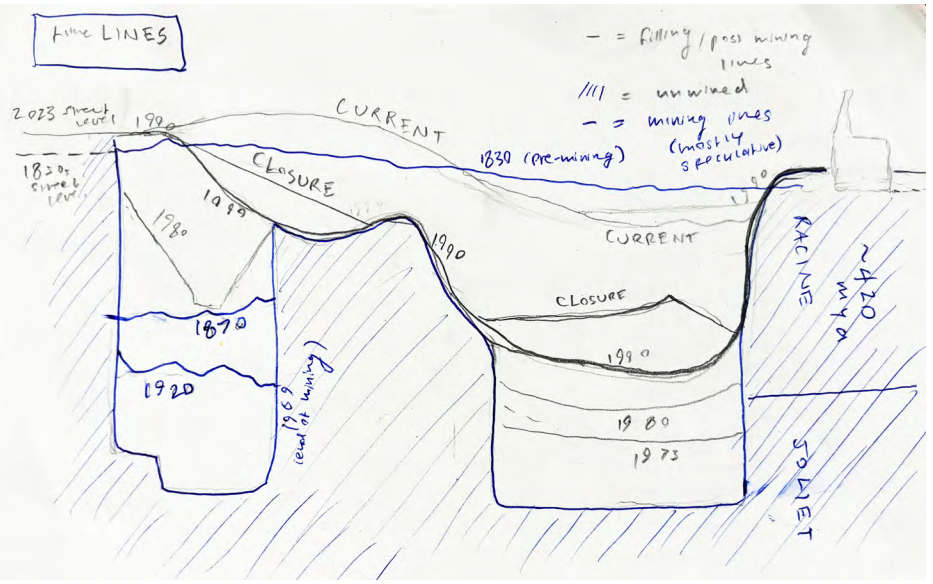




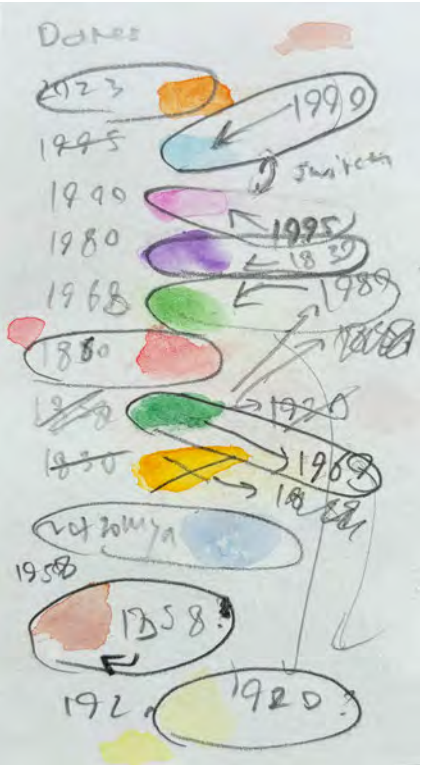
To the left: engineering drawings of existing conditions before the quarry was filled, from the "Closure/Post-Closure Application: Stearns Quarry Landfill Site" report. To the right, an image of Stearns Quarry from the Digital Research Library of Illinois History, and a diorama of the marine environment which existed on this site during the Silurian era, from the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Field Museum.







A collection of sketches that I made during drawing exchanges with Rose



Figuring out a representation system for the many layers of temporal and spatial change. The section I chose to focus on spans the right 900 feet of the section shown on page 26.

Final drawing. 1" = 43.75', section is 23"