

**MATERIAL ESSENCE**  
**Studies in Tectonic Layering**  
a botanical research center

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MIT Level 2 studio Fall 2003

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**ASSIGNMENT 2: Site Form and Material transformations**

**Part 1: Site Form**

The last assignment was a means by which specific and individual observations about the site and campus could be discussed and understood at differing scales – site, area, campus. Out of this you should have developed a sense of how to read that place and work with it in formal terms, and what issues seem to be of importance. The intention is now to develop those readings into design studies that engage form.

Taking specific ideas or actions from your 'site reading' study:

.....layering/ boundary/ barrier / densification/ path/ draping/ surface / warping/ fractals / line and modulation/ space and refuge / microclimate / flow/ texture, light, shade / .....et al

develop a series of 3D models that explore thematic ideas or strategies associated with the site. The models should not be to scale at this stage but rather they should be small enough to be able to work quickly and iteratively in order to enable you to see the emergence of ideas. You should start with a size of about of 6" and then progressively move towards a larger scale – 12" or so. The materials can be varied, for example start with paper or card, but move to other materials that extend the possibilities of a language- such as glass / plexi, plaster and so forth, which speak to other processes and qualities inherent in your thinking

*Reference : Herzog and de Meuron: Natural History*

Into these site form studies you should also begin to also incorporate ideas about:

- + Movement and path: how might you describe a progression or promenade relative to a sequence of space and the grain of the site
- + Modulation: develop a series of constituent parts or repeatable elements
- + Orientation and disposition relative to the scale and position of the site.

At this stage do not try and make a site model complete to scale – however the models should be site conscious, especially in regard to the existing physical characteristics such as orientation, view, movement and grain.

**Part 2: Glass transformations**

Taking *ONE idea, action, process or quality* that interests you most from the images representations of assignment 1, develop a material investigation in 3D model form using glass, plexi, polycarbonate, fabric (or other appropriate materials).

The investigation can be a series of small studies (ie. joints, connections, composites, laminations) or might be one designed piece that engages fabrication or material transformation at a larger scale. However, you should develop a study that speaks to how you have pursued the qualities that you have derived from the images, what actions you applied.

**Schedule:**

T 10/07 discussion and desk crits  
Th 10/09: 2pm Tim Eliason, Tri-Pyramid structures – On Glass. Desk crits  
F 10/10: Group pin-ups and discussion on “Site models”  
T 10/14: desk crits (or trip to Tri-Pyramid)  
Th 10/16: assignment review / pin-up- both parts