

## A refining stone



As the challenge of this semester's 771 studio was to explore the connections between perception and architecture through theoretical discussion and hands-on creation of an artifact, and as I embarked on a journey to research how desalination and architecture can bring an answer to the Southern Nevada water shortages for my thesis, an idea to merge the two projects came to me.

Way before the existence of Lake Mead and the Hoover Dam, the region was occupied by several Native American Indian cultures in a much cooler and wetter temperate climate environment. As early as 10,000 ago, these Indian cultures had mastered the art of hunting. Ground sloth, horses, and mountain sheep were some of the animals they hunted. These Indians also practiced early farming of corn, beans, and squash. Stone played a major part in these cultures' daily lives. It is with a refining stone that young teenage males would sharpen wood and bone arrows, and latter metals. It is also with a refining stone that women would grind corn to prepare flour tortillas. I began to see some similarities between the refinement of seawater in desalination, and the refinement involved in stone carving to make stone tools. Stone carving is a process that involves the refinement of rock, end products being a stone tool and a fine dust residue. Similarly, seawater undergoes a refinement in the desalination process, leaving freshwater and salt at the end.

In a metaphoric and poetic way, I wanted to create an artifact that speaks of this refinement. So I carved rocks to create a symbolic representation of the refining stone. A clear transition from artifact creation to designing architecture was then the final step of the studio.

# The Stone



The Spear Sharpening Stone



The Corn Grinding Stone



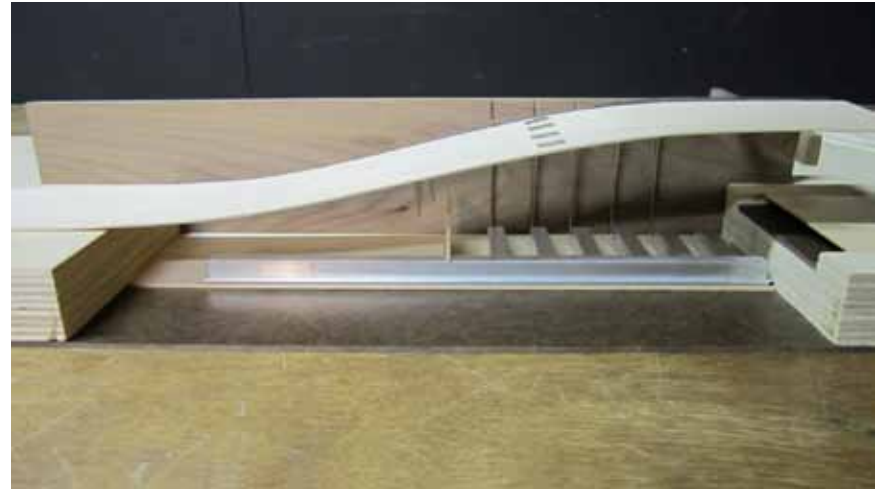
The Metal Sharpening Stone

# The Ritual



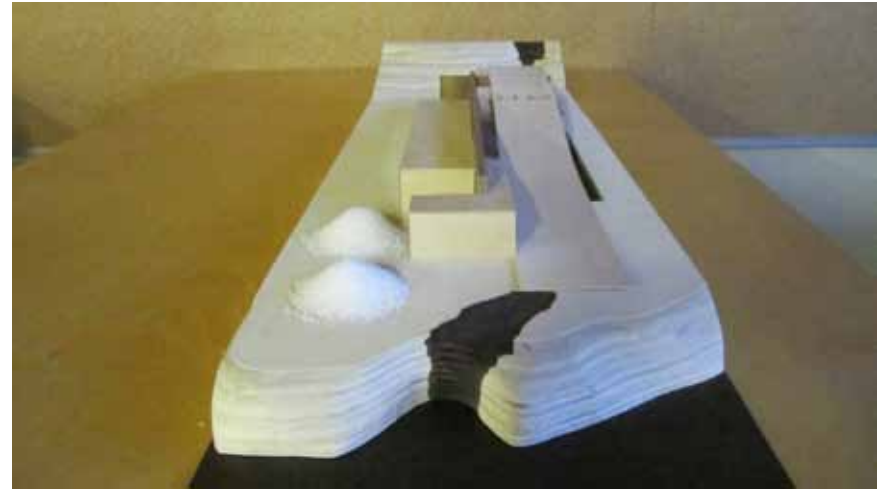
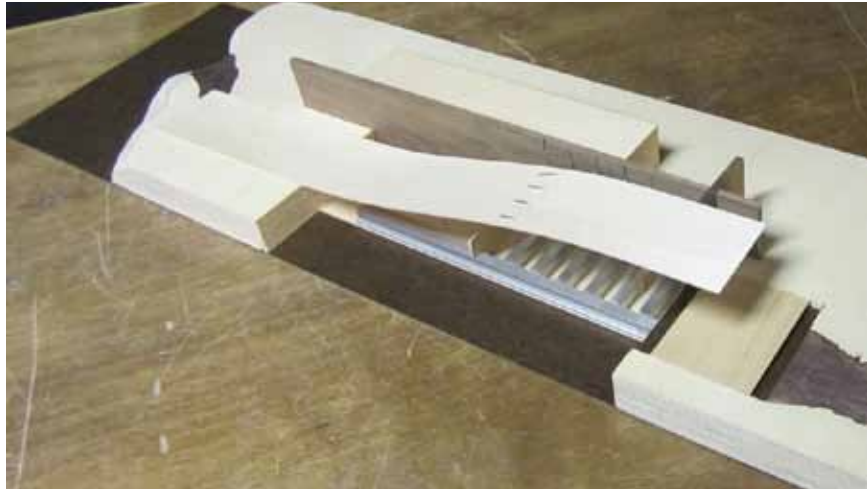


## The Architecture



A long narrow corridor metaphorically represents an experience similar to the long process of stone carving and seawater refinement.

## The Architecture



Opening views from enclosed spaces to open-air spaces, noise transitioning from factory-like sounds to nature sounds, and a revealing of freshwater separated from salt present in the architecture mimic the sounds of the stone carving ritual, and the dust residue separated from the carved stone.