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This design thesis, Waiting for Ruin, is an examination of how adaptive reuse projects can become an intermediary for the overlapping of contemporary and historic architecture. This project seeks to create a conversation between modern architecture and an existing ruin. This raises the questions of how to entwine the new with the old. How do you open a dialogue between the dead and the not yet born?

Ruined architecture has a unique aesthetic quality granted by time. This inimitable patina cannot be crafted by human hands alone; it is a result of nature's desire to reclaim matter. The valuable character of aging architecture can be used as one would use any other construction material. A ruined piece of architecture is something worth waiting for, because it affords new and unique design opportunities. A cohesive piece of architecture can be formed by examining the old fragments and new construction for their sensory and experiential properties. This adaptive reuse architecture will exist in the present while still speaking to the past, compressing time and creating architecture that is simultaneously new and old.

The philosophy of surrealism draws upon the nature of fragmentation, rearranging pieces and ordering them in a new way to raise questions about the nature of perception and reality. For this reason, I have chosen to create a gallery for surrealist art as my typology. The gallery itself and the art within will allow participants to question their place in time. The distant fragments of past and present become a collage of time and a vessel for meaning. The project site is the abandoned Island Station Power Plant in St. Paul Minnesota. The stark contrast between the functionalism of the power station and the fragile tranquility of the art creates a new way of observing both.