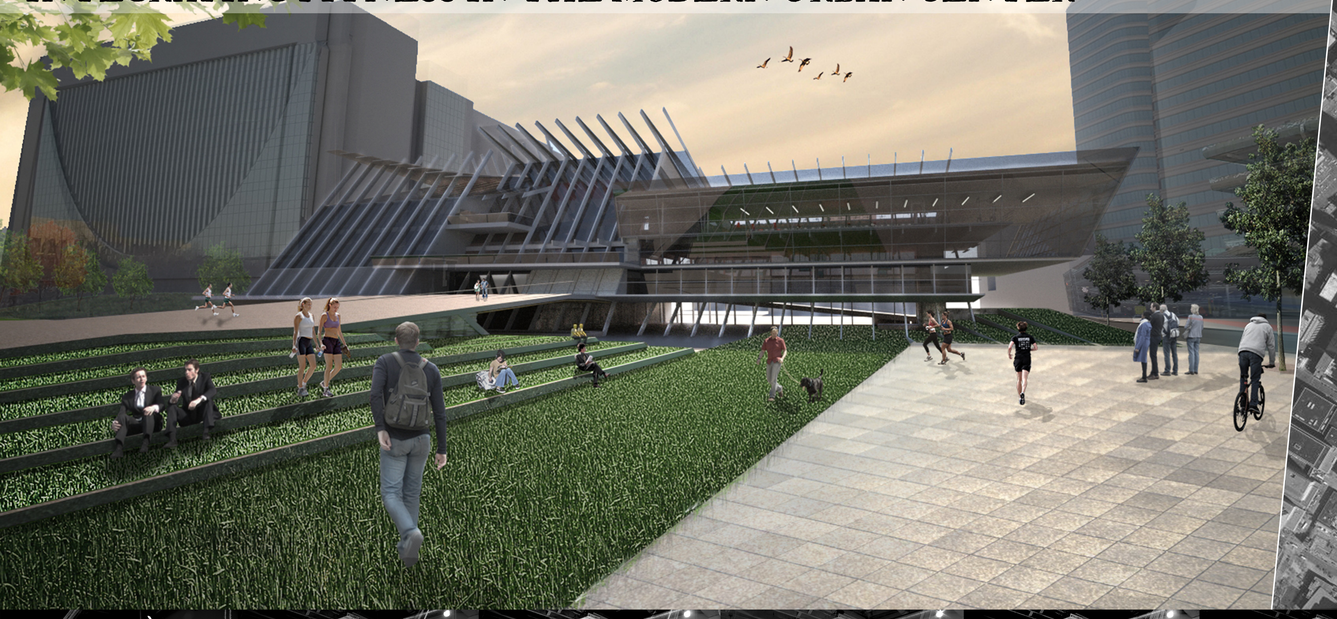
ARCHITECTURE & THE BODY

INTEGRATING FITNESS IN THE MODERN URBAN CENTER



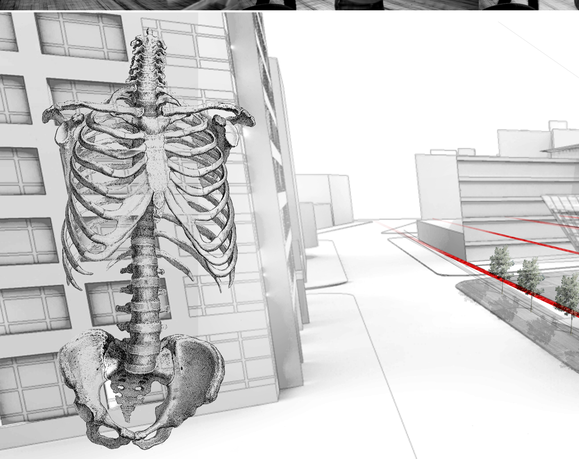
Minneapolis Central Fitness

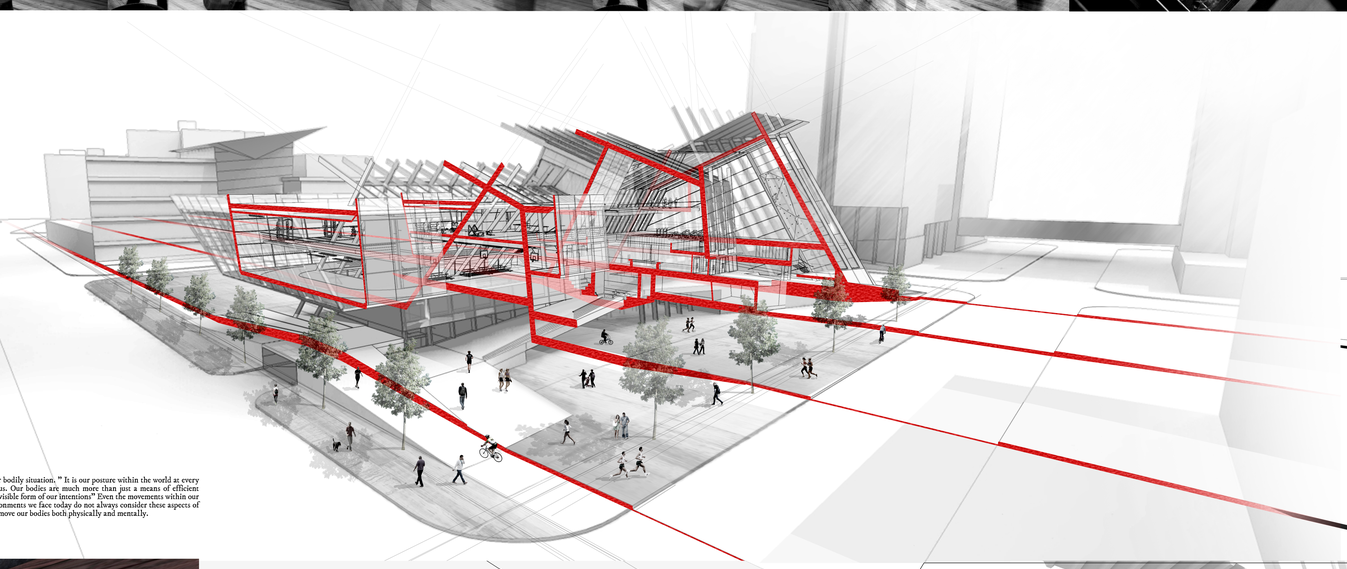
Artefact

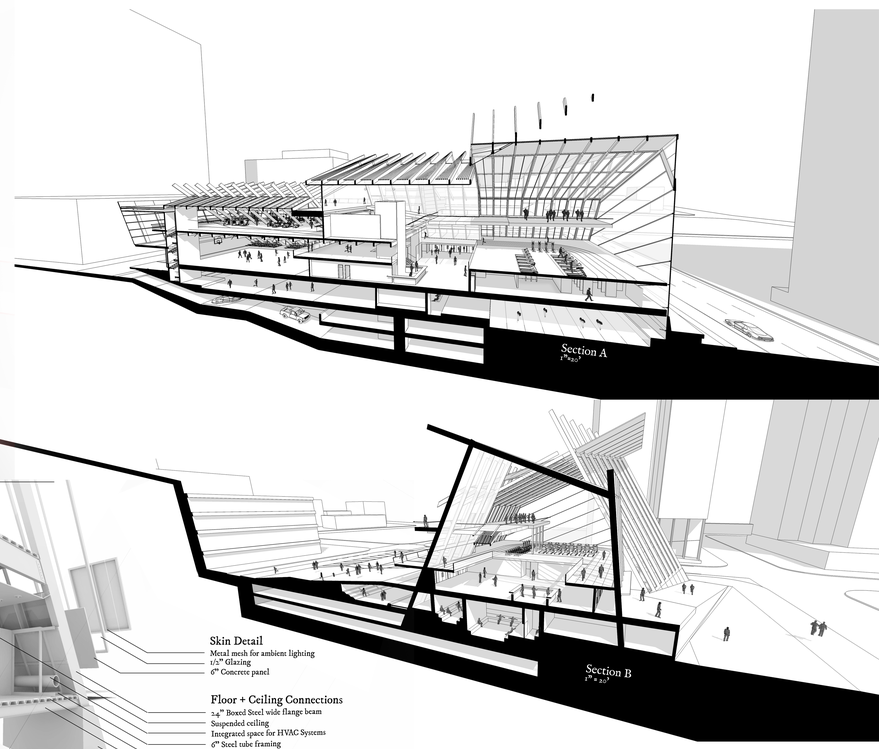
In conjunction with the research that I did for this project I also created an artifact that was a manifestation of movement and interaction. I wanted to create something that was reminiscent of a work out, a dance, the body, breathing; That would also bring the user into a conscious recognition of their bodily movements through the physical and visual connection with the piece. My artifact stands as a link between the body as seen and understood as a vessel whose parts are all divided, individual and serve separate functions from one another (the scientific perception), and the very ancient way of understanding the body which is of a more holistic view that concerns itself with the embodied experience of life and the things in this world with us. I believe that our architecture must respond to the increasingly sedentary state of our modern urban environment, and this thesis project was my exploration in doing so.

Design

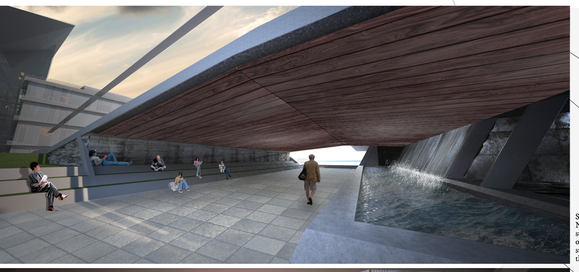
The Architecture is able to display movement of all kinds to the surrounding community ultimately creating a new sense of center and a call to participate in the celebration of bodily movement and fitness. Through its elevated posture the architecture allows for people to meander, run, bike, and move freely through the site while providing moments that also allow for rest and reflection away from the busy city. With its close proximity to the Minneapolis central library I felt it was also important and an opportunity to allow my design to respond to movements that are expressed from with in. I wanted to pull the public space feel that the Library already has established into the site of my architecture allowing people to enjoy the act of mental fitness while surrounded by a proactive environment. This gesture extends the interior public core of the library out into the plaza and outdoor reading areas my design incorporates.

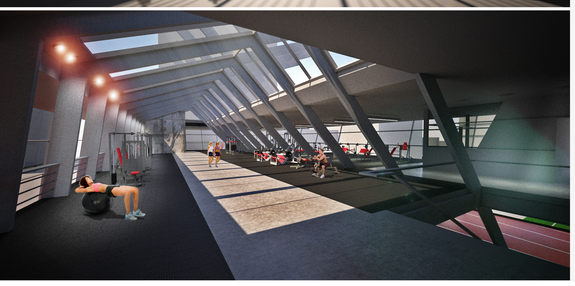






"The well known French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated that "we grasp external space through our bodily situation." It is our posture within the world at every moment that gives us a holistic and practical relation between our body and the things in this world with us. Our bodies are much more than just a means of efficient transportation from one place to another. They are, as Merleau-Ponty put it, "our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions" Even the movements within our bodies that go unseen and sometimes unnoticed help to shape our perception of things. I believe that the environments we face today do not always consider these aspects of the body, leading to uncomfortable, stressful situations. My thesis project is a response to our inherent need to move our bodies both physically and mentally.

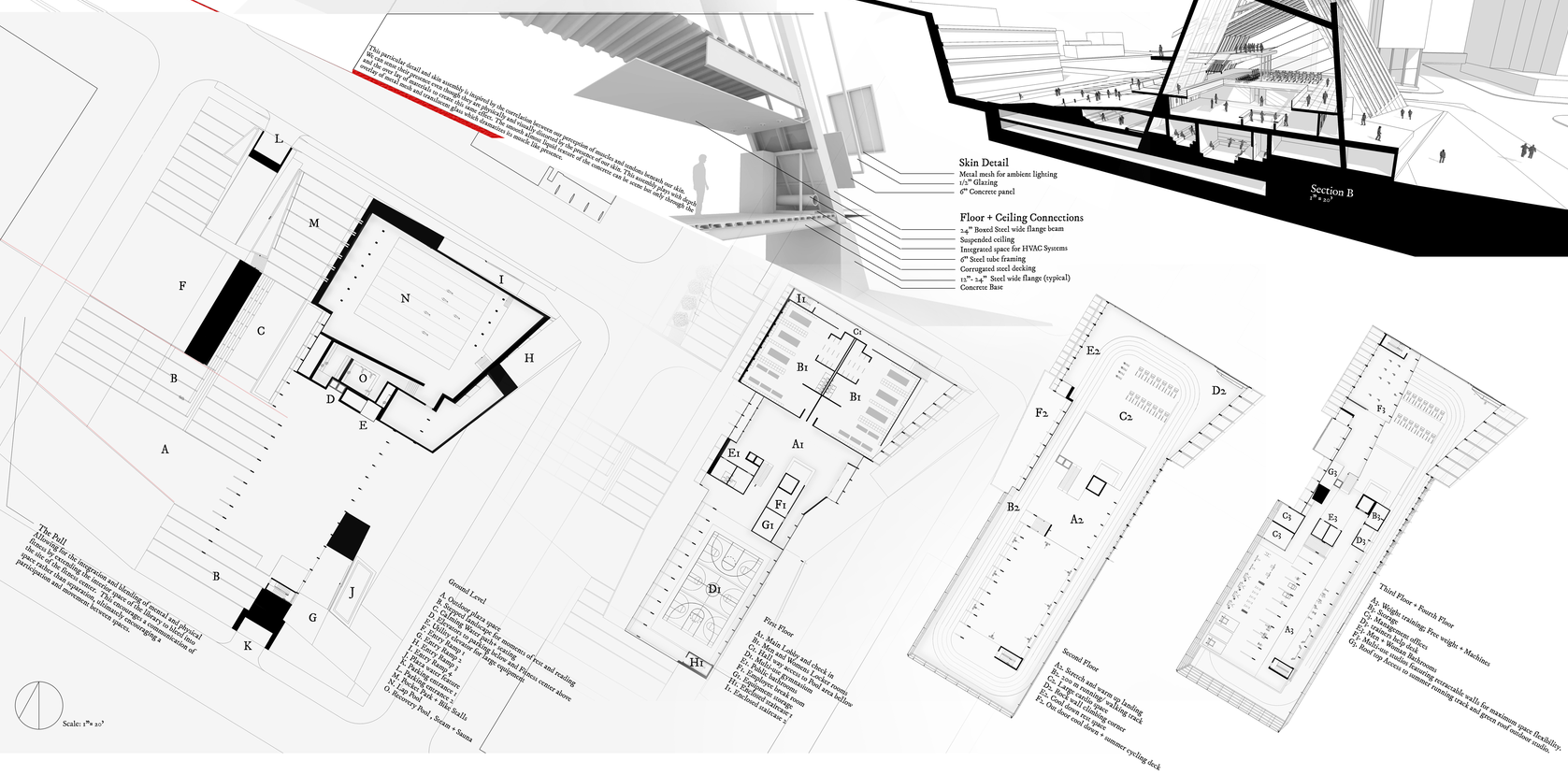




Situated on the north side of the building just off the pedestrian friendly Nicollet Mall this path was designed as a segue from the plaza to south 3rd street. This space utilizes the natural soothing essences of moving water in order to counter the noise created by both south 3rd street and south 4th street. This paired with the ramp over head creates a cool dimly lit space that can be utilized as a place for rest or some light reading.

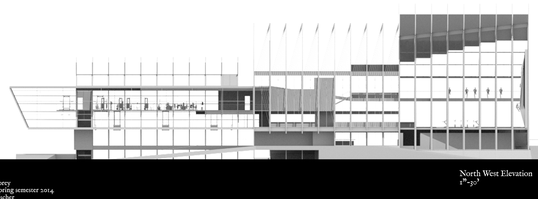
As you enter the facility your eyes are immediately called to look upward as the shear breadth of space expands the structure around you. You take a deep breath as the ambient sound of running and figures of people passing above encourage and call you to participate in the spectacle. You continue on confident and ready for a healthy work out.

After a few warm up laps your heart is thumping and ready for the next level. Situated at an elevated angle to the running track below this space is constantly alluded to as you make your way around the track. I did this intentionally and through the use of the structural beams to create moments that encourage you to imagine yourself completing the task at hand in order to move on through the building.

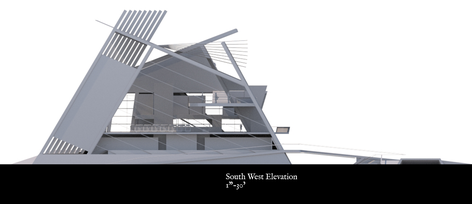


"The world is not seen in your body and your body is not in the visible world. The world neither surrounds nor is surrounded by your body. There is a kinship between the two. My body as a visible thing is contained within the full spectacle. But my seeing body subtends this visible body, and all the visible with it. There is a reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other"

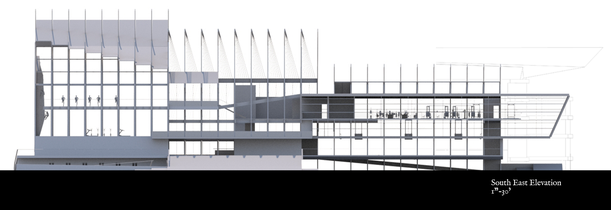
-Maurice Merleau-Ponty



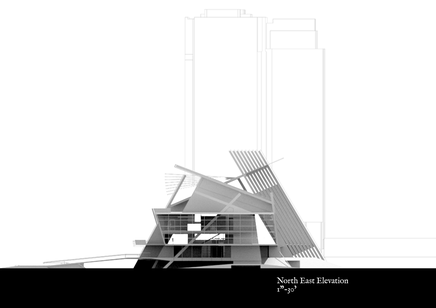
North West Elevation
1"=20'



South West Elevation
1"=20'



South East Elevation
1"=20'



North East Elevation
1"=20'

Calvin J Morey
Arch 771 Spring semester 2014
Stephen Wischer

SketchUp - Kerkythea - Maxwell - Photoshop - Illustrator - AutoCad