Exploring the recreation of fitness design in a natural setting.
Can architecture create a dynamic environment for physical activity by emphasizing natural elements?
What does it mean to be fit?

**fit**

adjective

1. (of a thing) of a suitable quality, standard, or type to meet the required purpose

2. in good health, especially because of regular physical exercise

verb

1. be of the right shape and size for
Why do we need to be fit, and why is physical activity important?
The lethargic lifestyles of the 21st century are a direct reflection of the obsession over constant commodity and innovation. Perhaps it is time to address this issue, with the health and welfare of the planet and its inhabitants depending upon it.
Why did fitness clubs originate?
Where did we lose our way?

Current Problem:

As people age, they are getting less physical activity, social interaction, and exposure to the exterior environment.

Today’s fitness clubs fail to fully engage users and create an interactive experience by tightly packing them into a mundanely static space, cut off from the outdoor environment.
How can I get people to move?
**THE SITE - SUPERIOR, WI**

A beautiful transition from Lake Superior into the St. Louis River provides a unique meandering coastline, marking the division between WI and MN. Superior and Duluth are the predominant cities in the area.

The site lies just Southwest of the city of Superior. A large state forest resides to the South. Residential plots dominate the area to the North-west, before dissipating to the core of the city. North 25th street turns into Billings drive, providing direct access to the site from the city.

Currently, the site serves as an underutilized boat launch. Tucked back in the woods, only a handful of houses are in direct view along the surrounding coastline. This separation from a typical gym setting provides an array of opportunities for architectural innovation.
SAN WAYAO COMMUNITY SPORTS CENTER  
CSWADI, 2015

DESCRIPTION
The large sports complex is tightly tucked in a highrise-residential community. Its soft appearance provides a comfortable experience that is well-lit within, and equally striking out. The building takes what little footprint it has and is able to create both a fitness center and greenspace that functions as one.

STRUCTURE/SPACE
The relationship between structure and space portray a beautiful balance of form and function. The u-shaped glass panels provide a translucent facade that gently shows off its large cross-braced structural elements. The simple arrangement of columns and beams open the space volumetrically as well as illuminated naturally. Every piece of steel is painted to show off its strength and beauty within the larger complex of spaces.
PROGRAM
The numerous functions are neatly divided in layers vertically, staggering its uses throughout.

INSPIRATION
Having the idea of literally pushing more space out of the building and site create a unique cohesiveness between the two.

ORIENTATION
The south facade allows for optimal solar gain and views, while still allowing the tiered effect on the stepped greenspace. The building funnels its shape to the East exterior focal point.
DESCRIPTION
As part of a redevelopment project, this small scale community center brings together many nearby residents of all ages. The transparent facades, open floorplan and streamline shape highlight the area.

AESTHETIC/COMPOSITION
The level of detail put into every inch of the building shows throughout the quality of its interior spaces. The numerous layers of partitions and their varying transparencies offer a stimulating gradient rather than the usual monolithic separations. The increase of visibility provides a degree of safety and certainty while engaging the building’s environment. Quality natural light softly penetrates the building facades and corridors creating a natural ambient feel.
SITE
The treatment of the site as a whole provides a unique experience for the community. People can come together inside for a swim, or head to one of the many outdoor greenspaces.

NATURAL LIGHT
One of the most captivating features of this structure is its elegantly handled dorsal-fin skylight. Not only does this give an iconic feature to view from the surrounding community, but it also provides an abundance of daylight into the space. Nearly eliminating the use of artificial light saves money, and provides an indoor pool with an outdoor feel.

CONCLUSION
Balancing the use of openings for both natural light and visibility is crucial in creating a space that emulates the outdoors. The dynamic ceilings and overhead conditions create interesting volumetric spaces within the enclosed environment.
**AESTHETIC/ COMPOSITION**
Completely reshaping the way different types of fitness is practiced in doors, this organically angular facility lets the architectural elements become the platforms or obstacles for physical activity.

**DESCRIPTION**
The radical design proposal features a fractured facade that allows light to penetrate into the building, while giving numerous views to the rocky, snow-ridden landscape that surrounds the cement structure.
CONCLUSION
Not only can users experience an interactive adventure with the buildings inner face, but the concept also speculates the ability to scale the exterior facade for a completely revolutionary site and building experience. Taking the building from serving a purpose primarily for shelter and adding the ability to traverse this manufactured landscape in a new way provided a great amount of inspiration in formulating the fitness center of the future.

IDEOLOGY
Relating the architecture to the Earth and its processes gives this project a deeper meaning that resonates with the building itself.
LACC MISSION COLLEGE  CANNON DESIGN, 2010

DESCRIPTION
The $38 million dollar project brought numerous aspects of campus life together under one roof. Complete with a variety of workout, flex spaces, classrooms, offices, a three-court gym, and scenic jogging track. This highly efficient facility achieved LEED certification through a variety of technology and systems including an air quality system and low-e coated glass.

AESTHETIC/ VIEWS
One of the most profound aspects of this building are its beautiful lines of sight, due to the angular composition that compliments its setting. The natural essence of the structure and the large expansive windows allow the facility to breathe as one with the environment, never provoking the feeling of isolation. The rich color palette and local materials allow both the interior and exterior to blend as a single, naturally cohesive element within its surroundings.
PROGRAM

A culmination of various spaces push for collaboration among multiple disciplines. The floorplan is a conglomerate of four different zones, beginning to change the limits of a typical fitness facility.

ORGANIZATION

The angular nature of the area begins to breathe into the rigid configuration of the architecture. The spontaneous variability of space uses encourages chance interaction.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating a strong relationship between site and structure is crucial, particularly in dealing with projects like these in unique settings. Pulling apart the building to encourage random social encounters, as well as opening up the space both physically, and visually will provide a strong basis for connecting the project to nature. Using proper scale to construct dynamic spaces can be highly effective, along with a rich color palette.
INSPIRATION
The key to being physically fit is all about finding and staying at a point of balance. Everyone achieves this point of homeostasis through a different journey or path of decisions and experiences. The idea of perceiving a stack of rocks in balance is symbolically powerful through the realization of its ability to transform its composition, based on your perspective, yet still remain in balance.
FORMAL EXPERIMENTATION

Using this idea of varying stacked forms, I explored the implementation of the inspiration onto the site.

Although the concept was strong, I still felt that I needed more to focus my design around rather than just the abstract idea of irregular forms situated at a point of equilibrium.
This site is dedicated to the thought that something as simple as fun is the easiest way to change people’s behaviour for the better. Be it for yourself, for the environment, or for something entirely different, the only thing that matters is that it’s change for the better.

MOTIVATING WITH FUN
Making things fun is perhaps the simplest way to adjust one’s behavior, no matter the situation. Something as easy as the slightest twist on a traditional object or practice can provoke interest and its encourage its use.
A little creative inspiration can go a long way when talking about changing people’s behavior for the better. Not everyone believes working out is enjoyable, although introducing the element of fun through architectural innovation using this type of thinking is crucial in predicting the solution for the fitness club of the future.
As a way of approaching the problem from a different perspective, I tried to put my own spin on some architectural elements found in fitness clubs in hopes of inspiring their use through fun engagement. Utilizing each and every sense the human body has at its disposal provided a springboard for numerous ideas of varying effects. While these strategies may not have been carried through my project, they are important to its development and the ideals behind such.
DESIGN THINKING

FIND COINS

YOUR NAME

FITCOINS

0123456789

ARCADe GYM

HARc WORK ON EQUIP. ETC = REWARDS - SMoothHEALTHY DRINKS

CONNECT FOUR

plate weights = game pieces

WHACK A MOLE
DESIGN THINKING

JACOB ESOCOFF // HEALTH CLUB
MOVEMENT MODEL

- Use the exploration of physical form boundaries to inspire movement in my project.
- Incorporate the formal qualities of these tunnel boundaries into my projects.
- Space not to become a static "form" of the space or structure - but rather an array of pieces that change incrementally as you progress through space.
- Progression of inspired/emulated movement.

"Hallway" Passage

Plan

Section

Creates space or succession of spaces that dynamically changes its shape as you progress through it.

Space frame structure

Instead of forcing these very specific movements implied by space tunnel boundaries, I intend to use that idea of a slowly changing shape through a segment of space that creates a visual sense of movement - then inducing its users to move as well.

Curve inspired by draping and curling effect.

VENTILATED RIGID STEEL FRAMES

Change in angle as you advance to influence perceived movement.

DESIGN THINKING
Inspired by the gestures explored in Esocoff’s work, the idea of using architectural frames to provoke movement would be a unique way to break up the monotony present in typical fitness clubs. The tunnel-like effect has the potential to create dynamic visual experiences while static or in-motion, mimicking the effect of progressing through a forest environment.
MOVEMENT MODEL

DESIGN THINKING
The angular form was chosen after coinciding with the design intent inspired by the cracking mud found on-site. Interestingly enough, the progression of angles takes on a curved profile when arrayed and viewed from the interior or exterior perspective. This balance of curved gestures within the rigid form mimics what we see in nature.

Light plays a critical role in enhancing the ability of simple architectural forms to inspire movement. As the light (or sun) moves throughout the day, so do the shadows cast, constantly changing the way the space is perceived. The repetition creates a strong allure, inviting exploration, along with the required effort to move through it.
**SPACIAL ORGANIZATION**
The typical arrangement of fitness spaces can lead to a mundane and even uncomfortable experience. Being tightly enclosed in a space with rows of bulky equipment can be vastly overwhelming to the user. Breaking up the space into separate areas would allow for a more dynamic experience with an increased sense of space and privacy.

**SECTIONAL QUALITY**
Manipulating fitness spaces vertically can help break the monotony of the indoor environment, and allow an increased sense of privacy when in the space.
Circulation

Thinking about the circulation of a building as an opportunity for physical activity and movement, rather than just a means of travel is the main focus of this design. Being that humans are especially known for being a bipedal species, it would only make sense that we focus on the use of our legs as a primary form of movement for physical fitness.

Taking the typical arrangement of an oval shaped track and instilling cues from nature can make the spaces for circulation a journey of meandering through the building, rather than a never-ending loop. The aim is to simulate these dynamic outdoor environments in a controlled architectural setting that inspires activity in the same way nature does.
VIEWS
Perhaps the most prevalent element of design noticeable in my project is the constant use of framing great views using the openings of architecture. The dynamic track experience takes its angular formation by meandering the user through a progression of implied views using various angles, also inspired by the cracked path or journey.

Specific zones - or hot spots - were noted, and received a great amount of focus in the design. These areas offer plentiful views to the exterior in almost every direction.

EXISTING SITE
Leaving the site in the most fertile state is incredibly important to the natural surroundings of this secluded facility. Making use of as much current vegetation as possible, along with reusing the beat-up trails previous human-activity on site is important in perpetuating this natural notion.
Initially, the spaces I wanted to incorporate into my building were represented by the graphic to the right. Although, once the focus and certain aspects of my building began to define themselves, the corresponding interior requirements (along with their names) began to change. Rather than having a plethora of rooms with pre-defined functions, many spaces are considered flexible and suitable for a number of uses.
DESIGN THINKING

FORMAL DEVELOPMENT
RECEPTION //
DESIGN SOLUTION

GROUND LEVEL // SITE PLAN
RECESSED RESISTANCE AREA //
RECESSED FLEXIBILITY AREA
// DYNAMIC MOVEMENT AREA
EAST TURF RAMP //
COMMUNITY SPACE
MOVEMENT MODEL
THE BREAK // VIEW 1
// RELAXATION AREA