



PRACTICAL SHED

CAMERON NEUHOFF
BARCH MAY 2016

This book is dedicated to the community -- of craftsmen, of builders, of brothers. For your continued encouragement and participation I am deeply thankful.

CONTENTS

Introduction	9
Schematic Proposal	15
Preparation	17
Construction	
Phase One	57
Phase Two	69
Phase Three	85
Phase Four	99
Completion and Use	111
Index of People	119

INTRODUCTION

Behind Beta Theta Pi fraternity, an architecture develops by and through the practice of different crafts, promoting a communal and experiential pedagogy that is both personal and physical in nature. The architecture formalizes through a series of workshops by local v, as their techniques and materials are applied to the architectural elements of the hearth, mound, enclosure, and roof. The true drive of my project is to recognize the value that different crafts and different people can provide to architecture and its practice. The effect: an autogenic classroom - a receptacle of interactions between communities, materials, and tools - a practical shed.

Knowing fully well that by calling my project a shed raises a flag for some theoreticians, or rather one theoretician, I aim to investigate the practice of architecture as a socially constructed artifact and the essence of architecture as an active process of community. I understand my role as an architect to not be strictly defined as an isolated designer but rather malleable as a social orchestrator, an informed builder and coordinator. I am responsible for constructing places that house the public realm and facilitate life in a given context. The specific context with which I dealt happened to be a defunct asphalt court at the bottom of a hill behind a fraternity house in Ithaca, New York.

Alongside my efforts to revitalize a neglected backyard, I address the increasingly overlooked notion of cultural transmission and the relevance of craft in the production of architecture. We are all witnesses to the architectural tendency toward fashionable production and the placeless boxes that this attitude proliferates. The dissolution of head and hand has stymied the culture of architecture's own making, preventing place-bound traditions from advancing in communities that always already exist prior to the architect's involvement. By inviting local crafts back into the private suite that has become of our modern profession, I open up the conversation of architecture to a larger culture of building, defined by Howard Davis as a dynamic and coordinated system of knowledge, rules, procedures, and habits constituted over time by its own functioning.

Maybe we can recognize that designing, building, and using are components of this dialogical system that gives shape to our surroundings. The laborer is not separated from but rather integral to the generation of ideas. The community is not simply the end user but rather an active participant. The architecture is not a singular instance but rather a holistic practice.



Photo of Beta House lifted from the living room of Beta house.

Photo of Beta House in its current state. The trees are now quite mature.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (the "MOU") is by and between the individual, Cameron Neuhoff, an undergraduate architecture student attending Cornell University ("Mr. Neuhoff"), and the members of Beta Theta Pi, a fraternity chapter at Cornell University (the "Brothers").

RECITALS:

- A. Mr. Neuhoff is in need of a site on which to build a small-scale thesis project during his final semester at the Cornell School of Architecture (the "Project").
- B. The Brothers have some outdoor space located behind their common residence at ___ (the "House") formerly occupied by a basketball court but currently in disrepair (the "Site").
- C. Mr. Neuhoff has requested that the Brothers provide the Site for his use in constructing the Project and providing certain services in return.

In consideration of the foregoing and other good and valuable considerations the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged Mr. Neuhoff and the Brothers agree as follows:

1. Mr. Neuhoff shall have access to the Site and temporary parking space outside the House during daylight hours free of charge.
2. Mr. Neuhoff shall obtain the approval from the Beta Theta Pi alumni and agree with the Brothers upon a mutually convenient date and time prior to moving large loads of material onto the site.
3. In return for use of the Site, Mr. Neuhoff, agrees to provide services around the area of the Site reasonably requested by the Brothers, including, but not limited to clearing the overgrowth of thorny brush.
4. Mr. Neuhoff shall comply with all ordinances of the Town of Ithaca and all rules and regulations of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, including, but not limited to parking restrictions and alcohol policy.
5. Mr. Neuhoff shall provide his own material and equipment and therefore assume all liability of personal health and safety.
6. Either party may terminate this MOU at any time, with or without cause, upon thirty (30) days' notice to the other party.

SO AGREED as of the 7th day of February, 2016.

CAMERON NEUHOFF CNH

(Representative of himself)

RED GIULIANO [Signature]

(President of Beta Theta Pi and representative of the Brothers)

A Memorandum of Understanding drafted with the help of good friend who is also a lawyer.

Meeting with Peter and Sara [1.20]
 I drove to my parking spot of choice
 to Significant Elements, spying several
 pallets stacked with stone behind the store.
 I entered the store and skirted past Peter
 in order to talk with Sara first, promising
 to return for a chud. I encountered Sara on
 the second floor as she rearranged a number
 of blackboards, seemingly at random due to
 the blatant distraction of my imprecise speech.
 Specifically, she said, I would facilitate a (more)
 helpful response. Perhaps, she said, I narrow
 down my definition of craft so that she could
 recommend hummer associated with fields
 instead of fishing ~~in~~ her brain at random.
 Also, she said, her brain was somewhat
 fatigued from a recent illness. She
 complimented my shelves and I left.

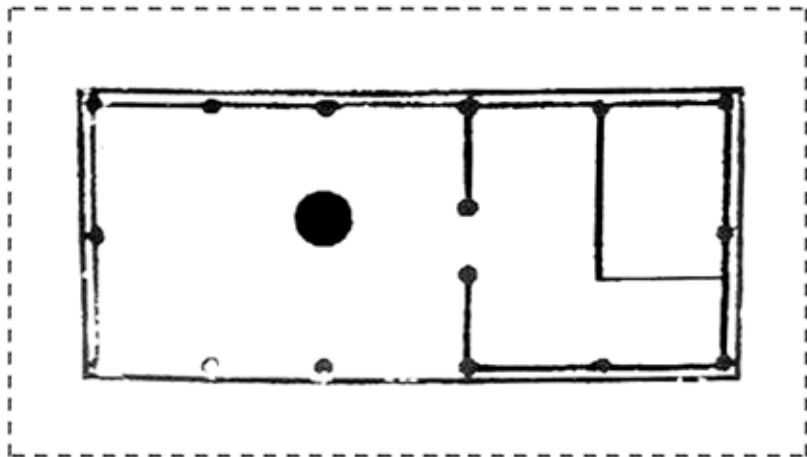
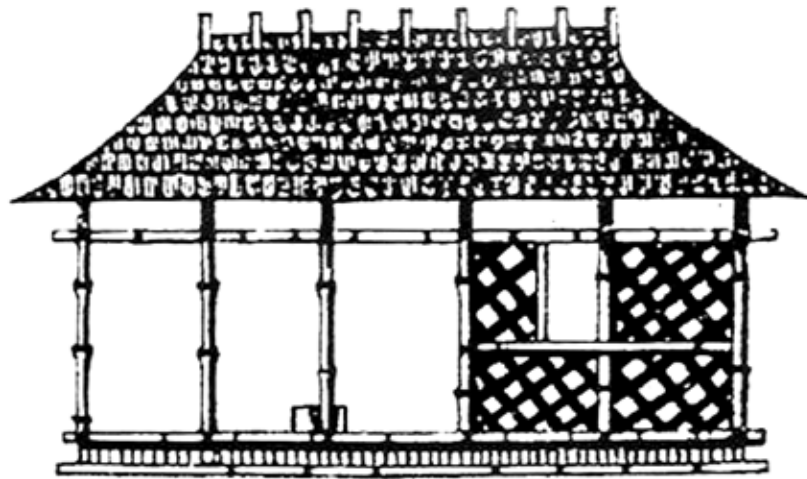
Notes taken on a napkin after my first engagement with the community

(she did suggest that I talk with CCE,
 a good source of general community info)
 I found Peter in his workshop juggling
 a hand plane. A woven jute chair
 stood in progress at his side. I
 explained myself. He questioned the extent
 of his input to the project but welcomed
 the idea of contribution as a friend. He
 expressed equal hesitation as Sara due to
 what he described as a strong but indirect
 proposal. My ambitions are pure but they
 will not translate if I do not have a clear
 set of skills desired. This relates to Julie's
 comment (and Lily's) regarding a list of
 criteria/protocols by which to judge the
 final product. The project's broad anthropological
 sociologic goals seem to be hindered by a lack
 of rigor. Nevertheless, Peter said he would
 gladly meet with me again to develop.

The back of that same napkin

Panoramic view of the
 site due to improper
 film exposure





SCHEMATIC PROPOSAL

The organizational principles of the practical shed are derived from the theories of Gottfried Semper and Antoine Laugier, whose discussion of four essential elements of architecture and primitive huts advanced the reading of universal architectural standards. I hesitate, however, to construe the practical shed as a primitive hut. My ambitions are not to investigate or reinterpret the elemental basis of architecture. Rather, I refer to Semper's hearth, mound, enclosure, and roof as a framework for interaction. All architecture needs structure (maybe a fifth element?), and these pieces provide a clear agenda for the shed's development. Assigning a particular craft to each individual element, I develop a local and global dialogue between practices and traditions. A masonry fire pit, cob floor, woven wall, sail overhang are concrete terms that allow me to communicate effectively with a broad community.

Gottfried Semper's Carribean hut with added dotted roof line

PREPARATION

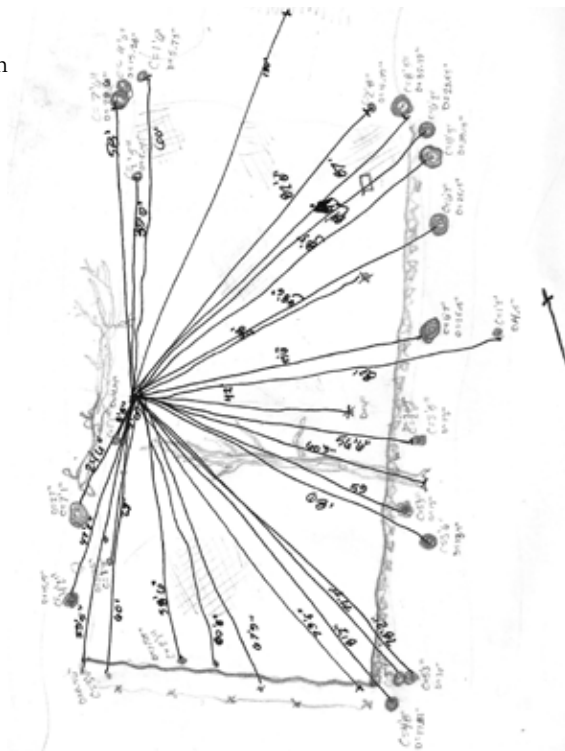
(Peter described my project as a configuration of material that is informed by and responds to the different crafts that it surrounds.)

Andy at Aquway - ("talk to Nan, he's an expert at that")
 ↳ The best time to eradicate the thorny weeds is in spring?
 Poison is effective only when it touches foliage or soft roots of trimmed stems.
 Use a pick ax ... maybe rent a mower ... field and brush mower.
 Andy had a firm handblake.

Advice from a local weed specialist. I brought Andy an example of the thorny brush consuming the site.

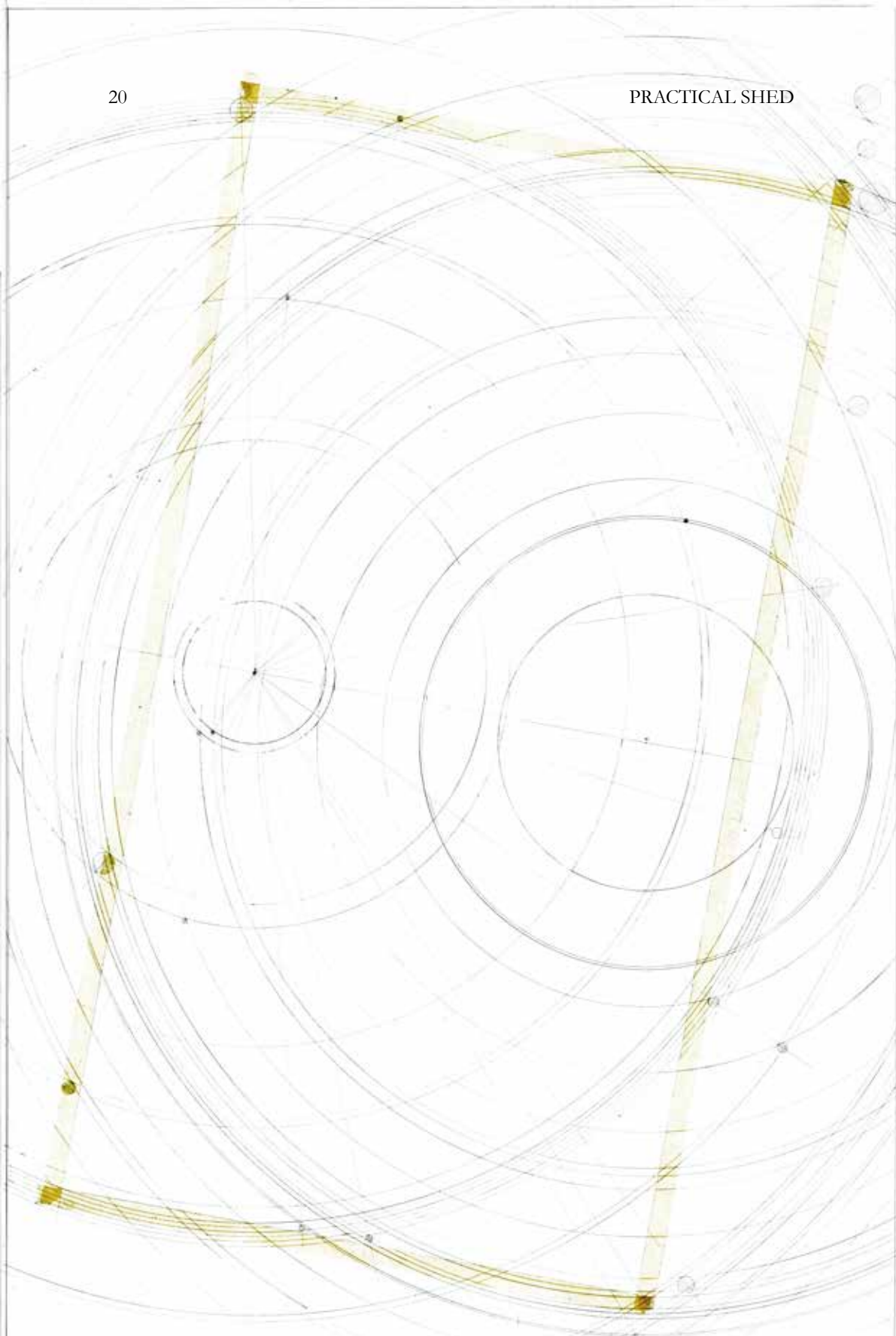
The thorny brush and its removal.

On-site survey taken from the west post.



On-site survey taken from the east post.

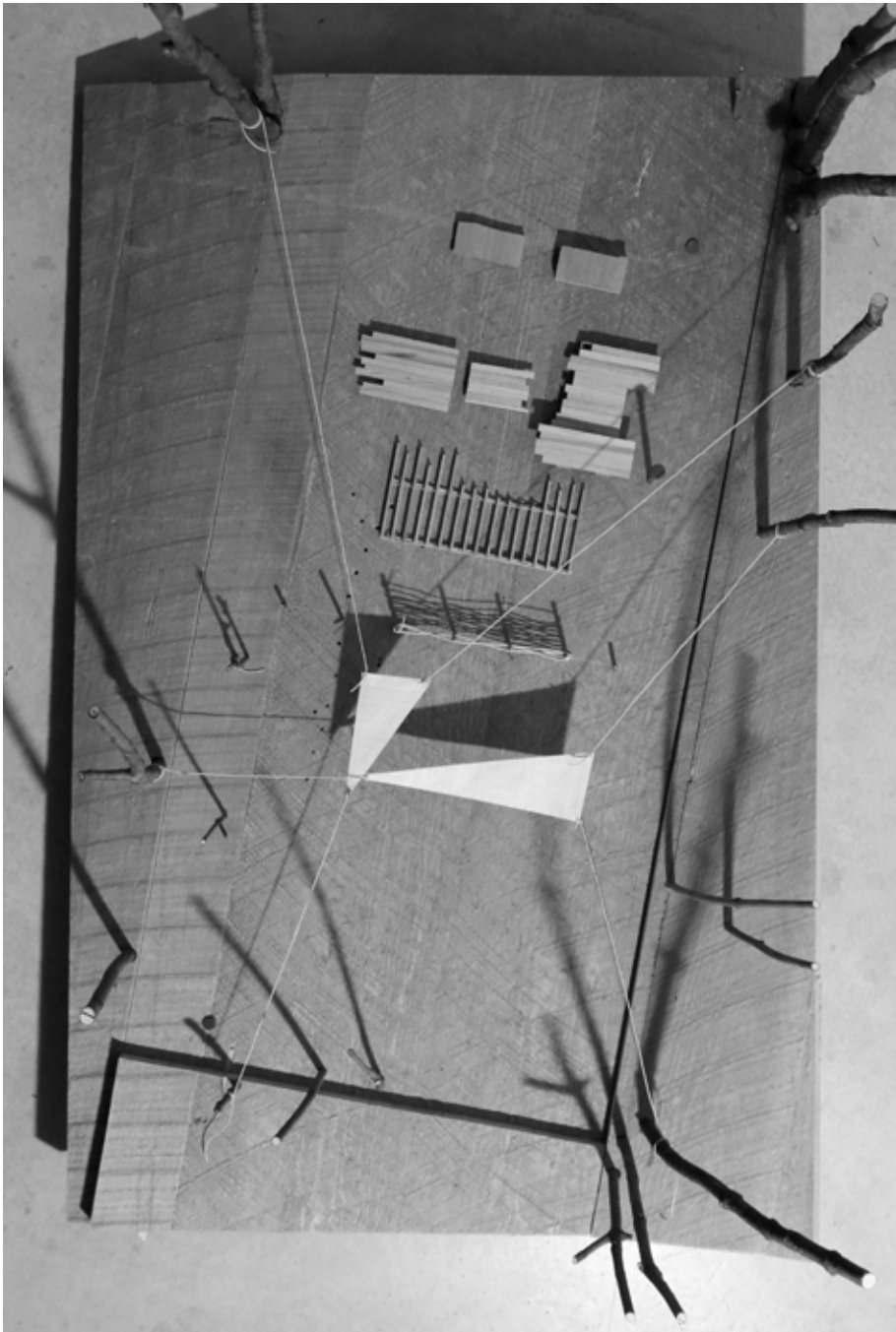




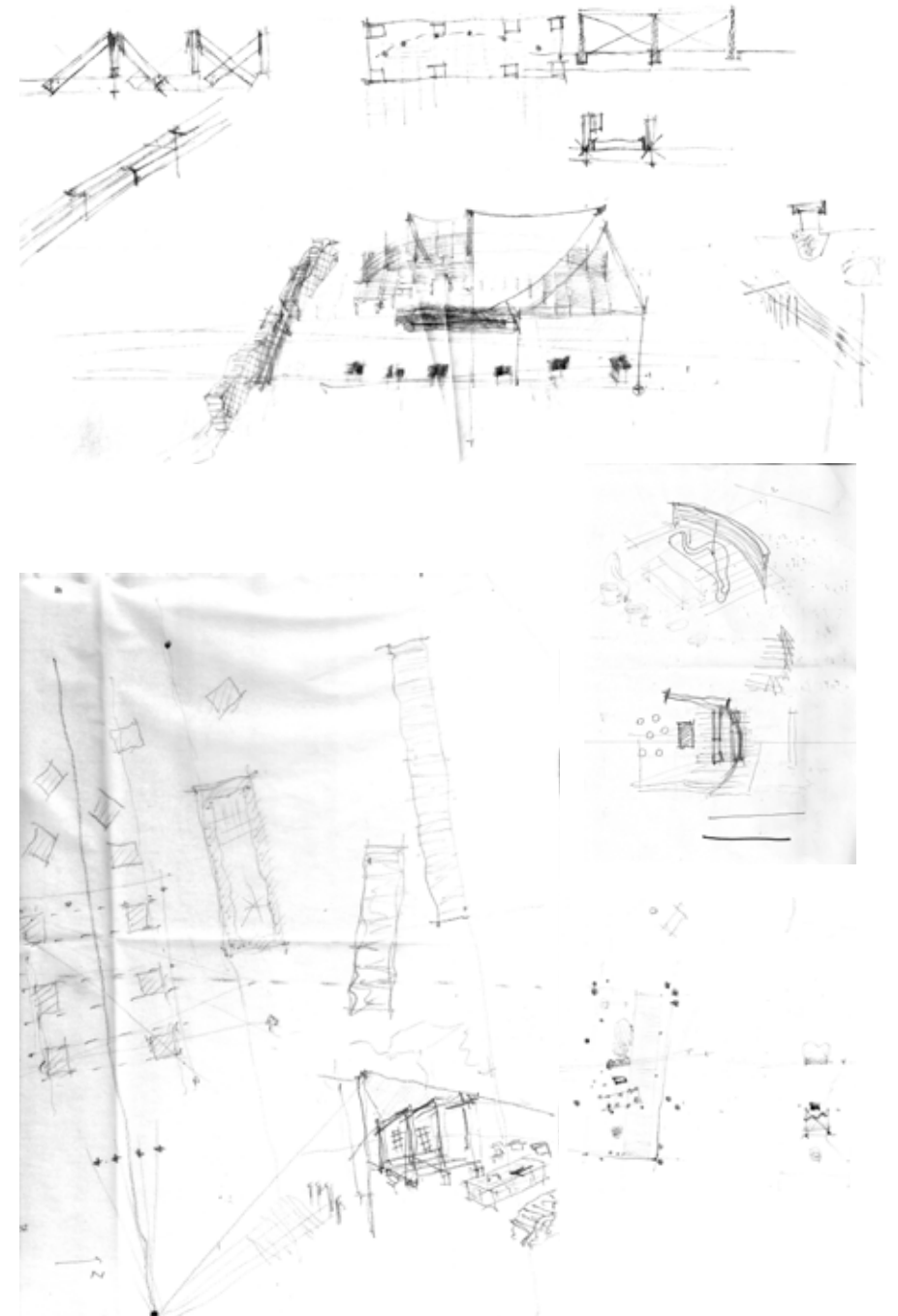
Wooden compass fabricated for specific site dimensions
On-site survey translated with wooden compass.

Photomontage of site from above looking west

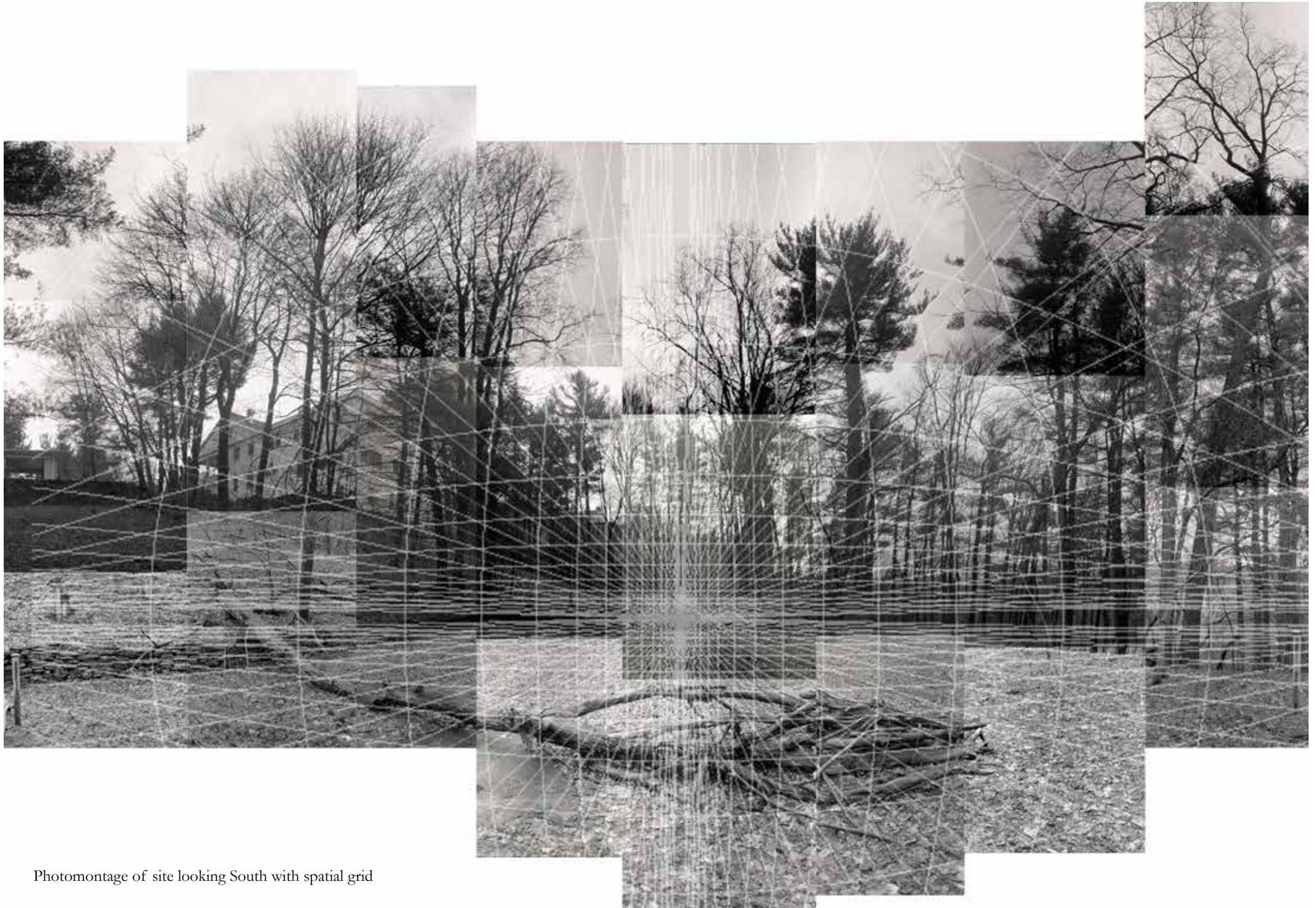




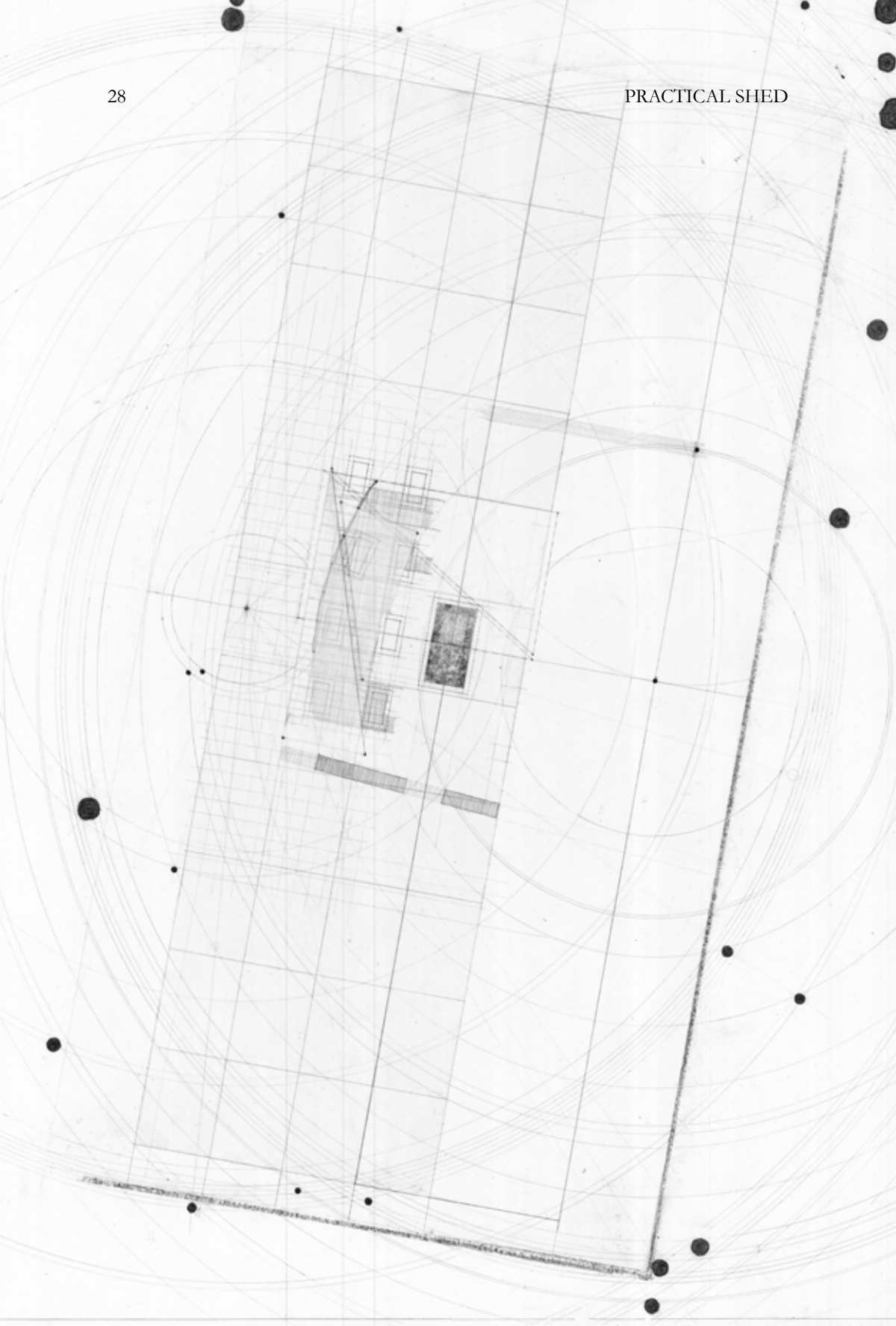
Model of site and four elements to be manipulated by hand



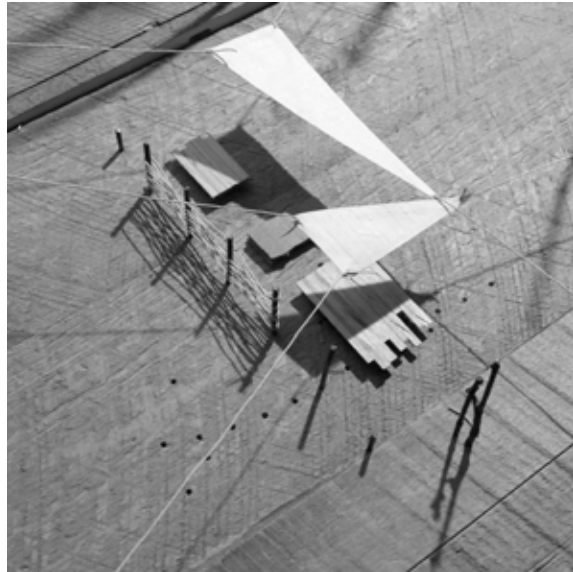
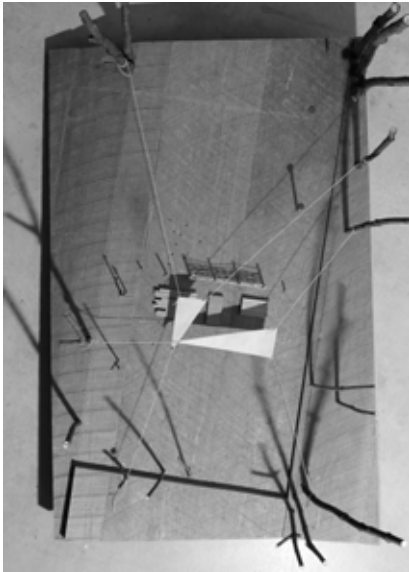
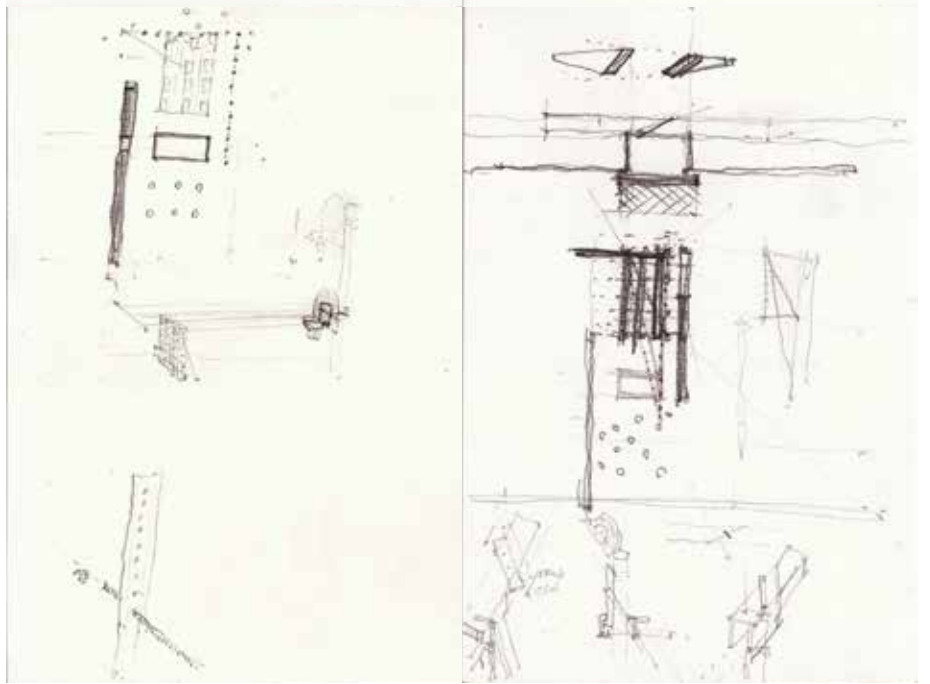
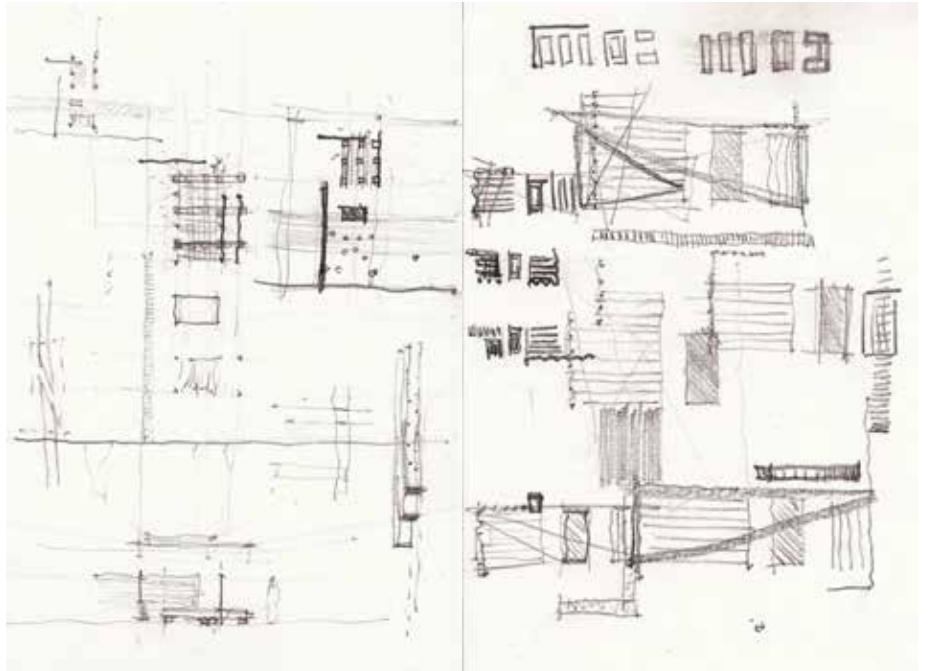
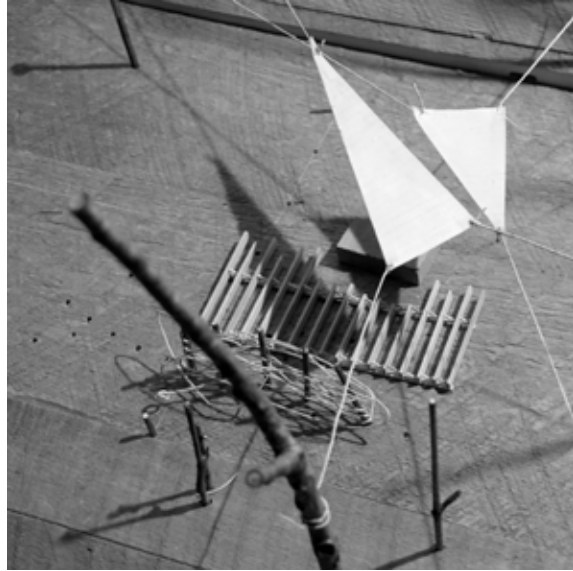
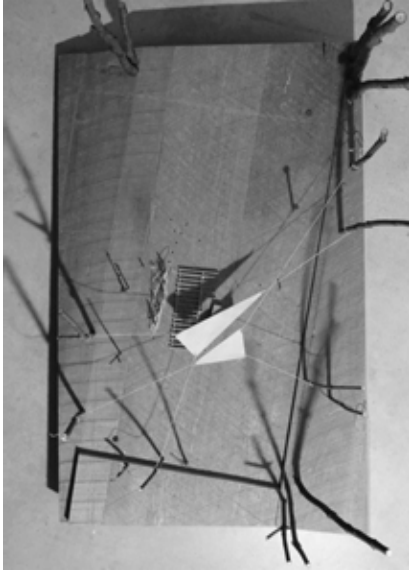
Sketches of elemental manipulations



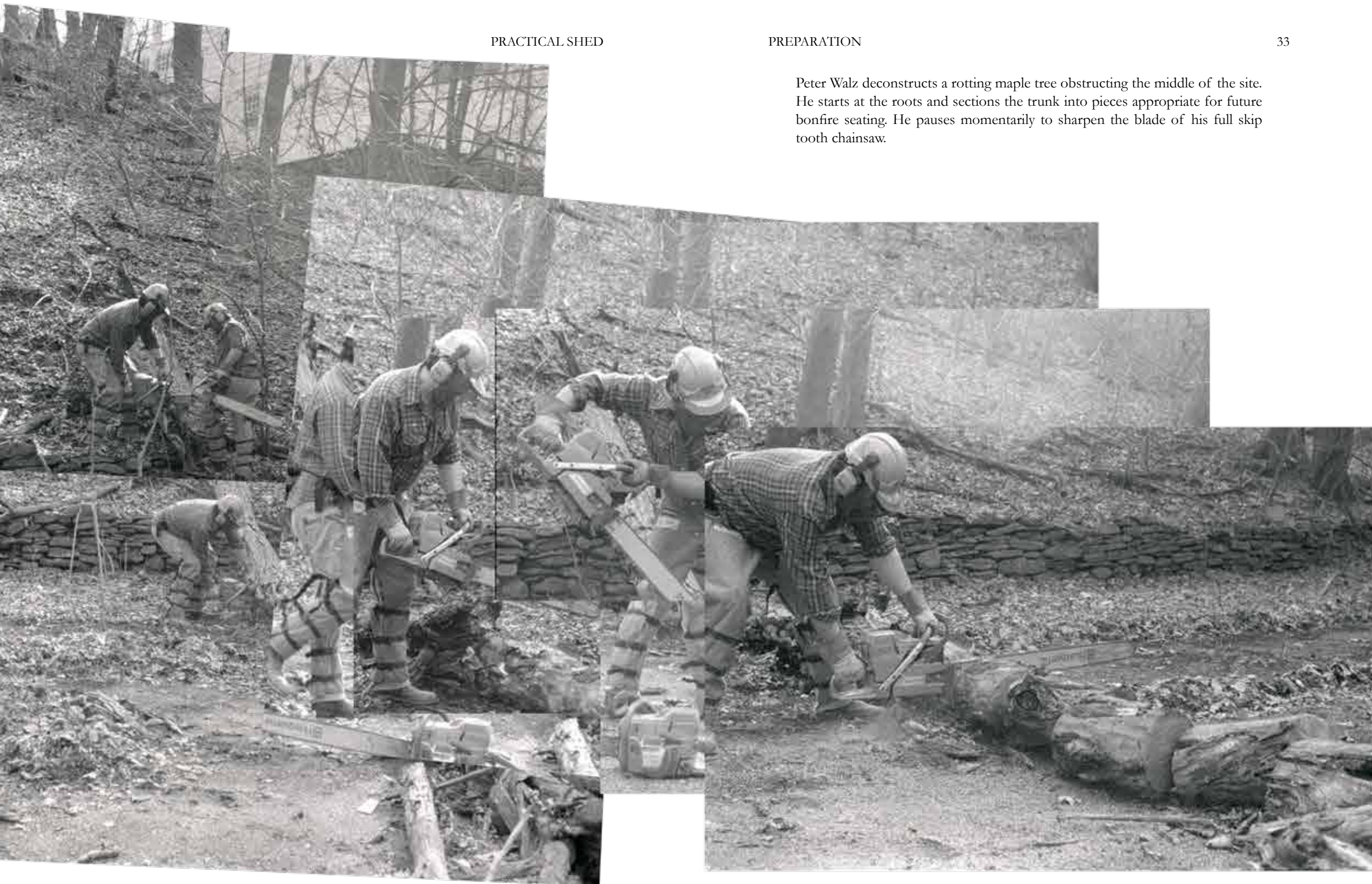
Photomontage of site looking South with spatial grid



Early iteration of the shed's configuration



Peter Walz deconstructs a rotting maple tree obstructing the middle of the site. He starts at the roots and sections the trunk into pieces appropriate for future bonfire seating. He pauses momentarily to sharpen the blade of his full skip tooth chainsaw.







Pat Curran offers her expertise as a Maser Gardener in the Cooperative Extension program. Though impractical during the dormant season, her assessment gave the brothers the opportunity to learn about the natural life surrounding their property and know how to take care of it for the future.

Cameron Neuhoff <cdn42@cornell.edu>

Mar 31

to jim-tyler

Hello Mr. Tyler,

This is Cameron Neuhoff, President of Building Community. Just wanted to thank you for your willingness to demonstrate such a unique craft and to help our club produce publicity material with the Risley letterpress studio!

I'm contacting you now because I am also working on my final thesis for my undergraduate architecture degree at Cornell. My project is focused on the value of craftsmanship and making in the production of architecture. I've organized several workshops around different local trades that relate to elements of architecture, but I'm also wanting to showcase other crafts and instances of handwork. If you're interested, I'd love to document the letterpress process as demonstrated by a local expert. I was thinking about using the press to print simple invitations for the workshops I am having in April, similar to the ones we have been printing for Building Community.

Would you be available and willing to do this during the usual time period on Saturday? 10 am?

I look forward to hearing back from you and involving you in my project!

Sincerely,
Cameron

Jim Tyler <jim-tyler@fast.net>

Mar 31

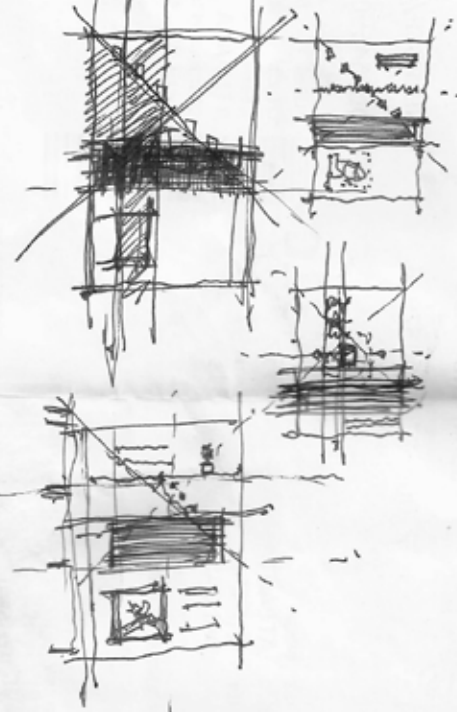
to me

Dear Cameron,

I am pleased that you would like to use the letterpress shop in Risley to print invitations to your workshops. . This Saturday, unfortunately, I have promised to be elsewhere from about 10 am to about 2 pm. I could, if you like, plan to be in the shop by 3 pm. That might give us time to talk over your project and for you to begin work on it. Then, if it is not too complex, and if your schedule allows, we might start in again about 1 pm on Sunday an complete the job. Have you found the paper that you would like to use? Have you made any decisions about color(s) of ink? All best, Jim

JOIN US
on April 10
at 11:00 am
for 2 short
WORKS
behind BETA THE
on the principles
DRY MA
WITH LOCAL CRAFT and RANDY RUTH
LOG SPLITTING
WITH BETA BROTHER BEN SPERRY

Franklin Cond. 18'
Optima 48'
Optima 36'
Ultra Bodoni 72
Wood type 96
News Gothic 36



MASONRY
WEAVING
COBBING
RIGGING

Jim Tyler walks me through the letterpress process, finding and setting type, inking, and printing on the Challenger press.



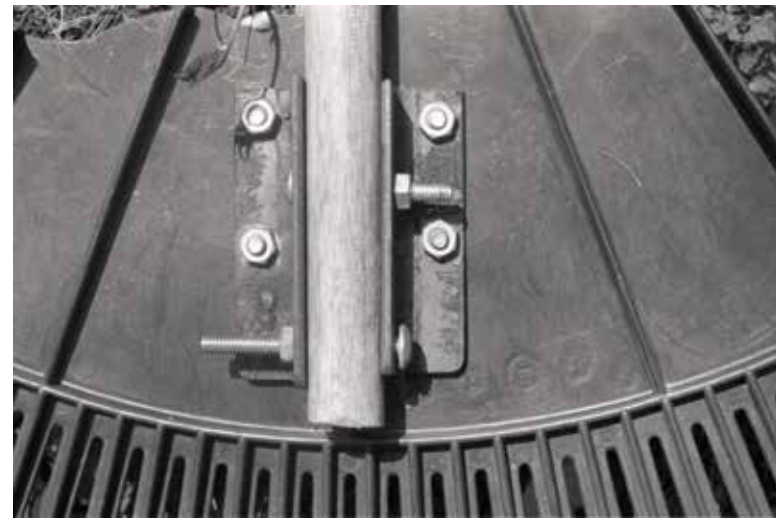


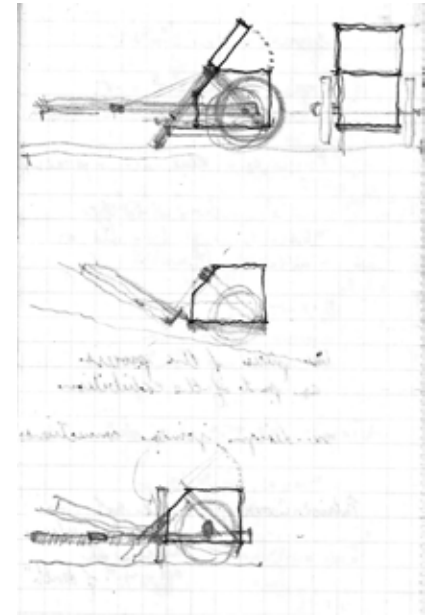
Piles of architectural elements in raw state: wood, stone, sand, vines

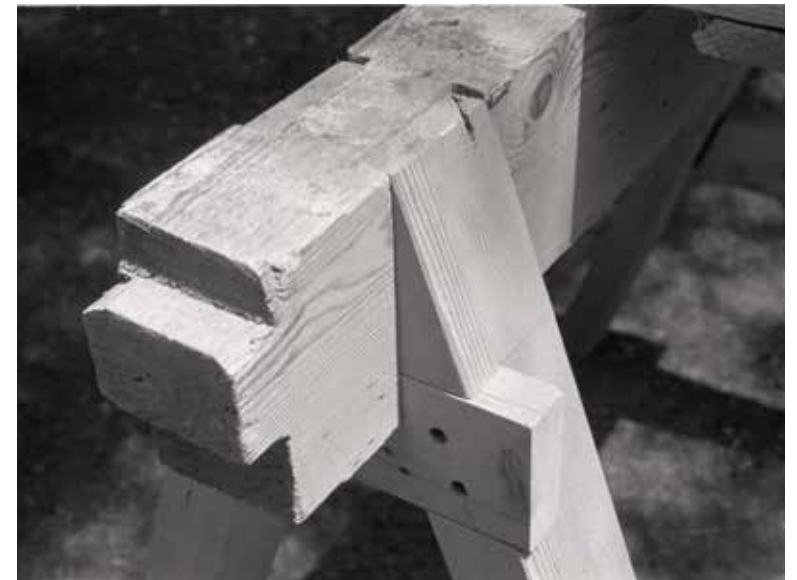
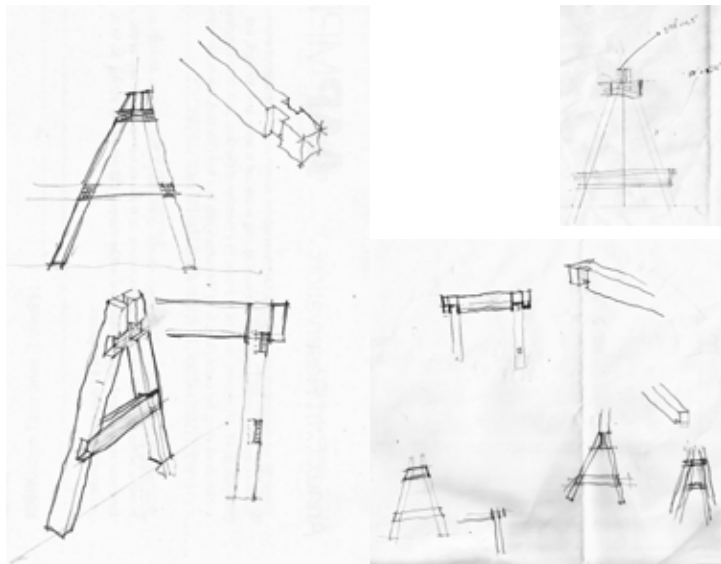




Service corridor made from pallets and duct tubing

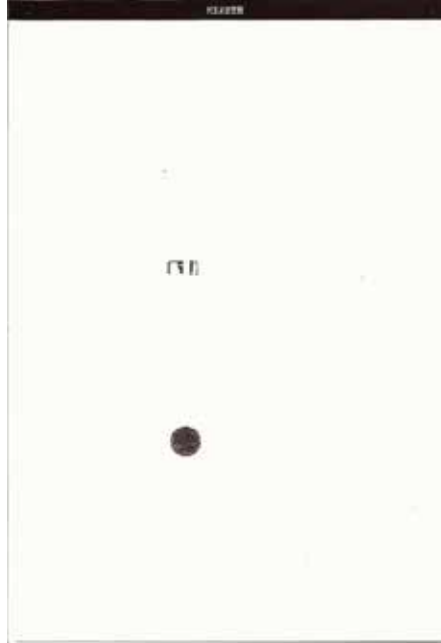




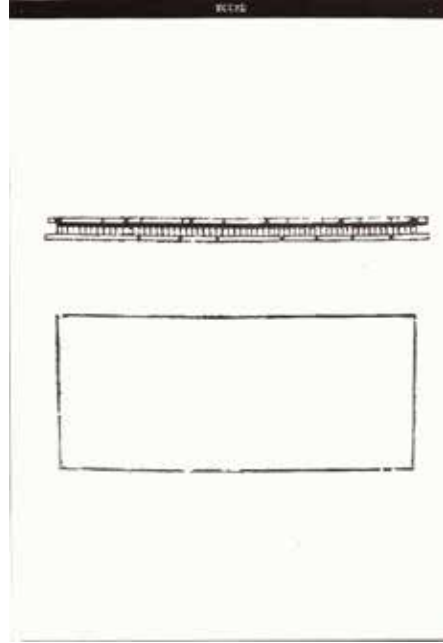




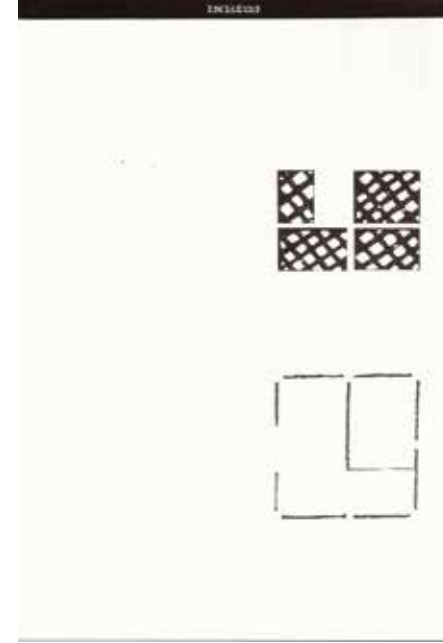
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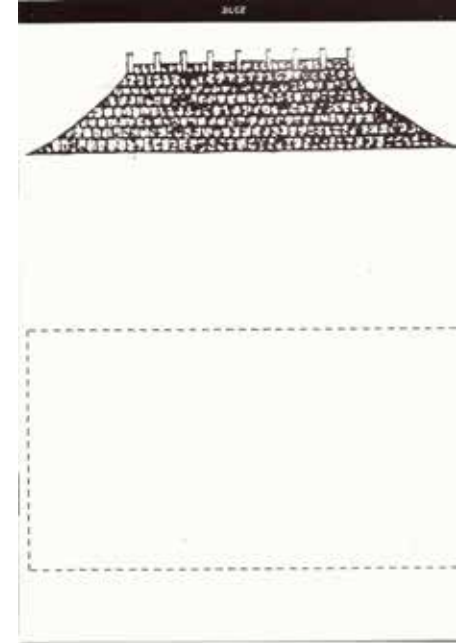
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13/220



13/236



PHASE 1



JOIN US

on April 16
at 11:00 am
for 2 short

WORKSHOPS

behind B011

DRY MASONRY

with local craftsman Randy Ruth

LOG SPLITTING

with Beta Brother Ben Sperry

PLEASE CONTACT CAMERON NEUHOFF TO PARTICIPATE



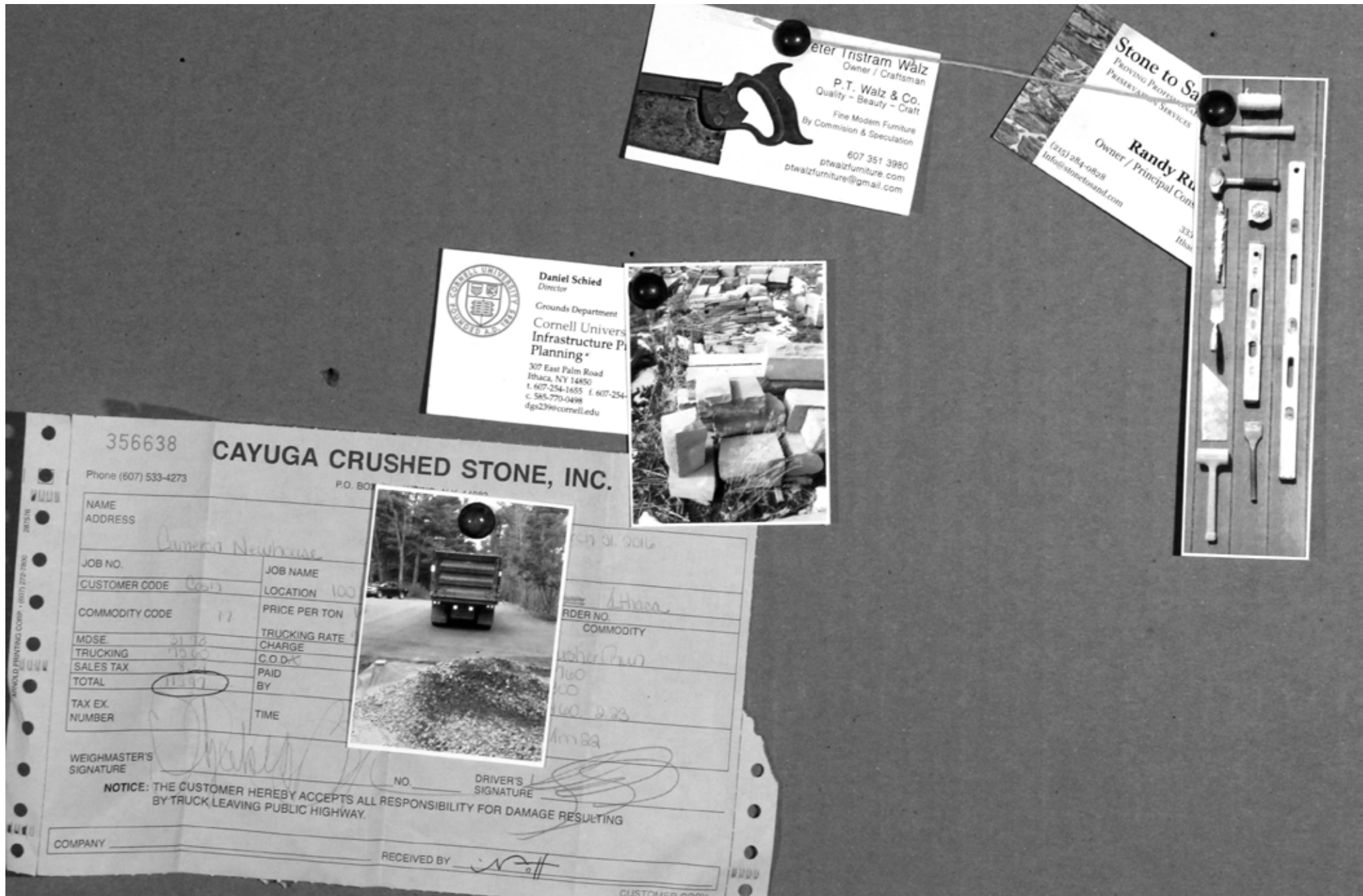
PLATE 36 Morning



PLATE 36 Morning



PLATE 36 Morning



Map of interactions that yielded the masonry workshop.

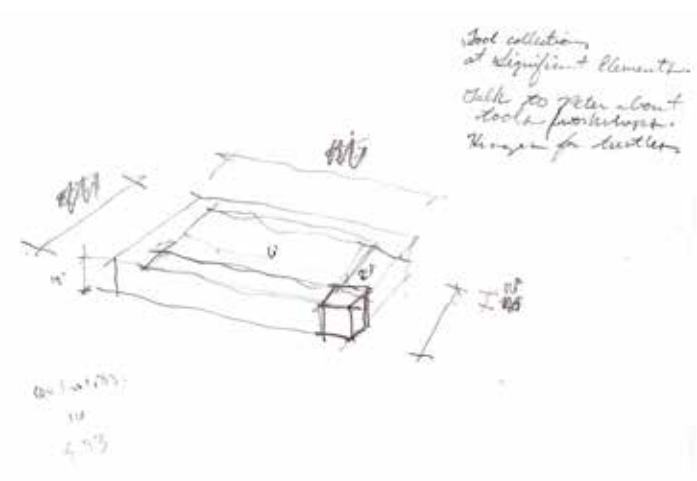
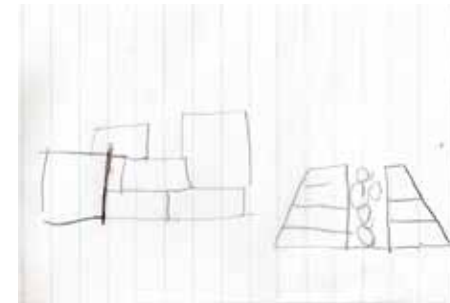


Handy 3.10
 Many important
 method to site
 April 2010 Workshop
 That was on site
 finding the site
 prep
 Set of water for site
 not.
 Camp a lot
 It was in a circle
 then site on each
 side
 10 m depth
 house and for living
 up
 and

state of a state for
 about state
 allow in a rock with
 a purpose
 1/2 ft. little
 stringing bands
 then
 As you build a
 workshop you
 start to the line
 to people
 guide the circle line
 around
 1 block of gravel
 to 100 yds. around
 the

Handy
 Handy 2.10
 Having relations
 people
 from same
 people in different
 element in location
 City of Technology Center
 Workshop and
 from for different
 people
 People in for material
 a good part
 then set up good
 a detail of
 different structure
 the

Be aware of labor/worker
 relationship
 -> salaries and
 performance
 factors, and
 labor, workers in
 and material from
 a cost
 live in each in
 knowledge factor
 social and
 cultural context
 Mission, Vision, Workshop
 based context
 hope
 and
 what things
 also from 2 structure



Randy demonstrates how to stack stone on a rubble trench foundation without mortar. He spreads a thin layer of sand over compacted gravel, sets the lead stones with a mallet and checks level, then fills in-between.





We break for lunch: gazpacho and bread.

CHILLED GAZPACHO

- 3 pounds tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 4 cups tomato juice
- 1 cup cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 cup red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 2 small jalapenos, seeded and minced
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup olive oil, extra-virgin
- 2 limes, juiced
- 4 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 2 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 tablespoons basil leaves, chiffonade

Select good, firm, ripe tomatoes. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Remove half of the mixture, blend it up, and add it back in. Chill in the refrigerator overnight.

Ben demonstrates shows how to properly handle an ax. He finds the center of his strike with the head of the maul, lifts the handle until the ax is straight up and down over his head, and guides the blade to his mark.



PHASE 2



JOIN US

on April 24
at 11:00 am
for 2 short

WORKSHOPS

behind BOP

COB BUILDING

with local craftsman Matteo Lundgren

WOOD WORKING

with Beta Brother Nic Jedema

PLEASE CONTACT CAMERON NEUHOFF TO PARTICIPATE

PHASE 2

71





Map of interactions that yielded the cobbing workshop.



Walter - distance yourself from debt culture.

#1 rule for surviving is to build a shelter...

Point to New Mexico. Point to Brazil... Walter disconnected from being burdened without the skills to build.

"something became unlocked"

Stick built... you're not building, you're putting it together.

Domestication of building

Building codes in USA doesn't anticipate new materials -> doesn't include cob.

That (China) is + alive.

"How do it interact with the world and create something new"

Efficiency of designer/contractor

builder/ builder

Working built alone

"We built a community together"

someone in the end in deciding

Person Nettle lunch

foundations

Not resisting H2O

Not resist.

Piles of dirt -> Sophie Diggs

Proctordale - gravel and sand.

Value as a community

Mutual valuing

Exchange ->

Clay / subsoil.

by Department -> straw bales

FLBart - 60

Carpenter -> Carpenter wooden

Phil Walker

Long theory as to the nature of architecture should be generated from practice and not the other way around.

Reinforcement





Matteo helps us mix and build cob the proper way. All cob begins with coarse sand, clay, and straw. Seventy percent to thirty percent to “enough that you can really see it” respectively. Add a bit of water to start the mix and find a rhythm with your partner. Once the mud reaches an even consistency you may begin the process of integration and discover the reality of cobber’s thumb.



We break for lunch: brisket, corn, and green beans.

OVERNIGHT BRISKET

- 5 pounds brisket
- 2 stalks celery
- 2 onions, quartered
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoon pepper

Bake brisket together with celery, onions and spices for 7-8 hours at 225 degrees. Allow meat to cool and slice across the grain. When ready to eat, reheat in the oven for 30 minutes at 425 degrees.

ROASTED CORN

- 8 ears corn

Do not remove the husk. Bake in the oven directly on the rack for 30 minutes at 425 degrees.

ROASTED GREEN BEANS

- 2 pounds green beans
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic

Toss everything together and bake for 30 minutes at 425 degrees.



Nic teaches intermediate wood joinery. He connects two shorter pieces of lumber stripped from discarded pallets with a simplified scarf joint. Using a shop fabricated circular saw jig, he miters the pieces with the same angle and cuts a dado in each to hold a key, which allows the boards to be lined up when gluing and screwing.

PHASE 3



JOIN US

on May 01

at 11:00 am

for 2 short

WORKSHOPS

behind ΒΘΠ

MAT WEAVING

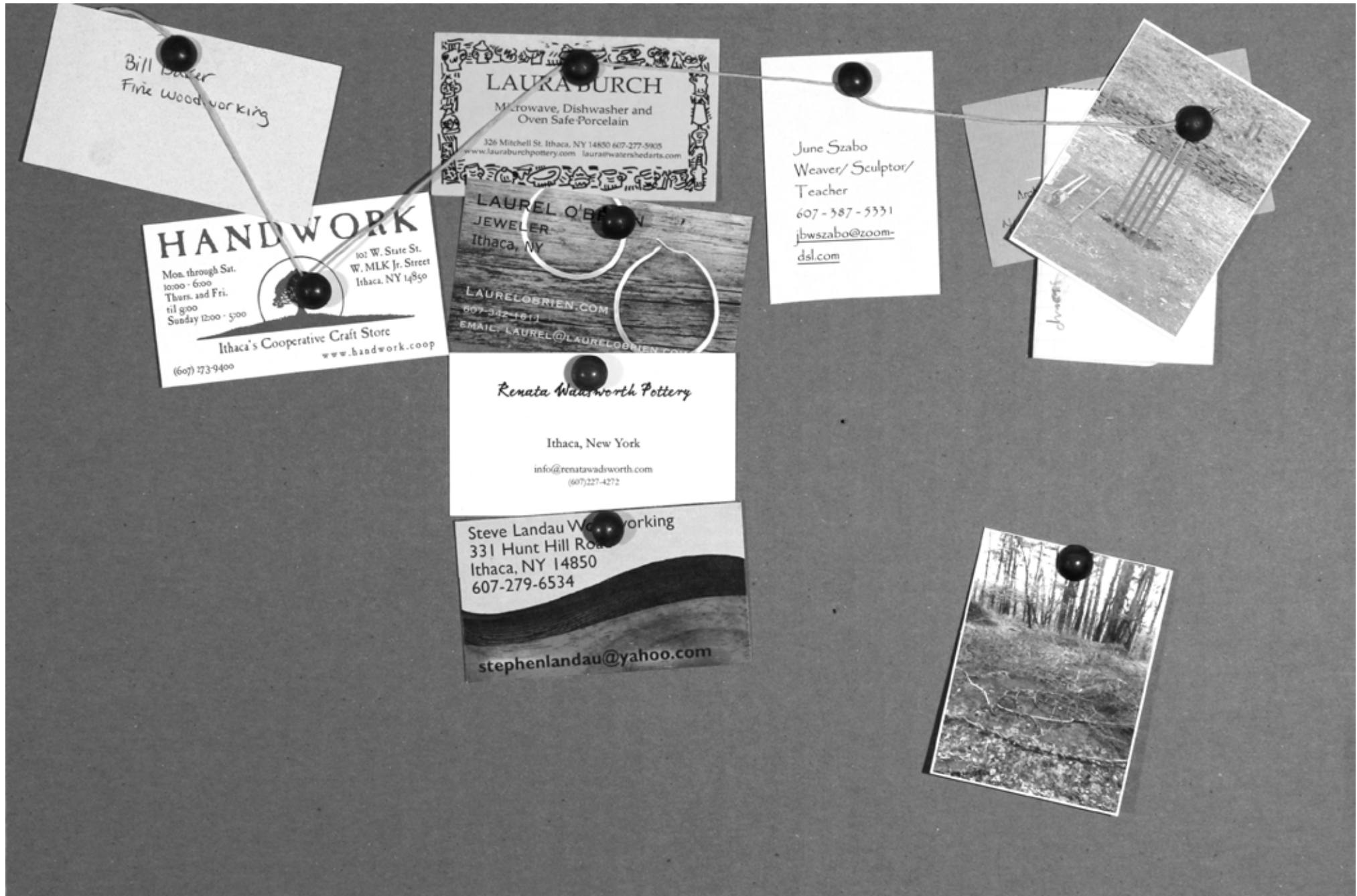
with local craftsman Nick DiGiacinto

LEATHERCRAFT

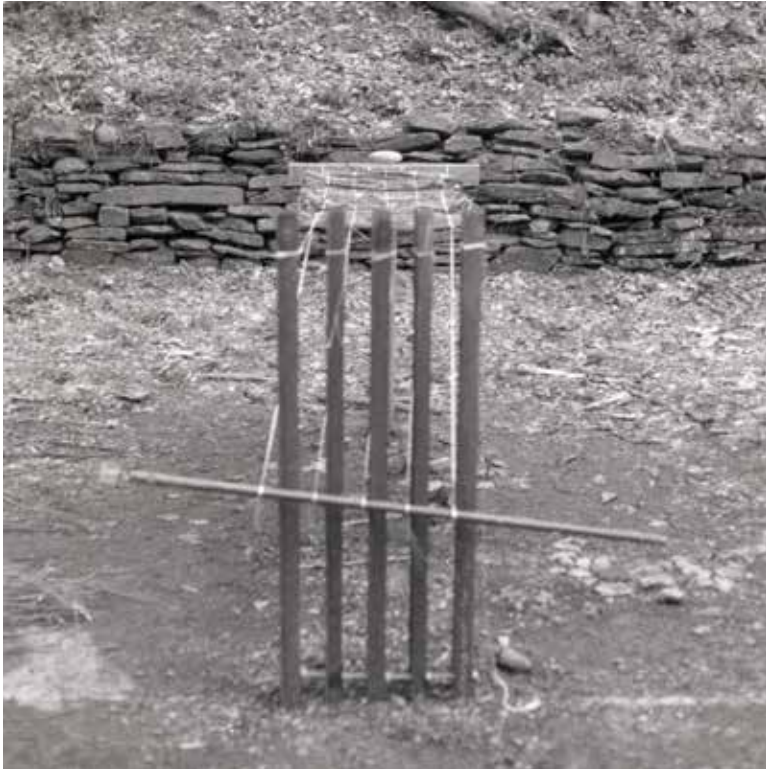
with Beta Brother Peta Feng

PLEASE CONTACT CAMERON NEUHOFF TO PARTICIPATE





Map of interactions that yielded the weaving workshop.



Safety gear.
 gloves → blue palm
 glasses → for safety

Notes → ^{or long} ^{or wrap} ^{half} ^{wrap}
 Stage person for
 log.
 grass was could
 fall apart.

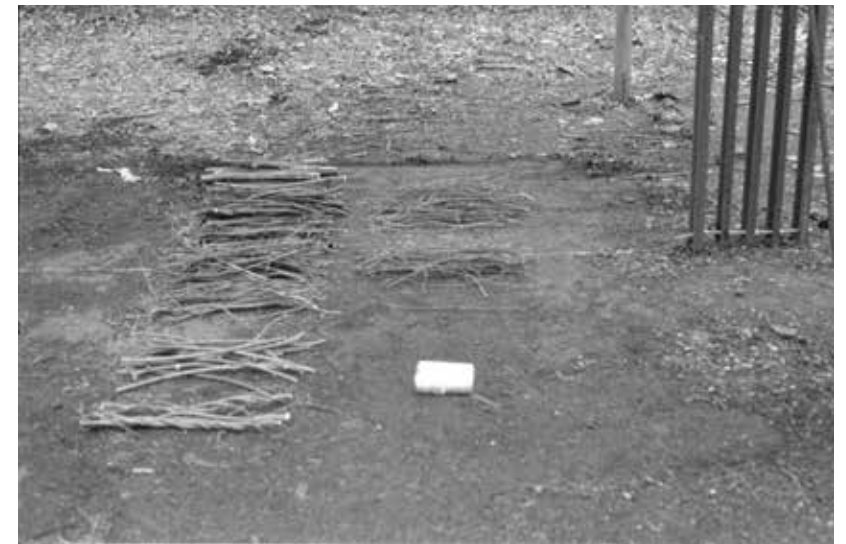
log → white sheets.
 10 ft tall gravel
 & boards.
 Construction banner
 tape.
 Shrink wrap

Shrinkage:
 spools → let out.
 water

logs for the end pieces
 Reader has to be
 smooth → handle on
 each end.

Bills →
 use piece of the process
 as part of the exhibition
 pre-design joints/connections

Patrick Crowley → "it's not
 interesting when
 there's an
 element of death"



Nic shows the basics of weaving with a ground loom. Unpictured is the setting up of the loom, a process that can take longer than weaving itself. Nic coordinates the movement of the heddle to change the shed and ensures the beater stick stays parallel with the filler material. Above all, he emphasizes the importance of maintaining tension and strict adherence to the weaver's mantra: fill, change, beat.





We break for lunch: pork tacos.

SLOW COOKED PORK SHOULDER

- ½ pork shoulder
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoon pepper

Mix the spices and butter in a small bowl. Cut 1 inch deep slits in the pork and fill with butter and spice mixture. Bake pork shoulder for 3 hours at 350 degrees. Allow meat to cool and shred.

ROASTED VEGGIES

- 2 red bell peppers, chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoon salt

Toss everything together and bake for 30 minutes at 425 degrees.



Peta explains how to use a precut template to form a card holder out of vegetable tanned leather. He cuts two profiles out of scraps with a utility knife, scores around the edge, punches holes for stitching, clamps the material together, and sews a saddle-stitch with waxed cotton thread to bind the two pieces together, burnishing the edges to finish.

PHASE 4



JOIN US

on May 07

at 11:00 am

for 2 short

WORKSHOPS

behind **BΘΠ**

SAIL ERECTING

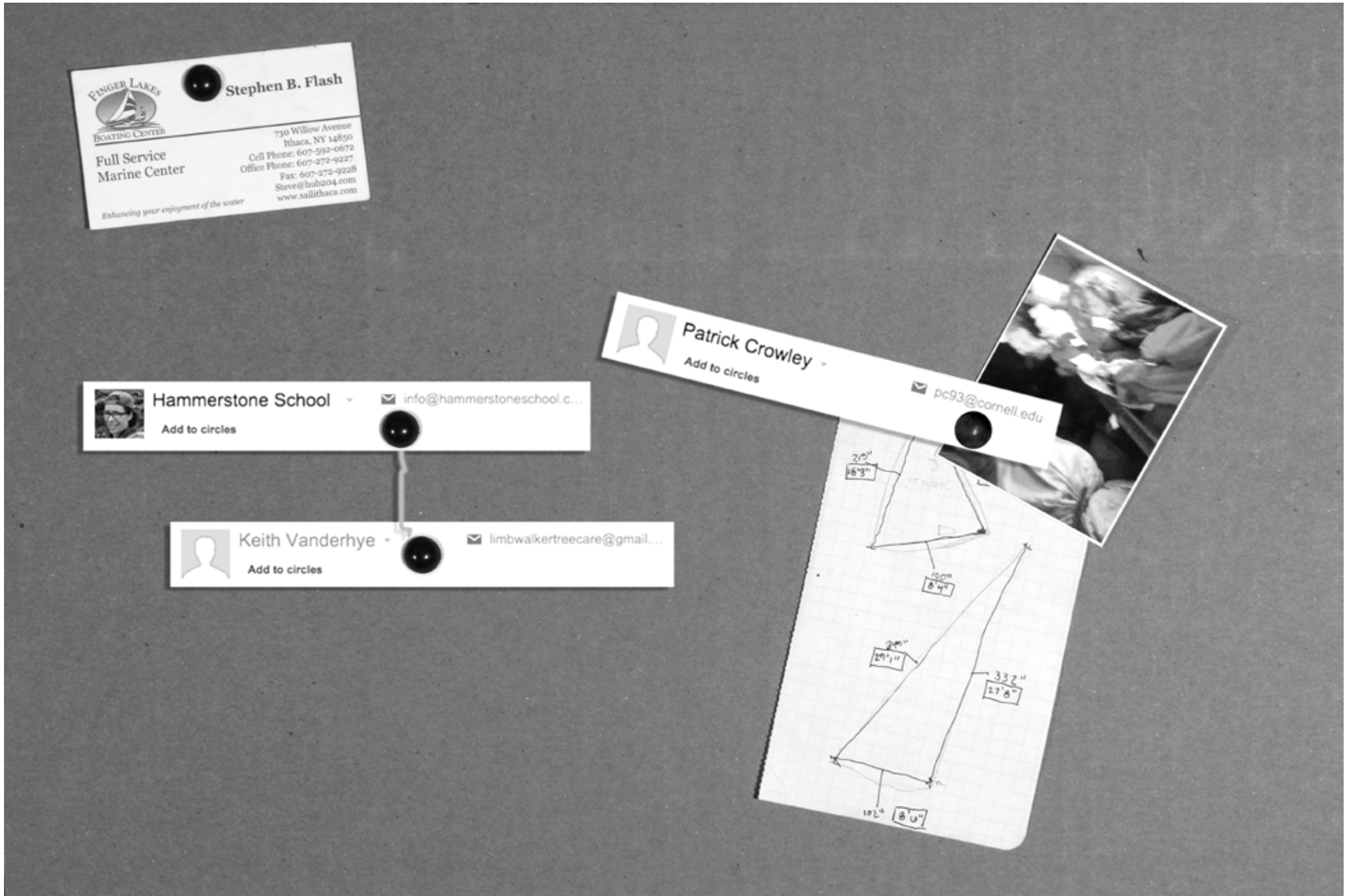
with local craftsman Keith Vanderhyye

KNOT TYING

with Beta Brother Samuel Creighton

PLEASE CONTACT CAMERON NEUHOFF TO PARTICIPATE





Map of interactions that yielded the rigging workshop.



Keith - "Limbwalker"
 "How did you know how
 to do all of this?"
 "Just fun doing it..."
 "He doesn't think through
 anything / doesn't
 know both ends of the
 deal thing -> site visit
 [talking community] will
 probably be on their
 yacht that day.
 Howlin'??
 Mechanical advantage
 "glorified clothesline"





PLATES 1-1 Keith uses tree climbing techniques to rig the sails to trees surrounding the site. He tosses his throw bag from a bucket up to the crotches of high limbs in order to attain the pitch of the roof. A mechanical advantage with a pulley and trucker's hitch knot allows him to connect the sail to a point halfway between two trees. The remainder of the knots he uses are bowlines or variations thereof, a very common and versatile knot.



PLATE 1 We break for lunch: seafood stew.

SEAFOOD STEW

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced fennel
- 1 cup finely diced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 3 thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce
- 14 ounces whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 16 ounces clam juice
- 8 ounces cod, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 pound clam meat
- 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt and pepper

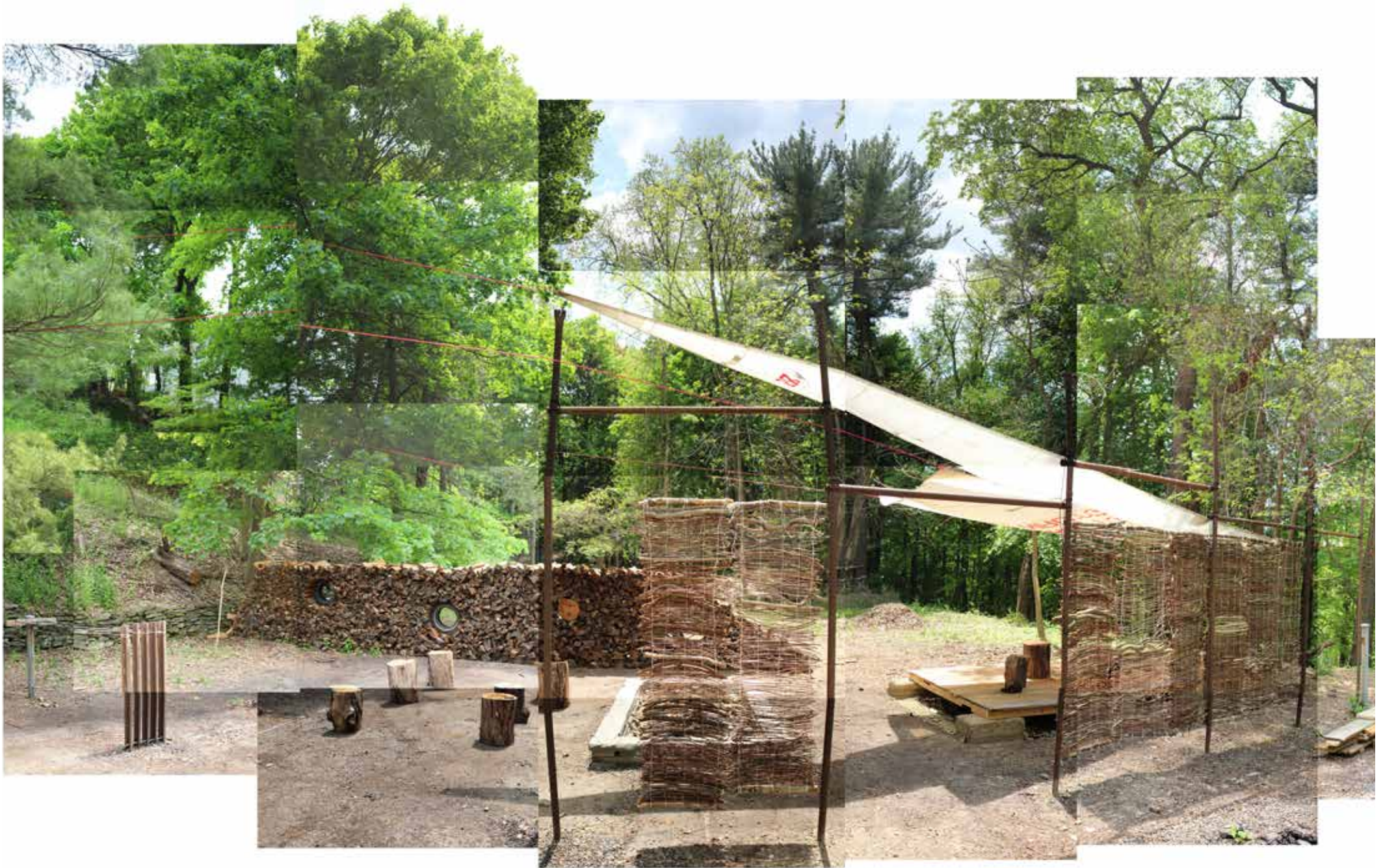
Saute fennel, onion, garlic, carrot, and thyme on for 5 minutes. Add fennel seeds, tomato paste, and fish sauce. Continue to cook for 3 minutes. Deglaze the pan with wine and reduce. Add everything but the fish and bring to simmer. When ready to eat, add the seafood and cook for 5 minutes.



PLATES 1-1 Sam guides us through four of his most frequently used knots and a couple of bonus ones to boot. The bowline comes first - here it is again - and he uses it for tying off or fastening objects. Next, the square knot, which should not be confused with the granny knot, is used to connect two ends. The clove hitch he admits he does not practice or use often, but it is a knot that Nick used extensively in setting up the ground loom. Finally, shows the figure-eight as one option for a stopper knot.

OCCUPANCY AND USE









INDEX OF PEOPLE

Angela Carbone
 Danny Salomon
 Ekin Bilal
 Ihwa Choi
 John Lai
 Keith Vanderhyye
 Matteo Lundgren
 Nick Digiacinto
 Randy Ruth
 Patrick Crowley
 Isabella Crowley
 Nic Jedema
 Red Giuliano
 Michael Raspuzzi
 Peta Feng
 Sam Creighton
 Matt Willingford
 Mike Lee
 Ben Sperry
 Andrew Shi
 Naomi Tashiro
 Ainsley Cullen
 Maggie Zink
 Gosia Pawlowska
 Nils Axen
 Melis Schildkraut
 Johnny
 Peter Walz
 Jim Tyler
 Pat Curran
 Sara Johnson
 Laura Burch
 Bill Baker
 June Szabo
 Maria Klemperer-Johnson

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 Steven Flash
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 Luben Dimcheff
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Thank you all for your generosity and good spirit.