

GROUND, SKY, AND THE SPACE IN BETWEEN.

FINLAND.

PROJECT NARRATIVE STATEMENT.

One must go through a process of detachment in order to gain true awareness. With architecture, this process is a crucial component for obtaining the necessary perspective on a project. With life, this wandering is a crucial component for obtaining the necessary perspective of ourselves. Either way, the conscience is affected by everything one sees, hears, feels, believes; it all accumulates from experiences of wonder, times of being lost.

There is something about stepping into the unknown boundaries that simply sparks a light into the imagination and emits an energy within the spirit – a wild peacefulness found no where else. Yes, most people prefer to have direction and guidance and acknowledgement that they are on the right path. However, when forced to make one's own decisions, to make one's own judgements, to make one's own path, a discovery is made not only spatially but mentally. Extracting the sensible from a project helps to ground those that are indecisive and provide them an opportunity for those discoveries. After all, no discovery can be made without stepping out of bounds. Mentally and physically. Individually and socially.

Over the course of the summer, I've been reflecting on my experiences abroad, and I came to the realization that we each inflict our own personal projections and opinions onto our surroundings. As a result, we each imagine [indefinite and suggested bounds] within a place – supposed boundaries that are physical, mental, and natural. The question, though, is which informs which? Where is there overlap? What are the consequences of each type of boundary? If 'everyman has a right,' like Finland believes, then there are no boundaries after all – only personal perceptions and projections accumulated from experiences...

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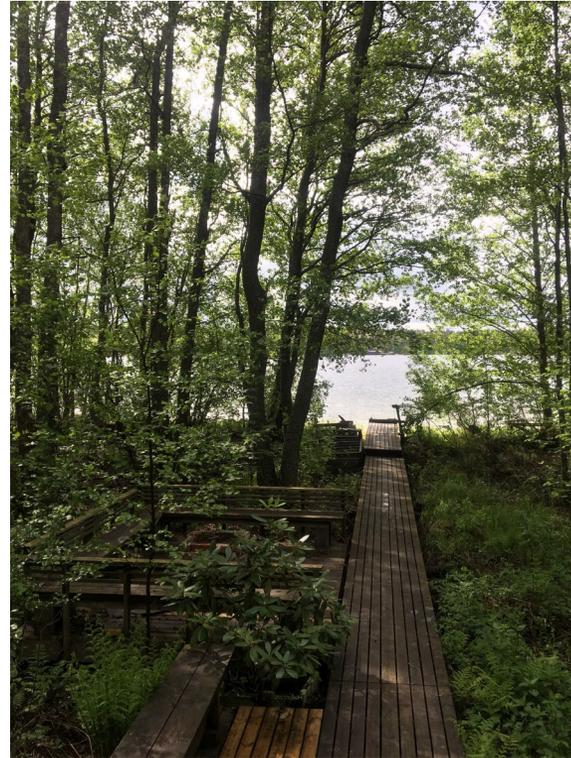
26.05.19 / Nashville to London to Helsinki

"I honestly was terrified for my trip. I never go anywhere alone, and here I was flying through London to land in Helsinki all alone...Thankfully, I made it with no trouble. It was only on my flight to Helsinki that things started to become intimidating because everyone was speaking Finnish and things were having to be translated; it was all such a strange new experience for me being on the other side of a language barrier...My plane landed in Helsinki on time at 18:25; I grabbed my luggage and took the train into the Central Railway Station downtown. I was so nervous. I couldn't read anything. Thank goodness for universal symbols. And thank goodness for my friends who came to pick me up from the station. I would have never found my way to the hostel otherwise. Well, I probably would have, but it would have taken many wrong turns and wrong trams. The best part? This was only the beginning to the most overwhelmingly exceptional experience of my life..."

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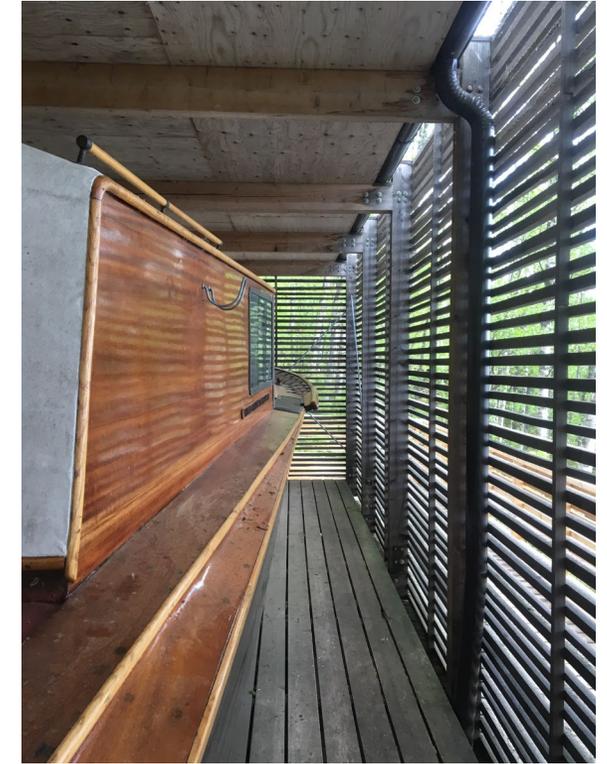
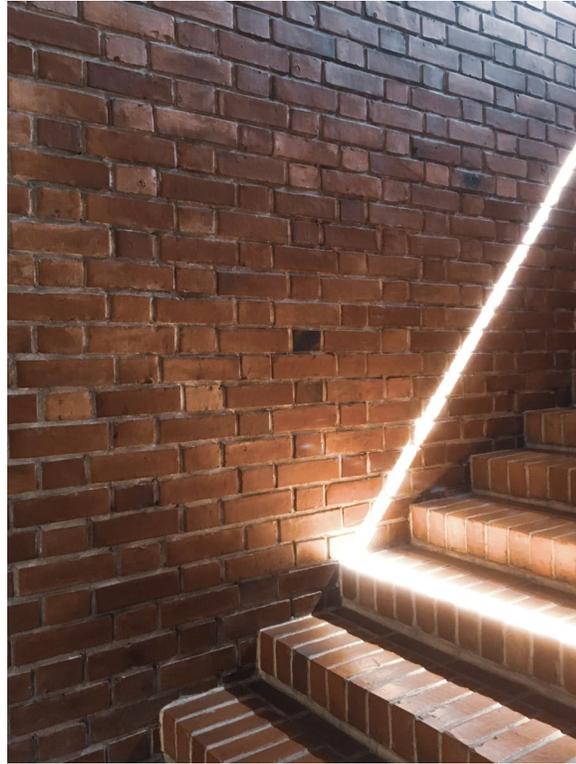


27.05.19 / Kiljava

"...Kiljava feels like a camp. An amazing one. We're staying in a lovely house on beautiful land with a wonderful sauna, eating good food and having fun times. What could be better? Oh yes, no wifi! Seriously, I love it. We each actually engage with one another rather than staring at our phones and obsessing over non-present realities...Before dinner tonight we all went to the sauna because it's a Finnish tradition. And oh my, the experience was lovely. At first, it was so hot I had trouble breathing, but given time you start adjusting. And you just DRIP with sweat. It was weird. But magical. We sat in there for probably thirty minutes and then as the second part of the tradition, you jump in the cold lake! I was nervous to go from such a hot temperature to ice cold water, but after doing it I felt AMAZING. You feel so refreshed and clean and new. I now understand why the Finnish people are so happy and beautiful..."

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29.05.19 / Säynätsalo

"...From Kiljava we drove two and a half hours to the Säynätsalo Town Hall where we will be staying the next couple of days. Once we got to the town hall, I explored for a bit, and then all of us went to a pizza place for dinner. After dinner, we've literally been doing nothing but relaxing in our rooms. It's a little challenging to entertain ourselves here, but I'm enjoying it because we're being forced to simply talk and be present with one another ... I've been in Finland for just about a week now, and it's mind boggling. Already I've seen, done, and experienced so many things. I'm slowly growing more comfortable here, too, but I still go through waves of emotions. Feeling confused, overwhelmed, excited, nervous, peaceful, stressed – a little of everything. I can tell that this summer will ultimately be testing my patience, understanding, and socialization. Let's hope I manage..."

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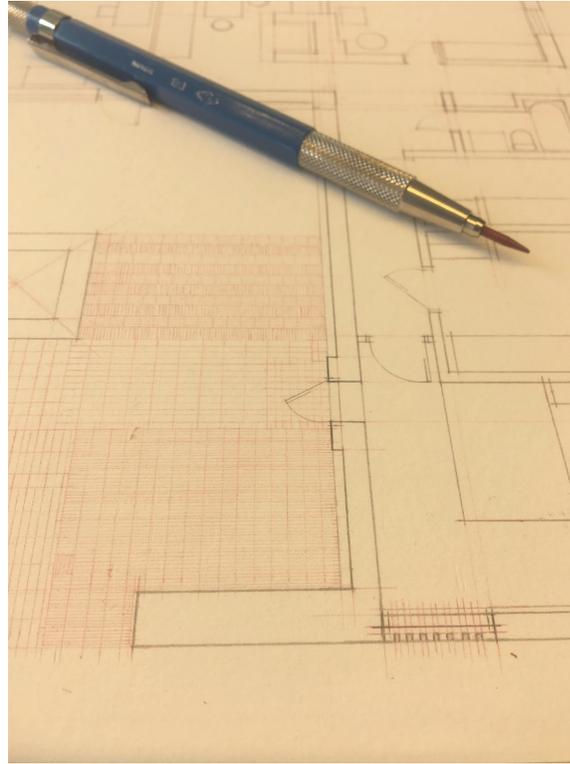
30-31.05.19 / Muuratsalo

"...Today we woke up in Säynätsalo around 08:30 and went to Muuratsalo to start measuring Aalto's Experimental House. My team was in charge of the site plan and mapping all the landscape elements. So, we spent the day triangulating trees and boulders. It was actually a really enjoyable day. The landscape here is absolutely breathtaking. But boy was the wind whipping. Freezing actually..."

"...We were moving and getting breakfast by 08:30 and off to Muuratsalo by 09:00 to measure the interior of the house. We measured all day with a break for sandwiches and left over pasta, and then we went back to Säynätsalo at five..."

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05.06.19 / Helsinki

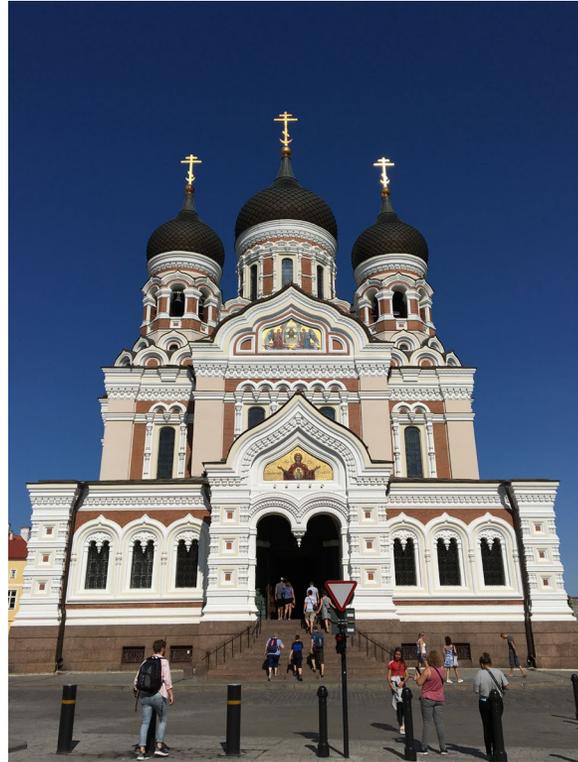
"And let the Finland studio begin! I'm officially settled into my room in Helsinki where I'll be spending the next two and a half months. Crazy to believe ... I think I'm finally starting to get the swing of things here in Finland. Or at least starting to learn my way around and feel comfortable. And it's probably because we're starting to develop routines. Every weekday we have class from 9-4 in studio with history from 4-6 three of those days. Long times to be studious, but it seems to move fairly quickly. Plus, we get an hour break for lunch. After class we all go our separate ways to our rooms and make dinner, relax, and go to bed. The daylight keeps getting longer and longer though, so bedtime is still very strange. But the rays are beautiful."



21.06.19 / Hanko

"Happy Midsummer! Today the sun never sets, crazy! To celebrate our time off and take advantage of the long weekend, a friend and I decided to go on a little adventure out to the Bengtskär Lighthouse. We arrived in Hanko at 10:20 thinking we'd have plenty of time to catch our 11 o'clock cruise..but no..we almost missed our cruise! The sole purpose for this trip and we came ten minutes away from missing it because we were confused and walked fifteen minutes out of the way. It was quite comical and heart wrenching at the same time. We literally just started running. Thankfully, we made it on time. But boy did we sweat ... The whole lighthouse experience was absolutely amazing. By far the highlight of my time here in Finland. Despite the stress of catching the ferry, my mad sunburn, and the intense downtime between dinner and our next train, this day was one I'll always remember and hold dear to my heart."

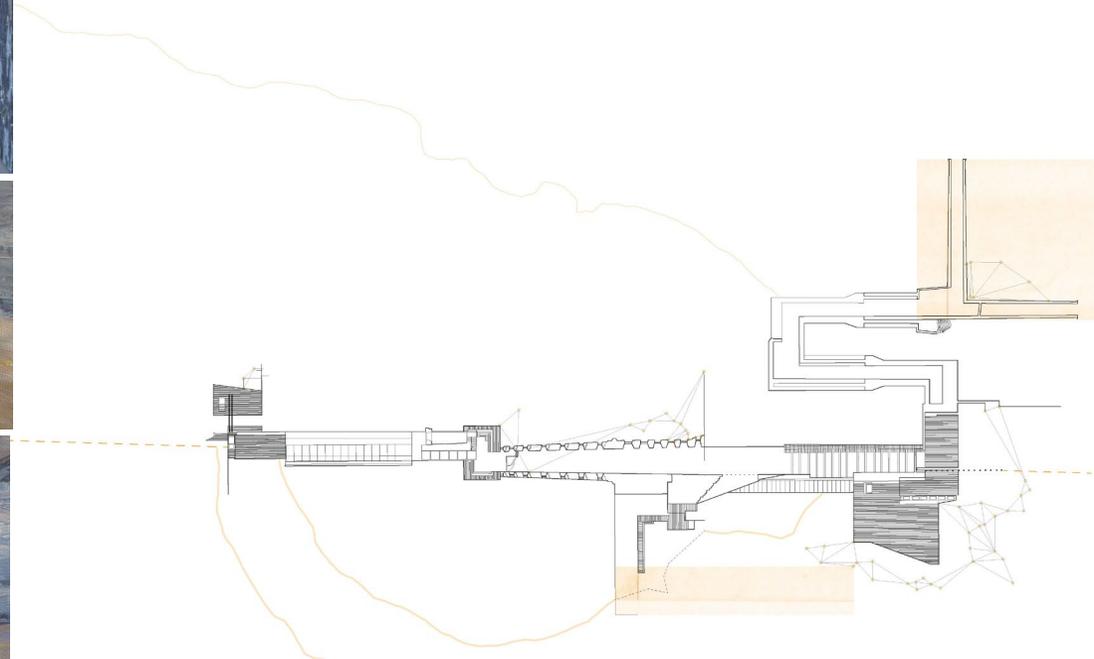
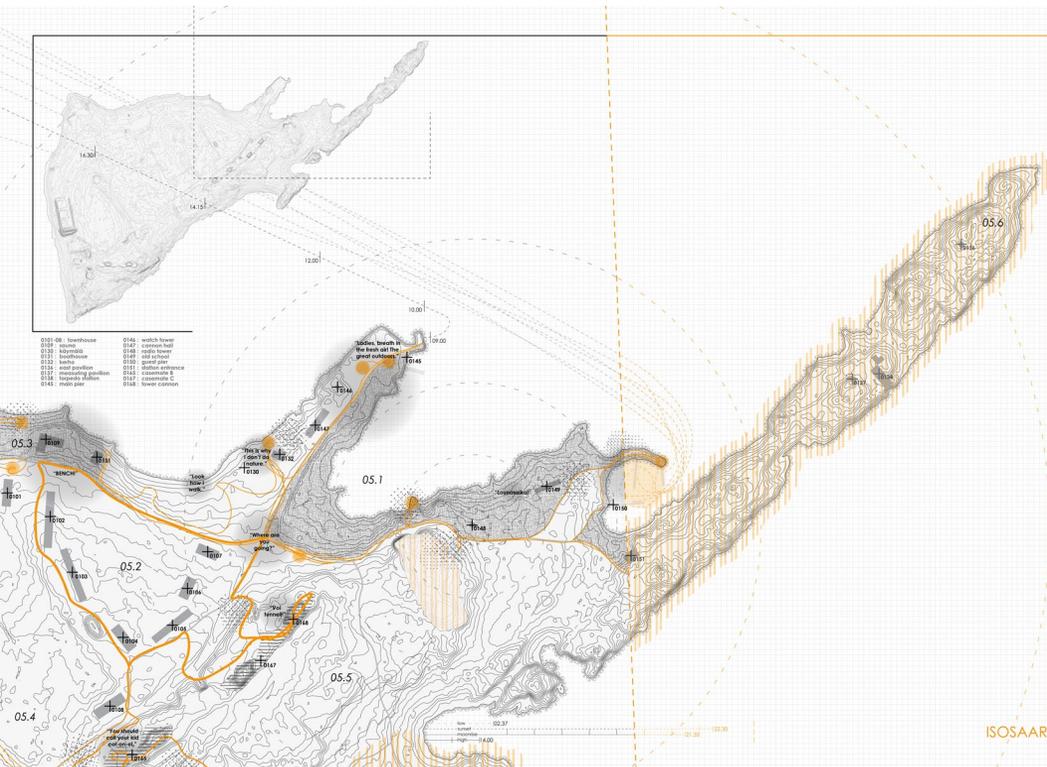
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02.06.-28.07.19 / Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Norway

"Churches have seemed to become a new obsession. I visit a new one just about every week. From the Helsinki Cathedral, to the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Tallinn, to the Matthias Church in Budapest, to the 1300 AD Kvernes Stave Church in Averøy (respectively shown in the images above), the structures only become more and more astounding with each look. There is a special atmosphere surrounding and embodying each place, creating a sense of peace that resonates within you, so much so that it evokes a certain kind of nostalgia. Each church is not just a place, but a place of commonality, a place of community, and a place of hope."

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10.07.19 / Isosaari

"The map and collage of Isosaari further develop my personal experience of Finland. Here, one can find fragments of many buildings visited across my time spent abroad. Within this discombobulation of space, one not only pieces together an individual's experience of place, but one is also able to find new configured possibilities of place within the extracted boundaries. Inherently, this project reacts by creating boundaries that force the occupant to comply with specific regulations. As such, one can only enter the space in the warmer months during the rotation of low tide. At high tide, water fills the voids, obscuring the structure all together and preventing entry to the submerged de-militarized zone. During winter, ice thickens the divide and freezing water once again obscures the middle ground division. Only in the right moment is one allowed to cross into the boundary between earth and sky."

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10.08.19 / Helsinki to Chicago to Nashville

“So long Helsinki. It’s been fun! ... I can’t believe the summer is over. My time abroad went by like the blink of an eye! And despite the cliché, I have to say it has truly been a life changing experience. I’ve become far more independent; I’ve gained so many new global and cultural perspectives; I’ve learned a great deal about people and that there are truly good people in this world; and I’ve learned a great deal about myself. I’ve learned that it’s okay. Yes, to put it simply, it’s okay. More than okay actually. I’ve come to the full realization that life is too good to get hung up on little things. Everything depends on attitude and perspective. I’ll admit, this summer was not all smiles all the time. There were anxieties, tensions, worries. And tears. But. All of that is what taught me what I know now. It taught me how to find freedom within a constantly restricting world.”