

Case Study #3

The third case study includes the process and product of a female student age 19. This student was a first year interior design student enrolled in Design Fundamentals I and in the fall semester of 2001. Her academic level is sophomore. This student had taken an architectural drafting class but had no drawing classes.

The student started her process discussion by relating that she had a struggle with developing a visual image from the required reading. Because this seemed like such an insurmountable problem, she related the short stories to mythology and then associated the stories with myths that she was familiar with. Once she had determined that the stories reminded her of the fabled Fountain of Youth and the Tower of Babel, she downloaded art images from these myths and studied and diagrammed those images as her visual inspiration. Similar to the other two case studies, this process and product were selected because of the different process.

Transformation was the student's main idea throughout idea development. On this project the student wanted her final product to be about transition between opposites. She also pointed out that she had more process for this project than for any other project she had completed during the semester.

She paralleled the upward movement of the Tower of Babel with the people in Lightman's (1993) book who lived in stilt homes on the tops of mountains in order to have eternal youth. She went on to compare both stories to the myth of Icarus trying to fly as high as the Gods.

Journal Process Discussion

Figure XII shows the student's first attempt at a concept statement. In the statement there is the first mention of transformation as a conceptual guide for the project. Additionally the student was thinking that the movement that supported the transformation should be horizontal. Additionally she wrote that she would like to focus on line, shape, movement and focus.

The following figure (Figure XIII) is a copy of the Fountain of Youth image that she downloaded off of the Internet. She explained during the interview that she was especially interested in the transformation from old and brittle to young and vibrant. She was also intrigued by the mythology of people seeking eternal life.

Figure XIV shows the image of the Tower of Babel that she downloaded from the Internet. Again it is interesting to note that she felt the need to relate the stories in Lightman's (1993) book to a visual image. This image of the Tower of Babel intrigued her and she diagrammed the design elements and principles in the artwork in order to have better understanding of a possible direction for her project. In her following sketches, the influence of these visual inspirations will be evident.

PROJECT 12

CONCEPT STATEMENT

I would like to use the entry from April 26th as my inspiration. I would like the light to create movement & rhythm & focus. I would like it to be a multi-level light that by changing the size, it can become a floor lamp or a ceiling light. I would like it to move up! ↑ I would like it to ~~be~~ appear as a sculpture when the light is off. I would like to show the transformation of the old becoming new or young.

Concept Statement → Project 12

Using the entry from April 26th about people seeking youth in the mountains, I wanted to use the concept of change or transformation. Using ^{horizontal} movement, ~~David like to transform~~ I would like it to be emphasized by line. The movement will lead to focus. I would like to integrate the light with the design by it emphasizing line, shape, movement and focus.

Figure XII Case Study #3, Journal – Page 1

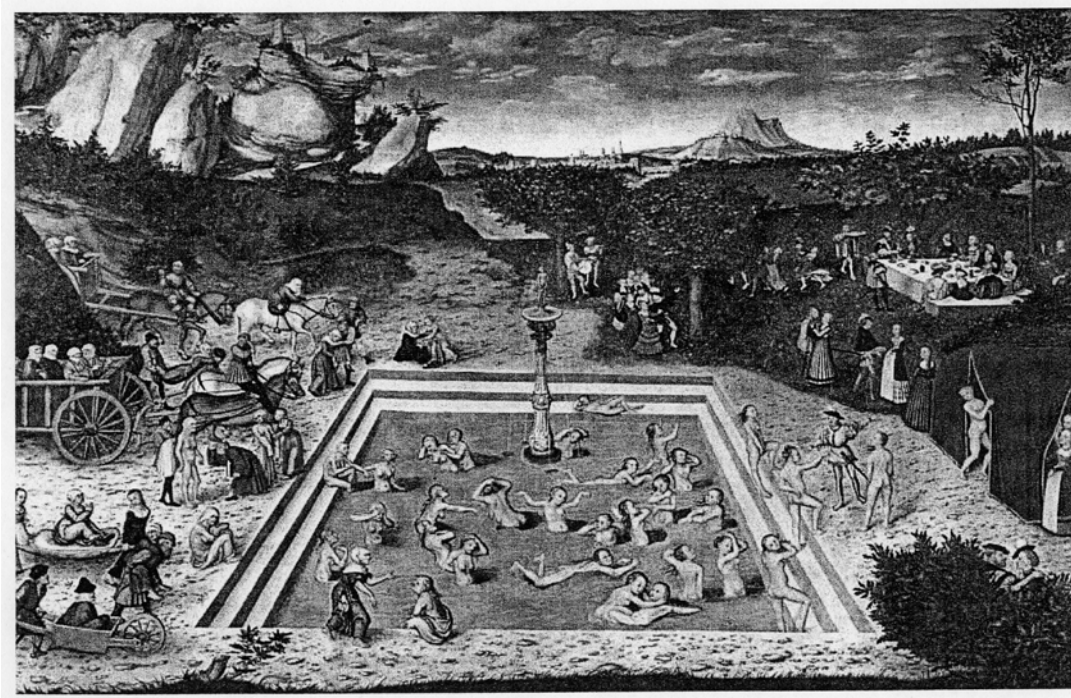


Figure XIII Case Study #3, Journal – Page 2



Figure XIV Case Study #3, Journal – Page 3

Figure XV shows the first page of sketching process in this student's journal. During the interview, she pointed out the first sketch (Sketch A) and said that it began as just a jagged line and then she added the three-dimensional form to it to start "seeing" the project as a three-dimensional object. This was also her first look at movement through line and started to explore transition.

Sketch B is a leveling of sketch A. She has turned the jagged line vertically and is not visualizing this as a three-dimensional object. Sketch C sharpens sketch B by adding back the sense of form. The student described this drawing to be a "genie in the bottle" sketch. Moving away from representation, the next sketch, sketch E illustrates some of the things that she is thinking about all her visual input. The jagged lines of sketch A are refined into wavy lines. Genie's bottle is now penetrating the wavy plane and "genie" is replaced by lines that transition tightly bent wire structures to wavy, free flowing wires.

Here again is another student who has challenged herself to think in three-dimensional forms at the very beginning of the process. Because of their very sketchiness, these drawings appear to have tumbled out of the student's mind very rapidly in an effort to record and externalize the images forming in her head. Not feeling completely satisfied by these solutions, the student turned the page and explored these ideas in further sketches.

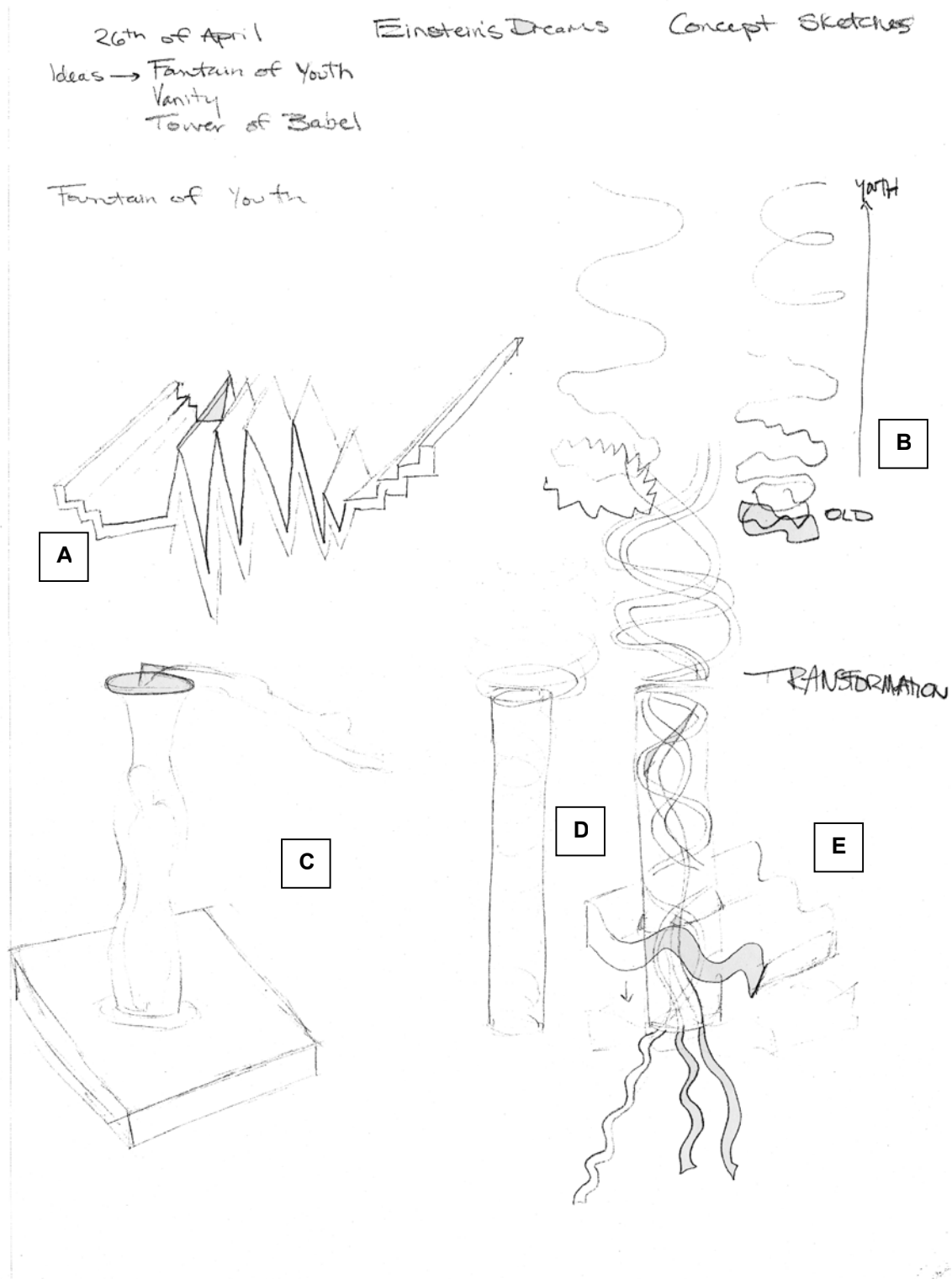


Figure XV Case Study #3, Journal – Page 4

This journal page (Figure XVI) starts with sketch F. Sketch F is a leveling of sketch A. There is less detail and no three-dimensional thought evidenced in this sketch. Again we see her persistence in finding “Transformation” in her design solution. Sketch G serves to sharpen her idea found in sketch A and Sketch F. This sketch turns the transformation from jagged edged plane transforming into a smooth plane on its end and she is experiencing the idea vertically.

The annotation at H shows again that early in the process, the student is considering the building materials that might be used to develop the design solution. In this iteration she is considering utilizing bendable wire and some translucent fabric to shade the light.

The first part of sketch I shows a leveling of sketch G. There is less information and the form goes back to two-dimensional representation. The idea of transformation is still present, however. This time there is the addition of an undulating line up the center of the shape. This drawing is potentially an elevation of the perspective illustrated in sketch G.

Sketch H could possibly be a section of sketch G. This drawing shows the location of lights in reference to the transforming plane. If this is a section, one can start to see the student’s progression along the conceptual base of creating a transformation. Perhaps at this point the student struggled with how to make the light transform in concert with the form.

Based on the linear quality of these sketches, and the proximity of the Fountain of Youth to these sketches. Perhaps these sketches were inspired by that artwork.

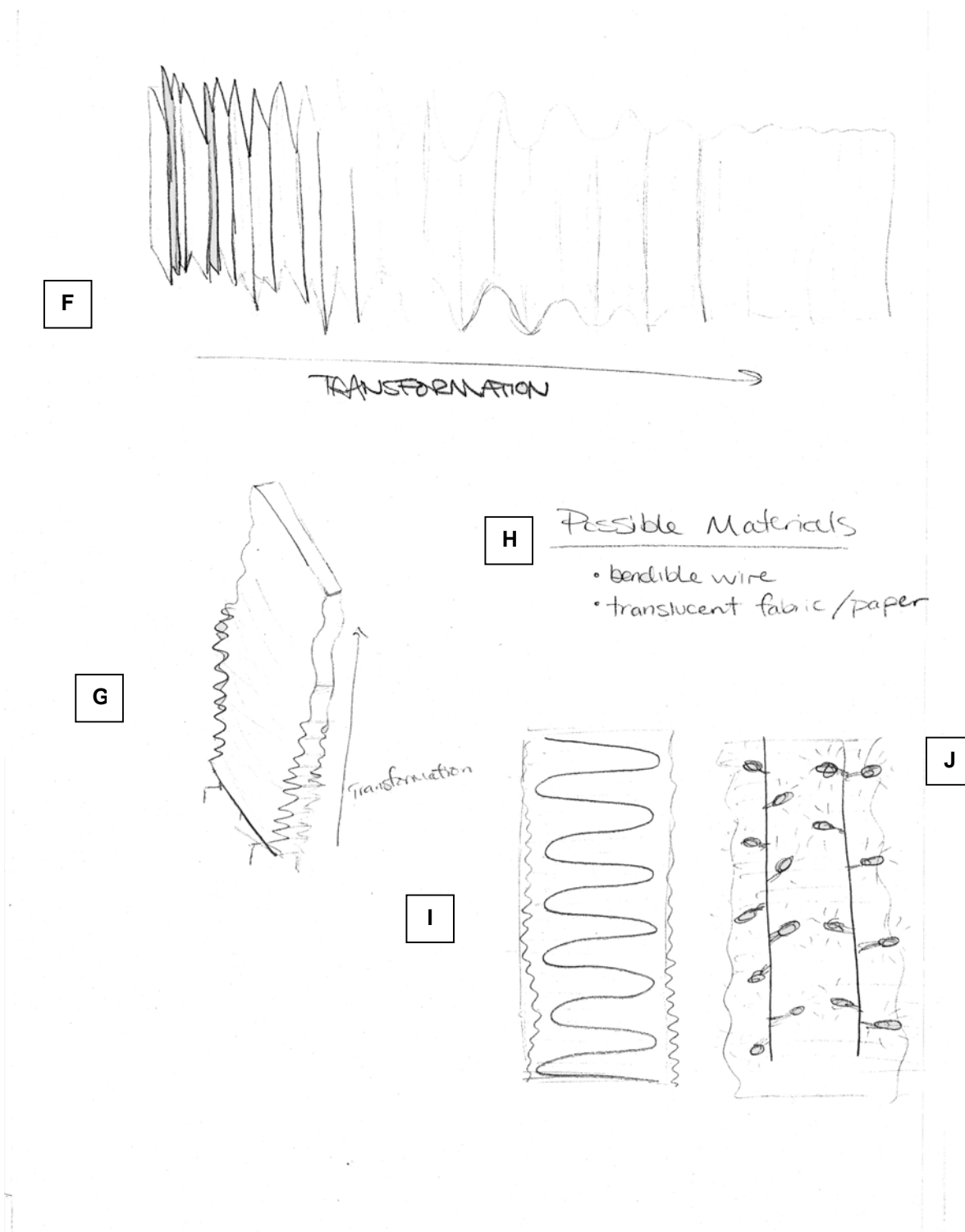


Figure XVI Case Study #3 Journal – Page 5

If the previous pages' sketches were inspired by the linear quality of the Fountain of Youth piece, then these were inspired by the image from the Tower of Babel. These images were inspired by the mountains in the short story, blended with inspiration from the Tower of Babel. The student said during the interview that the focus here was on movement to a pinnacle. She was exploring possibilities utilizing a cone shape.

Sketch K could possibly be about a range of mountains, or back to the transformation ideas earlier. This could be an elevation type of drawing that refers back to drawing A and drawing F. Drawing L, with its terracing and conical shape is representational of the Tower of Babel painting. Possibly it was a sketch to help the student abstract the visual inspiration. Sketch M and sketch N may be inspired by the sketch of the Tower of Babel. Sketch M possibly a sharpening of her idea, as there seems to be some sense of form and shading. Sketch N seems to be a leveling as there are fewer details and the sketch has no indication of form.

In sketch O, the student mirrored two terraced cones and placed them base to base. This might have been abandoned because of its similarity to the form pictured in the artwork. Sketch P was a sharpening of ideas as it depicts form and has the added detail of rectilinear forms protruding from the cone form. Sketch Q looks like it may have referenced sketch N. Sketch Q could be a section drawing of sketch N. Again, the student has returned to thinking about the form as a light fixture. Because of these added details, sketch Q was a sharpening of previous ideas.

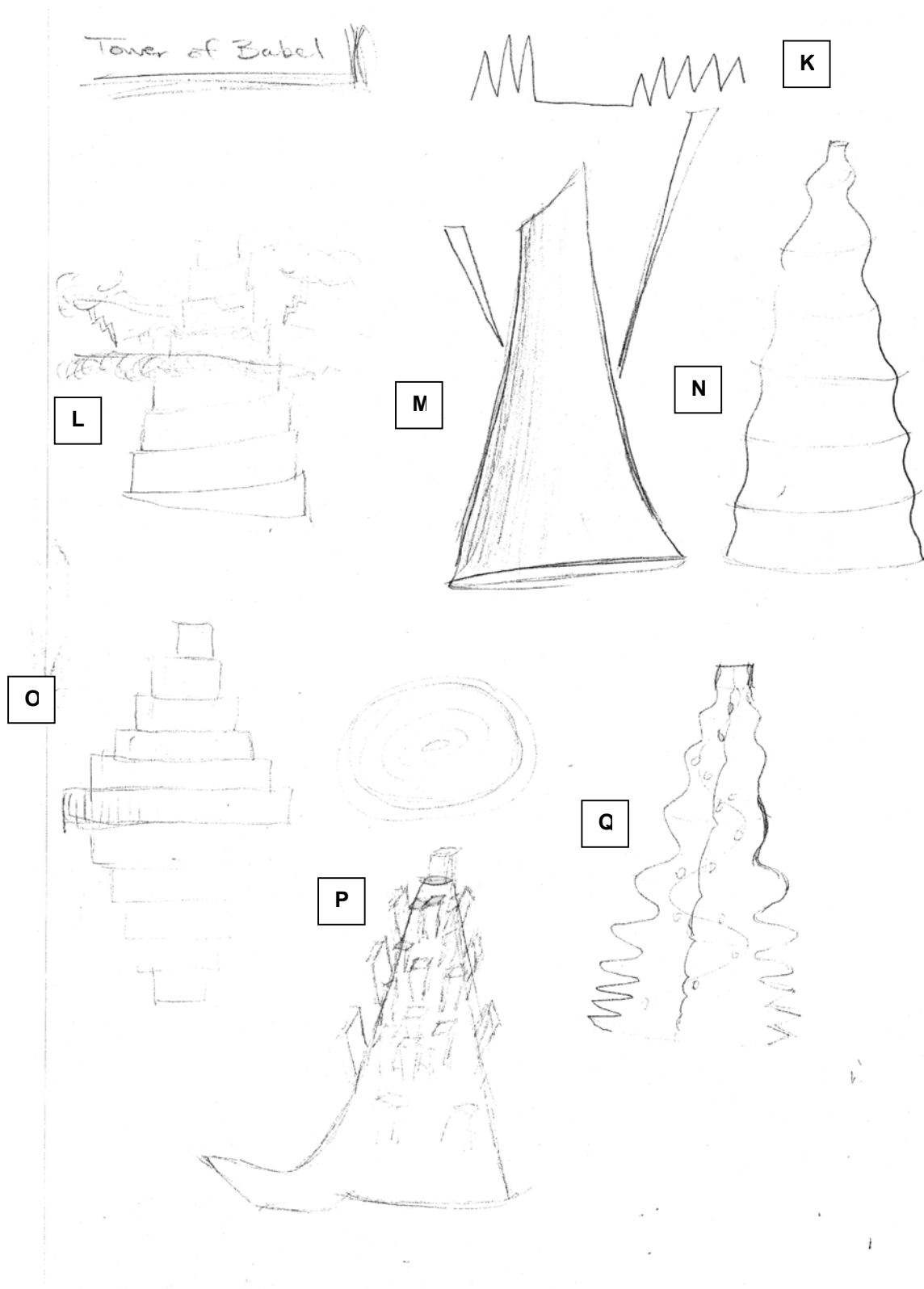


Figure XVII Case Study #3, Journal – Page 6

Moving on to Figure XVIII, page 7 of this student's journal, the first sketch on this page is another representational (referential) sketch of the visual inspiration. This sketch plus the previous sketches were combined to create the next series of idea sketches. All five of the sketches on this page are related to each other and the previous sketches in their vertical orientation and the generally upward movement. Sketch S pictures a tall thin cone with a very organized progression of pieces to the "pinnacle" top of the cone. Sketch T seems to have picked up the top detail of sketch s and pictured the discs creating the upward movement on the cone. In sketch U, that idea went a step further to cast the discs on an angle. Still there is a cone like base and vertical movement to the top of the form. All three of these drawings are form drawings.

Drawings V and W might be "construction" drawings. They could be proposing how to incorporate the lights into the previous forms. The first light sketch appears to be tubing with embedded lights. The second sketch could be the larger outdoor Christmas lights. Finally the third lighting sketch may be the white mini Christmas lights. The student concurred that in these drawings she was considering the light possible light sources she could use to light her form.

Perhaps the student felt that these lacked integration. In the next page she turned down a completely different tangent. It would seem that perhaps she exhausted her direction with the cones.

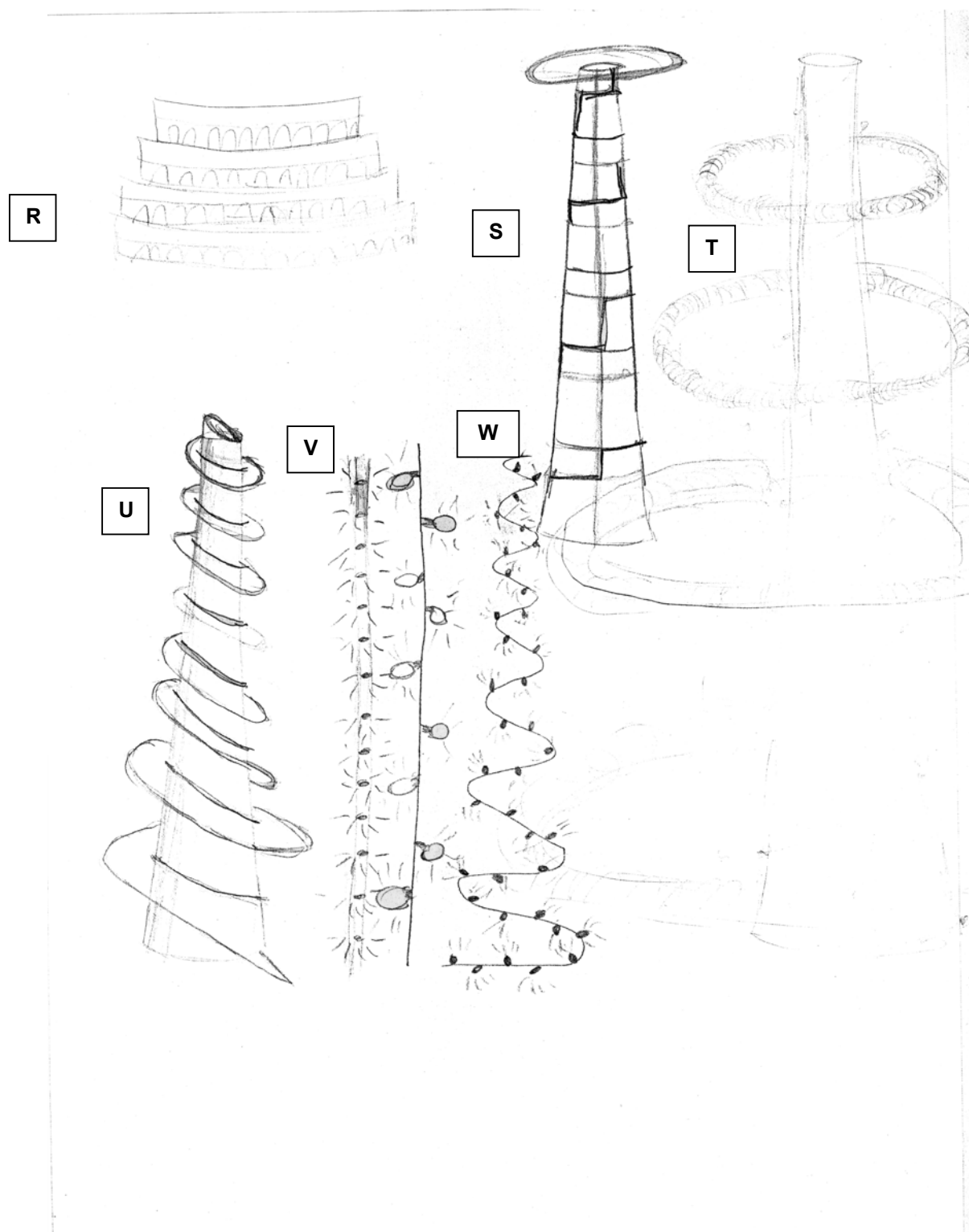


Figure XVIII Case Study #3 Journal – Page 7

Figure XIX represents the last page of this student's sketch journal. First, area X shows some verbal thought progression. "Brainwashed to need to be young ---Fountain of Youth---Movement---Change---Transformation" At this point the student must have decided to really concentrate on her original product design and started to move away from the visual images that directed her forms previously.

Sketches Y and Z were very lightly drawn on the sketch page but seem to be about transforming a rectilinear form to a curvilinear set of forms. These seem to be a tangent from everything else she explored in her process. She went back to a conical form in AA and BB sketches. Additionally in this area there are annotations about the materials to create the form. The student confirmed during the interview that at this point she had all but abandoned the cone in search of other forms. She decided that the rectilinear form was "too basic". She then attempted the cone idea again briefly and finally decided on a sphere form.

Sketches CC – JJ are a series of sketches that sharpen and normalize her idea for production. First she discovered the infinite cycle of circular motion. Once she discovered that cycle in a two - dimensional path, the next obvious step was to move to the three - dimensional form of the sphere. She declared in the interview: "The cool thing about the sphere is that it is immortal, it represents eternity."

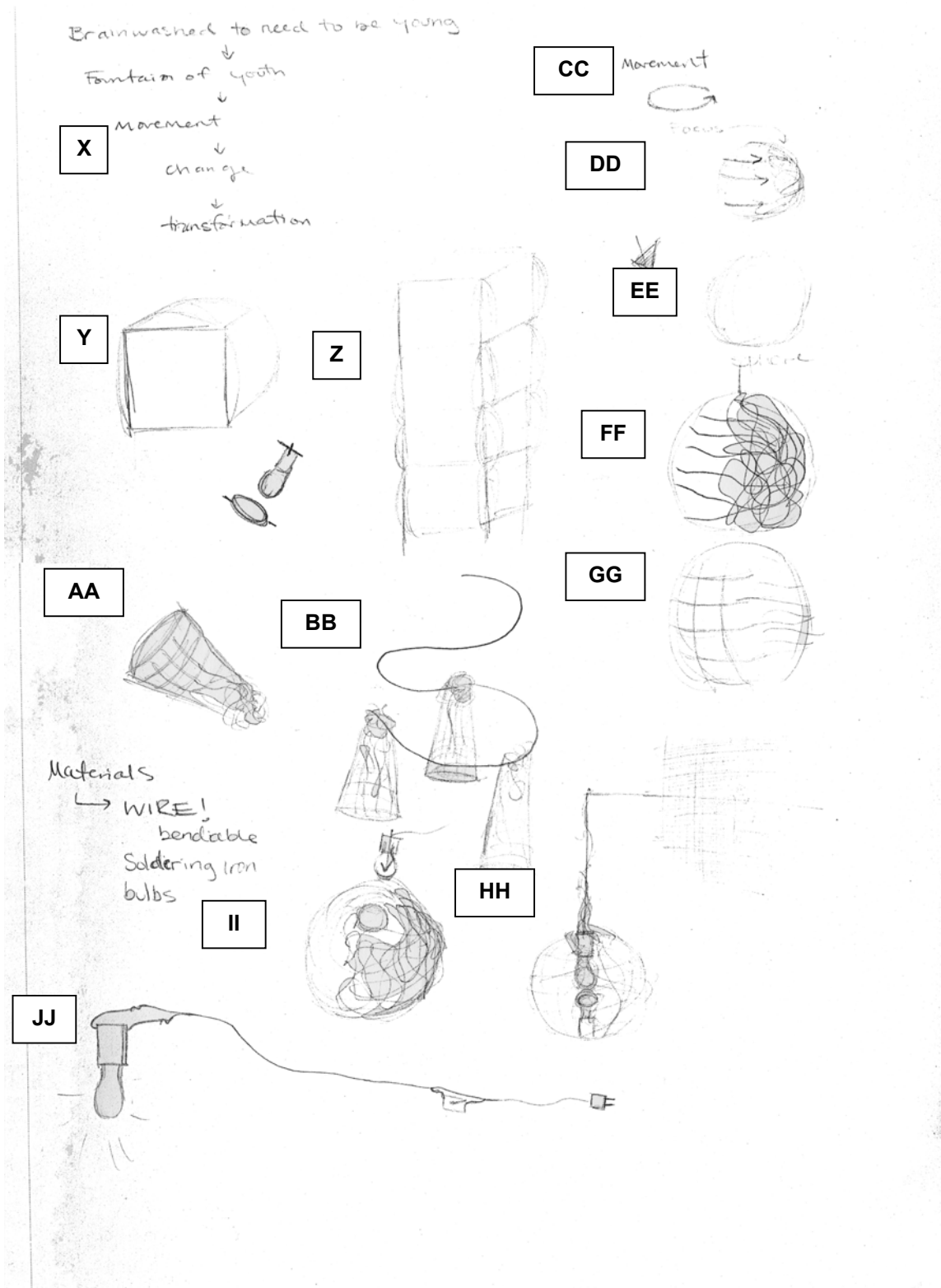


Figure XIX Case Study #3, Journal – Page 8



Figure XX Case Study #3, Final Project

Sketch EE was her first sphere sketch. The next sketch shows the jagged lines that she had been exploring all through her process. Sketch GG shows the lines taking on a very ordered progression. In sketch HH she determined that her

transformation had occurred. Sketches II and JJ show her structural and production thinking about how to handle the lighting part of the project.

Figure XX (previous page) shows her final product. The sphere light project with the use of bent soldering wire, and wire mesh solved her design problem of transformation and solved the problem of incorporating and shielding her light bulb. During the interview she pointed out that even at the end of the project, the lines she drew at the beginning of her process were still very important and that her transformation went from ordered grid wires to chaotic tangled wires. Because the sphere was divided in half, in many perspectives, the viewer is seeing either order transforming to chaos or the opposite effect.

Analysis

In conclusion it would seem that she spent much of her time with ideas that never came to fruition. To many students this might seem like a waste of time, but in reality, it took each step of thinking to get this student to the point of producing her final product. The interesting thing to note is how early in the process she identified her conceptual thought of transformation, and how committed she stayed to pursuing that concept.

Again in this case study, the process of creation was not at all linear. The student would explore an idea in a linear path for a time and then seemingly turn away to think about something else. Then she would return to an idea as if to see if she had explored all aspects of that idea.

This process also seemed to follow a conversational path with the student. It appears the student would consider a design solution and draw it, then reconsider it, change something and then possibly redraw it with a variation. This

visual conversations allowed the student to exhaust design possibilities before moving on to explore different forms.

Summary

The three case studies were selected from the population because of their quality of process. While all three students developed very different solutions using the same project guidelines, their process seemed to show evidence of thought and visual communication. Additionally, they were selected because of their very different styles of process.

All three students had taken either an art class or an architectural drawing class prior to enrolling in Design Fundamentals I. There is no prerequisite for Art or Drawing of any kind for the Design Fundamentals class. That the students had prior experiences in drawing or art surely effected the quality of their process. Because they have experience in drawing, they may have been more comfortable or more confident with their drawing skills. This may also contribute to the quantity of sketches that were produced.

These case studies seem to support the statistical findings of the last chapter. There does not seem to be a difference in quality of final product due to quantity of sketches. There is, however, evidence that the quality of the thinking, verbal or visual, that went into the process was reflected in the final product. All of the sketches seem to be clear enough for the student to understand, yet abstract enough to inspire them to continue on a path of adding and subtracting of information until they reached a point of fitness with the project guidelines.