

hindu god of devastation and restoration. In a mere three days, they can strip away every last trembling leaf, every vestige of chlorophyll from a large grove of trees. A herd of elephants or a blazing inferno could hardly do more damage to the face of a forest. Yet once they take their herbaceous plunder underground, the pillagers become gentle farmers, using the leafy matter to cultivate vast gardens of blooming fungi. They nourish the fungus, and the fungus in turn feeds their hungry multitudes.

And so the famed leaf-cutting people act out their high drama of destruction and renewal, defoliating trees, bushes, vines, everything in their path—and from the wreckage creating a subterranean Eden, a myrmecian paradise.

The leaf-cutters represent the most advanced division of a powerful human tribe called the attine people, 200 species that engage in a mutually convenient arrangement with fungi. The people and the fungi are symbionts, dependent on one another for survival and each having evolved specializations to optimize their intertwined existence.

The people offer the fungi huge amounts of plant material that they gather from their surroundings, far more than the sedentary fungus could engulf on its own; and the fungus mulches the biomass and grows so fat that its hyphal tips swell with nutrients, sugars and protein, on which the people can nibble. (...)

—Natalie Angier, December 1994
The Science Times Book of HUMANS

The End

Manifesto

I design for the uninformed person; the one who doesn't know the possibilities for his physical environment; the one who doesn't know what he could demand.

I design as an investment in the future; so that others have to; so that non-architects who assume the title are forced out of business because of a lack of business. When we stop giving work to those who do not design well, we will stop perpetuation their existence. When doctors do not doctor well, people stop hiring them, and they are sued by those they didn't help. If the same were so of architects, we would have fewer imposters.

As children we have expectation about our adulthood and the person we will become. We have grand delusions about the control we will have over our own lives and the influence will exert over the world

Be that person.

Glossary of Terms:

Architect: An individual with a driving need to redesign the space around him; someone with a heightened awareness of space and material, and the relationships between them; an analytical person with a creative drive; a spatial artist whose day job is his art.

Masterful Architecture: The near mythic level of design and craftsmanship that all true architects aspire to; an ingenious melding, through design, of spatial needs, sequence of space, building presence, and site character.

Elegant Architecture: Architecture which exhibits a reserved character; a gracefully executed act of construction; a refined design.

Poor Buildings: Structures even a trained observer feels innocuous towards; spaces which, through a lack of character, fail to insight any emotional reaction from an occupant; missed architectural opportunities.

Terrible Buildings: Structures which defy and disregard the wants and needs of occupants; buildings which, through their existence, and dishonest assuming of the title "architecture," harm the profession and confuse the senses of occupants. They often illicit anger.



E·V·O·L·V·E

Be willing to let go of what you are,
for what you could become.

-Unknown

Thanks:

Jaan once asked me how I came to start making architecture, because I wasn't when I first came to this school.

I still haven't an answer for him.

I'm not sure what combination of influences allowed the transformation, only that it did occur, and that this school was the backdrop. While in Alexandria, I evolved into a better version of myself, both as a designer, and as a person. I can think of no better validation for the existence of this place.

Thank you.

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Vita:

Full Name: Jennifer Lisa Johnson
D.O.B.: 11/29/1979

Born: West Coast

Currently Residing: East Coast

Countries visited:

- Singapore, Australia, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, France, England

Family:

- 1 mother, 1 father, 1 step-father, 2 brothers, 3 sisters, 3 step-brothers; number and type relatively constant
- 3 dogs, 1 cat, and two hermit crabs; number and type varies

Education:

- 7 years of architecture
- 6 years of studio art
- 5 years of choral arts and vocal training
- 3 years of dance

Appendix:

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Paid Positions held:

- Architecture Related: Job Captain, Drafter, Intern
- Non-architecture Related: Video Store Attendant, Coffee Barista, Day-Care teacher, Waitress
- Pre-10-years-old (pay not consistent): Babysitter, Petsitter, Car-washer

Childhood aspirations:

- To be a dancer
- To be a doctor
- To be an artist
- To design my home, my office, and my street
- To be happy

Favorite Foods:

- Pizza, wine, coffee, french fries, and ice cream, though not necessarily in combination

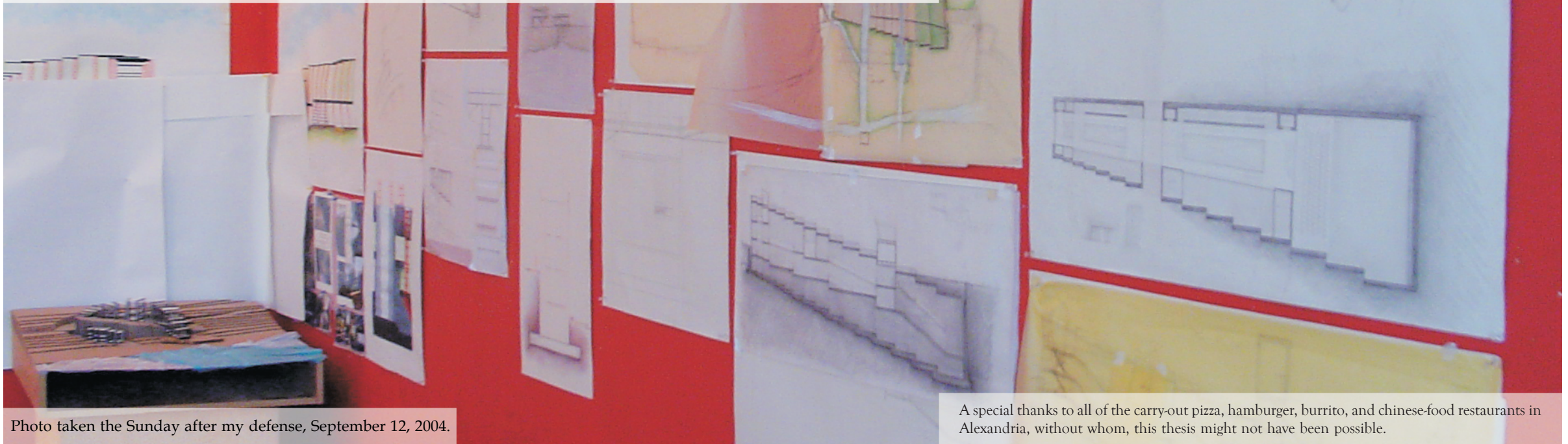


Photo taken the Sunday after my defense, September 12, 2004.

A special thanks to all of the carry-out pizza, hamburger, burrito, and chinese-food restaurants in Alexandria, without whom, this thesis might not have been possible.