

Interpreting Babel

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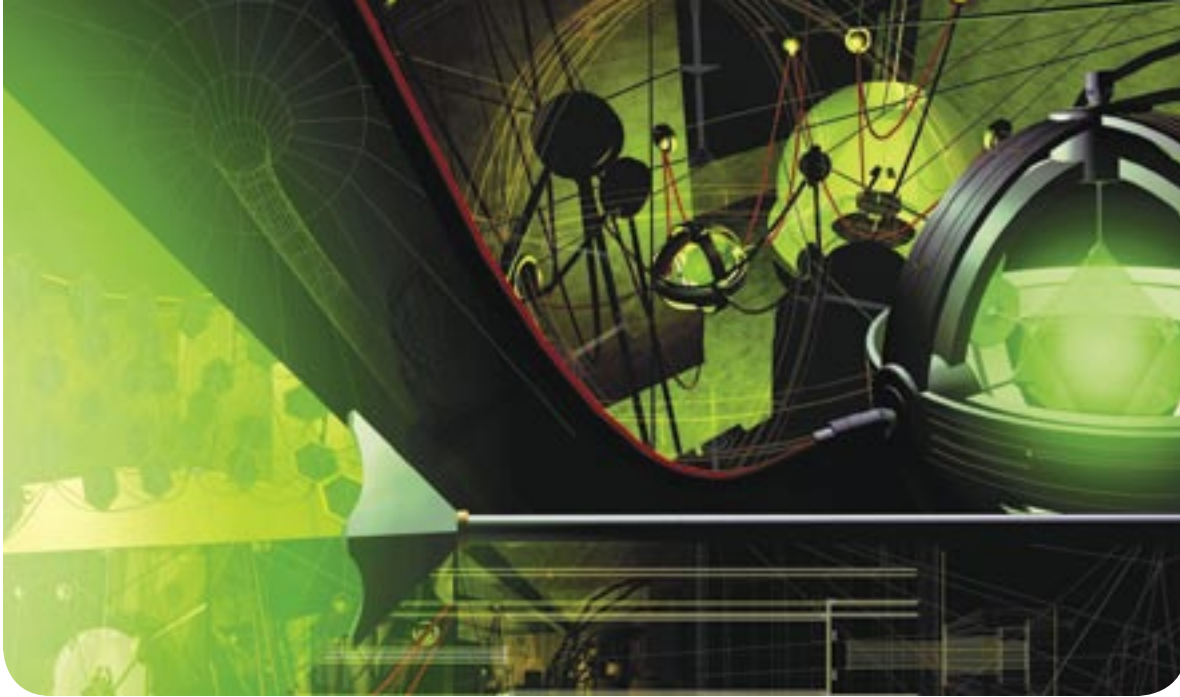
ESMOND LEE AND DAVID FLETT

As the first digital media course in the curriculum, the following project was designed to introduce and develop proficiency in **form•Z** while discussing theoretical questions of the legacy of modern representational devices of perspective, axonometry, and orthography as those modes that ground digital modeling applications.

The project began with a reading of “Library of Babel” from Jorge Luis Borges. The site was the reading room in the school of architecture. The students were asked to consider three primary threshold conditions of entry, gathering, interface (book and computer). They were asked to think in terms of basic architectural and tectonic issues such as surface, structure, light, threshold, etc. The project was the second in a series that tasked the students with creating an intervention in a three-dimensional model of an existing space within the School of Architecture, in this case the Reading Room. The threshold conditions related to four different areas within the Reading Room model, with one of the four areas being assigned to each pairing of students.

For the first phase of the project, the challenge was to inhabit a programmatic and spatial area of the Reading Room inspired by the story. The scale and level of detail of each investigation considered what Jose Oubrerie in “Architecture before Geometry, or the Primacy of the Imagination” claims to be one of three major shifts in architecture as:

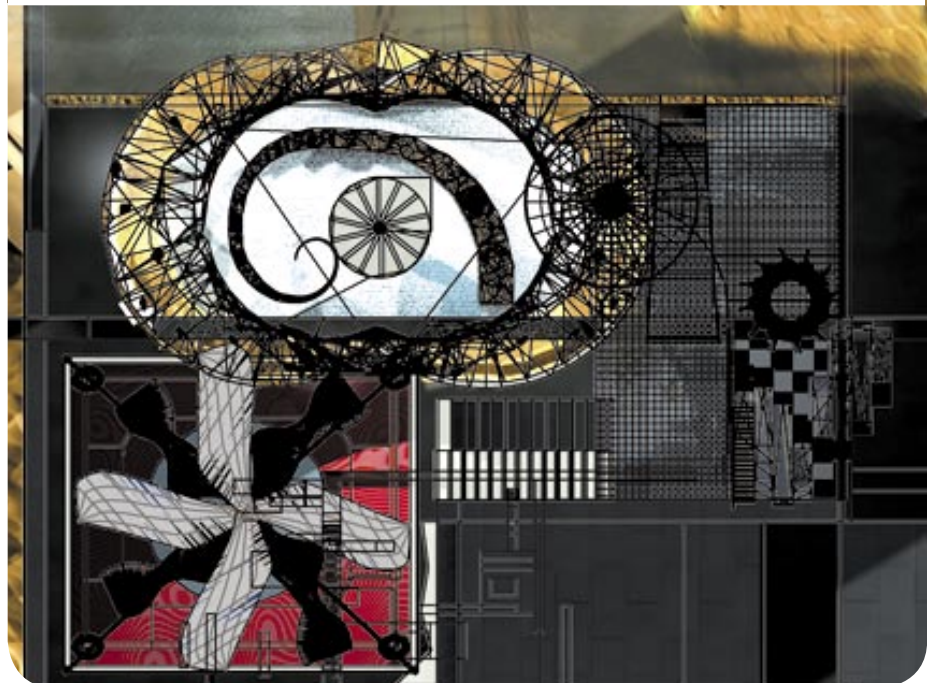
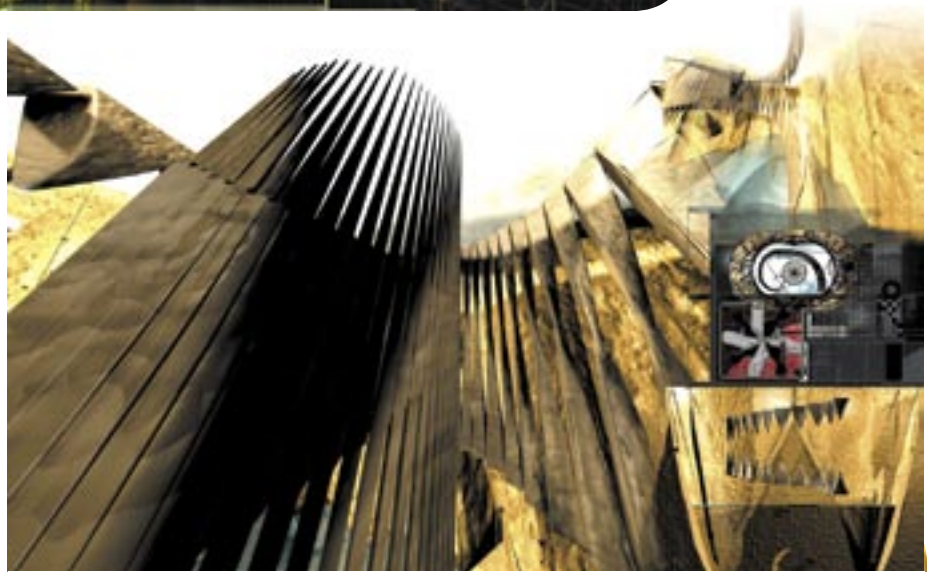
“... the abandonment of the human scale as a referent, a dimensional generator, in architectural creation. The anthropomorphic relationship has been superseded by a more psychological and perceptual one that addresses more the body’s senses than its physical presence.”



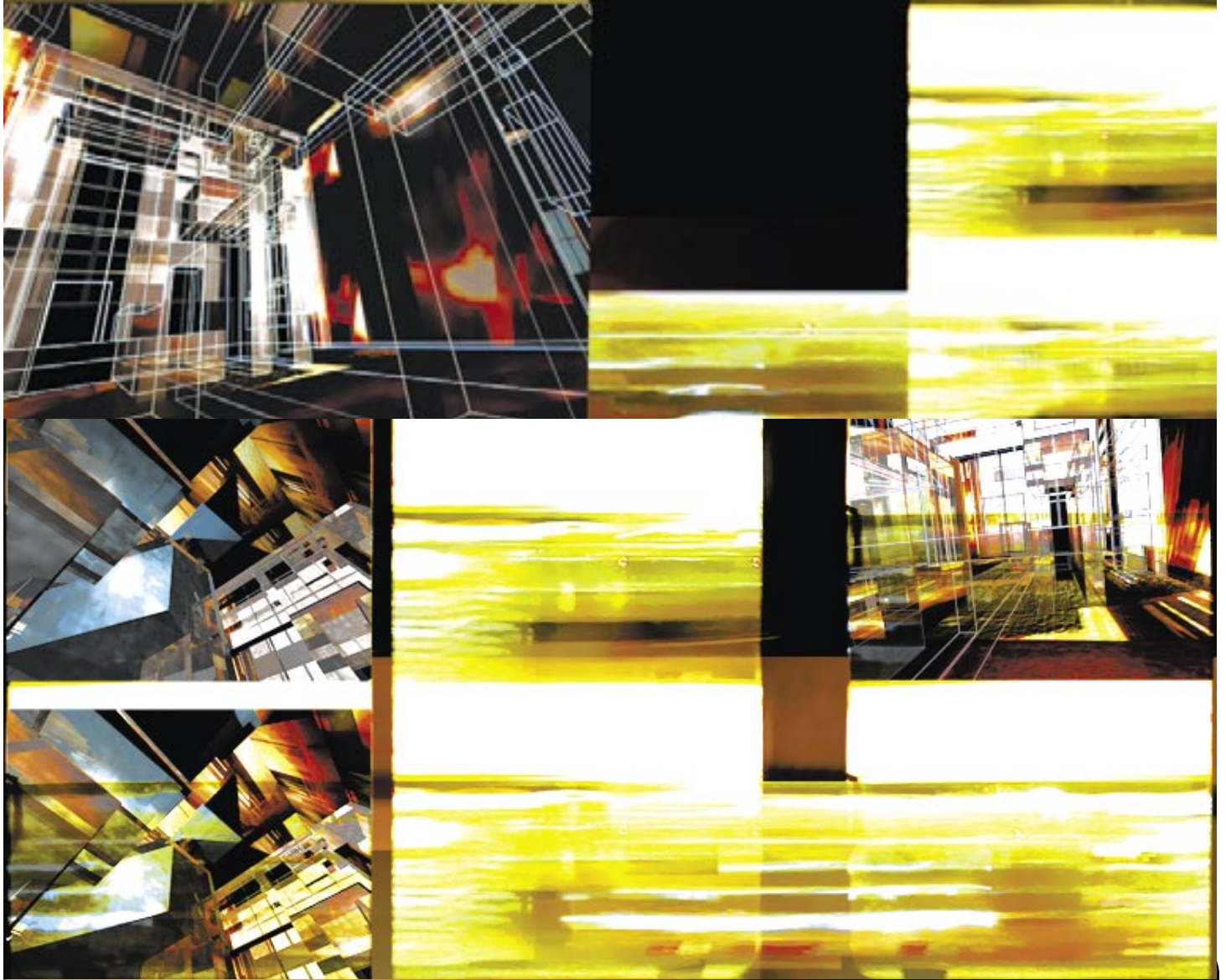
KATELYN WURTS
AND
BENOIT PERRAULT

Students were required to “read the situation” and respond to the given context (theoretical, physical, programmatic, etc.) in situ thus intentionally engaging the tool in all its complexity. **form•Z** was engaged in a speculative manner as a tool for the designer to investigate ideas and allow for the development of a design or idea in a similar fashion to the traditional methods of the pencil and the physical model.

The first phase was an exercise that required a sophisticated response to the situation by the students and simultaneously served as an introduction to the modeling, texturing, lighting and static rendering tools of **form•Z**. The first phase concluded at midterm with a presentation and discussion of each pairing’s panel.



RICHARD GURNHAM



For the second phase **form•Z** was used as a time-based dynamic medium, introducing the students to the camera animation functions of **form•Z**. Three additional student projects were added to the Reading Room model adding to the complexity of the project. The students were required to refine their own model, while responding creatively to the three new additions to the space.

The conclusion of the second phase was an animation that explored the spatial relationships of the Reading Room through light, motion, and sound. Students were encouraged to explore the manifold render styles of **form•Z** (Wire Frame, Quick Paint, RenderZone) in crafting and compositing richly layered renderings and animations.

The responses by the students ranged from ephemeral ghostly projects to meticulously detailed models to tactile textural models. The diversity within the student projects speaks to the versatility of **form•Z** as a design tool and the ability of the user to create projects that reflect intentionality and uniqueness in the creation of digital artifacts often not apparent in digital renderings.



AVIS YAU AND KARIN CHOW

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