

California State Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo Architecture Department
Fifth Year Design: Stannard Fall 2008
Architecture + Nature

"Elements:" a charrette exploration of materials, light, detail, craft, and ideas

el-e-ment, *noun*

1. a separate, identifiable part of something, or a distinct group within a larger group
2. a small amount of something
3. a cause or factor leading to something
4. any substance that cannot be broken down into a simpler one by a chemical reaction.
5. any one of the four primary substances, earth, air, fire, and water, that were formerly thought to be the materials from which all matter is constructed
6. a natural habitat or environment
8. a point, line, plane, or other part of which a geometric figure is composed
13. any one of the parameters required to define the nature of an orbit and to determine the position of a planetary body within it

noun, plural

1. the forces of the weather, for example, wind, cold, rain, or sunshine, especially when thought of as harsh and damaging
2. the basic and most important things to be learned when studying a subject

el-e-men-tal, *adjective*

1. basic and essential
2. relating to or caused by powerful natural forces
3. reduced to, or reducing something to, a stark simplicity
4. relating to the chemical elements, or to the elements of earth, air, fire, and water that were once supposed to be the basic units of matter

Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999

While you are reading some of the initial class readings and initiating your own thesis research, this charrette is intended to be a finely detailed and crafted full scale material exploration *in the spirit of* the ideas generated from both of these. The final aim of this charrette will be your participation in the Vellum competition/exhibition.

The challenge is to seriously consider the meaning of "elements" and "elemental" in the context of the topical nature of this thesis section (*architecture + nature*) and your response to that topic in the form of your proposed thesis. In addition, as part of the body of your thesis work, this exploratory piece will be shown at every review for the rest of the year.

- Challenge:
- Design + construct + document/photograph a three dimensional materials exploration that explores the ideas generated by topical readings + research. [Consult instructor regarding maximum size of object].
 - Develop a Story of Materials. Your designed object should demonstrate a substantive story in relation to the chosen material(s), particularly in relation to *environmental* issues such as: embodied energy; efficient + effective use of the material(s), poetic use of the material(s), recyclability; etc.

Possible avenues to explore might revolve around a composition that could include:

- site essence(s)...light, site materials, topography, defining features or character, etc.
- relationship to nature
- material properties (wide ranging at this point)...found objects, recycled materials, site materials, light transmitting/diffusing/coloring/refracting, created materials.....
- qualitative explorations relating to light + materials
- emotive explorations relating to light + materials
- basic elements: earth, sky, person
- consider "use:" physical, cerebral, joyful, etc.
- etc.....
- [be self-critical....avoid using too many materials by limiting yourself to a chosen few].
- [precedent research required....research the design and craftsmanship of other designers]

Requirements:

- The piece should be simple yet elegant.
- The piece should have a "story" in terms of material use.
- The piece should be thoughtfully designed and well-crafted.
- The piece must be given a unique name that hints at its character.
- If electrical, the piece must be able to hang without hanging from the electrical cord.
- The piece must be safe (structurally, electrically, and fire-related) as well as durable.
- Write a 1-2 sentence description of the poetic intent of the piece.
- (At least) 3 good digital photos of the piece, to be included in:
 - a descriptive printed "poster" of the piece, including the title, photographs and the 1-2 sentence poetic description (as a minimum). Presentation quality.
 - CD with all digital files (photographs as well as final poster layout).
- Size limitation TBA.

Schedule (desk crits and/or group discussion, u.o.n.):

Monday, 22 Sept.	Handout syllabus, charrette, questionnaire, assign reading #1.
Wednesday, 24 Sept.	Charrette crit: mini-models, sketches, collages.....
Friday, 26 Sept.	Pin/Model Up Review. Possible Revit workshop.
Friday, 3 Oct.	Mock Up Review
Friday, 10 Oct.	Full Scale Mock Up Review
Friday, 17 Oct.	Final Piece-In-Progress Review
Thursday, 23 Oct.	Confirm date, time, place: Elements/Vellum entry Due
Friday, 24 Oct.	Vellum Show Opening