

2019 ARE SCHOLARSHIP STATEMENT AND ESSAY

Thesis statement

The architect has a profound disposition to steward the built environment on political, ecological, as well as social levels. Our cities and towns are not built solely through the development of buildings, but on the foundations of public space.

Essay

In search of genius loci.

What motivates me is the search for a Minnesotan genius loci, the spirit of a place. What is it; how do we find genius loci given the unwavering grid iron layout of the American city; how do we achieve an architectural language that can reveal a closer relationship to this unique landscape and harsh climate; what local materials and techniques can we utilise in a mindful and sustainable manner to further the marriage of function and performance with an evocative experience of place; what are the appropriate research methods to adopt in order to learn from local histories about the spirit of a place?

I believe it is in this search for genius loci that the identity of the city, the neighbourhood and its architecture will be re-invented.

In search of social equity.

The spirit of the profession of architecture is challenged with envisioning and facilitating an urban densification that is programmatically diverse, socially inclusive, that functions independently from the automobile and promotes a collective sustainable endeavour. This calls for the designer to re-imagine the walkable city, to re-interpret communal living and to re-think the human scaled street. What will follow is the making of equitable and meaningful public space that engages with neighbourhood communities to enhance the pulse of the city. In doing so, the architect must advocate simultaneously for project stakeholders and for the common good of this civic place, one that is sustainable for future generations.

In this way, it seems increasingly important in our current socio-political climate to imagine the future profession of architecture that is diversified and adaptive, self-critical about approaches to public space, and continuously curious about past, present and future conditions of our built and natural environment.