1) Title: The Art of Living

2) Abstract:

The purpose of my project is to design and construct a liveable art environment. The space will be recognizable as a bedroom with common elements such as a bed, closet area, and chair. These furnishings as well as the entire room itself will be transformed into a singular work of art that will retain all of its functional qualities. Representing a fusion between art and design, this will not be a living space adorned with art; this will be art which serves as a living space. By questioning the distinction between aesthetics and function, I will show how the decorative arts are also a valid form of artistic expression.

3) Statement of the Problem:

Within this project I hope to demonstrate two things. The first is to show how a room can be stripped of traditional pieces of art (painting, sculpture) in order to allow the room itself to become the work of art. The second goal of this project is to demonstrate how the elements and principles of art can contribute to the space becoming both art and an environment.

Within the proposed environment, the most elemental pieces of the room (walls, doors, furnishings) will become works of art. An undulating curvature, derived from influential objects that I will discuss in section six (#1), will be the structural basis for the space. The result will be a room where the functional "feel" of traditional right angles has been diminished but the functional quality remains. For instance, Figure 1 shows a wall from the model transformed into a surface covered in raw silk, curving through space, which retains its function as a structural support to the room. Thus, a plane that is usually flat and disregarded as having any visual interest has become a focal point of the room. Figure 2 is an example of how the furnishings will be treated within the proposed environment. The chair has a curved back that mimics the curvature found throughout the room. The protrusion on the right side of the chair has an insert of glass, and the swooping back comes to a tip with a metal ring hanging from it. Both of these features separate the chair from the traditional sitting chairs that most of the viewers will be familiar with. However, these artistic features have functional qualities as well. The insert of glass acts as a built in table, and the metal ring functions as a dress hook. The chair has become an example of the fusion of art and design, a theme that will continue through all aspects of the room.

The elements of art that I will explore within this space are color, line, shape, texture, pattern and space. Figures 1 and 2 show the white and cream tone-on-tone color scheme that will prevail throughout the room. By eliminating color contrast as a distraction, the structural curvature of the objects will remain the focal point and force the viewer to see them as line and form in space. The color blue will be used sparsely to lead the viewer's eye throughout the room and provide an added dimension of the unexpected. Although primarily a white and cream environment, the space will in no way be sterile because of the exploration of texture within the textiles and surface qualities of the walls and floors. As seen in Figure 3, the textures of the flat fold fabrics have become the focal point rather than the clothing they would normally be fashioned into. Figure 4 shows a compilation of textiles that I plan to utilize within the space. Decorative painting techniques that simulate highly textured surfaces and the use of glass and metal are other ways I plan to explore texture in this project.

The principles of art represent how the elements are used to convey balance, repetition, emphasis, unity, and variety. By repeating a common curve throughout the room I hope to achieve a unity between the walls, floors, and furnishings. Balance will be achieved in the strategic placement of the rooms components in an interior design mindset. Emphasis will be given to the rooms most elemental
aspects through the limited use of color, and variety will come into play in the array of textures used throughout the space.

4) Previous Work:

This project employs several different disciplines within its design and construction including studio art, theatrical design, architecture, and interior and furniture design. Therefore, I have researched all of these areas to find individuals whose accomplished works fall within the realms of this project.

Beginning with the area of studio art, in 1984 Mark Camille Chaimowicz created an untitled installation where he explored the interior domestic space as an artistic canvas (Fig 5). Similarly, in 1981 with Revenge of the Goldfish (Fig 6), and again in 1986 Germs are Everywhere (Fig 7), artist Sandy Skoglund toyed with the traditional expectations for the domestic space by distorting color schemes and changing the context for which living spaces are normally thought of. In 1991, Aimee Morgana's installation Room for Hope (Fig 8) uses the bedroom to make her statement on reality with a roped off bed and a "security blanket" covered in gold condom packs. Other artists chose to express themselves in a more architectural manner. Figure 9 shows Gordon Matta-Clark's Conical Intersect, a project executed in 1975. In this work Matta-Clark sawed huge, geometric shapes from existing walls and floors and, in the process, created new possibilities for abandoned structures. Another modern artist who created a "visionary environment" with great architectural interest is Clarence Schmidt in his now destroyed Woodstock Environment, or House of Mirrors (Fig 10).

Architectural sculpture is an area of art where visual artists explore areas previously thought to be within the realms of architects and designers. In many ways, my proposed space falls within this area of art in that I am creating art out of architectural elements. Figure 11 shows a sketch of a possible entry way into my space that was heavily influenced by Joe Grant's untitled mixed media work of 1980 (Fig.12). In this work, Grant has removed the door from its normal context which is a concept I am bringing into my own work. Similarly, Akiko Fujita's Idenawa of 1966-67 (Fig 13) is an example of the natural curvature that my environment will possess.

From architectural sculpture I moved to architecture to find examples of structures that complemented the work I plan to execute. Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut, constructed between 1950-1955 (Fig 14), challenges the viewer in its fusion of architecture and sculpture in a single work. A more recent example of sculptural architecture is the 1995 award-winning design of The Ark (Fig 15), by Future Systems, a design team out of London. Figure 15 is an excellent example of how artistic expression can fuse with architecture. The final architect that I would like to touch upon for his outstanding sculptural architecture is Antoni Gaudí. In works such as Casa Milà (Fig 16), Apartment House in Barcelona (Fig 17), "Dragon Gate" (Fig 18), and Finca Miralles (Fig 19) Gaudí proves that architecture can be a form of large scale functional sculpture.

Gaudí did not end with architecture in his functional sculpture. He achieved a sculptural quality in furniture much as I hope to in my work. Figure 20 shows Palacio Guell, a dressing table in the Neo-Baroque style in which Gaudí successfully pushes our expectations of the common dressing table. This can be seen in the slanted placement of the mirror and the ornate iron work. Current examples of furniture design that also push the limits and create a fusion between art and design include Mark Reed-Hanmar's leaf chair sculpture (Fig 21) of 2000, and the red chair (Fig 22) currently on display at the Art and Industrial Design Showroom in New York.

Accomplishments in the area of theatrical design that are relevant to this project include the film design by Hermann Warm, Walter Reiman, and Walter Rohrig for The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, and designs by Tim Burton for works such as Edward Scissorhands and A Nightmare Before Christmas.

5) Significance:

My project is significant because it will bring together the realms of art and the domestic space in
a new and original way. Unlike the works of the previously outlined artists, architects and designers, I plan to keep the entire space as a functional unit. My goal is to surround the viewer with art. This is significant in proving that art is not always a painting on the wall or a sculpture to be placed on a pedestal. The pieces within my proposed environment allow a comfortable interaction between the user and the piece. There is a familiar security in interacting with things that are part of our everyday lives. By transforming these familiarities into works of art it proves that one can live harmoniously within art.

6) Proposed Methodology:

1. Find a theme or influence to base the structure upon.
   The curvature of the lines will be influenced by objects that have been accidentally altered (Fig 23). In detail, these objects include a deformed candle mottled as a result of long-term exposure to sunlight and a baking stone which cracked into three organic shapes when removed from a hot oven to a cool counter. Figure 24 shows a sequence called Bread of 1953 "Functioning Decoration" by Charles and Ray Eames that similarly finds interest in a break pattern. A ceramic vase with paint chipped away due to exposure to cold weather and a glass accidentally broken leaving it with a sweeping curve are also amongst objects of influence. All of these objects were accidentally altered leaving a defined curvature that will influence shape in the proposed space.

2. Sketch out ideas and possible formations and layouts.
3. Create a Ground Plan (Fig 25)
4. Sketch out detail drawings of individual pieces.
5. Research materials. (Cost and availability)
6. Make a small-scale model of the space and its furnishings.
   This project is being sponsored by Tom Brennan of the Studio Art Dept., with assistance from Jeff Moderegor of the Theatre Dept.. Because this is a temporary installation, many of the techniques that I have learned and will learn in the Theatre department in classes such as Fundamentals of Scenery, Scene Design, and next semester's Scene Painting will be of great use. All of the previously mentioned classes are those taken with Jeff.

8. Exhibition.
   I have already placed a bid to have a space in the Colburn Gallery for Fall semester of 2001. I also have made a connection with the Firehouse Gallery and there is a strong possibility of getting the back room of that space for exhibition if the Colburn is unavailable. If both of these spaces are unavailable then a studio space in Williston would be a definite location.

7) References:

Books:


Magazines:


Films:

*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

*Edward Scissorhands*

*A Nightmare Before Christmas*
Figure 1

roof