**Name of Project:**
Zion Artist’s Retreat

**Project Identification Number:**
AP16312 - Zion Artist’s Retreat

**Project Category:**
Academic Project

**Type of Project:**
Academic/ Unbuilt

**Completion Date:**
n/a

**Type of Construction:**
Structurally Insulated Panel (SIP) construction on a modular steel chassis.

**Materials Used:**
Reclaimed wood siding + flooring, weathered steel corrugated roof, weathered steel paneling, hot-rolled steel paneling (mill-finish), Baltic-birch paneling, and burlap covered homasote paneling.

**Project Area:**
Two duplexes each 696 sq.ft. total (348 sq.ft. / Living Unit)

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**Statement of Design Approach:**
A retreat for artists was to be designed as a pair of duplexes using modular construction for a mesa above Springdale, Utah just moments from the gates of Zion National Park. The mission of the project was to offer artist’s an escape to solitude and immersion in the inspiration of the place.

Zion Canyon represents a dialogue between two places: The expansive plain, and the compressed slot canyon. We believe this dialogue is vital to the understanding of this place. We recall our own experiences on the mesa (the site) and our time wading through the Narrows canyon. On the mesa, you are immersed in an expansive environment of plain, sky, and monoliths - an environment of both solitude and overwhelming sensual stimuli. In the Narrows, the tall stone walls create an awareness of space, your diminutive scale, and through the ever-changing light, the passage of time. We seek to communicate these characteristics of the landscape through the architecture in a way that may heighten the artists’ understanding, connection, and experience of the place.
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Narrative:
The artist approaches their dwelling from the exposed mesa. The structures punctuate the grassy plain like the uplifting boulders dispersed throughout the site. Roof lines and weathered-steel walls lead them into darkened openings. Opening the door reveals a tightening, winding passage way with a slot of light guiding them onward. Through the final leg, they will feel the weight of the walls and ceiling pressing down on their body until they reach the studio that explodes with light and air.

The journey is intended to remove you from the overwhelming experience of the expansive mesa landscape and fragment it through the typology of the slot canyon, creating foregrounded experiences of space, light, and texture. The studio is a place for engaging with the landscape directly through aperture, whereas the entry passage way is an engagement through memory and interpretation. This spatial dialogue intends to engage the artist with a new understanding, or a precedent for future understanding, of the landscape both conscious or unconsciously.
structures punctuating the grassy plain
Landmark and valley views surround the site. Apertures engage views with respect to passive solar design and removing views of neighboring units.

Orientation was limited for minimal reduction in passive solar performance (5% or less). The East units are rotated an additional 7° beyond the 18° limit for complete view of Bridge mountain.

view-shed
Landmark and valley views surround the site. Apertures engage views with respect to passive solar design and removing views of neighboring units.
approach from the expansive mesa
A cocoon-like sleeping area washed with light from a skylight above creates a place of refuge for sleep and protected contemplation and provides an introspective view of the mesa plain.

A large bi-fold patio door provides a strong visual connection to the landscape and is useful for collecting southern prevailing winds, directing them to northern daylighting and ventilation windows.

Screen doors create privacy wing walls on patios and can be used for controlling glare and modulating interior privacy, as well as channeling or blocking winds.
transition season shade
winter solar gain
PV array
natural ventilation
reclaimed wood
native re-vegetation

sections
south-facing openings allow plentiful daylight and ventilation
A varied rectangular patterning of weathered-steel references the stone construction of the original 1925 Zion cabins and reflects the colors of the landscape while translating to the exterior the boundary of the compressed, heavy space. Weathered wood alternatively translates the open, airy space of the studio while recalling the bark of pinyon pine skeletons on site.

Simple form and a sliding corrugated roof take precedent from the utilitarian Birch-Creek support complex that was used by the Civilian Conservation Corps. to help construct the Zion we know today.
"The door handle is the handshake of the building."
- Juhani Pallasma, The Eyes of the Skin

reflecting the typology of the slot canyon and our personal experiences in the Narrows, the entry passage is a fragmented experience of the landscape
The entry passage is a journey through compressed darkness lead by slivers of light. Hot-rolled steel clad the walls emphasize the darkness and emulate the coolness of the shimmering wet walls of the Narrows light grazes it’s surface. The varying degrees of reflectivity, color and texture from the mill-scale of the steel help to recall these features.
“...the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace.”
- Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space

The sleeping space is carved from the thickness of the passage way, emulating the deep depressions smoothed into the canyon walls. This space offers a place to retire for rest or protected thought. A skylight washes the space with light, or views of the night sky.
The studio becomes a place for engaging with the landscape directly through aperture.
Through sensory experience of space, light and texture, the journey is one that attempts to both teach and recall memory of the landscape.