VIOLINS

By Rowan Ricardo Phillips

He never saw a violin. But he saw a lifetime of violence.

This is not to presume That if he had simply seen

A violin he would have seen Less violence. Or that living among

Violins, as though they were Boulangeries or toppling stacks

Of other glazed goods like young adult Fiction, would have made the violence

Less crack and more cocaine, Less of course and more why god oh why.

More of one thing Doesn't rhyme with one thing.

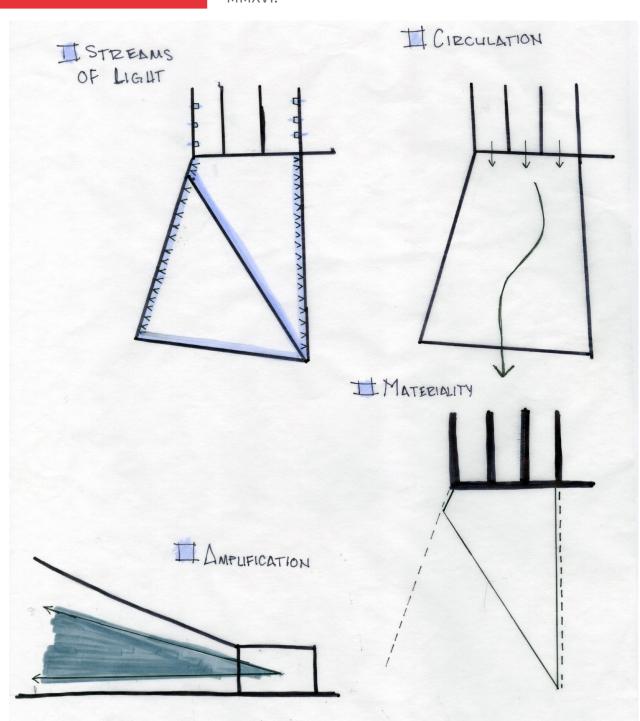
A swill of stars doesn't rhyme With star. A posse of poets doesn't rhyme

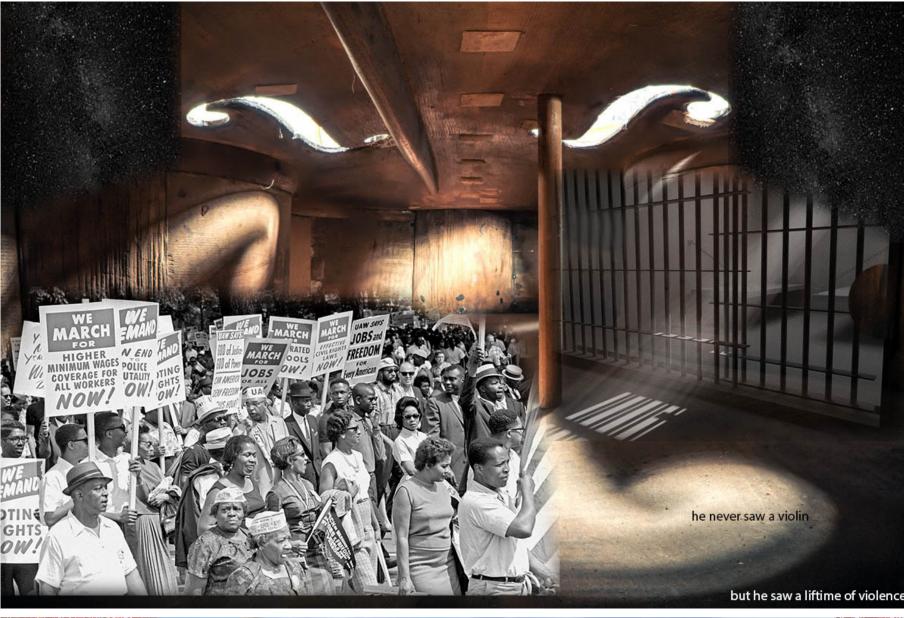
With poet. We are all in prison. This is the brutal lesson of the 21st century,

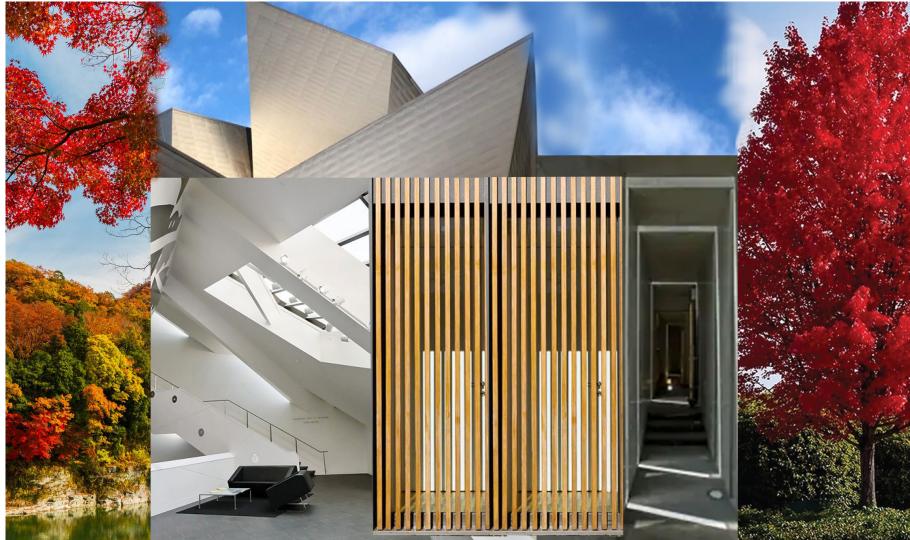
Swilled like a sour stone Through the vein of the beast

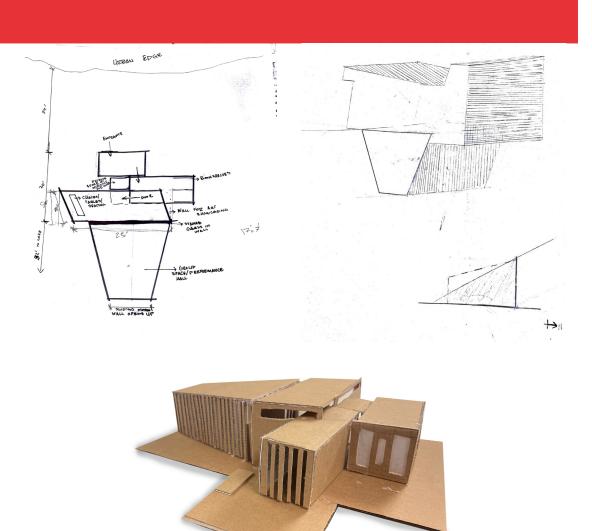
Who watches you while you eat; Our eternal host, the chummed fiddler,

The better tomorrow, MMXVI.

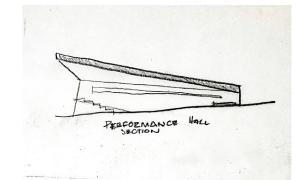














I never thought I would find myself designing a poetry workshop, yet A3 was one of my favorite projects from my time in ENVD. I loved having the constraints of the realistic building world, while still having so much creative freedom. I also really enjoyed the emphasis on poetry in design, or at least inspiration from it. I began this process by choosing a poem called "Violins" by Rowan Ricardo Philips, which focuses on the metaphorical (and sometimes physical) prison that black Americans experiece when living in the United States. After reading and analyzing this work, I decided to form my design around not only the themes of the poem, but also a possible hope for the future. After several different iterations, I decided to start Amplify with four regular, rhythmic walls that form hallways. Representing the four strings on a violin, the walls bring the audience through private and reflective hallways that give the feel of a prison through the thick concrete and steel-slatted roofing. People move through the hallway, pass through the existing masonry wall, and are immediately met with a space that is a stark contrast to the one they were just in. The room opens up to a group and performance space filled with light and openness, encouraging unity, interaction, and community. The privacy and loneliness that people feel in the independent spaces are completely flipped on their heads with the light and interaction of the group space. The circulation of the design then encourages people to exit through the glass doors into the third space: an outdoor patio area. The seating here encourages more performance and interaction both with other people and with the lake framed by the opening of the patio. Together, all three spaces move the poet from the current status quo of oppression in a metaphorical jail to the amplification of voices, ideas, and change in the bright future, represented by the outdoor space.