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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Summer Ellen Abston entitled "FEED." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture, with a major in Architecture.

Thomas Mark Stanley, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Andrew M. Madl, Jason T. Young

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

F E E D

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Architecture
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Summer Ellen Abston

August 2018

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate FEED to the place where I call home, a place where I have come to know on an intimate level. A place that has knocked me to my knees and sends me to my knees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest thanks my family who had put up with me these last 25 years - there's more to come. Thanks to my fantastical parents for their unconditional love and support through all my decisions. Thank you, Adam, my partner, who has made me a stronger and more a more open person. Thank you, Aunt Fran for being a survivor, the fiercest person I know, and for taking me in as your own.

I owe my all to my family.

I would like to acknowledge everyone who played a role in my academic accomplishments; all my professors and mentors that has made an impact on my life and how I view, create, and critique architecture and anything in general. Thank you to Jason Young and Andrew Madl for their continued support and guidance.

A special thanks to my advisor, mentor, and role model, Mark Stanley for simply being himself.

ABSTRACT

Topographic and metabolic systems of our landscape have changed over time by the human influence on the earth. This change is caused by a wide range of networks causing impact on our planet, including that network of agriculture. Because of population increase of the human species, the agency of agriculture was turned into a mode of production – the law of demand; More. Quicker. Cheaper. Things got [get] messy. Additives, modifications, combinations, GMO [Object] - all unconventionally mixed in a pot to boil. Machines spreading the mix across the land, seeping into our streams and digested as we drink the water and eat the cow that ate the grass that ingested contaminants from soil and the water.

This thesis investigates the impact of surface by human implication as a fusion of artificial and organic ingredients redefining scales of human reality. Where parts and pieces are augmented - took apart and fueled together forming hybrids of hybrids – rigged in such ways to get predicted results. Speculating and interrogating the farming practice in the built environment within the age of the Anthropocene.

PREFACE

The farm situates itself on a small 200 and some odd acre property in rural South-Central Kentucky with a makeup of mixed arable, pastoral grounds. The farm is divided into three territories that service mixed use architectural implications through the design a farmhouse in spirit of the four seasons, serving as a hybrid of the traditional gable farmhouse vernacular.

Speculating on the impact of the environment in correlation to the small farm, the method of attack starts as a network of economies that establish territory to uncover an underlying metabolism through the data, analytics, inventories, mechanics, atmospheres, and recourses. All of which acts as devices that ultimately helps to design a farm house that exists within and beyond its boundaries of a into new realities of the farm through its networks of networks, connecting other networks. Developing a rhythm and setting a tone of my work that encourages conversation and engages people to think about the farming practice in new ways and the impact of a small farm to a larger condition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01_Anthropocenic Now	1
02_The Farmer.....	3
_Body	3
_Rituals	5
03_The Farm.....	9
_The Location	10
_The Site	11
_The Territory	12
_Native Past	13
_Histories as Told.....	14
_Relics of Lineage.....	18
_Inventories.....	19
04_The Farm House	20
_The Fall.....	21
_The Winter	25
_The Spring.....	26
_The Summer	27
05_Farm Futures.....	28
_Figures Cited.....	29
_Works Cited	31
_Appendix.....	33
_Vita.....	39

_LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 01: Metabolisms of Anthropic Desire	1
Figure 02: Anthropogenic Radii	2
Figure 03: Blue Jean Prototype.....	3
Figure 04: Blue Jean Prototype	3
Figure 05: Blue Jean Prototype	3
Figure 06: Blue Jean Prototype	4
Figure 07: Ritual – Hauling	5
Figure 08: Ritual – Feeding	6
Figure 09: Ritual – Jumping	7
Figure 10: Ritual – Closing and Locking	8
Figure 11: The Farm	9
Figure 12: Location	10
Figure 13: Site	11
Figure 14: Territory	12
Figure 15: Hill	17
Figure 16: Relics	18
Figure 17: Inventory	19
Figure 18: The Farm	20
Figure 19: The Farm House	20
Figure 20: Data Tree 00045h	21
Figure 21: Data Tree 00976s	21
Figure 22: Data Tree 00324s	21
Figure 23: Fall	21
Figure 24: Seasonal Shift Rate Exchange and Harvest Per Season	22
Figure 25: Methane Extractorm Above	23
Figure 26: Methane Extractor Levitation Diagram	24
Figure 27: Data Tree 00018h	25
Figure 28: Data Tree 02460s	25
Figure 29: Winter	25
Figure 30: Data Tree 00005s	26
Figure 31: Data Tree 67802h	26
Figure 32: Spring	26
Figure 33: Data Tree 798705s.....	27
Figure 34: Data Tree 00002s.....	27
Figure 35: Summer	27

01_ANTHROPOCENIC NOW

It is now. We are in the current state of change within Earth's metabolic contingencies, defined, consumed, and produced by us. Discovering that we make our own nature through control, augmentation, and manipulation. We function with the nature that is given as well as alter it. It is because of this, the Anthropocene was pioneered and accepted. A term that shapes what we do and how we do it. Now. This is us.

What was more, quicker, cheaper is changing by examining ourselves and others, composing *hybrids* of the future that shapes our thinking.

In this thesis, the Anthropocene is graphically visioned through the lens of the anthropogenic autonomous radii (Figure 2). The radii governs the way in which the farmer operates on the landscape has no boundaries; infinite, operating on altering scales as it flows and fluxes via feedback loops- generating what we must work within, what we made for ourselves overtime.



Figure 01: Metabolisms of Anthropic Desire

02_THE FARMER



Figure 03: Blue Jean Prototype



Figure 04: Blue Jean Prototype



Figure 05: Blue Jean Prototype

The farmer is an actor not defined by a set gender, race, size, species, or apparatus. The farmer is ever present perpetual state of motion. The farmer makes the farm; no farmer, no farm. The farmer is one with the farmhouse just as the farmhouse is one with the farmer.

_BODY

The farmer wears an aesthetic that corresponds to the work description. The type of work a farmer does is typically varied throughout the day and with breaks between tasks workwear needs to be adaptable to the consecutive use.

The blue jean prototype is produced for farmer functionality, containing visible and hidden pockets for safety and storage, chaps, shin guards, and ankle ties to keep out pests.



Figure 06: Blue Jean Prototype



Figure 07: Ritual - Hauling

_RITUALS

house to barn
 barn to field
 field to house
 lacing boots
 local, global news
 weather updates
 breakfast, lunch,
 dinner
 feeding cows, pigs,
 calf, dogs
 baling, cutting, raking,
 treading hay
 planting crops
 harvesting corn,
 soybeans, hay
 planting and
 harvesting in garden
 weeding garden
 paying bills
 Friday soil
 conservation meetings
 checking fence rows
 checking cattle
 watering animals
 sale crops and livestock to market
 sit on back porch with dog and wife
 take a piss off porch every night
 round up cattle with dog
 come up with stories to tell daughter
 take boat out to fish or just to take boat out
 shoot ground hog 1/4 mile away in the head each time
 shoot deer when necessary
 shoot the riffle 3x every other night to wake up neighbors
 shoot stray dog bothering private -give only once chance
 put keys, wallet, loose change by bedside table
 venture to sales, buy at least one thing
 check on dogs when barking
 attend to sudden business
 head count of animals
 worn cloths
 cutting hay twine
 maintaining equipment
 oil change
 greasing equipment
 carrying buckets
 buying/reading newspaper at
 local gas station
 sic dog
 lock doors and gates
 check on bees
 prep and harvest honey
 rig equipment
 pray
 family and friends
 invite friends over
 buy equipment and tools
 spend time on the john
 scrape manure to lagoon
 go to the market
 consult with broker
 etc.



Figure 08: Ritual - Feeding



Figure 09: Ritual - Jumping



Figure 10: *Ritual* – Closing and Locking

03_THE FARM

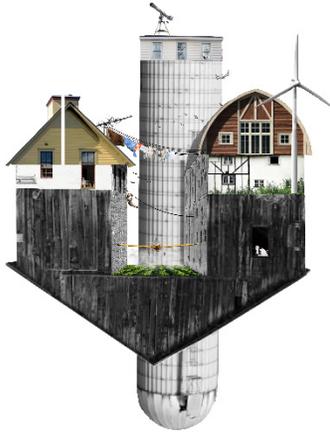


Figure 11: The Farm

The farm takes place on the scene of an existing farm in Albany, South Central Kentucky, property of Willow Oaks Farm (Figure 13). The small, rural town of Albany borders the northern part of Middle Tennessee that sits between two major lakes: Lake Cumberland of Kentucky and Dale Hollow Lake of Kentucky and Tennessee (Figure 12). The lakes play a major economic role in running the small town and surrounding areas. There are many natural recourses that keep the farm thriving, from fresh spring water to its trees that serve as a bank or reserve for future use. Oil and gas recourses are available but have been on idle. The back woods contain swamp land that feeds the mouth of a creek –leading to Howards Creek, feeding into Dale Hollow Lake. Today, reliant on the agriculture of hay, straw, soy beans, corn, bees, pigs, and beef cattle to keep things running. Its past remains apparent with buildings that were used for dairy, pigs, and storage – as they are now used as shop space, storage, and for honey production.

Speculating the future of the farming practice, this thesis takes on many of the characteristics and attributes of the current farm but suggests future implications in relation to the Anthropocene state of being. Speculating on the impact of the environment, the farm consists of many developed natures in the form of DNA and binary code retention in trees -data grove, methane extraction of cattle, livestock meat marbling, pollination typologies, and branch grafting.

There are 4 conditions of the farm: the field, the swamp, the forest, and pasture.

_THE LOCATION

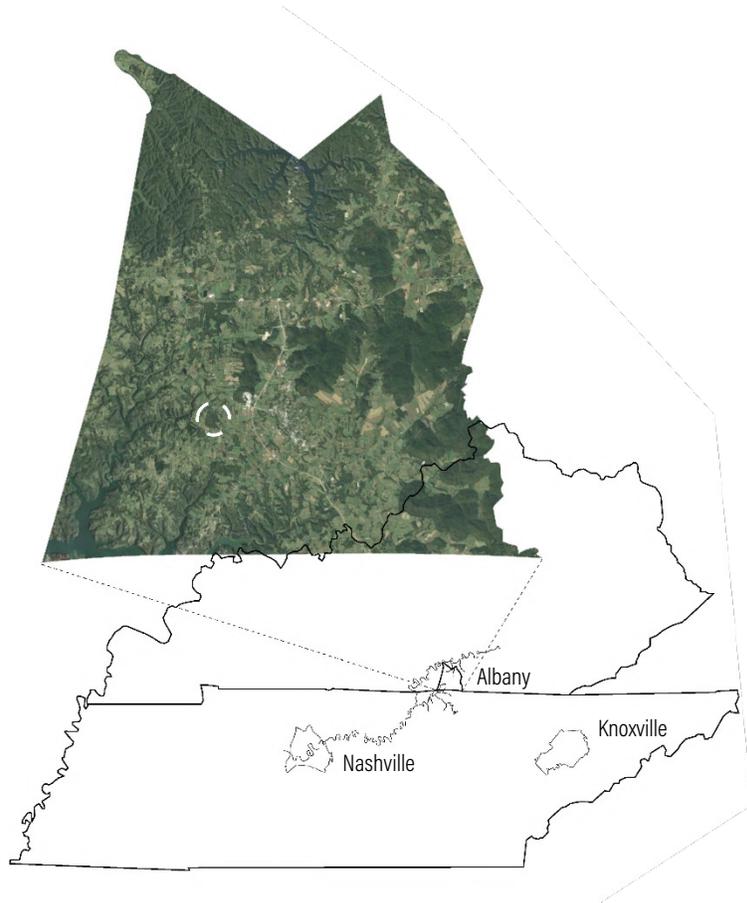


Figure 12: Location

_THE SITE

Willow Oaks is a 200 and some odd acre, mixed arable, pastoral farm that provides for its family as it provides for others. Family owned and operated by a third-generation farmer, Greg Abston. Abston gave a brief history of the farm as it has been told to him and he informed that Willow Oaks was developed in 5 stages out of 5 different property owners: The Booher's, WT Craft, Christell Wittham, Kendrick Flowers, and Betty Qualls¹. With such a diverse background of patching together different land typologies informs an interesting shape and dynamic of systems within.

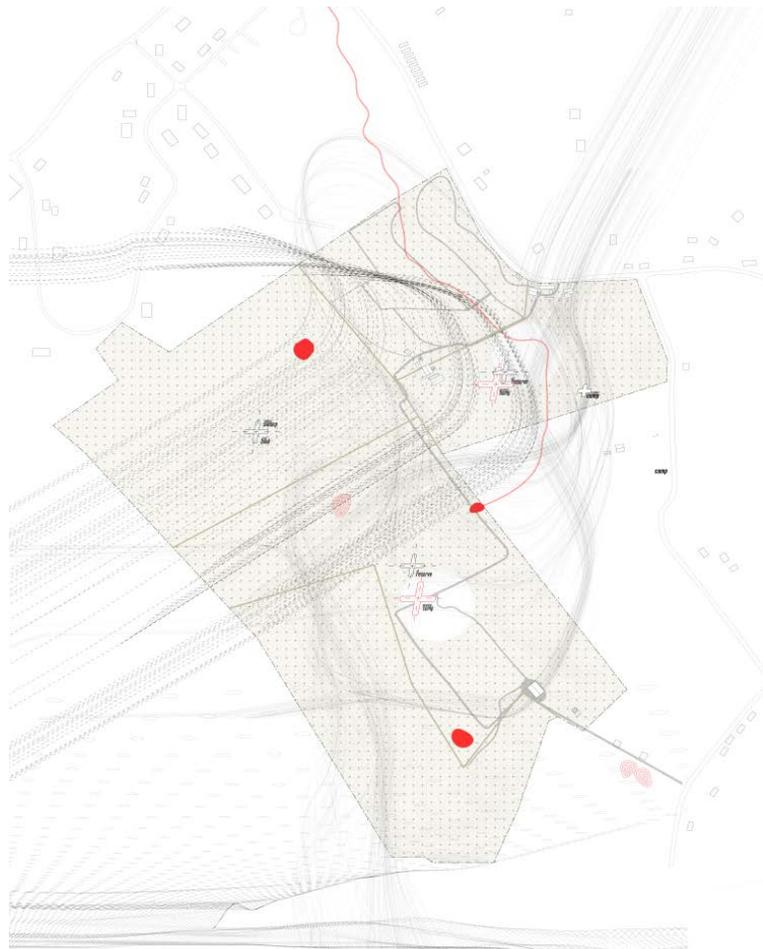


Figure 13: Site

¹ Abston, J. Greg. *Histories as Told: An Autobiographical Spoken Word Account*. 5 November 2018.

_THE TERRITORY

The Territory of the site functions as a whole yet it split into three pieces relating to the current living owners (Greg Abston, Betty Abston, and Frances Abston). The territory does not connect physically but virtually via cloud computing and DNA data mining at the source as will be discussed later. The shape of the territory now will change next week just as it will change tomorrow. This representation is of a moment in time housing parts of the field, the swamp, the forest, and pasture as the field and pasture are rotated, the forest harvested, and the swamp levels rise and lower. (Figure 14). There is no fixed, constant; always in oscillation.

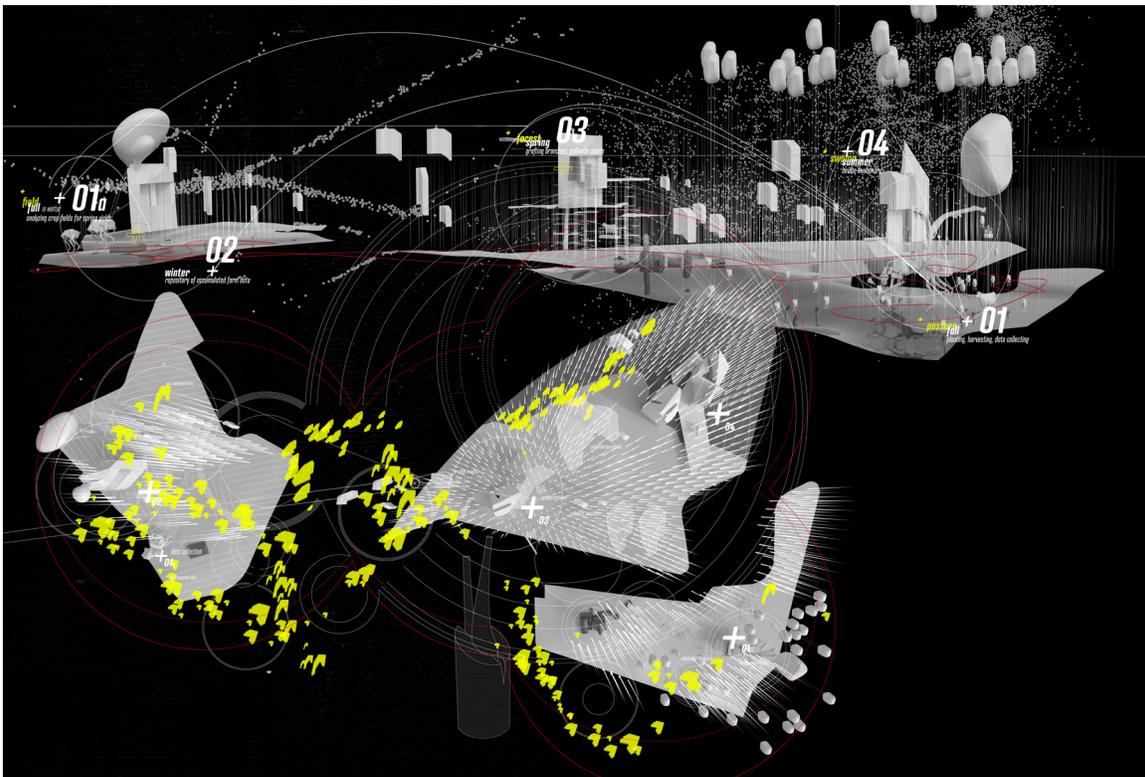


Figure 14: Territory

_NATIVE PAST

There is a strong Native American history embedded within the farm that can be found in the field and pastures – pieces of pottery, arrowheads, and flint turn up year after year. Greg Abston has a theory that the Native American Indians drove deer and wildlife from the swamp low to the higher lands making for an easy kill and travel distance to haul their slaughter to camp.

Many of the artifacts were burned to ash in a big house fire that destroyed his parent's house, Frank and Eleanor Abston, when Greg was a toddler and could barely walk. A big white house with a breezeway straight down the middle is what he has been told. The varied paths illustrate Indian and wildlife tracks (Figure 13) generated through simulations based on the topography of the territory. In the essence of the Native American history, there are still hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering carried out on the property by family and friends.

_HISTORIES AS TOLD

"My name is Greg Abston, I was born in 1959. I am the youngest of 5, Frank and Eleanor Abston. I am the third generation on this farm. My grandfather's name was Richard Blane Abston. My father was one of 10 children. This farm goes back, like I said, 3 generations. I was told by the elders -by the old people that we got a swamp here in the back and the old people used to call this The Big Swamp. Tending this farm, my father grew up using mules, drove mule drawn wagons and that is what we cultivated with during my younger years. My brothers all worked mules. My father had one of the first tractors that came into the community, it was a Super C Farmall used to work and cultivate the ground before that it was owned by the Boers, and before that General John Hunt Morgan, during the war, drove his company through here going down to Cumberland County, what territory know as Turkey Ben, Turkey Neck Ben, before that the Indians settled back here in the fields and worked the ground of corn and beans. Found arrow heads. My father in his younger days, in the hog lot down next to the spring found a lot of Indian axes, flint and they used those. Our house burnt out in 1962, what is referred to a breeze way house, had a section for the sleeping quarters on one side and the cooking quarters on the other. Had a big open area in the middle called a breeze way to help keep it cool in the summer. All they had was chimneys and wood burning stoves to keep warm during the winter time. The way I theorize this -this swap breaks and comes through our property through a creek down through the middle of the farm. Where we find these arrow heads at, before we put any fences up, the Indians had a cap here both sides of the creek and this swamp came with a valley right through the middle of it. As you get on top of the hill where the barns are, where I raise

cattle, milk cattle, and raise hogs -certain areas back there you can hear people talking back in the swamp – the sound will travel back through there. I can theorize these Indians getting together and driving the wild animals down the draw, they can get up on each side of it and they can slaughter their food [bow and arrow], this is what is referred to as gathers. They gathered nuts, walnuts, and at the time there used to be a lot of American Chestnut trees here. My father, when he was young -they didn't have a lot of clothes and went bare footed most of the time, they would tie a string around the bottom of their pant legs and they would go out in the field, in the woods, as a small community they would gather up all the chestnuts and acorns they could find and fill up their pant leg -when they get home pull the string out and all the nuts would fall out of their britches leg. This is some of the treats they had in the fall. They also used a lot of natural food that they grew -can it -they would salt cure the hams, that's how I grew up. We still do that today here at home. Not to say I am ashamed of it but that is how life was in the country, probably a little different in the city. I would like to add a few things to this taping, My grandfather, Richard Blane Abston served in the military, he also served as a guard at Alcatraz. He came back home to Albany, Kentucky and set up a harness and shoe shop. Repair shoes for 50 cents, repair settles, make settles, cover them – he also made harnesses for mules. That was the main engine for framing during the time. My dad went to college, he went to Trevecca, in Nashville, Tennessee. That is a private college Nazarene religion, before WW2. My dad met my mother early one morning when they had bible study before they went to classes, she stood up and gave a personal testimony and dad said that it was the most beautiful thing he had ever heard. He said I got to meet that lady. They did and right when

the war broke out Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, they got married. He went to war for the Army Air Cor – served on the state side. He was a navigator and shifted the fuel back and forth between your bombers -B2 Bombers. His crew was training during the construction of the atomic bomb in Knoxville. That was a secret thing going on during the time, a new bomb. Right after the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, they gave dad the opportunity to come home or re up his contract with the air core -he said he wanted to come home. Him and mom came home and built a farm together, bought my grandfather's farm, where we are at now. Wonderful place -my brothers all left, my sisters left -I'm the youngest. I came home, went to college. 1978 my dad said, "I'll raise you a set of heifers if you come back home and take care of me and mom." Had 110 acres here. I honored that, came home and we set up a small dairy farm, converted a beef and hog operation to a dairy. We ran this dairy until my parents got elderly, got sick. Both of them, like I said went to Travecca, both of them was teachers. Dad taught American world history and my mother was a 5th grade teacher. We worked side by side for about 17, 18 years. I come out of college -Eastern Kentucky University and worked my way through college. Milked 150 head most of the time every day, every morning. Never missed an 8 o'clock class for 4 years. I graduated in 4 with a bachelors in Dairy Herd Management and a minor in wood technology and mass production. Liking 6 hours to have a double major. Met a young lady driving a pretty little red car that caught my eye. We dated for 3 years and got married in 87. Just got through celebrating 30 years. We had a wonderful little daughter named Summer Ellen. She is a lucky lady. She grew up in a house with her grandmother and her grandfather who taught her a lot of morals and life lessons. A lot of respect that goes on in this family. All my

uncles, my grandfather, my dad, 2 brothers served in the military.
Something I have always been taught to honor God, family, and country
[in that order]. Needs to be a little more of that this day."²

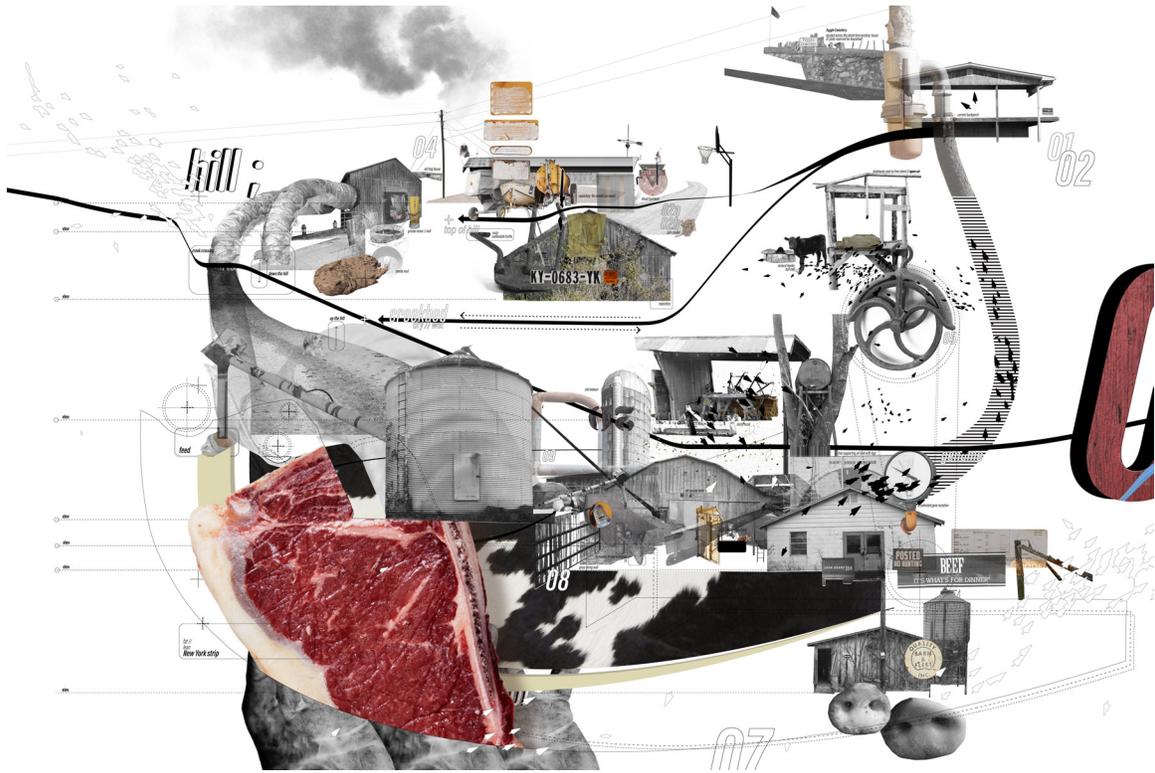


Figure 15: Hill

² Abston, J. Greg. *Histories as Told: An Autobiographical Spoken Word Account*. 5 November 2018.

_RELICS OF LINEAGE



Figure 16: Relics

01 banding pliers castrator; 02a corn sheller [front]; 02b corn sheller [side]; 03a mule harness with blinders [front]; 03b mule harness with blinders [side]; 04a broken single tree for attachment to harness and mule drawn tillage equipment; 04b broken single tree for attachment to harness and mule drawn tillage equipment; 05 water well pulley; 06 tools used in leather and shoe making; harness, bridles, saddles, and shoes by Ricard Blane Abston; 07 swathe for hay mowing; 08 sheers for mane and tail; 09 musical saw; 10 Leather cutter; 11 unknown.

_INVENTORIES

The point cloud below represents a list of farm inventories relative to proximate anthropogenic energies of time, space, and impact in correlation to their farming practice and geolocation.



Figure 17: Inventory

04_THE FARM HOUSE



Figure 18: The Farm

The farm house acts as a free agent to the farm - rigged with multiple assemblages (Figure 18) through time's seasonal shifts and flows. The farm house is autonomous. It is divided into 4 parts one named after respective season. Each part is apart of the whole; thus, each part is considered whole. Each farmhouse connects to one another, corresponding to seasons, one farmhouse having its own agenda specific to the time of year. The farm house as whole houses intimate background involvement through ritual, protocol, and procedures -modeling a farm culture that is hyper interactive with its internal and external infrastructures. Taking account for gathering data inventories of localized crop yields, chemical outputs, soil moisture content, and plant spacings to compare to global markets -continually downloading and uploading, stored in the DNA of trees (Figure 20 – 22) of the data grove (Figure 32). New inventories and DNA mechanics are coded through pollination and branch grafting (Figure 32). The farm house constructs and deconstructs itself from season to season contingent on need and function.

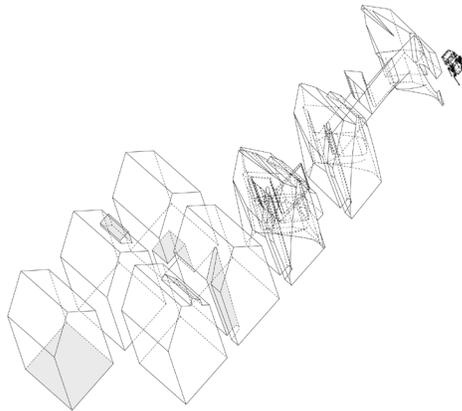


Figure 19: The Farm House

_THE FALL



Figure 20: Data Tree 00045h



Figure 21: Data Tree 00976s



Figure 22: Data Tree 00324s

In the fall, the farm house operates on all four conditions of the farm: the field, the swamp, the forest, and the pasture. The farm house is not on a leash yet knows its boundaries as it does the work it is instructed to do. The farm house is not physically connected being that it is separate from the whole but connected virtually -having data, actions, and observations transferred to the winter farmhouse to be analyzed. In the farm house collects crop data and stores it for record in the trees of the data grove. The fall farm house is not only responsible for collecting and transferring data but for cultivation and harvesting for all seasons (Figure 24); such as the summer hay crop or bi-weekly gathering of methane production (Figure 23, 25, 26). The yield in the fall is the survival rate of the winter. The fall farm house gathers yield by probing into the trees to update data (Figure 20 - 22) that cycles back to the winter farm house (Figure 29), so the farmer knows what, when, where, and how to plant for the start of the spring season and has good predictability for the seasons following.

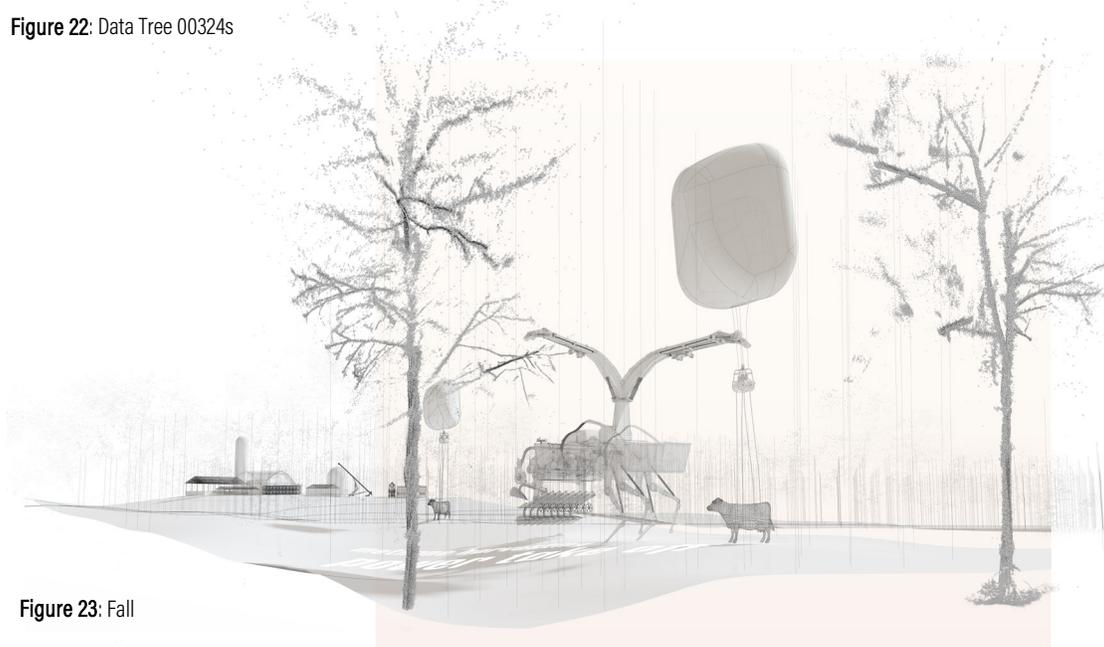


Figure 23: Fall

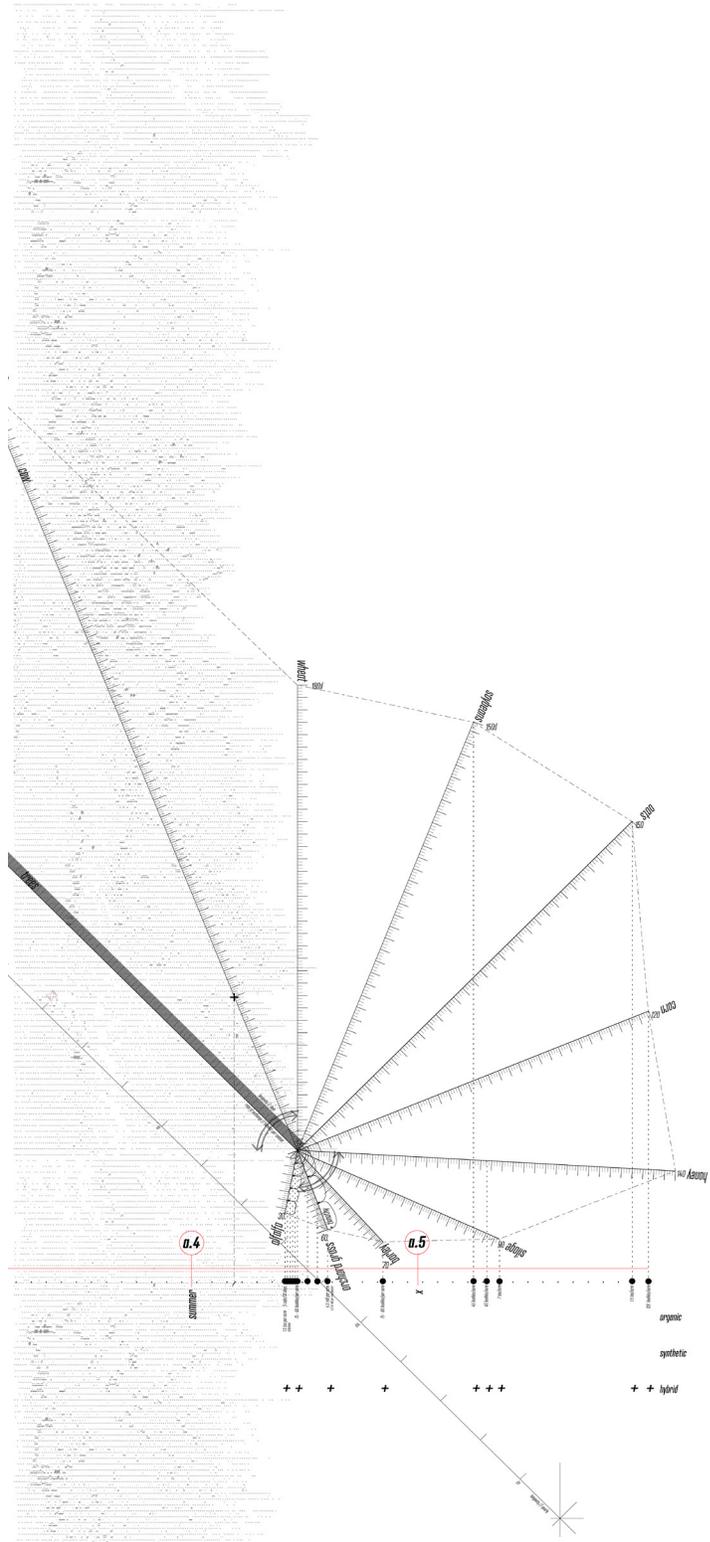


Figure 24: Seasonal Shift Rate of Exchange and Harvest Per Season

THE WINTER

The field and pasture are where the farm house situates itself in the winter alongside where crop cultivation and pasture for cattle takes place. The fields harvest is dependent on the crop growth period -quicker the harvest, quicker the data transfer, quicker the benefit and less storage capacity (such as soy beans - 150-day growth period); slower the harvest, slower the data transfer -higher storage capacity (such as trees -infinite growth period to a degree) (Figure 24). The trees within the territory are in the swamp and forest regions, the data grove. They are responsible for data storage of local yields and climates that correspond to the global market.

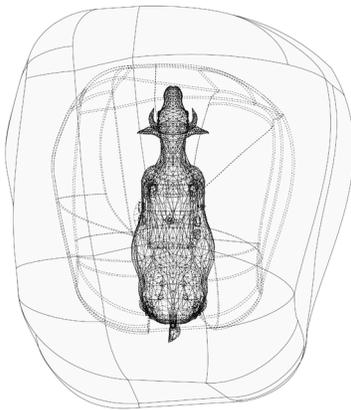


Figure 25: Methane Extractor, Above

The pasture includes grazing grounds for cattle to feed, breed, and nurse calves. Cattle combust methane into the atmosphere, a harmful natural gas that contributes to 28% of global warming each year. Each cow is surgically connected from their intestines through a series of tubes to a hot air balloon -typically powered by propane, it is substituted with methane extracted from the cow. The methane powers the hot air balloon at a low frequency – conserving most while powering the cow. (Figure 25 – 26). RFID cow tags signal hormones in the cow that alerts the balloon to go up or down. Calves roam and get lost in the meadow of tall grass, the cow bawls to alert calf, no sign. Hormone sensor activates, balloon increases altitude. Stressors ease when she spots her stray, balloon lowers. Cows are lowered to milk graze and breed.

To reduce the impact on the pasture grounds and to increase the marbling of meat -the methane extractor allows the cow to hover over the

grass field just enough to eat their daily amount, restricting their mobility yet allowing free range for a happy herd (Figure 26). For final extraction of weekly methane output, cattle are drove to the barn repository by the methane extractor from farmer interface. The methane is extracted from balloons and converted to liquid or stored as gas to operate farm. The barn stores accumulated implements, methane, and feed. Herd that

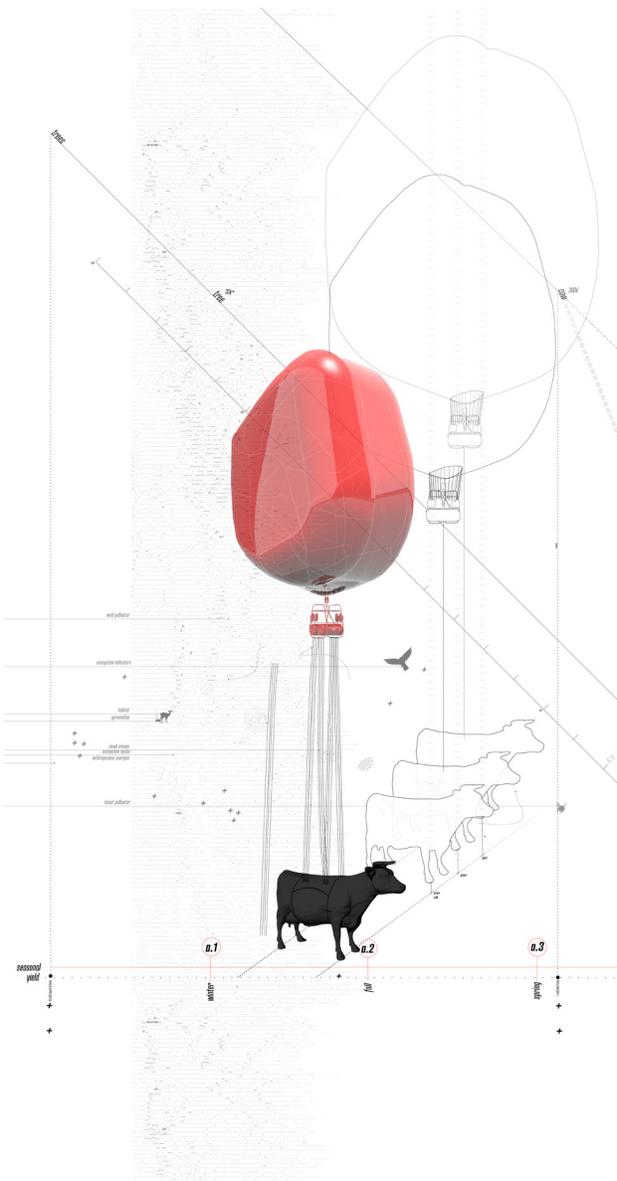


Figure 26: Methane Extractor Levitation Diagram

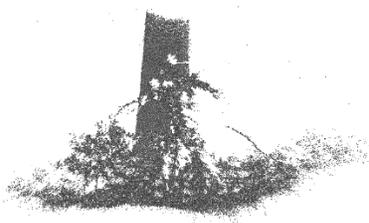


Figure 27: Data Tree 00018h



Figure 28: Data Tree 02460s

In the winter farm house is rounding the parameter - checking fences, collecting, and analyzing data to upload in the forest come spring. The farm house mobilizes using animal power and skids to tread through the snow and frozen top soil. It analyzes soil and moisture conditions by data transfer of fall farm house data collection for the upcoming season to ensure ultimate planting, growing, harvesting. In the winter the farm house is where the farmer sleeps nested by the motherboard analysis station where heat is exhausted. Communicating with the fall farm house via interface the winter farm house deploys the fall farm house to chase a coyote out of the field. (Figure 29).

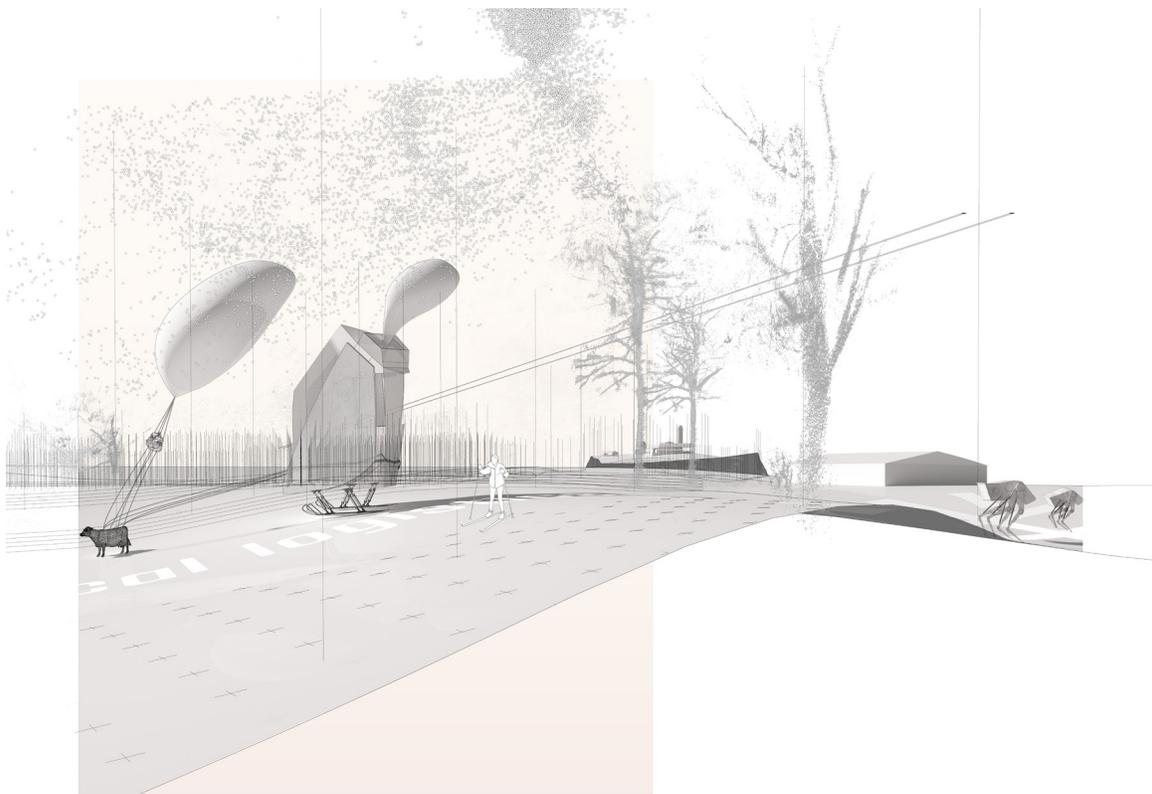


Figure 29: Winter

_THE SPRING

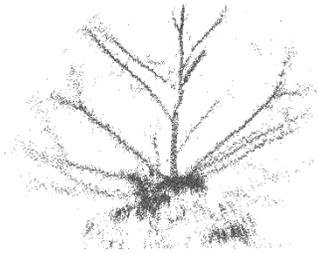


Figure 30: Data Tree 00005s

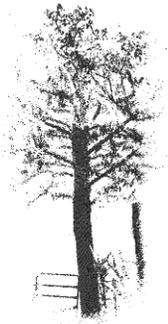


Figure 31: Data Tree 67802h

During the spring, the farm house is combined with the winter farm house (Figure 29) where they are located within the forest as the fall farm house (Figure 23) plants an early crop of corn. In the spring, the farm house is within the data grove and is responsible for DNA breeding and storing data records of farm yields. Plants are cross bred using pollination parachutes and by grafting branches on trees to account for new information. (Figure 32).

The data of the farm is stored in tree DNA within the data grove and connected globally from cloud networks. In house data stored is continually compared to global market economies to better model and operate the farm to its maximum potential.

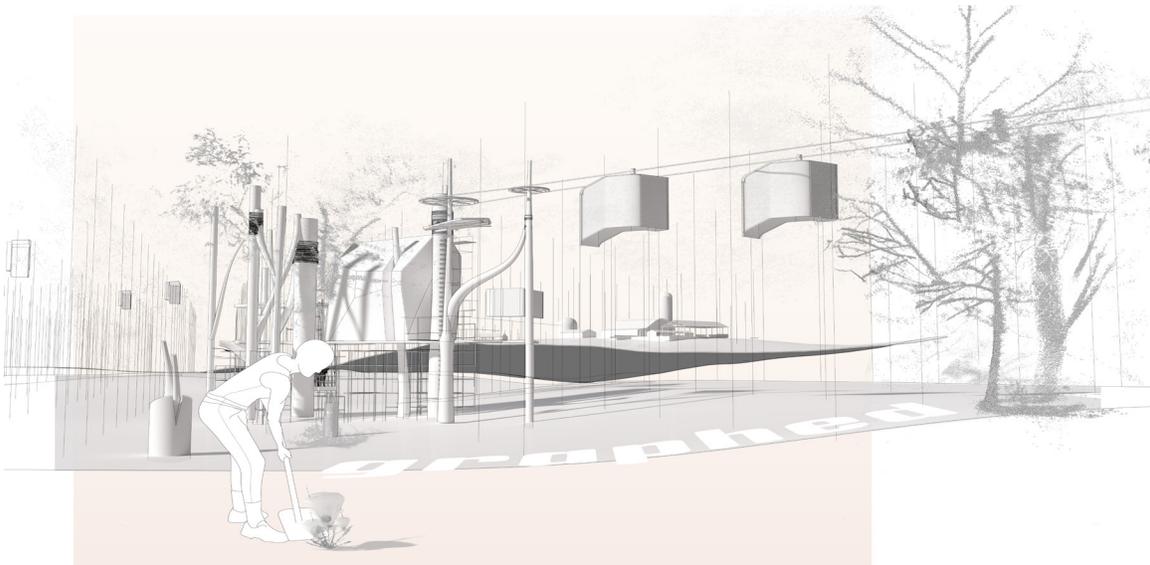


Figure 32: Spring

_THE SUMMER



Figure 33: Data Tree 798705s



Figure 34: Data Tree 00002s

In the summer the farm house is combined with the winter and spring farm house as the fall farm house is harvesting methane and the summers hey crop. The swamp is where the summer farm house floats and trawls along the low-lying water (Figure 35). Dependent on natural water fluctuations, the summer farm house searches for interesting plant and animal specimens while water samples are collected and analyzed in the lab to ensure proper water quality as the swamp serves as a mouth of a creek that leads to the lake. After a hot day's work, the farmer relaxes at the farm house to feel the cool breeze off the water. She calls in the cows – one by one they enter the farm house into a narrow corridor bawling, the farm house heats up the swamp water – steam a rolling – the cows muscles ease as the walls contract and start to vibrate and message, tenderizing the meat live. The cows are happy.



Figure 35: Summer

05_FARM FUTURES

The farming practice of small farms is becoming more progressive in sustainability and awareness of impact on the ecosystems of our environment. As we move forward with this thinking, farmers will become more reliant on technology and data to better advance their internal and external systems. Multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving, teaching, and design becomes more prevalent. Our genealogists, computer programmers, coders, and hackers become farmers and develop theory into reality. It is important to go beyond today's reality and embrace speculative thinking of the future because it's not far away; the future is tomorrow.

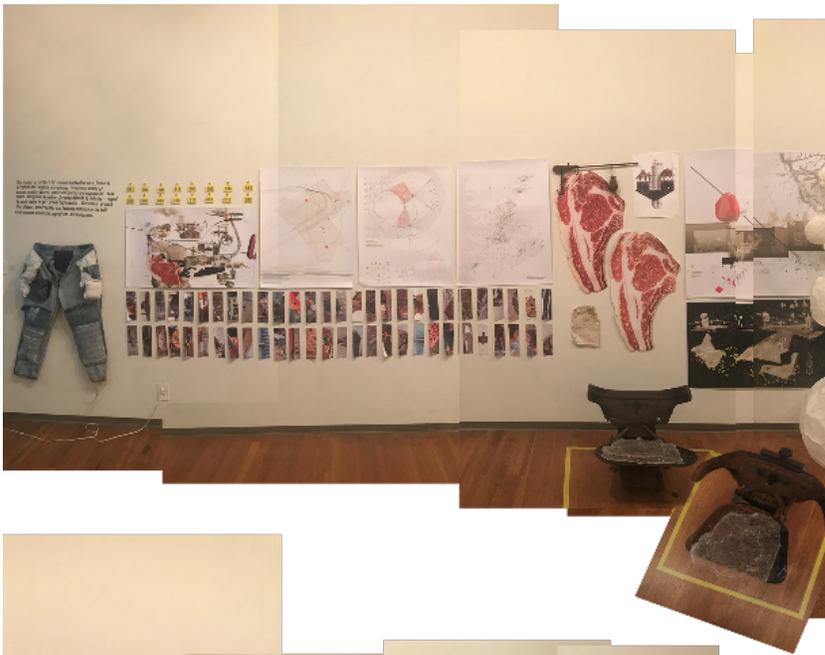
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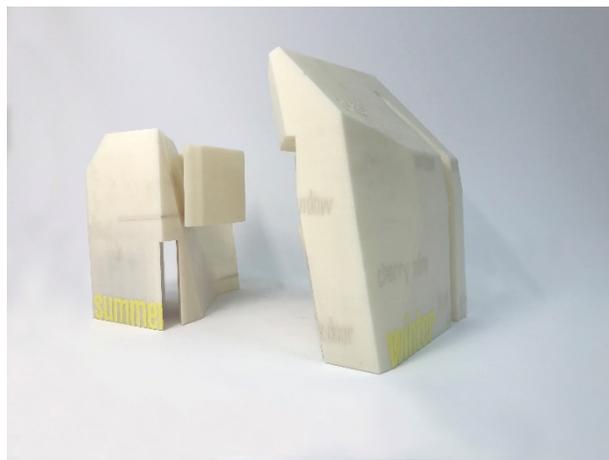
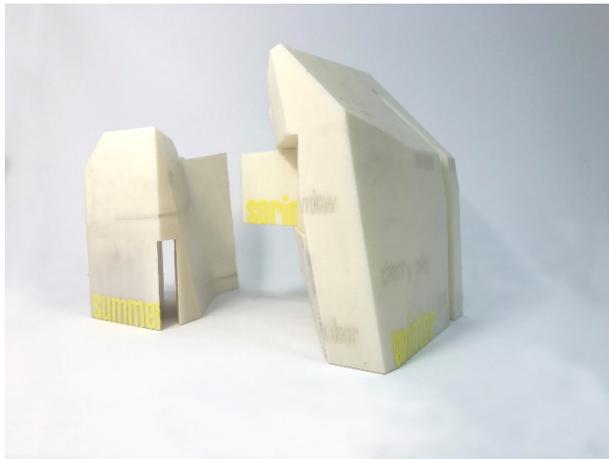
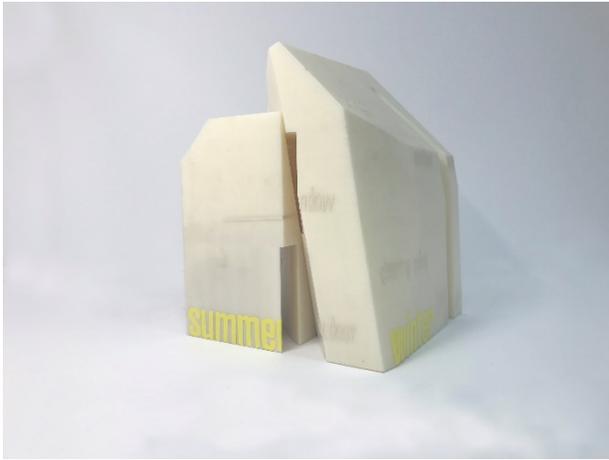
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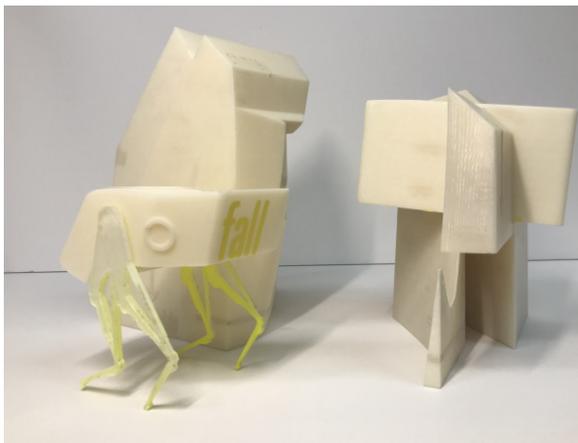
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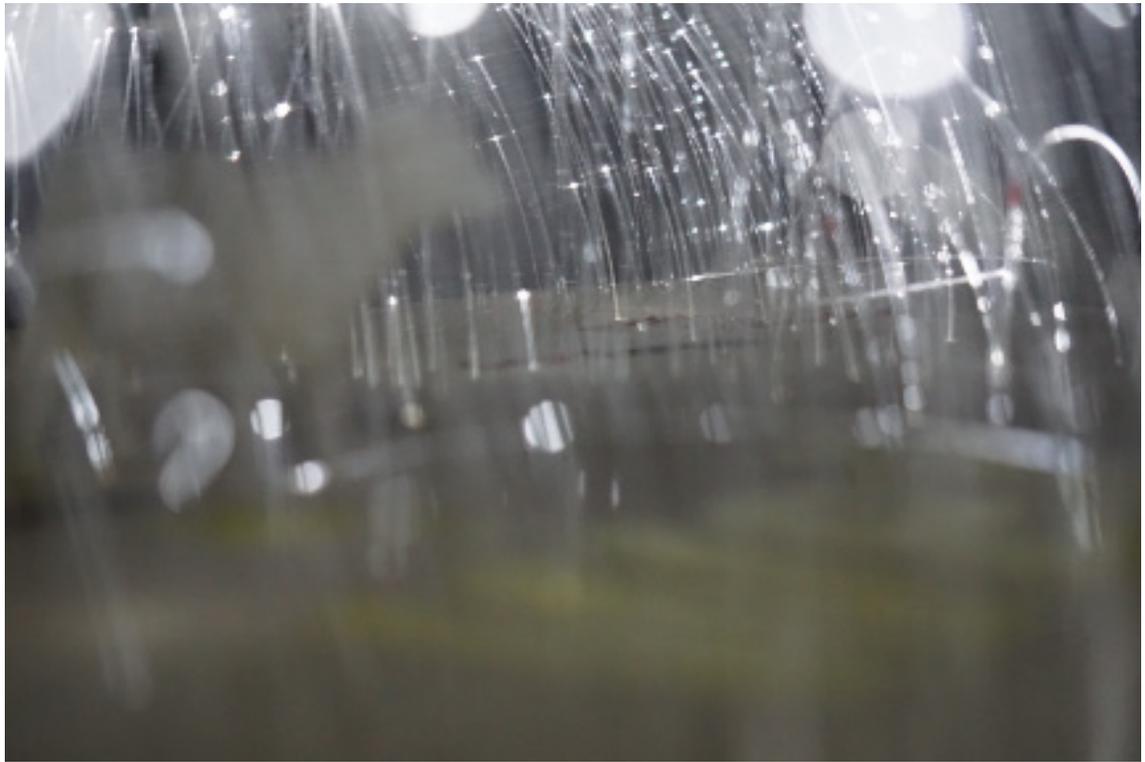
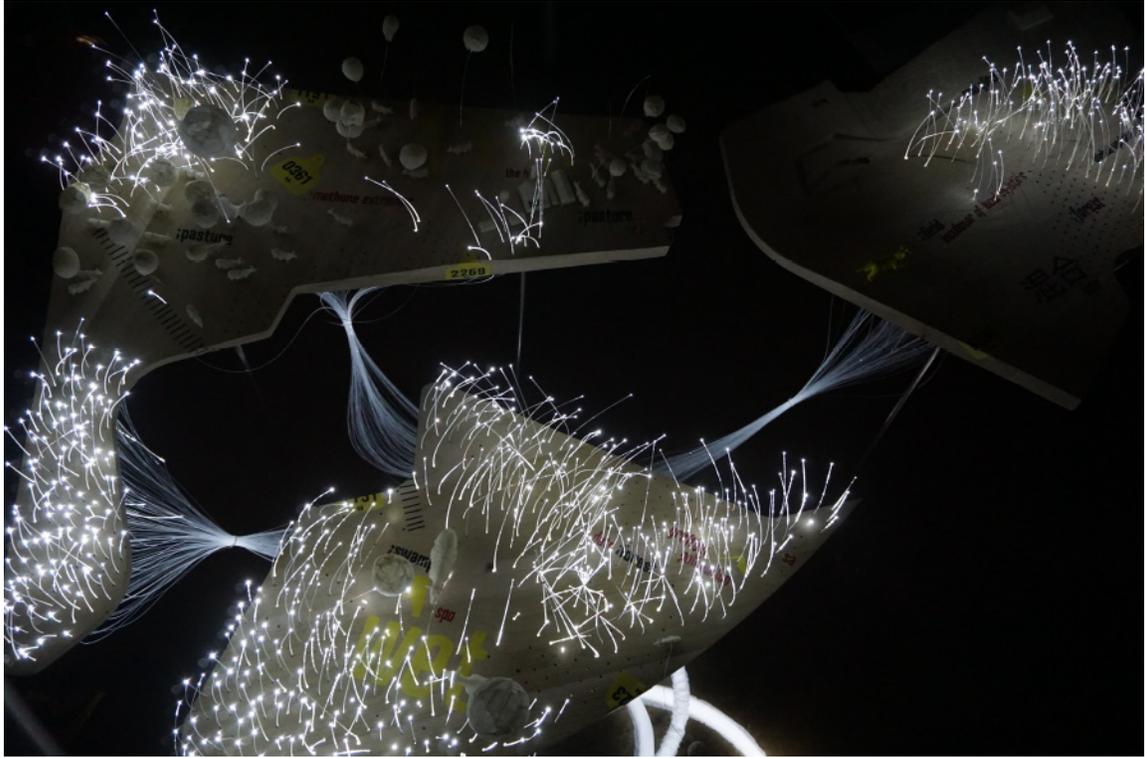
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APPENDIX











VITA

Summer Ellen Abston was born and raised in south central Kentucky on Willow Oaks farm - this farm. Following her passion of drawing and making, she decided architecture was the one after many attempts to try new things and career paths. Summer received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Western Kentucky University in 2015. Not long after she continued her education by pursuing a Master of Architecture at the University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design.

Having preconceived notions of what architecture is, she was thrown a curve ball. After countless contemplations, she never struck out. Having formed her own opinion of what architecture is, she now speculates and asks what architecture could be.