Altius sits on the crest of Grandview Avenue, looking out over Pittsburgh’s skyline. As Mount Washington tries to reassert itself through the other new restaurants that sit along its burgeoning crown, so too this building must come to terms with the assembly of past and future. With a more contemporary composition and the selective use of modern materials, the building can be rebranded as an upscale dining establishment, but still remain firmly situated within its context. The vertical plane breaks through the horizontality to signal the entrance, while the aperture that slips behind it allows one to peer through double-height space behind, and the spectacular view beyond. Then entry stair delicately dissolves while maintaining confidence in its own materiality. Through the door and past the stair, the room expands into an open space, bar, booths, and tables all looking out towards the city. Schematic design through construction.
DISTRACTION
HALFWAY HOUSE
If architecture and confinement are both about definite physical boundaries, how we read and interact with these boundaries is most telling of our position of power or lack thereof. Confinement is at its most oppressive when it is explicitly felt in the body. In an environment that one cannot change, individuals surrender their power – the ability to act – to those. Confined communities are offered a choice. An ethnographic exercise is conducted across multiple confined communities: a blighted neighborhood, a halfway house, a federal prison. Local methods of adaptation to stages of confinement (tagging, patterning, screening, etc.) are reconsidered through the lens of design and applied to the speculative reevaluation of a rehabilitation center for former inmates in Baltimore, MD. Foucaultian distinctions between "concentration" and "distraction" are blurred in an attempt to offer the confined curatorial opportunities, and, in so doing, a new level of control over their own lives.

POST-FLÂNEUR
FERRY TERMINAL
There exists within the terminal typology an inherent contradiction, architecture of dissettlement. The type inspires a hybrid between building and landscape, demarcating arrival to a place, symbolizing context without necessarily becoming a part of it. As landscape or landmark, it can be mapped, or become a map. The public codifies the typology of the terminal, to rearrange the programmatic and cultural conflicts. The terminal, then, can become a proto-typology. It can become an initiator of social revision, replacing hard-edged dialectics with rhetorical exchange. Thrown into the public sphere of transportation, of contemporary nomadic tendencies, it quietly opportunizes civic discourse, awakens communication.
THICK SKIN  
CHI. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Architecture cannot be frozen music; it does not stand still. If music can be defined as the physical delineation of sound movement through time, architecture is then the manifestation of being movement through time. Neither is inanimate. This truth is ever more apparent in an urban context, or in any situation that amalgamates disparate bodies in motion. Cacophony is more interesting. Skin is forced to move, forever wrapping and enveloping lives within. We must reconcile the constraints of its range of motion – we can't step outside of our skin. But such an expression exists for a reason: only one skin is a physical limitation. The other is a shield of [solar] protection or [programmatic] isolation. For any social contact to occur, one skin must penetrate the other, conversation bleeding through.

ELEMENTS  
SPA PAVILION

Simultaneously an act of reflection and self-induced amnesia, ‘relaxation’ redefines conventional emotion: Relaxed, one is suspended in a state of limbo, hovering just on the surface of their normative cultural milieu, the contact nearly indiscernible to the person loosened but not detached from reality. Connection abets distance. Although adamant about the proper use of material and technical structural perfection, Gottfried Semper was fascinated by the potential of cladding. As an extension of his theory regarding the differentiation made between ‘wall’ as spatially defining textile and ‘roof’ as supporting structural system, Semper praises the mask: ‘The suspension of reality, of material, is necessary if form is to emerge as meaningful symbol, as autonomous human creation.’ Meaning no longer rests on the shoulders of exhausted languages and postmodern semiotics, but is recovered, inscribed into surfaces of the present.