An Invisible Minority: Creating Agency for the LGBTQ+ Community

Zach Hart

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an invisible minority
creating agency for the LGBTQ+ community.
Request for Approval of Thesis Research
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Kathryn Bedette
and to the
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College of Architecture and Construction Management
by

Zachary Hart

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Architecture

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To anyone who has been rejected by the world for being themselves – you are not alone.

Professor Kathryn Bedette - Thank you for showing your unwavering support throughout this thesis. Your positive spirit and guidance has kept me motivated and excited to think and design critically.

Goldgeir Family - Thank you all for your scholarship, and for your positive impact on the lives of so many students. I am forever grateful for your contributions.

Mom - Thank you for supporting me through the most difficult 5 years yet, and for the countless times you’ve comforted me from across the country when I didn’t know how to go on.

Dad & Bethany - Thank you for your continued support both financially and morally, and for supporting me in whatever decisions I make. Thank you for bringing a new love into my life, my sister Eliana. I always knew I felt like a middle child.

Katie & Emilee - You didn’t do anything directly, but you always asked if I was “done with that thesis book” yet. Now I can finally say yes, it is done.

Alpha Rho Chi Brothers - Thank you for being my family away from home, and for showing me endless opportunities to grow. R.I.P. APX house.

To My Closest Friends, We couldn’t have done this without each other. Thank you for showing me that friendships can last a lifetime.

Katie & Emilee - Thank you for all the adventures, late nights, and fast food runs. Thank you for showing me that friendships can last a lifetime.

Professor Kathryn Bedette - Thank you for showing your unwavering support throughout this thesis. Your positive spirit and guidance has kept me motivated and excited to think and design critically.

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How can architecture instill power within a person? How can architecture be designed to lessen the impact of discrimination, abuse, homelessness, and mental health problems for members of the LGBTQ+ community? How can architecture be designed to increase the visibility and identity of the LGBTQ+ community, and provide safe spaces for them.

I am proposing to create a central hub for the LGBTQ+ community in Midtown, which will provide necessary programming catered towards the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the community of Midtown as a whole. This community hub will be designed as an architecture of agency, aiming to lessen the impact of discrimination, mental health problems, and homelessness for members of the LGBTQ+ community. I will use the research in my thesis investigation to establish a method of design that creates a sense of agency in a variety of ways.

This center will host a variety of programs, including

- **AFFORDABLE AND EMERGENCY HOUSING** for the over 900 homeless LGBTQ+ community members in Atlanta
- **RETAIL SPACE** that facilitates activity currently missing from the site during the day while respecting the LGBTQ+ history in Atlanta, and
- **CIVIC SPACE** for the various LGBTQ+ organizations in Atlanta to relocate to and utilize for events like Atlanta PRIDE.

There are certain qualities endemic to the architecture of power. Scale, materiality, visibility, circulation, and flexibility of space can form oppressive spaces, or spaces of agency, depending on how these qualities are designed.

These kinds of interpretations can be altered and applied in architectural programs, such as affordable housing, spaces for healing and meditation, or civic spaces that imbue power within the LGBTQ+ community. This architecture of agency will address the community’s specific needs - fostering independence, freedom of choice, confidence, and personal control over social interactions.

To create this architecture of agency, I will first study existing buildings that exhibit characteristics in built form that create a sense of agency. I will examine how and why this sense of empowerment is occurring, and how it can be replicated, scaled, and used in the design of this hub for the LGBTQ+ community.

The methods outlined here were extracted through the case studies and precedents that will be explored in the next chapter. They have been filtered through and outlined into their most basic forms, although there are many methods within each of the 6 outlined here.
Kim Dovey says that “a dominant built mass or volume signifies the control over resources necessary to its production.” How can we take the idea of having resources and authority and apply it without being oppressive? I want the building to have a voice: letting people know that the LGBTQ+ community has a voice and its members have a say in society. Declare their importance but not make it overbearing or oppressive. “Power is spatialized in the sense that all agency is situated in time/spaces ‘locales’—kitchens, board meetings, cities, neighborhoods, lectures, and clubs).”

Gehl, in his text Life Between Buildings makes the point that although architecture alone cannot create meaningful conversation between people, “the physical framework undoubtedly plays a more crucial and direct role” His studies on inhibiting and promoting contact through space give an outline on how space can be manipulated in intentional ways to support and give agency to the LGBTQ+ community.

“When we say someone is empowered, we mean their capacity to act is increased.” - Kim Dovey

FORCE
PRISONS
Explicitly architecture of oppression, prisons are designed with impermeable walls, with small puncturing letting minimal light in. Often designed with co-visibility being maximized, so guards may watch over the prisoners.

MEDIEVAL FORTRESS
In the medieval era, walls, bridges, and surrounding contexts. Spires lift up into the air, creating an imbalance of visibility and co-visibility, where those within the structure can see people approaching, but not vice versa.

WALLS, DOORS, FENCES
Walls, gates, doors, and fences, serve one main purpose: division of space. They are inherently designed to keep people from entering or leaving space.

COERCION
PUBLIC MONUMENTS
Prisons are designed with impermeable walls, with small puncturing letting minimal light in. Often designed with co-visibility being maximized, so guards may watch over the prisoners.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL
When a space is laid out affects the ways in which we view, approach, and experience a space. The organization of a space can dictate the order and manner of circulation, or subconsciously suggest a specific path.

VISIBILITY & INVISIBILITY
“The visibility and invisibility of others, becomes crucial to effective practices of coercion” (Framing Places 11). Depending on the balance of visibility & invisibility, power over others can be shifted.
The Anita May Rosenstein Campus by Leong Leong + Killefer Flammang Architects is part of a comprehensive support center for the LGBTQ+ community in Los Angeles, California.

The newest edition to the campus, the Anita May Rosenstein Campus houses a variety of programs targeted at the LGBTQ+ community. The space provides programming that are guaranteed to be a safe, inclusive approach to medical programs such as pharmacy, HIV/STI testing, and mental health facilities.

These programs address the community’s specific needs for affordable housing and access to safe medical facilities.

**PROGRAMS**
- Pharmacy
- HIV/STI Testing
- Mental Health Facilities
- Domestic Violence & Addiction Facilities
- Housing & Social Services (Transitional & Affordable)
- Culture & Education
A third of the building is the youth center. This space is where LGBTQ+ youth spend time, but those outside of the LGBTQ+ community are also welcome.

The center houses a day program in which meals are provided to the community, job placements training, and education are held. They feature programs on coming out, transitioning for transgender people, etc. There are 30 beds that form emergency housing, and can house up to 30 people overnight.

There are 94 beds in the transitional living program. This is a 4 story building that serves as longer term apartment living. This is a space that allows people to go to school or work and get back on their feet.

The new building features a culinary program for seniors and youth. The program teaches them the basics of cooking in a commercial kitchen and items that are needed and included so when they complete the program they will have learned a skill and gotten a certification that allows them enter the work force as a skilled laborer. Classes are held in an on site kitchen and the meals that are prepared for the youth. They have begun to sell snacks and coffee out front of the building as well.

There are also programs for seniors, which help them learn how to come out to their families, and they offer group therapy as well.
Eileen Gray saw architecture as a living organism, and felt that “the house is a machine to live in.” Her design in e.1027 is primarily a flexible space that focuses on 3 main levels: “the self, the house, and the outside environment.”

The architecture allows for light to be controlled separately, from views, and the privacy of the home is kept at an intimate level. Space saving and flexibility become key components within the building. Modularity allows for choice in amount of airflow, light, and privacy.
The London City Hall, by Foster + Partners, features a spiraling, open air circulation space that allows visibility to both the center atrium space and the outside world, giving the visitor clear visual knowledge of the space they are in, and the space beside them.

The circulation of the building creates an opportunity of choice for the visitor. First, one is able to observe the atrium space without being noticed by those below in the space, and after assessing the situation, then they are able to make the conscious decision to continue walking the path and enter the space or not.

For the LGBTQ+ community, the idea of knowing whether or not a space will make them feel safe is vital, and this type of circulation could be used to give them a sense of security and agency.
The Reichstag Dome, by Foster + Partners features a new glass addition to a German government building, and allows the public to access this space. Allowing the public into the government building is a symbolic move towards the new, more transparent government after the country’s oppressive past.

The circulation spirals, allowing someone on each floor to see down into the conference space below, giving the citizens a sense of agency in their own government, making the connection clear.

In a similar fashion, this building’s circulation and transparency establishes a symbolic connection of understanding between the state and its citizens.
The proposed addition to the Memorial Hall for the Nanjing Massacre Victims by Japanese Invaders features a hall where visitors can walk around and read about the events that unfolded during the massacre. The room is completely shut off from the outside. But if a person stands in front of one of the sections for over 30 seconds, contemplating what they are taking in from the museum, the building reacts to this contemplation by opening up this section, light pouring into the space and creating a space for the spectator to sit and reflect in the light.

Self reflection is a key component in what many members of the LGBTQ+ community deal with when coming to understand themselves and their sexuality and/or gender.
CASE STUDY #6

LA BREA AFFORDABLE HOUSING
BY PATRICK TIGHE ARCHITECTURE & JOHN V. MUTLOW

METHODS OF AGENCY

The LA Brea Affordable Housing project features an interior space, broken up by organic, concrete planters of various sizes, winding across the space to create a network of pockets of space and breaking up circulation into a branching network. These planters are filled with vegetation and bamboo plants, which further divide each space and create an intimate relationship that can be used for private conversations as well as self reflection.

For the LGBTQ+ community, “coming out” and talking about issues related to their sexuality is a private, intimate experience, and often an air of secrecy is desired, to negate self-consciousness. Spaces like this create a warm environment that allow the visitor to open up and feel comfortable.

CIRCULATION

The circulation in the area forces you to make a series of choices in regards to whether or not you enter the seating space or continue on to the other part of the space. The orientation of the openings allows for a private conversation to take place without being directly open to the circulation space around it.
**MATERIALITY**

The density of the bamboo material used in the planters and planters serves to create an inhabitable and flexible bullede-together space within the room. For various levels of privacy, the bamboo becomes a screen between different parties inhabiting a space.

**SOUND ABSORPTION**

Bamboo as a sound absorption material with an average absorption coefficient of 0.95 at frequency about 3kHz. This natural material acts as a buffer for sound to pass through. The density of the bamboo material can be enhanced to become a buffer at lower frequencies by adding additional air gaps for sound to pass through. This natural material acts as a sustainable, air purifying, and visually appealing material.

**PROXEMICS**

The kind of seating allows for a flexibility of social distancing. At a dense level, the bamboo allows对于 either side to be fully realized. Speech and activity is not fully recognized each other, but the clear co-visibility between the two sides allows for complete awareness of activity on either side.

**IN COMPARISON**

- **Fig. 2.20**
  - Bamboo as a sound absorption material with an average absorption coefficient of 0.95 at frequency about 3kHz.
  - This natural material acts as a buffer for sound to pass through.
  - The density of the bamboo material can be enhanced to become a buffer at lower frequencies by adding additional air gaps for sound to pass through.

- **Fig. 2.21**
  - Various levels of public and private spaces. The curvature allows for flexibility of social distancing.
  - At a dense level, the bamboo allows for complete awareness of activity on either side.

- **Fig. 2.22**
  - Open window.
  - Effective sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha > 0.75$
  - Bamboo's sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha = 0.95$

- **Fig. 2.23**
  - Standard wall.
  - Effective sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha = 0.95$
  - Bamboo's sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha = 0.95$

- **Fig. 2.24**
  - Open window.
  - Effective sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha = 1.00$
  - Standard wall.
  - Effective sound absorption coefficient: $\alpha = 0.95$

**TABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Effective Sound Absorption Coefficient</th>
<th>Bamboo's Sound Absorption Coefficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Wall</td>
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Source: Architectural Acoustics Illustrated (November 2014).
WINDHOVER CONTEMPLATIVE CENTER
BY AIDLIN DARLING DESIGN

METHODS OF AGENCY

The Windhover Contemplative Center at Stanford University is primarily a space where students can self-reflect, or come to escape from their stress, anxiety, and pressure of their lives. The structure of the room consists of small columns that reflect the idea of a light space. The space takes advantage of natural materials, like wood, stone, and vegetation, in conjunction with glass to connect to the outside world, where nature is framed by large glass panels, creating a visual connection to a serene scene.
The structural system of the Windhover Contemplative Center clearly draws on its connection to nature, mimicking a non-rhythmic forest of tree trunks that the visitor resides in. These structural supports vary in the width, as well as in distance apart from each other, creating a seemingly natural growth that does not stick to a visible pattern.

The interior courtyards of the Windhover Contemplative Center are covered in gravel, made up of small, round stones. The small scale of these stones create a comforting environment, creating the opposite of a monolithic environment that create texture in slight variation in color and size, as well as a clean, soft surface to look at. The contrast of the hard rocks, with a soft, rounded shape creates a balance in the viewer's eye.

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The National Memorial For Peace & Justice takes advantage of material usage, using concrete treated in a way that makes it feel more natural, revealing the wood formwork that was used to create it, and has rustic colors that symbolize a long history of hardships and wrongdoings.

The memorial features spaces for sitting, conversing, and contemplating the tragedies that took place, which emerge seamlessly from the sloping ground.

Metal poles suspended from the ceiling reach down into the spectators’ world, forming a sort of open drop-ceiling, the scale of these not so large and high that it becomes daunting but comforting.
MATERIALITY
Wooden planks on the walking surface serve as a familiar material that reminds us of home and nature. The planks are cut down to a small, manageable human scale, and the planks flow from the circulation space up to the seating area in a continuous manner.

SCALE
The spacing of the hanging poles is set to represent the victims of lynching, and simulate the size of a human. The space between them is just big enough so that a person could walk through them, but not comfortably. If we change the spacing of these columns, different effects can be achieved. By placing these poles closer together, a more massive, heavy surface is projected, while if we place them further apart, a more open, light surface is revealed.

Fig. 2.37
Fig. 2.38
Fig. 2.39
Fig. 2.40
The site sits in Georgia’s capital, Atlanta, in a neighborhood called Midtown. This neighborhood is well known as a beautiful place with a lot of diversity in building topology and hosts Piedmont Park, as well as stands as Atlanta’s LGBTQ+ neighborhood. The neighborhood has a strong history with the LGBTQ+ community, and was established in the 1970s with the openings of the first LGBT bars in Atlanta. The area saw a cultural revolution in LGBTQ+ rights over the years, and should continue to develop this trend.

**AGE RANGE**

- 16-29: 25%
- 30-39: 26%
- 40-49: 19%
- 50-59: 19%
- 60+: 11%

**POPULATION**

- Live: 20,000
- Work: 70,000 / day
- Live + Work: 8,000
- VHT: 10,000 / day

**STATISTICS**

- 59% say there aren’t enough shopping options
- 94% of crime is non-violent property crime
- 7 min walk to the Midtown MARTA station
- < 1 min walk to the MARTA bus station
LAND USE & SURROUNDING SCALE

The spacing of the hanging poles is set to represent the victims of lynching, and simulate the size of a human. The space between them is just big enough so that a person could walk through them, but not comfortably. If we change the spacing of these columns, different effects can be achieved. By placing these poles closer together, a more massive, heavy surface is projected, while if we place them further apart, a more open, light surface is revealed.

The site sits on a pivot point, between 4 distinct areas of building usage. Each of these (public park, single family residential, multi family / mixed used, and offices / mixed use) are visible from atop the site, and the experience of the site from each of these places is unique. The views from each of these locations will take a role in determining the placement of programming, massing, and materiality.

SITE AS A PIVOT POINT BETWEEN TYPOLOGIES

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CIRCULATION PATTERNS

The circulation patterns reveal that the site and the surrounding area have a high level of vehicular activity throughout the week. This circulation is heavily dominated by vehicular traffic and is used as a transitory space for cars to use on their work commutes into the city. The site lacks circulation activity on the weekends when offices are closed.

LIGHT & SHADOW STUDIES

The site, being on a corner, provides a suitable spot for sun exposure throughout the year. There is very little overlap of shadows from the surrounding buildings, as the high-rise buildings are north and west of the site. This condition allows direct sun exposure throughout the year.
This history will directly inform some of the programming used in the building. The existing conditions will also inform how agency is created, or maintained, on site.

This history holds for the community, as well as the lens of agency, reveals some of the history that the site maintained, on site. This history will directly inform some of the programming used in the building. The existing conditions will also inform how agency is created, or maintained, on site.

The history of the site

Looking at the site through a lens of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the lens of agency, reveals some of the history that the site maintained, on site.
ATLANTA LGBTQ+ ORGANIZATIONS

- PFLAG Atlanta
  3 miles north
- Lost N’ Found Youth Center
  2 miles northeast
- Center for Positive Aging
  LGBTQ+ support for elderly
- The Philip Rush Center
  Houses Multiple LGBTQ+ Organizations: Georgia Equality, All-1 Family, The Health Initiative, and Sojourn
- PFLAG Atlanta
  3 miles north

ATLANTA HOMELESS SHELTERS

- HOMELESS LGBTQ+ STATS
  TOTAL HOMELESS YOUTH: 3,374
  TOTAL LGBTQ+ HOMELESS YOUTH: 950
  Well over 1 in 4 homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+
  27% increase since the last report

According to a Georgia State Study, in 2015 the LGBT homeless youth was counted at 950, or 28.2% of the 3,374 homeless youth

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- 1 in 30 youths (aged 13-17) experienced homelessness over a 12 month period
- 1 in 10 young adults (aged 18-25) experienced homelessness over a 12 month period

- LGBTQ+ Youth represent up to 40% of the homeless youth population, but 10% of the overall youth population
AGENCY DRIVEN SITE ANALYSIS

VISUAL INEQUALITY

Visual inequality occurs on multiple levels on the site due to a significant change in scale and materiality between adjacent buildings. The mid-rise building’s facade on the Park, present for visual inequality on the site, and pedestrian and vehicles are not able to see inside the multifamily apartment complex, but those inside have a clear, but distant view of what happens on the site, which is reinforced by the materiality of each building. The apartment complex has a glass facade, but the finish and glazing is reflective on the outside, preventing visibility from the outside, for privacy. Each unit has a balcony that is exposed, but the drastic height difference reinforces the pedestrian may be being watched by those above, and be unaware. The programming around the site is all transitory - there is a lack of stationary visual that happens on the public space of the site and the private space of the apartments.

WAY-FINDING VIA LANDMARKS

The approach to the site from each of north is drastically different. The streetscape, building scale, and choice of materials all vary so each person or vehicle is exposed to the site in terms of what is visible on the site, and how the site is seen on a unique intersection of building typologies. This becomes important when approaching the building coming front, either the single-family/mixed use area, the pedestrian view, or the office area. Documenting the experience as you approach the site from each direction allows us to use how possible building forms and scales will interact with the existing conditions. Approaches 2 & 4 see the site as an object in space, whereas approaches 1 & 3 see the site as an object in space, where the building will have to both respect the existing context, and make an effort to stand out in the promenade.

VISUAL POTENTIAL

The approach to the site from each of street is drastically different. The streetscape, building scale, and choice of materials all vary so each person or vehicle is exposed to the site in terms of what is visible on the site, and how the site is seen on a unique intersection of building typologies. This becomes important when approaching the building coming from each of the single-family/mixed use area, the pedestrian view, or the office area. Documenting the experience as you approach the site from each direction allows us to use how possible building forms and scales will interact with the existing conditions. Approaches 2 & 4 see the site as an object in space, whereas approaches 1 & 3 see the site on a unique intersection of building typologies. This becomes important when approaching the building coming from each of the single-family/mixed use area, the pedestrian view, or the office area. Documenting the experience as you approach the site from each direction allows us to use how possible building forms and scales will interact with the existing conditions.
DESIGN INTENTIONS OUTLINED

CREATING AGENCY AT DIFFERENT SCALES

COMMUNITY SCALE

Creating a sense of agency for the LGBTQ+ community can be done at multiple scales. At a community scale, we have a look at the context of the site in an urban scale and as an object within the city. The site sits on a threshold of 4 distinct building typologies: a single family home on 13th street and Piedmont. These typologies vary in scale, gravity, and create a gradient from small scale to large scale.

AGENCY

The site, sitting on an existing symbol for the community, should present to the LGBTQ+ community as a symbol of empowerment. This symbolism will be built upon and be projected into built form, standing as an icon of modernity, pushing away from the traditional context surrounding it, and into the new era of acceptance in the current civil rights revolution.

The site is symbolically placed in the middle of a unique threshold. The single family home sits on the east, the site sits in a multi-family/mixed use area, and to the west is the large scale mixed use area, which evokes symbols of “city” in scale and form.

This symbolizes how acceptance of this community starts at home, and from the home, is then being pushed into the workplace and the city, which represents “society.” It becomes a symbol of change and growth both metaphorically and physically. For this community to be fully accepted, change needs to start at home, which will directly influence the rest of society, symbolized by the city.

VISIBILITY / COVISIBILITY

In terms of agency, visibility and covisibility is centered on information. If one party has a greater level of information about the other party is doing, there is an imbalance in the unknown. For the LGBTQ+ community, knowing your surroundings can give you a sense of groundedness and control over your own safety, free to make choices without being surveilled.

By intentionally maintaining visibility to landmarks in the downtown, pedestrians are able to orient themselves in the city without the feeling of being watched. This gives them a sense of independence and can reinforce their sense of agency.

MATERIALITY

Materiality is primarily the “first impression” of the built environment. Upon and how we perceive materials behave, and how to use them intentionally in terms of agency, can push this LGBTQ+ hub to the highest level of acceptance and developing a sense of agency to all who experience it in the context of the site.

In the immediate context of the site, traditional materials like brick and stone are used, especially in small scale constructions. These call on traditions, providing two options. To recognize these traditional materials, being used in a traditional method of construction, and challenge the old material into new methods of construction. Taking the modular brick that has been used primarily in the simple construction of walls, and construct something out of the material that wouldn’t have been possible with traditional methods of construction. The other option is to reject the materials of the past, and push towards a radically new material, representative of the new world in the new era of acceptance.

SYMBOLS

The symbol of the site is a pink triangle on a white background, used in concentration camps to identify homosexual men. This symbol is also used to identify homosexual women and sex workers. The pink and yellow triangles were used to single out male homosexual prisoners that were Jewish.

SITE

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At an individual scale, agency for the LGBTQ+ community means thinking about how space interacts with us in unique ways that may not be thought about in isolation. For community members who struggle with their identity, providing options that empower the user through built form become subtle ways of letting them take back their power and control their environment. The space needs to work for them, not for them to work around.

Choice gives an individual the gift of control. For the LGBTQ+ community, choice is everything. People in the LGBTQ+ community have a right to choose when they "come out," to choose what to share about their identities, and to choose who knows about them. While fine for many, some may not want this highly public entrance visible to others. By providing choice in how you enter the building, we can allow visitors to maintain their power, and feel comfortable in a public space that they may be uncomfortable being seen in.

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Architecture can provide choice as appropriation by creating spaces that have different ways of appropriating. A seating space, for example, can provide opportunities for large groups to gather and socialize, for an intimate conversation, or for a private solitary situation.

This example from the La Brea Affordable Housing Project shows the diversity in seating arrangements that allow for various modes of engagement.

The Shed, by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, takes flexibility of space to a new level. This space completely transforms, from an outdoor space to an interior atrium. Depending on weather conditions, planned events, and seasonal changes, the building can adapt to fit large venues, outdoor events as well as host smaller, intimate social interactions that flow into the street, activating the street during summertime events, and maintaining this space during the colder months.

The T wave, by Brian Lee, functions as a wall that can be appropriated into a seat seamlessly. This wall serves as a space divider as well as an interactive seat that molds to each user. The choice is given to the visitor to sit, recline, or stand. In the current conditions of the interior space, limited seating is available, with very limited flexibility of space. The tables are in close proximity, which forces a social interaction that some visitors may not be comfortable with. By providing more flexible space, we can give visitors the power to inhabit however they feel comfortable.

Choice as Appropriation

Architects can provide choice as appropriation by creating spaces that have different ways of appropriating. A seating space, for example, can provide opportunities for large groups to gather and socialize, for an intimate conversation, or for a private solitary situation.

This example from the La Brea Affordable Housing Project shows the diversity in seating arrangements that allow for various modes of engagement.

Flexibility of Space

The Shed, by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, takes flexibility of space to a new level. This space completely transforms, from an outdoor space to an interior atrium. Depending on weather conditions, planned events, and seasonal changes, the building can adapt to fit large venues, or outdoor events as well as host smaller, intimate social interactions that flow into the street, activating the street during summertime events, and maintaining this space during the colder months.

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This example from the La Brea Affordable Housing Project shows the diversity in seating arrangements that allow for various modes of engagement.
DESIGN PROCESS OUTLINED

PROGRAMMING & PROCESS

PROGRAMS

Considering the needs of the LGBTQ+ community and surrounding context in midtown, this project will implement a variety of programs that serve primarily the LGBTQ+ community, but the general public, including residents and visitors alike, providing daily programs and destination spaces.

HOUSING

An undeniable statistic in the LGBTQ+ community shows the heavily weighted percentage of the homeless LGBTQ+ population, that is widely unaddressed in Atlanta. With over 950 homeless youth that identify as LGBTQ+ in Atlanta, the need for both emergency housing and affordable housing is apparent. This program will be divided into youth and adult areas, with private rooms and communal spaces for both sections.

CIVIC SPACE

Many LGBTQ+ youth are forced into homelessness at a young age, and depending on their situation, have an unstable relationship with school and education. These youths’ odds of receiving a higher education are much lower, so this center will provide the option of education in practical skills that will leave the members of the center with skilled labor practices, opening up opportunities for employment, allowing them to start supporting themselves financially.

CULTURE & EDUCATION

A large population of the homes community has a day to day need to live out of their car, which serves as a temporary shelter and necessary transportation. This space will be flexible, being reconfigurable for various events surrounding the community, including events, meetings, and gatherings. This space will serve as event space for various events surrounding the community, including event, meetings, and gatherings. This space will be flexible, being reconfigurable for various events surrounding the community, including

RETAIL

A lack of daily destinations, or 3rd places, in this area has resulted in a lack of pedestrian activity on a regular basis. The site being a landmark for pedestrian activities, but nothing holds or draws people to the site, the activity is transient. The existing coffee shop on the site provides for a small gathering space, but can be expanded upon. To re ignite and revitalize the previous LGBTQ+ bookstores, which served as communal hubs of activity and meeting for the community, a more modern version of an LGBTQ+ bookstore will be implemented into the site as well as a space for learning and gathering.

OFFICES

To accommodate for and house the various LGBTQ+ organizations that need a home on the site, office spaces will be provided that facilitate group meetings, as well as individual rooms for smaller groups that can be used for private meetings. The program will also accommodate the various employees that the hub will need for the housing, education, and administrative programs. This program will also accommodate the various employees that the hub will need for the housing, education, and administrative programs.

PARKING

A large population of the homes community has a day to day need to live out of their car, which serves as a temporary shelter and necessary transportation. This space will be flexible, being reconfigurable for various events surrounding the community, including events, meetings, and gatherings. This space will serve as event space for various events surrounding the community, including event, meetings, and gatherings.

DESIGN PROCESS

To move forward with the design process, I will work at three distinct scales, creating a series of experiential moments in the building, eventually connecting these and thinking about them in conjunction with each other, starting at the individual experience, working out to built form, materiality, and details at an urban scale. These scales will be called the micro scale (individual experience), mid-tier scale, and macro scale (urban scale).

CIRCULATION PATHS

The way visitors can enter the space becomes a direct for both formal and programmatic design. The main entrance becomes centered along the prominent west side of Piedmont Avenue, with an emphasis on the corner facing the corridor across the street. A more private entrance gets pushed further north along piedmont Avenue, becoming more common entrance for cars and those who utilize the housing on site.
INDIVIDUAL SCALE DESIGN

Designing at the micro scale to experiment with designing key moments in the building for the LGBTQ+ community. These moments are about creating agency, for oneself and empowering choice and empowerment for multiply involved.

The idea of a ‘personal bubble’ of space that gives a user a sense of privacy, while still being immersed in the space itself. This bubble can then expand to become a space of private conversation, or a space for a private collaboration of multiple people. Providing private nooks, public gathering spaces, and flexible use seating that can be appropriated to fit the LGBTQ+ community’s needs is reflected at a micro scale, honing in on moments that connect with nature, materials, and self reflection.

EXPERIENTIAL SCALE DESIGN

Designing at the micro scale to experiment with designing key moments in the building for the LGBTQ+ community. These moments are about creating agency, for oneself and empowering choice and empowerment for multiply involved.

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Designing at the macro scale to experiment with form finding that will create an iconic landmark for the LGBTQ+ community. The form should symbolize acceptance, equality, and a push towards the future of civil rights.

Starting with the street edge condition that will ultimately be the experience for pedestrians and vehicles in the site, designing a street edge that draws visitors into the space, without having to make a conscious decision to “enter” the building, blurring the line between interior and exterior, and public and private. The space at the ground level wants to engage and be highly public, while the private interior spaces are pushed further away from the pedestrian.

When visitors come the rainbow crosswalk, an existing LGBTQ+ landmark, they should be drawn in to stay and experience the area surrounding the crosswalk as well. The building should both acknowledge, and grace this landmark, allowing visitors to interact with the new architecture, and the existing landmark at the same time.

A space that brings the public to a higher level and allows them to interact with the public below offers a moment for the building to become a photo opportunity from the building to the crosswalk, and vice-versa.

This program can cater towards visitors, and allows to build the narrative of an exciting destination for visitors.

The distance between those on the ground and those above is close enough that both parties could communicate with each other, avoiding creating an imbalance of visual and audible connection. This distance is key for communication between the two levels of public activity.
HOUSING  
2,500 SF x 10 stories  
APPROX. 125 ROOMS

PARKING  
4,000 SF x 8 stories  
APPROX. 119 SPOTS

OFFICES  
5,800 SF x 8 stories  
APPROX. 23,200 SPOTS

EDUCATION  
4,000 SF x 8 stories  
APPROX. 32,200 SF

CIVIC SPACE  
3,150 SF x 1.5 stories  
APPROX. 4,725 SF

RETAIL  
2,325 SF x 1.5 stories  
APPROX. 3 RETAILERS

PROGRAM CONFIGURATION

FORMAL EXPLORATIONS
Designing at the macro scale to experiment with form finding that will create an iconic landmark for the LGBTQ+ community. The form should symbolize acceptance, equality, and a push towards the future of civil rights.

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CENTRAL COURTYARD WITH SPIRALING CIRCULATION

MASS #2
CENTRAL COURTYARD WITH SPIRALING CIRCULATION

MASS #3
PUBLIC & PRIVATE COURTYARD WITH SPIRALING CIRCULATION

MASS #4
OPEN STREET EDGE AND CENTRAL COURTYARD

MASS #5
CREATING HIERARCHY OF SCALE

MASS #6
SYMBOLICALLY FREE, FLOWING FORM

Fig. 4.23
Fig. 4.24
Fig. 4.25
Fig. 4.26
Fig. 4.27
Fig. 4.28
Fig. 4.29
Fig. 4.30
Fig. 4.31
Fig. 4.32
Fig. 4.33
Fig. 4.34
Fig. 4.35
Fig. 4.36
Fig. 4.37
Fig. 4.38
Fig. 4.39
The ideas of connection and sheltering for the community, as well as touching on symbols of the community, like the AIDS Ribbon, this landmark evokes remnants of the idea of a ribbon, wrapping and embracing the community, opening itself up to the public as well.

CREATING A SYMBOL

These images expanded to become a space of private conversation, or a space for a private collaboration of multiple people. Providing private nooks, public gathering spaces, and flexible seating that can be appropriated to fit the LGBTQ+ communities needs.
MATERIAL SPECS
ALUCOBOND PLUS SPECTRA COLLECTION

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MATERIAL SPECS
3M MANUFACTURING COMPANY

3M manufactures a variety of architectural products, including a family of dichroic films designed for laminated glass. These films have a variety of color ranges, each having slightly varying translucent properties, and unique light filtering properties, through space. The effect that this produces is an iridescent glow and tint that is seen throughout the day, and in different lighting conditions. These come in a variety of color shifting spectrum, and can be customized as well.

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Attributes
- Easily fabricated using conventional tools
- Custom lengths up to 400”
- Large panel sizes for fast installation
- Light weight, high rigidity, very flat
- Transitioning colors create dramatic effects

Material Composition
- Aluminum facings in 0.020” nominal thickness
- High quality, color-shifting paint finish
- 4mm total nominal thickness including a proprietary fire retardant core

SAKURA

GALAXY BLUE

OCEAN

CUPRA

WHITE GOLD

ALUCOBOND PLUS Spectra finishes add fascination, life, and movement to architectural design. From naturally-occurring elements to the glowing luster and sheen found in modern metals and luxury goods, colors add fascination to the movement to architectural design. ALUCOBOND PLUS Spectra colors are transitional finishes which celebrate the natural color shifts that occur in the world around us.

THE SPECTRA

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From naturally-occurring elements to the glowing luster and sheen found in modern metals and luxury goods, colors add fascination to the movement to architectural design. ALUCOBOND PLUS Spectra colors are transitional finishes which celebrate the natural color shifts that occur in the world around us.
MUSEUM AT PRAIRIEFIRE
BY VERNER JOHNSON INC.

For the LGBTQ+ community, change is a necessary part of the movement towards acceptance. The LGBTQ+ community is often associated with the colors of the rainbow, and the community is diverse and prominent as the color spectrum. This concept of change and diversity can be translated directly into materiality. In contrast to the surrounding context, which is vastly comprised of traditional brick, an iridescent material such as dichroic glass can make the structure stand out and present itself immediately as part of the LGBTQ+ community's values.

Dichroic glass is created through a process of layering glass that has been treated with metal oxides, the various types of oxides reacting differently to light at different angles. The result of this metal oxide layering is glass that shifts in color at various times of day as the sun moves through the sky, and also as a person moves through space. The effect that this produces is an iridescent glow and tint that colors sunlight as it passes through the translucent film. The translucency of the glass is reduced with each added layer of these panels as well.

IRIDESCENT STAINLESS STEEL

GENIUS OFFICE
BY LEESER ARCHITECTURE

Leeser Architecture takes the use of dichroic glass in a different direction, contrasting it with a more rustic, dull environment in an interior office space, making the colors contrast greatly against the dull wood and steel of an industrial building. The properties of the materials allow for a certain level of translucency, while also giving a degree of privacy to offices and meeting rooms within the space. This effect is enhanced by the use of reflective materials.

DICHROIC GLASS
EXO Apartments, in Reston, Virginia, is a 16-story mid-rise residential building that features a dichroic aluminum facade from ALUCOBOND PLUS’ The Spectra Collection in the color “Ocean.” This dynamic metal facade gives an iridescent glow to the building, making waves of color that reflect the surrounding sky in shades of blues, greens, and purples. This building is a great example of the ephemeral qualities that dichroic metal can give at a larger scale, appearing as multiple colors at once, as well as shifting colors as the viewer moves through space. The dynamic use of color also adds depth to an otherwise generally flat facade.

MATERIAL SPECS
ALUCOBOND PLUS - SPECTRA COLLECTION
CREATING AGENCY IN ARCHITECTURE

PREFACE

To create this architecture of agency, I will first study existing buildings that exude characteristics in built form that create a sense of agency. I will examine how and why this sense of empowerment is occurring, and how it can be replicated, isolated, and placed intentionally in this hub for the LGBTQ+ community.

The methods outlined here were extracted through the case studies and precedents that will be explored in the next chapter. They have been filtered through and outlined into their most basic forms, although there are many methods within each of the 6 outlined here.

- CHOICE
- VISIBILITY / CO-VISIBILITY
- FLEXIBILITY OF SPACE
- CONTEMPLATION
- MATERIALITY
- SYMBOLS
Considering the needs of the LGBTQ+ community and surrounding context in midtown, this project will implement a variety of programs to serve primarily the LGBTQ+ community, but also the general public, including residents and visitors alike, providing daily programs and destination spaces.

CIVIC SPACE

This program space will serve as event space for various events surrounding the community, including PRIDE, and meeting spaces for LGBTQ+ conventions and gatherings. This space will be flexible, being reconfigurable for various events from an auditorium-like setup for lectures, to a setup used for an LGBTQ+ convention, to an exhibit featuring LGBTQ+ artists’ work.

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CULTURE & EDUCATION

Many LGBTQ+ youth are forced into homelessness depending on their situation, have an unstable relationship with school and education. These youths’ odds of receiving a higher education are much lower, so this center will provide the option of education in practical skills that will leave the members of the center with skilled labor practices, opening up opportunities for employment, allowing them to start supporting themselves financially.

RETAIL

A lack of daily destinations, or 3rd places, in this area has resulted in a lack of pedestrian activity on a regular basis. The site being a landmark for pedestrian activities, but nothing holds or draws people to the site, the activity is transient. The existing coffee shop on the site provides for a small gathering space, but can be expanded upon. To recognize and revitalize the previous LGBTQ+ bookstores, which served as communal hubs of activity and meeting for the community, a more modern version of an LGBTQ+ bookstore will be implemented into the site as well as a space for learning and gathering.

HOUSING

An undeniable statistic in the LGBTQ+ community shows the heavily weighted percentage of the homeless population, that is widely underestimated in Atlanta. With over 950 homeless youth that identify as LGBTQ+ in Atlanta, the need for both emergency housing and affordable housing is apparent. This program will also accommodate the various employees that the hub will need for the housing, education, and administrative programs.

A large population of the homeless community lives on the day to day to live out of their car, which serves as a temporary shelter and necessary transportation. The idea that the safety of protecting this valuable asset, a space for safe storage of vehicles, becomes valuable for the other programs within the building as well, which may draw people from outside of Atlanta who may not use public transportation.

OFFICES

To accommodate for and house the various LGBTQ+ organizations around Atlanta, office spaces will be provided that facilitate group meetings, as well as individual rooms for smaller groups that can be used for meetings. This program will also accommodate the various employees that the hub will need for the housing, education, and administrative programs.

BUILDING PROGRAMS
As part of the LGBTQ+ community’s values, 3M manufactures a variety of architectural products, including an array of dichroic films for architectural laminated glass. These films have a variety of color ranges, each having slightly varying translucent properties and unique light filtering properties through space. The effect that this produces is an iridescent glow and tint that colors sunlight as it passes through the translucent film. The translucency of the glass is reduced with each added layer of these panels as well.
BUILDING MATERIALS

DICHROIC GLASS ENTRY

3M MANUFACTURING COMPANY

3M manufactures a variety of architectural products, including an array of dichroic films for architectural laminated glass. These films have a variety of color ranges, each having slightly varying translucent properties and unique light filtering properties. The effect that this produces is an iridescent glow and tint that colors sunlight as it passes through the translucent film. The translucency of the glass is reduced with each added layer of these panels as well.
With over 900 homeless LGBTQ+ community members in Atlanta, emergency housing for the homeless is a basic necessity that this community needs currently. Providing a temporary shelter for the homeless LGBTQ+ population to utilize while they utilize the center’s resources to develop financial independence will help mitigate the high rate of homelessness in the community, giving them access to resources that will allow them to learn hard skills to enter the workforce, and a space to transition during a difficult time in their lives.

Focused on three main functions, (personal resources, professional resources, and shelter), these emergency housing pods provide the necessary programs that a homeless visitor will need. The personal resources include a bathroom that provides resources for bathing and personal hygiene, which are necessary especially when looking for employment. The professional resources include a closet space to store clothing, including professional attire for job interviews, and a convertible desk space where a visitor can search for employment opportunities on the center’s rented out laptops, as well as fill out any needed paperwork. The shelter houses a bed for the visitor to sleep. These necessities have been boiled down to fit in a 101 SF unit that is suitable for temporary stays.
This housing pod, while minimal in size for maximum efficiency in number of units, reinforces the visitor’s sense of agency in a number of ways. Because of the tight space, much of the wall space is taken up, but clerestory windows above the bed and closet let light pour into the space, filling the space with a light that many homeless shelters lack. The opportunity for plant life to come into the space creates the feeling that this space isn’t a prison cell, but a space for growth. The configurable vertical wooden shutters on the wall behind the bed allow for light to flood into the space while creating some privacy simultaneously. From the outside, one has a view of the outside clearly through the shutters, but from the inside far away, one cannot see what is happening inside the space.
The storage underneath the bed in the unit is divided, and can be removed and flipped on its side to become a small bench seating. This bench seating is designed specifically to pair with the fold-up tabletop at the bottom of the closet, which can be arranged for use, and when not in use can be folded back down to maximize space in the room.
With over 900 homeless LGBTQ+ community members in Atlanta, emergency housing for the homeless is a basic necessity that the community, the city lacks currently. Providing a temporary shelter for the homeless LGBTQ+ population to utilize while they utilize the center’s resources to develop financial independence will help mitigate the high rate of homelessness in the community, giving them access to resources that will allow them to learn hard skills to enter the workforce, and a space to transition during a difficult time in their lives.

**LONG TERM - AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

1. **PUBLIC STREET**
2. **LIVING**
3. **SLEEPING**
4. **COMMUNAL SPACE**

A street edge that draws visitors into the space, without having to make a conscious decision to “enter” the building, blurring the line between interior and exterior, and public and private. The space at the ground level wants to engage and be highly public, while the private interior spaces are pushed further away from the pedestrian.

**UNIT: 250 SF**
The communal spaces in the housing provide the option for both social interaction in groups, as well as solo contemplation. On the first floor of housing, various seating is provided, as well as work stations for the occupants to utilize. These can be essential stations for online counseling, job searching, job applications, and online paperwork.

The 5th floor housing space features a rooftop seating area, and a large green wall that the tenants are able to care for. Each subsequent floor of the housing units features a balcony that has direct access to this green wall. This connection to nature directly affects mental health and brings the occupants closer to nature and fresh air.
RETAIL

REVIVING THE BOOK SHOP & COFFEE HOUSE

Outwrite bookstore opened in November of 1994 on the corner of 10th street and Piedmont, and quickly became a gathering space for the LGBTQ+ community. It was Atlanta’s only gay and lesbian bookstore and coffeehouse, and at the time, Atlanta was one of five large cities who didn’t have a bookstore dedicated to the LGBTQ community. Replacing a boarded up, abandoned building, was a bright bookstore that shed a light on the LGBTQ+ community. In 2014, this cultural landmark was shut down, and the lack of a communal space persisted. To revive this sense of place for the LGBTQ+ community, a bookstore and coffee house will be placed on the streetscape of Piedmont Avenue. This storefront will welcome pedestrian and vehicular traffic with its transparent facade and welcoming materials within. Inside the retail space, methods of agency in terms of choice, material, and contemplation are highlighted. Flexible tables and seating are placed throughout, so the option of reading or dining solo, as a couple or in small and large groups is present. LGBTQ+ books and art are on display throughout as well.
EducatIon

Giving the Homeless Skilled Labor Certification

Many homeless youth and adults don’t have the same educational opportunities as their peers in terms of access to a quality education and higher education for specialization in the workforce. To negate this inequality, the LGBTQ+ community hub will feature a collaborative culinary space where occupants will enroll in a course that teaches them to cook, and allows them to receive a certification so they can work professionally in a kitchen at a restaurant or similar workplace. A hard skill in the workforce can be the difference between living an income above the poverty line and being homeless, and being able to sustain and care for oneself. The effects of homelessness are severe and long-lasting, and this programmatic feature will negate the lack of skilled workers, ultimately lessening the number of homeless LGBTQ+ community members.
FLEXIBLE, INCLUSIVE SEATING

These benches, while resembling the building form in its bending ribbon form, serve as a method of choice and agency in themselves. They can be arranged to seat individuals for solitary use, or be condensed into any number of lengths to become benches that seat a more communal group activity. Along with seating more people, this option for expansion of seating space provides a level of inclusiveness. You are able to place your belongings beside you, as well as fit people of any size. This caters towards a group within the LGBTQ+ community, as well as outside. Individuals with body dysmorphia, that may not fit comfortably in an average size chair, this allows for them to sit in the space without added anxieties or self-conscious thoughts.
CIVIC SPACE
A PUBLIC EVENT SPACE FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

The civic space functions as a flexible event space, that allows events such as Atlanta PRIDE speakers, booths, and various events surrounding the LGBTQ+ community. Speakers in the LGBTQ+ community from around the globe can come to Atlanta and see this as the heart of the LGBTQ+ community, it gives a sense of place and an icon to remember Atlanta by.

The option of expansion for Atlanta PRIDE also becomes apparent here. If Piedmont Park becomes unavailable due to weather, part of the festival can be held inside the civic space that can house a number of booths. This space becomes whatever the LGBTQ+ has a need for, and it is here to serve the communities needs.
DISTANT VIEWS

FROM NORTH PIEDMONT AVENUE

The site being played on a pivot point between 4 distinct typologies means that in each of these 4 areas, the building presents in a different way. Each of these views shows what the figure/ground of the building looks like from each of the four streets on the corner of 10th Street and Piedmont Avenue.

FROM SOUTH PIEDMONT AVENUE

FROM WEST 10TH STREET

FROM EAST 10TH STREET
When visitors come the rainbow crosswalk, an existing LGBTQ+ landmark, they should be drawn in to stay and experience the area surrounding the crosswalk as well. The building should both acknowledge, and praise this landmark, allowing visitors to interact with the new architecture and the existing landmark at the same time. A space that brings the public to a higher level and allows them to interact with the public below, offers a moment for the building to become a photo opportunity from the building to the crosswalk, and vice-versa.

This program can cater to both visitors, and start to build the narrative of an exciting destination for visitors.

The distance between those on the ground and those above is close enough that both parties could communicate with each other, avoiding creating an imbalance of visual and audible connection. This distance is key for communication between the two levels of public activity.

The Sky bridge provides direct access across the building, from the coffee house / bookshop to the civic space. It also provides direct views to the rainbow crosswalk and to the courtyard below. The height of just at 12 feet above the ground level, close enough so that visual and audible connections can be made, and the bridge serves as a viewing destination and photo opportunity.
With over 900 homeless LGBTQ+ community members in Atlanta, emergency housing for the homeless is a basic necessity that the city lacks currently. Providing a temporary shelter for the homeless LGBTQ+ population to utilize while they utilize the center’s resources to develop financial independence will help mitigate the high rate of homelessness in the community, giving them access to resources that will allow them to learn life skills to enter the workforce, and a space to transition during a difficult time in their lives.

The transition from public street space to public courtyard space was intentionally made to be inviting, drawing visitors into the slightly sunken courtyard through the use of a seating space as a circulatory transition space. A typical entrance is a decision: inside or outside. Here, the decision feels like that of a choice to enter the space, and even of a gradual transition from outside to inside.

**PUBLIC SPACE - COURTYARD**

Fig. 5.34

Fig. 5.35
Despite the continuous fight for LGBTQ+ rights, the community still faces struggles with government policy. A heavy percentage of the homeless youth population identifies as LGBTQ+, yet we have little resources catered towards this group. No child should be forced into homelessness because of their orientation. The homelessness rate is one of many prejudices the community faces. Mental health issues are extremely prevalent in those within the community as well. This thesis aims to create an architecture which these hardships can be lessened, and can represent what the group stands for in terms of equality and a new society in a new era of civil liberties. Architecture can be designed to bring comfort, acceptance, and home to anyone who may need it. We can use architecture as a way to educate those both inside and outside the LGBTQ+ community. By providing choice in building materials that welcome and represent a visual and auditory balance, architecture can facilitate the qualities that promote mental health and well-being for this community. Architecture can create a sense of agency that has been stripped of the community by those who reject it, bringing the LGBTQ+ community out of the shadows and into the light.

CONCLUSION
BIBLIOGRAPHY


