The Tanzakademie is intended to provide a center for the study and performance of dance in New Orleans. Located in the historic Warehouse District, the project features two theatres, studios and administrative space for the school as well as a cafe and bookstore which front St. Joseph and Magazine Streets.

As the arts community inserted itself into the former industrial Warehouse District, the form of the Tanzakademie is composed of two contrasting volumes which are merged and then split by the central circulation space. This split is generated by sightlines to the Mississippi River and Lee Circle, both visible from the top floor. This angle is carried throughout the project, creating screens which both direct light and hide light fixtures in the large theatre. In addition, angled openings in the copper screen which wraps the façade allow for uninterrupted views back to the surrounding context.

The central atrium is pierced by solar pipes, which bring natural light into the Tanzakademie. Their dynamic form is derived from expansive and contractive themes in dance, while their metallic suspension system recalls the former industrial nature of the neighborhood.
Contrast
Merge
Fracture
Puncture
Curtain Wall at Parapet
Copper Screen Connection
1. magazine street elevation
2. practice studio
3. sun shading and solar chimney
4. helioscope and monitor detail
The Louisiana Outdoor Outreach Program (LOOP) approached Tulane City Center with a need for a shade structure at the program’s ropes course where students could have lunch and participate in group activities out of the unrelenting Louisiana heat.

The resulting design was a result of the Tulane City Center studio. While several approaches were explored, the final project uses yield signs attached by custom-designed CNC fabricated aluminum connectors to create an undulating roof form. The abstracted form was inspired by the dense canopy of the forest surrounding the ropes course.

The canopy’s undulation is determined by the need for shade and views of the ropes course, rising up towards the course and dipping low to provide shade over the benches. While the suspended yield sign canopy appears to float, the pavilion is bounded by a berm into which benches are formed, allowing for ample activity space under the canopy.

Team: Dan Akerley, Madison Baker, Casey Bernisi, Michelle Carroll, Rachel Conques, Jose Cotto, John Coyle, Maggie Easley, Ellen Hearle, Emma Jasinski, Kate Luxner, Sarah Satterlee, Meredith Zelenka

Personal focus was on canopy design and detailing and presentation drawings.
Materials:

RTA’s generous donation of railroad ties formed the structure of both the berm and the benches. They are left exposed at the entrance from the nature path.

The benches are left unstained, with the intention that they will eventually grey to match the concrete ground. A thin reveal of aluminum flashing allows for drainage while making the connection between the benches and the concrete seem seamless. Additionally, it provides for continuing with the aluminum roof.

The steel columns vary in size and are painted black to blend in with the surrounding trees.
In the summer of 2011, I spent four weeks in Rome where I undertook an independent research project with a scholarship from the Maryland Summer Scholars program. While in Rome, I studied the drums of seven Renaissance and Baroque churches. My goal was to trace the evolution of the relationship between the techtonic expression of the interior and exterior articulation of the drums. From sketches, sections and elevations created on visits to these churches, I created a series of sectional axons, which express the varying techtonic relationships.

techtonic study

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