

Familiar Farmhouse

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Our pedagogical fundamentals celebrate novel buildings, a term synonymous with strange, exciting, weird, or radical. We have mastered the practice of producing such objects, but consequently, their surroundings are often underappreciated.

This proposal for a farmhouse, however shifts the emphasis away from the house and towards surroundings typically overlooked. It considers the adjacent clutter as an equal source of creative potential.

This farmhouse is set in California's Central Valley, where stacks of junk are tradition and a distinctive trait of the area. They are as readily familiar as the locale's cherished farmhouses. The accumulated clutter around the farmhouses is generally of utility use and organized by an individual's sensibility towards collection and composition. Emblematic surroundings to the farmhouse are shipping pallets, hay bundles, firewood, cedar mulch, to name a few of an endless list.

In this proposal, surrounding junk adds value to the house. There is more to look at, the saturation of which is personally enjoyable. It is gratifying to gaze at countless hay bundles, stacked two by two on top of each other, leaning against a house's board-and-batten siding. One of the hay bundles is propped up by the 18-inch on-center white picket fence that surrounds the stack, protecting it from livestock. At the base of the stack is a collection of handmade flower planters, ranging in diameter. An assemblage of collectable figurines is stuck between the two bowed plywood sheets pitched against the stack. Beside this pile is another pile, consisting of shipping pallets and is equally as exciting.

Junk is inherently interesting to our contemporary culture. In architectural studios, they are designated as ready-mades or found objects, things that have intrinsic symbolic value because of their cultural familiarity. Students kitbash, mix, mash, and blend these familiar objects together, producing something in-part recognizable, but overall unfamiliar. However, there is no need to reinvent them; they are fascinating as is. This farmhouse consciously negotiates with its given variables.

This proposal sincerely considers background as anything but, well, background. It is necessary to teach that there is always an opportunity to find value marred in convention, no matter how mundane the subject matter may be. This is not a personal plea to give up designing novel farmhouses, rather to understand the value of the things in front, besides, and behind it equally.

