

ASCA Distinguished Professor Award  
Supporting Materials  
Kent Kleinman, Brown University



## Candidate Statement

I submit this portfolio as a candidate for the ACSA Distinguished Professor award in the category of service to the academy. As former dean of Cornell's College of Architecture, Art and Planning from 2008 to 2018, and in recent leadership positions at RISD and now Brown University, I have endeavored to create teaching and research environments of exceptional quality; to provide encouragement, support and opportunities for faculty and students alike to excel in their work; and to use the capacity of the dean's office to fuel a community of passionate teachers and dedicated learners. This folio is organized into four sections, each representing a domain of particular focus during my decade at Cornell University:

- Section 1: Buildings and the physical space of teaching and learning
- Section 2: Faculty and support for creative work
- Section 3: Students and support for extra-curricular opportunities
- Section 4: Parallel practices as sources of inspiration and edification

These efforts were shaped by the conditions I inherited upon joining Cornell, a difficult time nationally and institutionally. The Department of Architecture was facing serious challenges: its renowned B.Arch program was at risk of losing its accreditation and the department had no accredited graduate track. Faculty demographics projected a cliff-like future without the necessary transition period between generations of faculty. And the facilities were woefully inadequate for an intense, studio-based program. The semester I arrived in Ithaca, the recession struck.

These internal and external forces necessitated a comprehensive review of the college and its operations. An ambitious ten-year capital plan was developed in 2009, and a faculty renewal program was initiated resulting in 45% faculty renewal between 2011 and 2018. Cornell's professional graduate program received dedicated leadership and was successfully accredited in 2012, ranking now among the top in the country. Funds were raised and labs established to advance faculty scholarship and creative work, a vital dimension of our mission. Student-support staff were hired, and diversity programs were developed to address the well-being, equity and diversity of our student body.

During my over two decades of academic leadership, I have aspired to foster academic conditions in which excellence is rewarded, risks are accepted, speculative ideas are encouraged, and the creative spirit is nourished.

## Section I: Building Programs Overview

For many years, the Department of Architecture was underserved by its physical plant. Building a teaching, learning and research environment commensurate with an intense studio pedagogy and high academic standards was a key undertaking during my tenure as dean. In 2009, a ten-year, multi-building capital plan was developed to address key deficiencies. Projects ranged from ground-up new construction to historic preservation to radical adaptive reuse. In each case, the college was committed to demonstrate architectural excellence regardless of scale and budget. The final major component of the capital plan was completed in 2019.

Our buildings are designed to support high-quality academic programs; this is the principal, charge, but not the only objective. Each project is also a material expression of our values, an extension of our commitment to advance architectural discourse, and a public demonstration of the power of architecture to build community.



Milstein Hall studio plate: a composite image from roughly 250 individual photographs taken by photographer Bret Beyer, 2011.

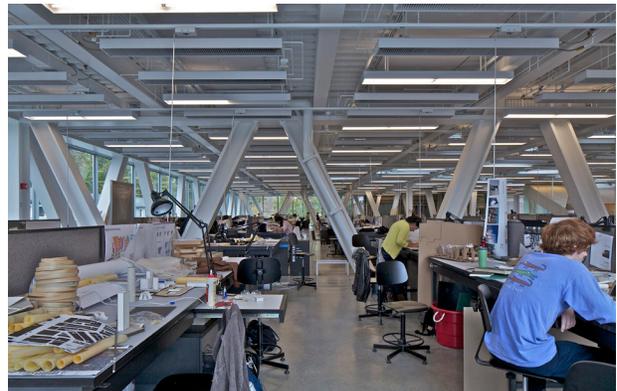
## Section I: Building Programs

### I.1 Milstein Hall

Designed by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, the 47,000-square-foot building includes a 25,000 square feet, open, daylit studio, a 250-seat, state-of-the-art auditorium, and a domed critique space that functions as a central events location. Milstein Hall is the academic center of gravity for the design arts at Cornell, and has fueled a transformation in the way design is taught. The open, sectionally interlinked spatial organization of the building fosters collaboration, encourages peer-to-peer learning, provides programmatic flexibility, and creates a new gateway to campus with the 50-foot cantilevered studio plate.

“The open plan of the studios in Milstein Hall inspires collaboration and sharing. In one quick clip across the studio sections, I take in the breadth and depth of all our architecture degree programs at Cornell.” Associate Professor Jenny Sabin, 2017

2013 AIA Institute of Honor Award  
2011 Archdaily Educational Building of the Year  
2012 Excellence in Structural Engineering Award  
2012 Architectural Lighting Design Award  
Leed Gold



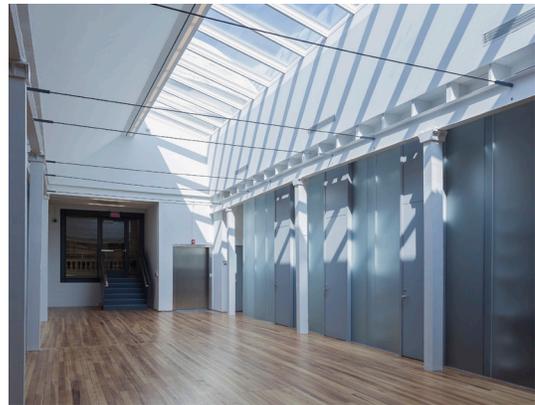
## Section I: Building Programs

### I.2 Shloss Studios

Designed by Leven Betts, this 8,000-square-foot project involved the renovation and gentle re-use of an entire floor in landmarked Sibley Hall. Given the severity of deferred maintenance as a challenge for campuses nationally, this project sought to advance a sensitive design ethos that balanced precise preservation, structural rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse in a non-oppositional manner.

“The design resolution is not simply binary, i.e., new vs. old, but is more nuanced and at times it is indistinguishable where the new begins and the existing stops.”  
Leven Betts, 2015

2015 Chicago Athenaeum Award  
2015 AIA NY Chapter Design Merit Award  
2015 Architecture Podium International 2nd Award  
2015 SARA Design Award of Honor  
2015 Azure Merit Award

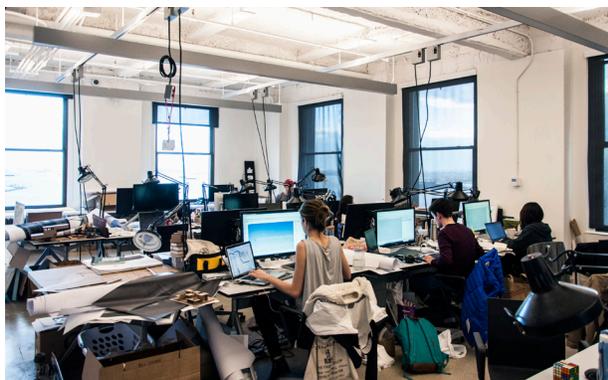
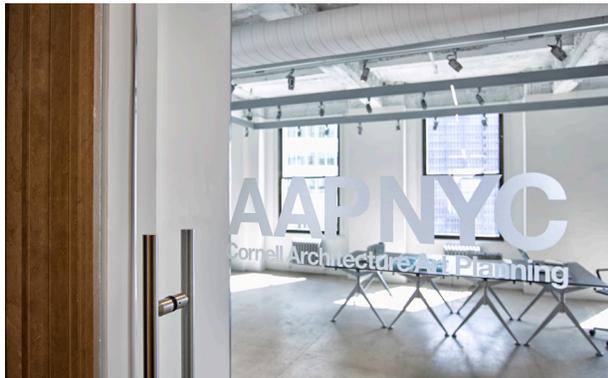


## Section I: Building Programs

### I.3 AAP NYC

In 2015, the college opened its first purpose-designed New York City facility: AAP NYC. Occupying a full 11,000 square-foot floorplate in the historic former Standard Oil Building in Lower Manhattan, the facility reflects the centrality of the urban turn in our curriculum. The goal is to better prepare our students for the complex, multifaceted challenges of the contemporary city. The project, a gut-rehabilitation designed by Gensler, is a vital extension of the college's geographic and programmatic footprint. AAP NYC is a place (studios, lecture and seminar rooms and even housing); a cohort of faculty (courses are taught by architects and related professionals deeply experienced in the urban context); a curricular innovation (a full semester is required of all graduate architecture students, and optional for undergraduates); and a platform for our students to engage directly some of the world's most urgent problems.

“For all of our students – graduate and undergraduate and across disciplines – New York City is a laboratory and a muse.” Robert Balder, AAP NYC Executive Director, 2015



Top left: AAP NYC at 26 Broadway, NYC. Top right: Craig Dykers (Snøhetta) with AAP NYC studio cohort, 2016. Bottom left: an AAP NYC studio. Bottom right: Michael Manfredi and Marion Weiss present the 2017 Goldsmith Lecture at AAP NYC.

## Section I: Building Programs

### I.4 Cornell in Rome: Palazzo Santacroce

In 1986, at the urging of the late Professor Colin Rowe, the college started a program in Rome. What began tentatively has since become a cornerstone of our educational model. During my tenure as dean, a semester in Rome became mandatory for undergraduate architecture students; funding was raised to provide travel aid to students in need; and a new space in the renowned Palazzo Santacroce was secured and renovated, providing ample room for architecture, fine art, planning and, most recently, humanities students to attend Cornell in Rome.

The renovation of Palazzo Santacroce, executed by architects Garofalo/Muira, involved a deep commitment to its historic condition and considerable work with local restoration craftspeople. It serves as an object lesson for our students who use the building with impressive care and obvious affection.



## Section I: Building Programs

### I.5 Mui Ho Fine Arts Library in Rand Hall

This project was driven by a problem familiar to a number of architecture programs nationally: the demise of the book and the abandonment of the library. Cornell's fine arts collection, a circulating collection of approximately 250,000 art, architecture and design books that counts among the finest in the country, was at significant risk for removal from the college. Several years of intense debate, advocacy and fund-raising ultimately proved successful in preserving the collection in a purpose-built new library, housed in the college's historic Rand Hall. The Mui Ho Fine Arts Library, designed by Vienna-based architect Wolfgang Tschapeller, was completed and opened to the public in September, 2019.

“The protagonist of the new library will be an open stack, circulating collection of books covering urban design and planning, architecture, fine art, art history, landscape architecture, and interior design. Stable, immune from software glitches, with reliable color rendition and faithful text/image relationships, unchanging aspect ratios, and always fully charged. They never crash.” Anne R. Kenney, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, 2015



## Section 2: Faculty Support Overview

Cornell architecture faculty are committed to a dual mission: teaching excellence and advanced research/creative work. These missions intersect: teaching disciplines the mind and hand, and creative work and scholarship refreshes the pedagogy. Advancing faculty research was a high priority; it involved securing space for research labs, providing stipends for graduate research assistants and, perhaps most importantly, encouraging speculation and accepting failure.

The dean's office supported research activity and facilities in sustainability (Environmental Systems Lab), robotics (Robotics Construction Lab), and computational design (Sabin Design Lab). With decanal support, faculty have entered and won significant competitions, and the dissemination of creative thought and scholarship through conferences, exhibitions, publications and even films increased significantly.



Professor Jenny Sabin with research associates in the Sabin Design Lab, Sibley Hall.

## Section 2: Faculty Support

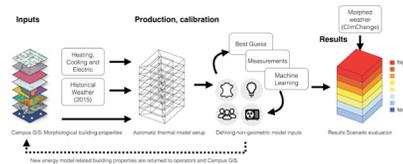
### 2.1 Centrally supported faculty research



The Robotics Construction Lab, directed by Assistant Professor Sasa Zivkovic, studies the use of computer-controlled devices for additive and subtractive methods of construction. He recently designed and assembled a building-scale printer in Rand Hall.



Associate Professor Caroline O'Donnell explores re- and up-cycling strategies in her teaching and research, including her 2015 MoMA PS-1 winning entry made of salvaged skateboard blanks. She is currently working on a mobile structure that seeds a garden in its wake.



The Environmental Systems Lab conducts research in energy modeling, daylighting, and passive climate control. Director Assistant Professor Timur Dogan integrates his research into his teaching, offering students an active role in developing the next generation of design software.

## Section 2: Faculty Support

### 2.1 Centrally supported faculty research



The Sabin Design Lab, directed by Associate Professor Jenny Sabin, investigates computation in design, biological models of form generation, new materials, and digital knitting as demonstrated in her winning proposal for the 2017 MoMA PS-I pavilion competition.



Assistant Professor Tau DuFour's research is concerned with architecture in post-colonial and late socialist contexts with a focus on Cuba. Partnering with acclaimed cinematographer Kannon Arumasalam, DuFour is working on a documentary film of housing conditions in Havana.



A cross-disciplinary team of architects, economists, South Asian specialists, engineers, and fine artists, co-led by Assistant Professor Aleksandr Mergold and Kent Kleinman, worked to physically and culturally “unpack” the Tata Nano, the world's first car to retail for less than \$2000. The work was exhibited in 2011 at the Johnson Museum of Art.



### Section 3: Student Support Overview

As part of the college's post-recession restructuring, several new student-focused units were established. AAP Connect is a dedicated internship and career placement office, offering portfolio workshops, career forums, internship placement services, job search assistance, and a deep database to link employment opportunities to qualified students. The newly organized Office of Student Services offers a range of student advising, global study, academic, and student well-being services. IT Solutions provides extensive computer support including in-house laptop repair services and bootcamp program workshops.

On my initiative, in 2016 the college founded a program to address diversity challenges in the architecture program. The Cornell Future Architect Award (CFAA) is a focused effort to increase under-represented minority representation in applicant pools by providing access to an intense, high-quality studio-based six-week summer program in advance of the college application cycle.



## Section 3: Student Support

### 3.1 Professional development

In 2104, the college established a central student internship and career office titled AAP Connect. AAP Connect organizes career forums on campus, mentorship relationships, portfolio review sessions with partner firms, and holds a database with over 6,000 contacts internationally.

By 2017, only three years after its founding, AAP Connect was annually offering 40 events, hosting over 90 visiting professionals, and holding 230 individual advising sessions. AAP Connect was founded as a bridge for students to gain access to, and profit from, the expertise of professionals, but it has developed into a rich space of dialogue for the faculty, many of whom have integrated critical conversations about practice into the design studio.



Top left: portfolio review day hosted by Richard Meier and Partners, 2017. Top right: portfolio review day hosted by KPF, 2015. Bottom left: in-studio dialogue with architect Débora Mesa Molina and faculty member Caroline O'Donnell, 2018. Bottom right: in-studio dialogue with architect Toshiko Mori and faculty member Dasha Khapalova, 2018.

## Section 3: Student Support

### 3.2 Cornell Future Architect Award

While the Architecture Department at Cornell does an excellent job yielding a diverse cohort of students, longitudinal applicant pool data show limited success in changing the composition of our student body. It is clear that without diversifying the applicant pool, there can be no significant change in the diversity of our students. Thus, any serious effort to diversify the field must tackle the issue prior to application.

To address this persistent concern, in 2016 I launched a scholarship program for under-represented-minority high school students to attend our six-week Introduction to Architecture program on the Ithaca campus. The Cornell Future Architect Award (CFAA) targets selected high schools nationwide and offers full scholarships to eligible students who qualify to attend our summer program. The scholarship covers tuition, room, board, studio equipment and materials, travel and provides a weekly stipend. Each student is paired with a local mentor who works with the student before and during the program, and supports the student when s/he applies to college. The program funds 11 students each summer, and has already had a measurable effect on the diversity of our application pool.

“This program has taught me my strengths as well as my weaknesses inside and outside of architecture.” Mesha Johnson, CFAA ‘16

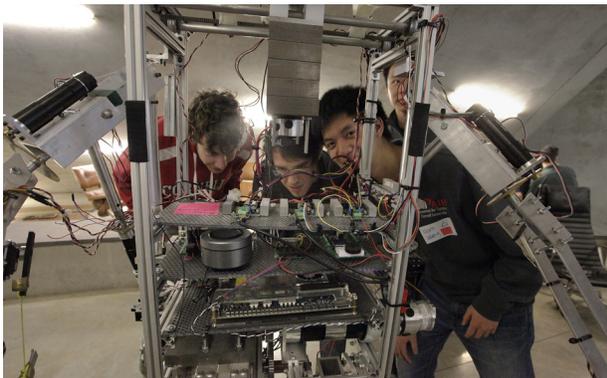
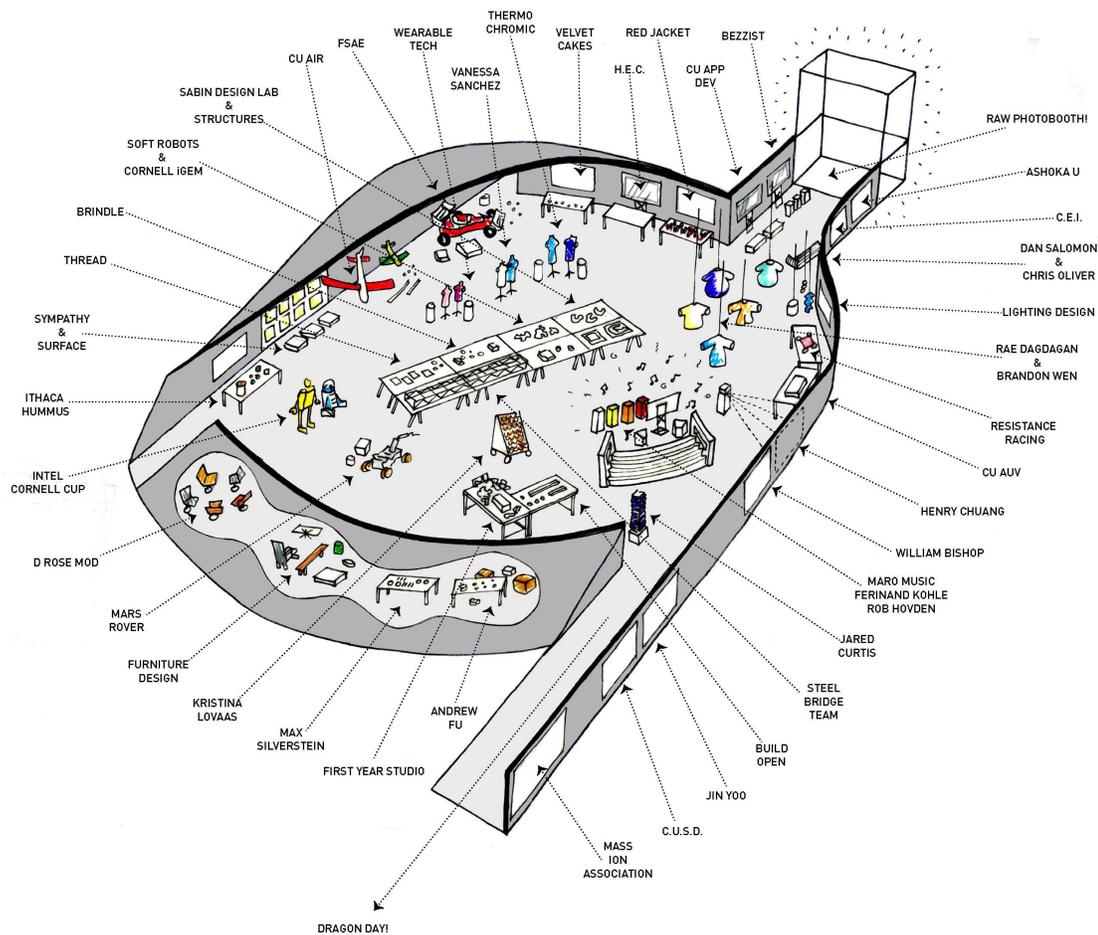


Left: Nadiya Farrington, CFAA '17, during a studio crit. Right: members of the CFAA Class of 2016.

## Section 3: Student Support

### 3.3 RAW

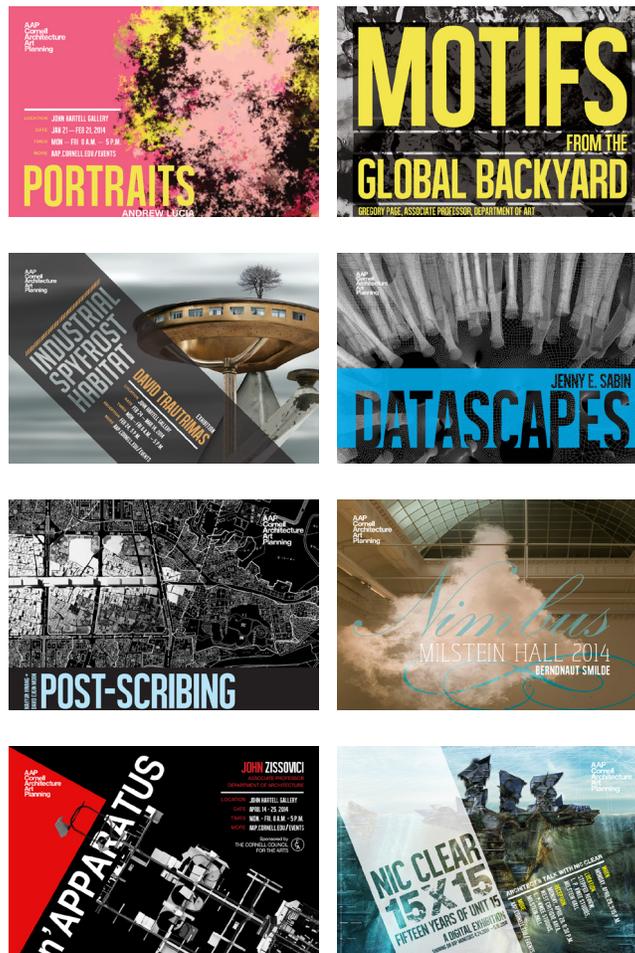
RAW is a student-run annual exposition, held in the college and supported by the dean, that celebrates in-process, unpolished design activity across the entire Cornell campus. Representing fields as diverse as apparel design, robotics, plant science and, of course, architecture, and featuring artifacts as varied as Ithaca-made hummus and the Mars Rover prototype, RAW attracts roughly 500 participants to the Milstein dome in a raucous celebration of designing and making.



## Section 4: Parallel Practices Overview

Architectural education is more than required coursework and oftentimes exposure to parallel creative practices can be as significant as the formal curriculum. In 2013, I funded a new position in the college to oversee exhibitions for our galleries, leading to a strong and regular program of exhibitions and events. As the lead dean for the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA), I provided leadership for art-related activity across campus, including the establishment of the CCA Arts Biennial starting in 2014.

Such efforts expand the intellectual and creative sources from which architecture draws so much of its inspiration, perforate the divisions between diverse modes of creative expression, enrich the student experience, and situate architecture in a broad field of practices dedicated to shaping the built world.



Exhibition posters for spring semester, 2014.

## Section 4: Parallel Practices

### 4.1 Sound/Art

The college seeks and supports collaborations with sound-based artists and ensembles, not only in the spirit of Goethe who famously described architecture as frozen music, but to highlight the interplay of space, material, sound and time. The dome in Milstein Hall, with its lively acoustical properties, multiple vantage points, and openness to the design studios above, is a frequent and favored site for performances.

One such event was the installation by artist Ellen Fullman of her Long Stringed Instrument, a site-specific musical apparatus that uses the existing space as its resonating chamber and is activated by gliding the player's fingers along the roughly 50-foot-long strings. We also hosted the Cornell May Fest, a university-wide festival featuring choral and chamber performances, and in 2016 premiered the opera *Eyes That Do Not See*, a student-composed, directed and performed work featuring Prometheus and Le Corbusier as protagonists.



Top left: score by Patrick Barga for *Eyes That Do Not See* featuring a passage on urban renewal, 2016. Top right: Ellen Fullman's Long Stringed Instrument, Milstein Dome, 2013. Bottom left and right: choral and chamber ensembles in Milstein dome, 2012.

## Section 4: Parallel Practices

### 4.2 Bodies

The choreographed body moving in structured space over time is an fundamental architectural trope, and the college embraces experimental works that re-imagine and re-interpret our spaces through bodily engagements.

In 2012 the college hosted experimental choreographer William Forsythe who brought a major work to Rand Hall. Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time is a site-specific choreography involving a single dancer interacting with 150 hanging pendulums, marking with his body the specific qualities and conditions of the space.



Brock Labranz performing Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time in Rand Hall, 2012.

## Section 4: Parallel Practices

### 4.3 Environment

As climate becomes a central and urgent concern, architects are increasingly focusing on the performative aspects of their work, challenging the conception of architecture as an exclusively material and formal discipline. In parallel, a number of creative practices have emerged whose medium, technique and format produce not artifacts but relationships, effects and ephemeral traces.

In 2012 we hosted artist Berndt Smilde to perform a work in Milstein dome. Smilde is a Dutch artist who creates clouds by carefully calibrating interior climate conditions. His miniature nimbus cloud hovered briefly under the dome – illuminated by florescent lights, reflected in the damp concrete floor, and raising a host of fundamental questions about nature and culture – before depositing its moisture and dissipating into the atmosphere.

