Maybe It’s a Unicorn

Of all the legendary animals of art, folklore and literature, the unicorn is the one with the greatest hold on our imaginations. Other fabulous beasts…are clearly inventions, existing only in a mythical landscape of our own collective creation. Based though they may be on some distortion of actual experience or some need of the human psyche, these other creatures immediately seem impossible, as incredible as dreams. But the unicorn strikes us as more than imaginary. It seems possible, even probable – a creature so likely that it ought to exist.

From “The Unicorn”, by Nancy Hathaway (1980).

Setting: Atlanta
Program: Elementary school
Base programmatic needs: given, kind of
Additional programmatic elements at the discretion of the designer
Methodology: Exploration and Iteration
Philosophy on Education: Yours to develop

The first four to five weeks of the studio will be fast. It will be a combination of site research, educational theory research, precedents, planning, form-making and generation. This first project iteration will be the jumping off point to explore possibilities. Each week after that another iteration will be created through a new set of lenses, such as the exploration of a sustainable practice, experience of a space, time, what the future may hold, technology, politics, site, play, etc. The expectation will be that the choice of representation (film, virtual reality, drawing, graphic novels, etc.) will match the desired exploration, and these representations will be experiments that will influence the project, formally, programmatically, and philosophically.

The goal is to design a “unicorn,” a magical place and experience that allow students to see, do, learn, make, things that seem impossible, as incredible as dreams at first, but become more than imaginary, more than possible, become probable.