PERSPECTIVES

Selected Works
Columbia GSAPP 2023
Alison Lam Tung Yi
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Self-objectifying Humboldt

Currently, the Humboldt Forum exists as a singular institution in a monumental building that authorizes the display of ethnological objects from regions across the world, many of which were looted during the Prussian Empire. In the process of museumizing these artefacts, the Humboldt Forum is problematic in its ways of objectifying others, representing world cultures through fragmented objects.

My proposal of the Humboldt Forum aims to objectify the Humboldt Forum itself primarily through the radical fragmentation of the structure, treating itself as a series of fragmented objects just like its own collection. Through fragmentation, the forum transforms from a singular site that represents a singular institution, into groups of smaller structures that resemble a village. The buildings are turned into community gathering spaces for people of different ethnicities, which include exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, performance spaces, markets, and workshops - the community leaders take charge of occupying various buildings of the Forum, an agora for ethnic minorities.

Through fragmentation and self-objectification, the forum should eliminate the hierarchy between the self and others, and remove its agency of narrating the others. Instead, the forum should engage in a mutual exchange between people of different ethnic backgrounds, becoming a platform for people to experience first-hand the voices of various communities. The engagement of multiple parties and institutions allows for a multiplicity of narratives and voices. In the process, it may begin to de-objectify its object collection and counter its own colonial legacy.

Currently, Humboldt Forum has reduced world cultures to a series of singular narratives, with fragmentation acting as a tool for objectification. Objects displayed in fragments, out of their original contexts are interpreted under the Eurocentric paradigm, under the Western gaze. However, fragmentation can be positive as a means to diversify and enable multiple narratives on the site of the Humboldt Forum. Fragmentation can be a way to create diversity and multiplicity. The process of fragmentation should be a way to acknowledge the impossibility of having a coherent view of any culture and history.

The Humboldt Forum should reflect that German society is trending towards a more heterogeneous society rather than a homogeneous one where people with a migrant background are othered in German society. The singular narrative about Germans and national identity no longer applies.

By renegotiating the relations between objects in the Humboldt Forum collection, the artefacts escape the singular lens under the same roof of the Humboldt Forum but confront the viewer from simultaneous points of view. The objects that are currently held within the Humboldt Forum should be represented as objects in progress that are bound to be displaced and potentially returned. The positioning of objects should be non-hierarchical and non-linear.
Experiments in Fragmentation
Objects: Blurring as Fragmentation
De-cologne-izing Singapore

Studio: Advanced V: Plein Air Studio
School: Columbia GSAPP
Tutor: Nahyun Hwang
Studio Partner: Tim Chen
Year: Fall 2022
The changing scentscape caused by the commercialization of Orchard road is emblematic of the displacement of communities and cultures in Singapore. Scents that were once owned by native dwellers of Singapore are now displaced by commercialized and controlled scents, most of which are imported and manufactured elsewhere. The project proposes to intervene Orchard road’s highly controlled scentscape by creating a series of spaces underground that provides a parallel world for local people to retrace, preserve, and create scents that were lost and displaced by new developments in Singapore. The scents that are produced in these spaces are partially discharged to the streets and secretly disrupt the current scentscape of Orchard Road. These sites of scent preservation and production are highly participatory and communal, bringing people together to relive significant memories of Singapore.
In the Scent Archives, smell cabinets that preserve the scent of uniquely Singaporean objects that are displaced by the commercialization of Singapore. The larger space in the lower level holds preserved animal and plant species, such as the Malayan Tiger, which have become extinct due to deforestation, landfills, and developments of Singapore.
In the Steaming Rooms, personal smells and odors are collected and diffused. People can place personal garments and textiles into water. Through a distillation process, the solution vaporizes into water vapor through individual rooms where people can smell the vaporized scents. The vapor then condenses as it passes through the cooling area and turns into essence which trickling down and gathering in a central reflecting pool.

In the Incense Tower, the space aims to reveal the masked history of Orchard Road. Through excavating and probing historical soil layers underneath Orchard road, odors are released from the depths. The organic matter from the plantation soil layer in the lower level is burnt and released into the memorial hall in the upper level. The odors ultimately rise up and escape on the street level. On the street level the cone shaped volume integrates into the landscaped sidewalk of Orchard road with terraces of plants for growing Guar gum, an important ingredient for the making of incense that are made and then burned in these smaller chimney spaces in the lower level.
This space sources and recreates atmospheres of displaced places in Singapore, such as the Kampong fishing villages and disappeared forests of Singapore. Each elliptical volume is perfumed with atmosphere scents of a displaced place, which are recreated in its adjacent lab and production space. Rainwater from above the streetscape is collected as a medium to be mixed with scent molecules before being sprayed into each volume through nozzles. A stable thermal stratification of the air is then created by heating and cooling coils so that a cloud of scent condenses into a single layer, materializing clouds of scents that people can see and smell.

This is a candlelit memorial with a scented wax making studio, where people can bring in objects of people significant to them that may be sourced from the deceased, casting them and capturing scent molecules into candles that could be lit. These candles can be brought into the dome-shaped memorial chamber and lit up for the remembrance and honoring of lost memories.
Mall Intervention Study Model
Pines Nest vertically integrates Christmas tree farming and mass timber harvesting and production on one site at the edge of the Black Rock Forest. The project reimagines an efficient and economically viable solution for mass timber production. Eastern white pine is selected as the main species to be grown as it is a common native species that can be used for both Christmas trees and wood for CLT and is moderately fast-growing. This hybrid tree farm uses the technique of forest thinning, in which trees are first grown at a high density, then are selectively removed to enable faster growth for the remaining trees. For every acre of trees, around 700 trees will be harvested as Christmas trees (7-15 years), and around 300 for mass timber (40+ years). A network of lodges is installed for families to enjoy a unique festive experience in a forest of Christmas trees instead of buying cut Christmas trees. The lodges are designed to be easily assembled with CLT modules and can be relocated to adjacent lots to accommodate different stages of tree growth. The mature trees are harvested and produced into mass timber products at the factory on-site, which also houses amenities for lodgers.

Studio: Advanced IV: Fringe Timber Studio
School: Columbia GSAPP
Tutor: Lindsey Wikstrom
Year: Spring 2022
With the aim to generate intergenerational housing that encourages mutual support among family units, the affordable housing complex composes of modular 5-unit clusters that share a courtyard that opens to the corridor. The project consists of a series of interconnected spaces from units to public plazas, connecting the residents to their neighbors and the public. Communal spaces that include childcare and elderly care facilities encourage interactions among people of all ages.
Sited in Lower East Manhattan’s Sara D. Roosevelt Park, this library aims to provide a platform for the intermingling between the multi-cultural public in the neighborhood and creative professionals in residence. The two legs provide separate entry points for the public and workers and give porosity at the ground level. The recessed glass pockets become the walls that define the program but maintain openness that allows visitors to be engaged in various activities in the library.
Terraced Commune

Project: The Grand Interior
Studio: Core I
Tutor: Josh Uhl
Semester: Fall 2018
The neighborhood of Inwood has a strong sense of community with a lot of social interactions on the streets. My urban intervention seeks to provide a dynamic space to facilitate street activities, reinforcing community bonding among the residents. Most of the residential blocks in Inwood have underused interstitial space bounded by the residential buildings as wide as the street. The terraced commune stretches across the interstitial space, with direct access from the residential buildings of the block and the street, allowing residents to use shared facilities from community garden to mini market.
Black on Black

Class: Advanced Curtain Wall
Tutor: Daniel Vos
Semester: Fall 2022

The façade design is based on the painting Grille Collor Noir by Jean Degottex. It is a black-on-black painting with a diamond shaped pattern defined by thin white lines. The quality that I especially appreciate is the subtle shimmering effect achieved by faint bands of grey strips with horizontal patterns that offset from the thin white lines. Based on this painting, my façade design will be a black-on-black façade with a diagrid system using mostly dark tinted materials including dark-tinted glass dark coated diagonal mullions, and dark perforated metal screens with thin silver fins that outlines the pattern.

System Description

WT-1: Aluminum and Glass Unitized Curtain Wall System with Diagonal Screen and Fin Attachment

System consists of insulating glass [GL01] four-side structural silicone glazed onto unitized frames of thermally broken, custom profile extruded aluminum [AL01, AL03]. At exterior, system features aluminum [AL02] unitized screen assembly composed of diagonal custom-profiled perforated aluminum panels spanning the length of diagonal mullions. Screen assembly is anchored black to curtain wall unit with clip mounts at the diagonal mullions. The aluminum panels provide attachment system for stainless steel fins. System is anchored to building structure at top of concrete slab.

Finish of all aluminum exposed to the exterior wall shall be PVDF coated [AL01]. Finish of all aluminum exposed to the interior shall be one-coat acrylic resin [AL03]. Where visible, glazing accessories, glazing gaskets, and weather seal silicone color to be black.
The FAR Game

When designing for clients in high-density cities, an architect’s top priority is typically maximizing their building’s gross floor area while staying within the size constraints provided by local zoning codes. Maximizing gross floor area (GFA) enables the client, typically a developer, to optimize profits by maximizing the building’s leasable space. Local zoning codes typically provide constraints for a building’s maximum floor area ratio (FAR), height, and setback from site boundary, as well as further setbacks determined by environmental parameters.

Our team asked how automation can assist and expedite this process, hypothesizing that the computer can replace the architect in performing these first iterations and analyses. Using generative design, the computer can develop multiple design iterations that meet the constraints provided by zoning code, and then select among these iterations to determine a massing that maximizes gross floor area. This massing scheme can then be developed and refined by the hand of the architect.

In our model, the computer maximizes gross floor area within zoning constraints provided by floor area ratio limits, setback requirements, height limits, site coverage limits, and limits provided by the sky exposure plane. Our model uses Rhino with Grasshopper and Discover to generate massing models computationally that can then be developed by the hand of the designer. Our project uses a site in Seoul as a case study, but the constraints provided could be retrofitted to any site globally by inputting the site boundary, represented by a simple polyline, into a Rhino model and then plugging the setback requirements, building height limits, site coverage limits, maximum FAR, and setbacks determined by environmental parameters into the Grasshopper model.
Design iterations generated by Discover

Grasshopper Script
EGRESS

Class: Architecture Technology V: Construction Systems
Professor: Nicole Dosso
Semester: Spring 2022
LOOP

Project: P.S. 64 - A Series of Liminal Spaces for Community Engagement
Architecture Technology III: Building Systems Integration
Professor: Berardo Matalucci
Group Partners: Ruonan Du, Jiageng Guo, Yuli Wang, Renka Wang
Semester: Fall 2021
Zeitz MOCAA

Architectural Drawing & Representation I
Professor: Josh Uhl
Semester: Fall 2018