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Reflection

The relationship between research and design

The theme of my research is to apply the systemic assemblage thinking of bricolage to urban regeneration, to explore the possibilities of new combinations of old and new substances. In fact the research process integrates greatly with the design process, or rather the design process itself becomes part of the research.

At first I analysed the advantages of the bricolage system by perceiving images of bricolage that occurred around us, and by modifying the collage to further understand the factors that influence the bricolage system, exploring the middle ground between the work of bricoleur and that of engineers.

At the urban scale I use Colin Rowe's discussion of objects and fabric to investigate the implications of bricolage's systems theory for urban design. I conclude that the bricolage city is a context-oriented city and that urban bricolage is the shaping of texture. Based on this conclusion, I have researched the system of the surrounding buildings, the public space system of the city, and connected them into an organic whole through urban design, by means of historical databases and on-site interviews and video production.

At the architectural level, my research turns to the study of the relationship between the structure of the old buildings and the new parts. On a smaller scale I discuss how the existing old buildings fit into the new architectural space and with what identity the old buildings should intervene in the new space. In this section I introduce Bill Brown's thing theory and Kazuo Shinohara's thingness. Through the analysis of Kazuo Shinohara's work, I explore a theory of how to transfer the architecture component into things. Ultimately, this theory is used to guide the manipulation of old building structures in the final design.

Review of Research Methodology

A number of methods were used throughout the research process. Among them was the production of a comparative collage that was able to perceive and differentiate the impact of individual factors in the system on the overall system in a way that controlled for variables. The video interviews provided first-hand information to visualise the current social situation of the research subjects, but were somewhat bulky in comparison to the other methods and took more time to process for production. Image mapping, on the other hand, serves as a way of listing types, and by mapping images, it is possible to generate many ideas that were not anticipated before the mapping, and to note issues that were not perceptible before the mapping. The study of theory provides a more sophisticated and systematic perspective on thinking. The case study is a self-interpretation of the corresponding case through theory and can be used as a training exercise in the application of theory, which can then be used in design.

Relation with stuido and track

Our studio called urban architecture，which studies medium-size urban sites that are inaccessible for the regular tools of urbanism, and where expectations of urban design can only be fulfilled by architecture. Adding a building on these locations thus means (re-)designing an environment. This studio argue that architecture is not seen as a craft of filling in blanks within an urban plan, but about articulating public, private and collective spaces. Architecture grows out of an awareness that designing a building always means creating and influencing the surrounding environment. It is about critically reading and assessing a given situation, in order to either complete or re-direct it by adding a building. This perspective is in fact an expression of critical regionalism, where established environments should not be perpetuated for granted, as they are merely representations of historical cultures and old technologies, but we should judge them in the context of a larger era, where new technologies and cultures necessarily need to find their place in the world as well. And this year's theme is bricolage, which discusses the use of the tools already at hand to solve problems. Because of the limitations of the toolset, bricolage forces us to think beyond the established social division of each tool to the possibilities above the form. From a philosophical point of view this is a process of thingifying the object, the process of rethinking the object out of its original system.

Relation to the wider professional, scientific, and social framework

With the development of society and technology, a large number of prefabricated buildings have been built in order to efficiently meet the demands of production and life, a trend that poses a great threat to the continuity of regional cultures and creates many spaces that lack identity. I hope to use bricolage to find possibilities for the coexistence of cultural materials from different times.

It is a way of thinking about how the history of human civilisation should be preserved and perpetuated in a broader context. Especially today, when virtual technology is so advanced, we are aware of the material finiteness of the human world, and as human civilisation develops, the amount of information generated by cultural iterations will inevitably grow, and one day materiality will not be able to carry these cultures. These are all questions that deserve constant reflection by a school of architecture concerned with regionalism. And I believe that when we really give up the one-to-one relationship between matter and culture, that is when we really liberate the materiality of things.

Ethical consideration

The whole process of research has made me aware of the chaotic nature of the world. This chaos is not pejorative, it means the birth of difference, diversity, interest. Exploring the chaotic order has given me a desire to critique absolute systems. This idea is not only restricted to architecture, it is a rebellion against dualism on a philosophical level.

After Modernism, too many architects became obsessed with self-narratives. This way of thinking naturally has its advantages, as it helps architects to explore their own ideas with maximum efficiency and to strengthen their own compositions and the output of new ideas.   But this has also resulted in the creation of more and more introverted systems of architecture that ignore

their environment, they are absolute systems. But we need to recognise that all buildings that are built will eventually have a huge impact on their surroundings and it will be the context for new buildings in the future, so we should think in a more regional perspective for all practical projects. If the engineer is the one who indulges in infinite tools, and the bricoleur is the one who can only fiddle with the materials at hand, then perhaps the truly responsible architect needs to find a balance between the engineer and the tinkerer.

Also returning to the level of urban renewal mentioned above, the use of such absolute systems is much more common, especially in developing countries where the value of old buildings is often not discovered, or if it is discovered it is overwhelmed by the forces of capital. In most cases the old building is completely obliterated and the new building rules the site with an entirely new identity. This is a neglect and avoidance of the history of the area.

There is also the dilemma of assessing the value of old buildings. Apart from those with aesthetic or special historical significance, is there no value in preserving other more mundane buildings? I believe that no matter what the building is, once it has been built, it will begin to relate to the world like a baby is born, a social relationship will be born. Even a featureless concrete box can become meaningful because a child once carved a pattern into its façade. Meaning sometimes does not come from the form of the building itself, because the meaning of the form itself is mostly given by the architect, whose translation of traditional elements is in the end an expression of personal consciousness, and it is in the interaction with people that the meaning of the building emerges.