



Machinic Magic

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Explore lab #27
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Reflection paper

This project is an attempt to bring back play, from the mere simulation it is now, to a creative force that it once was. It questions whether the entertainment park is still relevant in contemporary society and whether it can be reimagined and transformed from a scripted to a more unscripted arena of action. The aim of this project is to create an environment for entertainment that is not just consumable but also productive and transformative, transforming life rather than an individual. A life that is valuable and made out of zest, beauty, wonder, and adventure; life as “something that is lived for its own sake; something that is a value in and of itself, in the unexchangeable “currency” of experience.”¹

¹ Brian Massumi, 99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value: A Postcapitalist Manifesto (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), page 13

Relationship between research and design

The project rejects to support any kind of binary oppositions such as human vs. technical, biological vs. mechanical, before vs. after, good vs. bad. Therefore, it also considers research and design, not as opposite or separate parts, but as the same thing. However, considering the entire process consists of many relations, a diagram (figure 1.2.3.) is made to define the correlations that took place throughout time. These several columns (research questions, sub-questions, problems, methods, conclusions) try to explain in a diagrammatic and concise way how, why and from where each part of my process emerged.

Relationship between the studio, master track, master programme and the project

Having Explore Lab as a graduation studio where everyone chooses their own fascination, the students' projects assumably have no similarities between each other. While this might be true when narrowing down the project to its theme, it is not if you are looking at the students' goals and aims. In some sense, this project has more similarities with other Explore Lab students such as problem making, shifting, multiplying and complexifying, than the projects in different studios where the theme of the studio is a specific program, function, typology or location.

Regarding the master track and master program, the project strived not to be confined

by pre-notions of what is considered to be architecture. The methodology of the research was not conventional such as exploring entertainment park typologies, data collecting, or pure historical investigations; but a process of developing alternative methods complemented with other disciplines such as philosophy, art, landscape, physics. Not only this experimental approach revealed and touched upon so many different themes but also has left me with ideas not tied to any specific program. Since there is no program or function and consequently no brief, an environment needed to be created from scratch. To achieve this, I needed to unlearn the traditional processes of designing and thinking, quite difficult but ultimately rewarding task.

Elaboration on research method and approach

The research started by exploring literature based on the topics of entertainment, work-leisure dichotomy, and capitalism. The chosen entity for further exploration was entertainment park due to the fact it was one of the first modern examples of captured fun; replacing the fun fair that was temporal and spontaneous with scripted, organized space of consumption.

The problems found while exploring the entertainment park were consumption oriented entertainment; enclosed, fixed environment; scripted and repetitive behavior; invariable experience; absent and reactive subjects. While analyzing Coney Island, these problems brought up various questions that needed to be addressed: How is the site orga-

nized? What is the site doing? Why does one want to be absent and reactive? Why does one have the desire to suppress oneself? Where and when in the entertainment park does one suppress oneself? These questions have led me to 3 parts of the research: Island, Park and Ride or architecture as stratum, architecture as referee, and architecture as an exception.

The method of analysis for each part is the same - mapping (mapping of the strip, mapping of game or mapping of furniture). Different diagramming and mapping techniques were tested in order to understand more complex desires. Mapping is used, as James Corner's in *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, and Invention* defines, as a "collective enabling enterprise" that "unfolds potential", not as a reproduction of what is already there (like tracing would do) but as experimentation towards revealing hidden potential and as to "discover new worlds within the past and present ones." The mapping is almost like a performance of the project-in-time, not restricted to the site visit, data collecting or capturing physical attributes, but as something that would extend to design itself.²

The entertainment park is not a site for rest but the intense full-body experience of light, color, smell, sound, and posture. These materials were mapped to discover potentials and practices in order to understand what kind of desires people had. Further on, the research investigates how these materials, potentials, practices, and desires overlap to create certain affects. The focus is not on objects but rather on actions. Instead of mapping usually mapped parameters such

² James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," in *Mappings*, ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), page 214-252

as function, use, program, scale, typology, morphology, research maps the more unconventional layers such as movement, speed, forces, flows, actions, elements, territories, rhythms, habits, patterns, and relations. Furthermore, these relations were not just extracted, but they were tackled with five Nietzsche's minor questions: how, when, where, for whom and what purpose; as well as always referring back to desire, value and play, the three main anchors of the project. These mappings are done without beginning or end, creating fields that are always expanding and feeding off of each other. Finally, cartographies are done with versatile and flexible techniques, such as sketching, drawing, collaging, de-collaging, hatching, to allow the possibility of even the "unmappable" things to be "mapped."⁴

Elaboration on the relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, and transferability of the project results

The social aspect of the project can be found in problematising some of the issues of contemporary society such as commodification and consumption of goods, experience and time; and effects it has on the perception of value. As listed in figure 1, 2, 3, the purpose of the project is producing different reality, new subjectivity and play. The projects aim, as mentioned in introduction, is to tackle normative arenas of leisure and create entertainment that is not consumable but transformative. By adding a new performative platform,

it offers a different type of operations. This new ground tries to eradicate the whole idea of consumerism and consumption by allowing generative forces to emerge, moving away from scripted behavior, encouraging change. In order to create a play, diverse and deviant objects are placed on this platform to unfold the potential. They are points of stability that intensify constraints of the regulatory field work as attractors, gathering movement around them. Finally, the environment is not enclosed, there is a connection with the previous ground through holes left open that are potentially producing new subjectivity in a different form of agency that can act against channeling and capturing.

The scientific relevance and the transferability of the projects lay in the developed methodology of research. This diagrammatic thinking can be easily applied in other environments such as the spatial, economic, political et cetera. The methodology is not referring to one thing, but it is a principle that can be transferred elsewhere. Also, the fact that the project makes an attempt to propose something beyond the new right answer, or "a design of interdependencies, chemistries, chain reactions, and ratches"⁵ as Keller Easterling wrote in her book *Medium design*, makes it applicable elsewhere. This approach is too valuable to be overlooked as it has the potential to elevate the projects within the architecture or other disciplines.

³ Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), page 19-21

⁴ James Corner, *TAOM*, page 214-252

⁵ Keller Easterling, *Medium Design*, (Moscow: Strelka Press, 2018)

Research question

How can *desire* (both individual and collective) as expressed in the current form of entertainment park help in re-evaluating the *value* of *play*?

Problems

1. Consumption oriented entertainment
2. Enclosed, fixed environment
3. Scripted and repetitive behaviour
4. Invariable experience
5. Subjects are absent and reactive
6. Privileging individual over collective
7. Objects are not completely fixed
8. Bodies in various positions
9. Memory of the day
10. Machinic

Sub-questions

How is the site organized?
What is the site doing?
What are the potentials of the site?

Why one wants to be absent and reactive?
Why one has the desire to suppress oneself?
What are the forces that are imposing the rules?

Where and when in the entertainment park you suppress yourself?
What is the main element that makes entertainment park?

Method

= island - layers - field

= park - game - rules

= ride - element - exception

Method

Conclusions

What if?

Design questions

island - layers - field

1. Architecture **captures and control the flows**
2. Territories are formed in encounter of different forces
3. Forces overflow the territories

... we follow the flows instead of controlling them?
... territories shift?
... forces of one territory overflow to another?

How to intuit the following of flows and break them accordingly in order to produce the potentials?

park - game - rules

1. Architecture is a **rule giver and a referee**
2. Rules create habits and rituals
3. Subjects suppress themselves because of the desires

... there are no rules?
... the rules are shifted?
... door, fence, walls are removed?

How to create architecture where subjects generate their own rules depending on their own activity and complying to them?

ride - element - exception

1. Architecture is a **producer of constrains**
2. Constrain affords experience
3. Constrain can lead to production and / or consumption

... this experience is introduced somewhere else?
... the shape is translated into something else?

How can a constrain connect production and consumption of the subject that undergoes it?

Design questions

How to intuit the following of flows and break them accordingly in order to produce the potentials?

How to create architecture where subjects generate their own rules depending on their own activity and complying to them?

How can a constrain connect production and consumption of the subject that undergoes it?

Purpose

different reality

new subjectivity

play

Proposal

performative architecture

event

deviant objects

Theory

circle of possession / expression

line of light

point of stability

Design

membrane / skin

movement

markers



