

Abstract

I am entranced by technology and I am conscious of its limitations. I aggrandize the digital apparatus, and I cut it down to size. I believe in technological utopianism as much as I subscribe to luddism. My position resists stabilization.

I understand technology by looking at its objects—by exploring the physical realm of the digital landscape. I ask what the boundary is between machine and non-machine; I ask what devices can and cannot do in the physical world. I find cracks in the seemingly flawless veneers of digital objects and technology as a whole, and I pry these cracks open, revealing where cords tangle, where devices break, and where machines leave us waiting endlessly for things to load. I find delight in these momentary messes.

I understand technology by looking at the ways its objects make bodies move—through its input methods, its hand gestures, its physical affordances and constraints. With video work, photographs, writing, and sculptural objects, I defamiliarize and reframe these moments.

In all these projects, I work from the technological, but more so I work from the *logos* of the *tehkne*: from a principle of art (*tehkne*) that creates its own, often absurd discourse (*logos*) between technology's vows and its reneges, between what the digital world promises us, and where those promises fall short. I revel in these utopic promises and these dystopic failures equally, and my work transposes and transforms them, as if by sleight of hand.

Elise Kirk (Photography, 2015)
Mid-

Abstract

This thesis explores a personal and cultural tension between rootedness and restlessness, set against the backdrop of my native Midwest. The large-format portrait and landscape photographs reflect a paradoxical longing to pull up stakes and put down roots, and the liminal state we often dwell in as a result. Playing on the conception of the Midwest as a transient zone to be passed through en route to somewhere else, the work refers to the pervasive belief that our greatest hopes and potentials can only be realized in some other place, at some future or past time. It's a syndrome I grapple with myself, centrifugally lapping the country in perpetual search for an impossible landing pad. As American society drifts increasingly towards untethered mobility and develops a homogenized temporary landscape in its wake, our identifications with distinct regional home places are more likely to reach mythical proportions. As such, the Midwest becomes not just my centripetal anchor, but also my stage — a metaphorical intersection between movement and stasis drawing from observation, experience, memory and fantasy. Here, my personal myth of place unfolds.

Sewage is a biologically enriching medium that can enable a water improvement infrastructure and relate a city to its local ecology.

abstract

How can a resilient hydrourbanism emerge from the wet and dry seasons of South Florida? Drinking water supply and wastewater treatment are inherently linked to the estuarine city's fluctuating hydrologic condition. Conventional water infrastructure is designed on risk-based and resource exploitative models, resulting in static structures which lack the ability to respond to changing conditions. The hard edges of levees, locks, and walls and freshwater uptake and wastewater removal have proven unreliable and inefficient. A new model for water management in fragmented suburbia recognizes fluctuations, local conditions, and water supply/treatment as one connected system rooted in the climatic fluctuations of the region. The intent is to design with water as a networked urban ecological infrastructure, with change as a

collaborator in the design process. This thesis moves beyond environmental sustainability by designing strategies for capturing and using the fluctuating nutrient and water flows of a city as a resource. It does not remake or reinvent the city's entire water infrastructure. Instead, it is a surgical insertion of one component- productive waste treatment- that reorganizes how the current infrastructure functions. The proposal creates places of public access to freshwater for recreation and enjoyment. Wet and dry seasons are no longer considered flood and drought crises, but instead as opportunities for engagement with local ecology and a new blue infrastructure. The new ecologically engineered landscape is centered on the experience of "wild Florida" for residents in the city.



glossary of terms

aquifer- is a wet underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand, or silt).
BOD- biochemical oxygen demand, the critical design parameter for wastewater treatment facilities.
city- an area of land with a density of inhabitants, land uses, and commerce.
cypress dome- a landscape type unique to the Florida landscape, a forested wetland dominated by Bald Cypress trees.
ecology- the interactions and set of relationships between all living and non-living entities.
engage- to attract and hold by influence or power.
estuary- is a partly enclosed coastal body of water with one or more freshwater bodies flowing into it, and with a free connection to the open sea.
fluctuation- to rise and fall, to vary.
hydrology - the study of the movement, distribution, and quality of water.
hydrogeology- the study of ground water and its relation to the geology it occupies.
hydroperiod- a period of time marked by water logged

soil in a wetland.
hydrourbanism- urban design that is based on local hydrologic conditions.
flow - move along or out steadily and continuously in a current or stream.
mangal- the plant community of a mangrove swamp or mangrove forest that occupies the brackish fringe on the coast.
MGD- million gallons per day, used to measure the flow of wastewater treatment plant effluent.
structure- a fundamental, tangible or intangible notion of relationships of entities.
resilience- the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks.
suburban sprawl- a geographic area defined by low density housing, big box retail, car-dominated environments typically surrounding an urban core.
system- a group of components that together perform one or more vital functions.

Bret Tonelli (Furniture Design, 2016)
Deep Seated: Some Thoughts Involving Furniture

Abstract

The universe is vast and indifferent. We exist in, what is for us, a habitable planet, something like a grain of sand on the beach of the cosmos. We seek meaning and we find it. We have families and jobs, communicate through language, develop goals and hopes for the future. Science constantly progresses, both improving our lives while habitually proving previous theories inadequate or incorrect - milk used to be good for you, now it's not. Direct sunlight was recommended, then sunblock. Now both are supposedly carcinogenic.

This book is about furniture: how it exists for us, within, and because of, the ambiguities and questions of human existence. Despite the constantly shifting cultural and scientific landscape, we have developed tools to ground us in a common reality; language, shelter, morality. Where the universe may quite possibly be endless, furniture is not. It is a tool rooted in finite, human proportions. It always relates directly to our scale. It is consistent. Dependable.

In furniture, we find location for experience, a place for memory to congeal, and a way to return - to home, to ourselves, and to a feeling. Somewhere between the distinctly inhuman universe and the translation of daily experience into the zeros and ones of the digital firmament, there exist these things that we call "chair", "table" and "shelf".

Whether or not we should eat more protein than carbs, or if vegetables should replace them both, we never question or critique the way we sit on the couch. We inherently know how to. Whether or not addressing climate change becomes an international political priority, I am aware of something simultaneously concrete and poetic when I sit in my favorite upholstered armchair, reading in the gentle glow of the lamp. Furniture doesn't need to be applied. We access it from a place of intuitive knowledge. It may not offer solutions, but using furniture does not require a manual, an education, rationality, class or nationality. Furniture is a point of access to something we already hold.

Eugenia Yu (Architecture, 2013)
The Ear of the Tempo

The making of space exists in language, drawing, woodcut, film, dance, calligraphy, miming, music, puppetry, reading, walking, gathering, and Architecture, among other things.

This thesis is a collection of stories in many forms, on many themes. One is architecture, another is humanity.