

February 28, 2024

STAR Project Proposal

An Aesthetic Experience in a Contemporary Catalog

Project Description

Since Vitruvius's original Roman publication and subsequent rediscovery in the 15th century, the book has been a primary medium for documenting, designing, teaching, and disseminating architecture.¹ Architectural literature, with purposes ranging from historical documentation to speculation, caters to diverse audiences, from architects to the general public. One focus of architectural books, since Serlio in the 16th century, has been democratizing design through representations of building patterns, kits of parts, and DIY building blocks.²

This project contributes to architectural history through historical analysis and speculative design. It involves researching and designing a new catalog and kit of parts for architecture students to creatively design their dorm rooms. Building on the 1971 modular system for CalArts students, the Metamorphokit,³ the project explores influential case studies like the Design Research store in Cambridge,⁴ Action Office for Herman Miller, John Hejduk's nine-square grid studios,⁵ and publications such as *The Whole Earth Catalog*, *Nomadic Furniture*,⁶ *The New Domestic Landscape*,⁷ and others. The interdisciplinary approach uncovers the history of cataloging and its impact on architecture, aiming to provide insights for future

¹ Vaughan Hart, and Peter Hicks. 1998. *Paper Palaces : The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*. New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press.

² Vaughan Hart, and Peter Hicks. 1998. *The Making of The Typographical Architect: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise*. New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press.

³ "Metamorphokit: You Can Make It Anything You Want." 2011. 24700. February 14, 2011. <https://blog.calarts.edu/2011/02/14/metamorphokit-you-can-make-it-anything-you-want/>.

⁴ "Design Research." n.d. Architectuul. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://architectuul.com/architecture/design-research>.

⁵ "Kit-of-Parts Conceptualism: Abstracting Architecture in the American Academy." n.d. Harvard Design Magazine. <https://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/articles/kit-of-parts-conceptualism-abstracting-architecture-in-the-american-academy/>.

⁶ Hennessey, James, and Victor Papanek. 1973. *Nomadic Furniture*. New York: Pantheon Bks.

⁷ Ambasz, Emilio. 1972. *Italy : The New Domestic Landscape ; Achievements and Problems of Italian Design ; the Museum of Modern Art, New York in Collab. With Centro Di Florence ; New York: 26.5.-11.9. 1972*. New York: Museum Of Modern Art.

design strategies and spatial experiences. Design research, for example, known for its curated collection of modernist design objects, served as a prime example of how a physical space can function as a living catalog, influencing both retail environments and architectural understanding while formulating an early logic of the Do-It-Yourself movement.

The research challenges established cataloging techniques by creating a new catalog and physical representations of a "metamorphokit," incorporating neuro-architecture principles. Moving beyond static drawings, the catalog becomes an interactive learning experience for university students, combining multimedia components, model-building, graphic design, and digital representation. The goal is to deepen understanding of neuro-architecture through a comprehensive and engaging aesthetic educational experience.

Methods and Experimentation

Neuro-architecture focuses on designing efficient environments based on technical parameters and subjective indices such as emotion and well-being.⁸ It will consist of a contemporary approach to design catalogs, containing key information on design strategies with furniture, color, lighting, and other elements that interfere with the well-being of the person entering the spaces.

The project's methodology spans three weeks of research, five weeks of catalog creation and model-making, and two weeks of revision and presentation. Drawing inspiration from neurology experiments, the approach aims to untangle links between environmental stimuli and neural responses, offering insights in how the human brain perceives and interacts with its surroundings.

Publication and Dissemination

The project yields a physical architecture catalog backed by a research paper and experimentation models and drawings. The catalog's finalization is marked by a book launch

⁸ "Neuroarchitecture: How Your Brain Responds to Different Spaces." 2022. ArchDaily. May 26, 2022. <https://www.archdaily.com/982248/neuroarchitecture-how-your-brain-responds-to-different-spaces>.

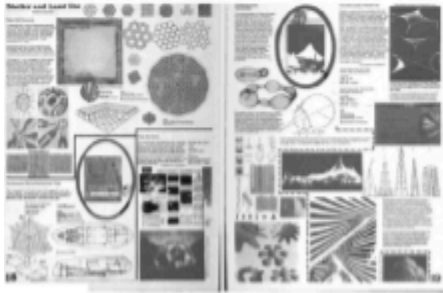
event, inviting faculty, architects, students, and guests for a panel discussion on the topics researched.

The ultimate goal of the research project will be to create a catalog with a pedagogical nature that collaborates with faculty from first year studios to be used in the course. In studios like Introduction to Architecture Studio (ARCH 101), professors can look into the catalog booklet and work with it to create a project for the students as they're transitioning into the field of architecture. Students can also participate in the "book launch" event and play with the prototype models I will make and learn from the catalog. The knowledge gathered from the catalog will allow the students to further dive into the psychology of architecture and spaces and how it has evolved over time.

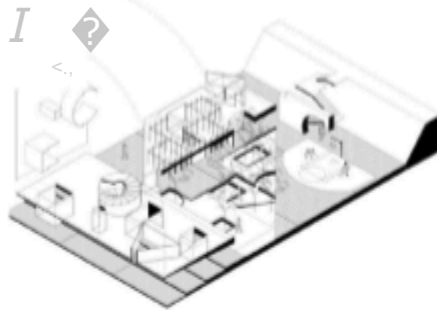
Discourse and Personal Motivation

The new speculative design of a contemporary architecture catalog aligns with my passion and serves as a personal thesis project. It connects with my work in architecture studios, focusing on spaces from the perspective of the individual experiencing them. The project's impact on young architects and its contribution to a collaborative and democratized design approach motivates me. It will enhance my academic and professional journey, adding to my design portfolio and advancing my research experience. The project's broader contributions lie in fostering the development of design projects and ideas within the artistic field.

Figures



The Whole Earth Catalog



Axonometric View
Multipurpose Community Space, [redacted]



Perspective View



Action Office

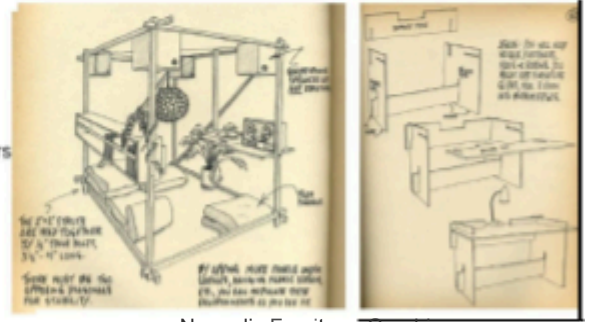


City from Afar Project Renders and Axonometric, [redacted]



City from Afar Project, [redacted]

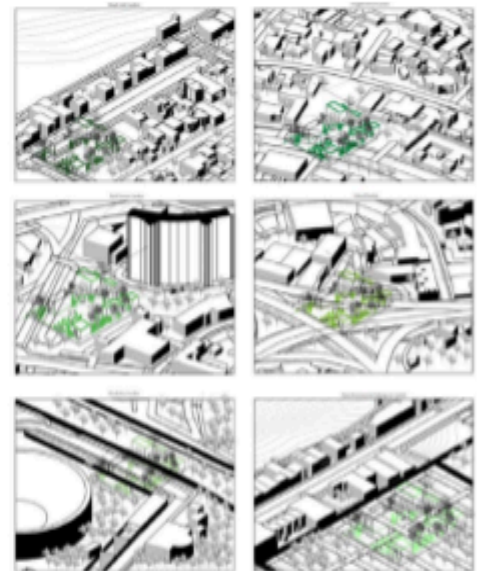
Nomadic Furniture, Covers



Nomadic Furniture, Graphics



Design Research Store, Cambridge



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