

Parallel Projections

Beginning

This project investigates and conflates two types of post-industrial site: the architectural and the agricultural. It focuses not on specific places but on specific kinds of places – defunct industrial buildings, abandoned urban edifices, and mechanized rural landscapes.

The spaces of urban and rural abandonment share palimpsestic surfaces that are compelling grounds for observation and intervention. Their layers are complex if not nearly obliterated histories, sometimes overwritten by ghost texts, always faded by changes in production methods and habits of occupation. In opposition to the idea that these sites should be whitewashed and redrawn, the authors consider them as grounds for new imagery and as repositories for material evidence that deepens, rather than erases, the evidence of their pasts. This new imagery is developed, in part, through the accumulation and projection of phenomena harvested from other post-industrial sites.

Parallel Projections is anticipated as a long-term and multi-located effort. For this first component of the investigation, raw materials and audio and visual recordings were collected from dormant and derelict post-industrial sites in two different states - Iowa and Ohio – then installed in their native state and re-situated in the other in the form of alien topographies. Both the local and extraterrestrial interventions were designed to amplify observed and haptic aspects of each environment.

A primary objective of the project is to make visceral and evident our intellectual comprehension of the relationships between materiality, surface, place and history. We act on the conditions of one place by invoking the circumstances of other territories. In doing so, we intensify and extend the scale of location and environment through re-occupation and radical inter-connection. Our relationship to the world beyond shifts, gaining stability and instability simultaneously. The authors, living in different spaces that have both been substantially altered by scalar economic shifts, have adapted the project components to their host contexts.

Set Up

Parallel Projections is an effort to redraw surfaces and recast spaces using images derived from landscapes foreign to the sites that receive and are transformed by them. Iowa freight trains, wind turbines and steaming ethanol plants were transplanted onto exterior building walls in Cincinnati. Ohio buildings under renovation, smoking factory stacks and river ferries were relocated to interior building walls in Des Moines.

The subject matter of the imagery shot in both states is focused on old and new industrial environments that support urban centers or are no longer relevant to them, that are visibly integrated into civic or rural fabrics or spatially or psychologically divorced from them.

Surfaces and spaces were identified as projection sites based on a number of factors: a state of disrepair or abandonment; their potential as drawing grounds for the medium of light; evident but not entirely legible historical traces; the quality of embedded detritus that could be incorporated as found, participant imagery; and their standing existence as situated drawings-in-place.

Tools and Methods

The project is inherently about movement – images in and over time, scenic displacement, temporary apparitions framed in isolated and varied conditions, travel as an embedded act of drawing, disembodied conversations as a means to clarifying spatial perception, design and intentions for mark making, revelation for different (intended and unintended) audiences at times of testing (drafting) and completion (exhibition and documentation.)

Essential to the enterprise have been the pickup trucks owned by each of the authors, one with a generator, another with a built-in convertor, both laden with fuel cans, extension cords, laptops, projectors, cables, video cameras and tripods. These rigs are unrecognizable as drawing toolboxes yet fully equipped for alternative forms of draftsmanship.

Access to the sites for drawing has required the cooperation of people, schedules, the elements, traffic and the law. In Des Moines, one building supported multiple interior projection efforts that transformed specific architectural moments – canopies of beams, voids in walls and floors, piles of debris, forests of pipes. In Cincinnati, multiple buildings yielded surfaces for projection. Some were already heavily marked by the traces of adjacent

buildings that had been demolished, others were extended by shiny industrial accretions that heralded their potential future permanence.

Iowa's Ohio

The primary project site in Iowa was the Pitt Carriage Company Building, located in the flat flood plain at the base of Capitol Hill and in the heart of the East Side of Des Moines. Built in 1909, it is a rare example of an intact carriage works building, made more distinct because it was constructed and operated by Mabel Pitt, the only woman to ever own a carriage company in the United States. The facility served as carriage factory and warehouse through 1934 at which time it changed ownership and served as an ostrich hatchery until 1951. From 1951-1974, it was used as a warehouse for the Feed Specialties Company. Since then, the building has been vacant. The brick structure has a concrete floor, interior wood and steel columns, an array of steel I beams, wood girders and remnants of wood flooring. Almost all window openings have been filled with concrete masonry units.

The lack of light and diffuse spatial order makes perception in the building interior unpredictable. This unpredictability guided the placement and overlay of the video footage from Ohio, which was positioned to evoke multiple intersections while offering a consistent assemblage. The compositional whole produced an embodiment of material atmosphere in the absence of environmental control. The resultant spatial construct might be construed as a type of tomb that contains the material leftovers of our post-industrial culture animated by light and by the smell of time, darkness and moisture.

This construct becomes contingent on a depth which is not dimension but rather the experience of the matter of dimension – the way that we and our world become interlaced, and interior and exterior become inseparable. Here the body in space envelops the in-between, drawing out worlds by bringing forth our own ability to sense or fathom alien territories and terrains of time and multiplicity. In these moments it is possible to intuitively feel the arrangement of lines along trajectories established by various past occupations. Discontinuity and difference partner with equilibrium. The ghost trajectories of no longer present stairs combined with a floorless system of joists and the helter-skelter configuration of post and columns offer generative powers that are put into motion by the various experimental projections.

Against the tapestry of clay and mortar, we enter history and situate ourselves within the belly of a corpse. We find ourselves [consecrated occupants] against the tabernacle of pipework and flying wood joists. Within, we are immobilized by an incessant inaudible murmur. Aroused by the noxious aromas of our time, we are illuminated by sunlight emanating from a single overhead window as it passes through the array of burnt wood floor joists - the smell, no longer present. We crouch beside desperate sensations of longing which are equally acoustic, tactile and imaginative - engendering, unfolding and participating in fantastical realities. Lingering, we ourselves comprise a deep and intimate relationship between patterns of inhabitation, activity and space. Our interventions are auratic and indexical as we lay desperately still in an effort to invoke and draw out the worlds of and between here and there. Dust from overhead looms in the form of minute separate particles between us. Each utterance reverberates off the masonry walls and impregnates the material ruins with antiquity and a voluminous blur. We drown in material dereliction...ibis white, ivory lace, antique white, repose gray, accessible beige, reddened earth, canyon clay, cachet cream, ox-blood red, harvester, torchlight, lusty red iron ore.

Ohio's Iowa

Whereas a singular site and interior volume supported the Des Moines component of the project, multiple exterior sites supported the work in Cincinnati. Histories of architectural, civic and human abandonment in this Ohio city on the Mason-Dixon Line are most palpable on the city's many skins – on eroding and crumbling structural walls, in the voids of razed edifices, in the blackness of ominous and hulking night sentinels – buildings absent any illumination, on shiny surfaces that sidle up to those dusted by disrepair and suggest the possibility of industrial rebirth and continuity.

The many cycles of prosperity and poverty that have defined Cincinnati are particularly evident in an area just north of the Ohio River. Over-the-Rhine (OTR) retains many of the marks left by shifting fortunes and populations. If in the 1850's Cincinnati was the fastest growing city in the United States and by 1880 was considered the 'Beer Capital of the World', the First World War dramatically changed the character and community of OTR. Anti-German sentiment not only erased civic evidence of German culture, but also compromised the many German-owned breweries situated in OTR that powered a significant part of the city's economy. By the end of the 1920s OTR slid

into an economic depression that emptied its buildings, increased crime rates, and incited turf wars and race riots. Most of the 19th century brewery buildings in the district were shuttered by the middle of the 20th century.

Almost one hundred years later, significant renovation and revitalization efforts are underway in OTR and its environs. While many buildings have been preserved or are in the process of being renovated, many remain abandoned, uninhabited, even near collapse. The Clyffside Brewing Company is a defunct complex on the north edge of OTR where beer was brewed consistently for 111 years (1846-1957), the longest production run of any brewery in Cincinnati. In 2010 the western wall of one portion of the complex collapsed, forcing the demolition of the oldest brewery building.

The void where this building once stood is one of the Cincinnati projection sites. Elevated above the street intersection where buses stop but few travelers appear, there is a jumble of spatial, visual and textural information. The two remaining complex walls are interrupted by pipes and wires, supports for inaccessible doors suspended well above ground level, and host to illogical shapes formed by concrete block infill. Peeling white paint is returning the bricks to their original color; turquoise subtly frames a steel beam over a sealed aperture. What once was an interior floor is now a ridged and crumbling concrete pad surrounded by barricades and partially submerged in a thin layer of rust colored water. There are discards everywhere – a refrigerator door, a washing machine, empty liquor bottles, two yellow hairbands.

A second site, the functional Samuel Adams Cincinnati Brewery, is just a few blocks south and east of the abandoned Clyffside Brewing Company. It provides a stark material and experiential contrast to its defunct 19th century relative. Whereas the Clyffside complex is embedded on a hill and integrated into a residential district, the Samuel Adams complex occupies ten square blocks in opposition to its surroundings. Lengths of beige planar geometries and bundled, repetitive stainless cylinders surround and absorb the architecture that once supported the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewery that originally occupied a portion of this sprawling, indifferent domain.

At night, both sites breathed emptiness – neither were inhabited – people and vehicles appeared only intermittently. Unlike interior projections, those carried out in open public spaces invited attention. As moving images shifted the identity and perception of the surfaces they joined, there were ambling silhouettes that remained at a distance and people who announced themselves with requests for work, for money, for the use of a cell phone. Chance encounters became an additional experiential layer of the work – unanticipated conversations, interruptions, even cars that drove through the projections became part of the meta-record.

In the dark voids of the city, isolation modulates breath and unease sharpens views down narrow streets littered with architecture and humanity left to weather time, unattended. The air is filled with yeast and oil smoke and the river continues its passage, low and out of sight. Lost plastic wafts across gated passages, glass shatters under heavy footsteps and truck tires, stagnant water reflects ivy crawling and consuming structure already under pressure. The envelopes that distinguish us from our surroundings fall away as light and images turn the place where we are into another place entirely. In these moments we are transported into the compressed overlay of past and present, with here and there asserting their infinite malleability.

Conclusion

Parallel Projections deploys an extra-terrestrial methodology for alternative forms of draftsmanship. Using non-conventional means of drafting, the works in this developing project might best be understood as experimental choreographies that yield new drawing types and cartographic transects. The ‘transect’ is understood in its original context of botanical studies, where walking in straight lines of up to 50 miles, and taking samples along the way, is a means to establishing statistical species counts.

The Iowa and Ohio post-industrial environments are usually perceived in passing if at all, or are made invisible by redevelopment. Establishing a programmed choreography through these spaces is a means to discern them. Though the line we are drawing is not straight or defined by distance, walking it is a way to draw out the effective nature of the past and to assist in the provocation of a new realm of history.

Geographic surveys often face their most awkward, difficult moments during the initial phase of cultural adjustment, where we are suddenly confronted with an alterity of new terrains, new environments, new material languages, and new social norms. *Parallel Projections* has begun to provide a structured (albeit strangely structured) logic with which to engage the post-industrial forms and landscapes of the Midwest, and to seek out and explore some of its most challenging districts. We will continue to explore and debate the project’s critical significance, and extend it. Is it a *derive*? Do the experiential projections constitute a ‘map’ themselves? To what extent do the

obsessively recorded and projected videos represent an industrial past and present when combined with defunct industrial settings and material constructs?

Atmospheres are physical. They are experienced by the body in time, and affected by our responses to and redefinition of their experience. Our experiment wanders about in an atmospheric amalgamation pierced by the passing of a train or the stillness of a layered surface that supports the emanating exhaust from a distant industrial plant. The body, implicated by occupation, becomes the canvas onto and into which the course of such conflated histories can be redrawn.

Biographies

Samantha Krukowski

is an artist, author and educator. She engages an interdisciplinary and intermodal practice that explores the nature of objects, the records of experience, the identity of place and the consequences of intervention. Her writing has focused on presence and absence in the pictorial field; rootedness and dislocation; utopian models; time-based artworks; the nature of creativity and the identity of the maker. Her edited volume *Playa Dust: Collected Stories from Burning Man* was published in 2014. Krukowski's experimental and painterly videos have screened at hundreds of national and international film festivals; her drawings, paintings and sculptural works have been exhibited nationally and internationally. She is on the faculty in the School of Design at the University of Cincinnati where she coordinates the foundations sequence and teaches studios and seminars at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Peter P. Goché

is a practicing architect, artist and educator. Using site-adjusted installations as his primary mode of practice, Goché deploys an integrated and focused approach to both theoretical and practical questions pertaining to the nature and impact of materiality specific to the re-occupation of post-industrial spaces. Each inquiry utilizes a range of domains including art, architecture and anthropology as a means of exploring not only what material cultivations can be, but also what they, in fact, do. Based on a series of modulated experimental actions (material modalities), each installation is driven by the nascent possibility of a persistent desire to intercourse with existing material surrounds pursuant a philosophical position that leverages perceptual notions of *chiaroscuro* - the disposition of light and dark. By extension, the conscious and unconscious, the seen and the unseen, focus and open awareness and the made-re-made are factors in the realm of understanding and producing space. It is a full-scale, three-dimensional methodology, concurrent with exploratory drawing, photography and videography that seeks to express the affects (immaterial harmonics) found latent in our post-industrial landscape. Goché has exhibited and lectured on his creative practice and scholarship at many conferences and cultural institutions throughout North America and Western Europe. As educator in the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University, he coordinates and teaches design studios. Goché is also the founder of *Black Contemporary*, a rural field station dedicated to the study of perception and atmosphere.