



FUTURE ARCHEOLOGY

SO - IL
Solid Objectives - Idenburg Liu

The Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design Presents:

FUTURE ARCHEOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 18, 2009 – OCTOBER 18, 2009

The Exhibition is Generously Supported by
STIMULERINGSFONDS VOOR ARCHITECTUUR



Consulate General of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands



SO - IL
Solid Objectives - Idenburg Liu

Curatorial Statement:

Towards Architecture Anew

Future Archeology is a paradoxical premise with the bravura and urgency of exploration and discovery. Confident that there will be something worth unearthing Florian Idenburg and Jing Liu (Solid Objectives – Idenburg Liu) dialogically position their work in a kinetic present where design methodology and rhetoric benefits at once from a forward-looking impulse and openness towards the potential usefulness of prior ideas and organizational strategies. This cool opportunism speaks more to a set of broad relational concepts like adaptation, continuity and evolution as domains for architectural novelty than it does formal articulation and expressionism. But this is not to preclude form from SO-IL's agenda. On the contrary, their works reflect a clear investment in the development of a strain of current architecture characterized by affects associable with what may be described as a contemporary sublime. And it is this that makes the notion of the exhibition a compelling one, implicitly challenging us to consider an aspect or two of what might qualify such work as an agent for a progressive present of future promise.

No matter its scale of manifestation SO-IL's version of the contemporary sublime projects an immediately intelligible Gestalt through effects and strategies including: broad sweeps of blankness, chameleonic atmospherics, guerilla-like placement of diminutive tabulae raesae, juxtapositions of straightforward figures with vast landscapes and epic skies, vernacular silhouettes, or seemingly effortless synthetic mergers with nature. Clearly this approach is attributable to the principals' long association with Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, but it bears stating that, unlike their Japanese mentors, their slates are somewhat less blanc, their dispositions a little more noir. Whether in the countryside or on city rooftops, admixtures of gritty realism and cosmopolitan savoir-faire contaminate high with lo making for an haute primitivist architecture with an air of 'look no hands' logic. An intentional compositional naïveté displays what Robert Somol has identified as a strategy of shape rather than one of (capital F) form. The resultant is a visceral beauty redolent with empathy and fragility. Particularly in plan, the subtle awkwardness and gently deformed figures infuse and diffuse abstract wholes with a libertarian, structured informality.

Leaving behind the stochastic and oft representational strategy of 'Datascape' as form-giver SO-IL remixes Alison and Peter Smithson's ideas of 'active socioplastics' and 'conglomerate ordering' through Venn diagram-like interminglings of raum plan and plan libre. Within the overlaps and thresholds of the transparent and translucent mat-scapes the idea of program is positioned as a province of qualities not quantities. Here and there happenstance permeates the dimensions of quotidian arrangements creating relaxed urbane habitats of rooms, courts and gardens. With a Montessorian civility of co-existence and co-appearance SO-IL's architectonics set up a sensual sense of ease worthy of Édouard Manet's picknickers in Le déjeuner sur l'herbe. In all, digging up SO-IL's tomorrow today provides us with an optimistic forecast of what might yet appear on the horizon anew, and invites us to consider the duration of a moment, the half-life of ideas and the still alluring nature of an incomplete project with unknowable limits.

- Sep 2009, Mohamed Sharif, Director of LA Forum

"I think there is a form rare and important becoming visible through SO-IL's work, it is the Contemporary emerging before us."

- Sep 2009, Michael Maltzan

"SO-IL appears to work in an idiom inherited partly from the Swiss, the Dutch and the Japanese, but the work can rightly be situated among the principle concerns of none of these. For one discerns in their organizations of particles and planes a distinct interest in genesis and pregnancy, the feeling of having successfully smuggled the moment of brinkmanship and eruption in beneath our noses amid the eeriest of calms. They deliver the impression that they are releasing the rope when in fact, with steadiness and wit, they are actually drawing it ever tighter, betraying a subtlety rarely matched in their generation."

- Sep 2009, Sanford Kwinter

PROJECTS IN THE SHOW



Wedding Chapel

This is the design for a wedding chapel as part of the China International Practical Exhibition of Architecture, (CIPEA) in Nanjing.

The project is located northwest of the old capital, in the lush area of the Foshou Lake district. Situated in a beautiful mountainous landscape, we propose a singular gesture to create an intimate environment. Through splitting the topographic landscape a space is generated within the land. Surrounded by trees, light filters in from the sides. From the top of the roof, one can see the sunset behind the mountain range and the Yangtze River in a distance.



Open Fort

Open Fort is a strong but pliable structure. Its sheer scale and brawny meandering shape allows for flexibility and generosity on other levels such as the way it operates and the typologies it houses. Rather than a building, it is an expressive framework that can be occupied depending on needs and occasions, a structure that can adapt over time without losing its presence and character.

It is a base where people can develop their dreams, can try and fail and try again. It has lavish areas on the higher floors, with thrilling views over the river and city center, and more intimate ground related places where people can explore, discover and produce. The fort finds its strength through the occupation and participation of the life it takes in. The meandering form provides moments of protection, sensation, seclusion, absorption, and diffusion along the dynamic river front.

The building can be financed over time by identifying and writing off separate building components over an extended time. The primary structure has a lifespan of a hundred year, whereas party walls and secondary infill will be on different cycles. This allows the building to gain 'historical capital' over time and become an integral part of a new part of the city.



Chermayeff House

In this project, a weekend house sited on the high grounds of a forest in New York's Hudson Valley, we challenge the conventional 'man-looking-over-nature' trope. By dissolving the mass of the building into a loose gathering of solids and voids the house equally opens in all directions and welcomes nature in.

The house realizes two distinct conditions: "living small" - by minimizing the construction footprint, and "living in the forest" - by creating a permeable edge between man-made and nature.



Museum

These are study models of a 5000 m² 'pavilion' to house an art collection and spaces for changing exhibitions, an auditorium, restaurant and shop, as well as support and storage spaces. The site is located on the most fundamental boundary within the Dutch landscape, where the natural, forested sand-grounds of the dunes meet the cultivated landscape of the polder. The collection has at its core work by Dutch minimalists and conceptualist as Jan van Schoonhoven and Philip Akkerman and currently comprises of a vast array of work ranging from large sculptures to small painting and artists books.

Conceived as a spatial composition of alternating dimensions, relations and light levels, held gently together in an ephemeral skin, the design tries to offer a place of order in the natural, yet at the same time proposing a dynamic wandering path through the rich and diverse collection.

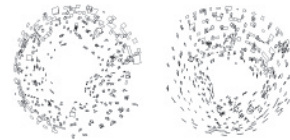


Prato Nursery

This is a proposal for a nursery school for initially three and eventually six groups of 30 children.

The design proposes an open and multi-sensorial but scalable world of enhanced environments in which children can explore, discover and play, but also feel safe, identify and reflect. The incremental use of scale (class, group of classes, building, world) is considered both spatially and experientially. Each space is part of, and inextricably linked to a larger whole. As the child's mind develops, fluid spaces enhance the urge for exploration and the discovery of relations.

The abstraction of the geometry stimulates imagination. Large, bright, open spaces and darker, more intimate places are generated through (movable) walls, curtains and furniture. Apart from connecting the interior, the exterior covered area is also a place to play, explore and investigate. In this space one finds oneself surrounded by a plethora of shadows, colors and plants. Instead of merely deploying sustainable strategies as a technical exercise, nature is an integral and crucial part of the project's proposition. The design fuses use and environment, making it a central part of the educational program. The creation of a micro-climate through a combination of constructed and organic materials emphasizes at an early age ones inter-relationship with a complex system, in which balanced cycles generate life.



Zenith Nadir

As part of 'Contemplating the Void', a show celebrating the 50th anniversary of Frank Lloyd Wright's New York Guggenheim, SO - IL was asked to propose ideas for an intervention in the rotunda of the building.

Rather than an addition, SO - IL tries to reveal the theosophical ideas Wright had when considering his design. Seeing the rotunda as a space between heaven and earth, this print shows a view from the rotunda looking straight up towards one's zenith, and straight down towards one's nadir. The structure is erased to show people and art floating between these two poles. From a distance the print reads as two neighboring galaxies or as a stereographic projection of the earth.



Sunnyside Up!

Garden City Roofs, a startup company catering to a growing need for expertise and access to green roof systems, is converting the roof of a large industrial building in Sunnyside, Queens, into a showroom and knowledge-center for green roof systems.

SO - IL has designed an allotment system for the various roof systems and a small sales and learning pavilion. By organizing the natural in rigorous geometric forms we try to expose man's current deployment of nature in its reaction to the current environmental crises. We question if this condition can be considered merely as an engineering problem, in which nature is drawn as part of the equation. The green-roof embodies the ultimate dislocation of the natural, covering our failing artifices.

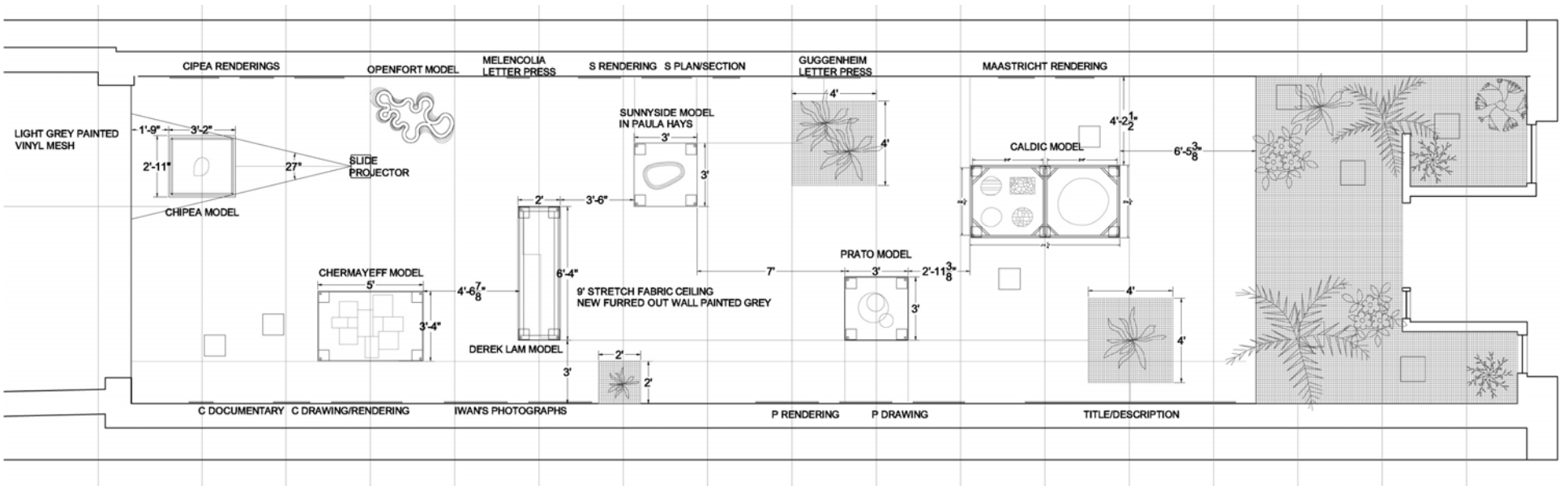


Atelier Derek Lam

Rising fashion designer Derek Lam has opened his first boutique store in conjunction with a new headquarter in early 2009. SO - IL has designed the atelier, showrooms and administrative offices of the Derek Lam HQ, located in a five story land-marked loft building in downtown SoHo, New York.

The initially contradicting desire for both an open office and substantial privacy is achieved by devising a series of adjoining spaces which are gently separated by a 2" thin wall. People and places are connected through large openings in these slim partitions, creating fluid relationships between realms of variable intensities. In this spatial layering and exposing of concurrent activities all participants in the creative process can be seen as equal.

We try to expose the intrinsic value of the historic by stripping the building down to its bare essentials and synchronizing these with this one simple element - the wall - to generate something new.



CATEGORY LIST OF MODELS / DRAWINGS

1. Wedding Chapel



- Exterior view, photomontage, 30"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Exterior view, photomontage, 21"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Interior view, photomontage, 30"x18", inkjet on vinyl



- Model, 1:100 scale, mdf, CNC-Milled, 36"x36"
- Shadow projection, 35mm film slides

2. Sunnyside Up!



- Aerial view, photomontage, 18"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Exterior view, photomontage, 26"x28", inkjet on vinyl
- Section, 18"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Roofplan, 19"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Engraving (13"x15", Albrecht Dürer, 1514, reproduction)



- Model, 1' = 1/4" scale, resin in terrarium by Paula Hayes

3. Chermayeff House



- Aerial view, photomontage, 20"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Exterior view, photomontage, 26"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Plan, 30"x18", inkjet on vinyl



- Film, "A Conversation with Ivan Chermayeff"
by Corinne van der Borch (Runtime: 10 min.)



- Model, 1' = 1/2" scale, foam core, 40" x 60"

4. Open Fort



- Projection / Model, 1:300 scale, white styrofoam,
animation by Sean Capote, 42" x 24"

5. Prato Nursery



- Exterior view, photomontage, 38"x18", inkjet on vinyl
- Axonometric, 35"x28", inkjet on vinyl
- Interior view, photomontage, 35"x18", inkjet on vinyl



- Model, 1:100 scale, aluminum, acrylic, 30"x36"

6. Atelier Derek Lam



- Photography(4), 24"x24", 18"x24", 36"x24", 36"x24", C-print, by Iwan Baan



- Model, 3rd floor, 1'=3/8" scale, foam core, 18" x 60"

7. Zenith Nadir



- Letter press print, 28"x14", series of 9, 2009

8. Museum



- Study Model, 1:100 scale, foam core, paper
- Study Model, 1:200 scale, pink styrofoam, CNC-Milled
- Study Models (3), 1:300 scale, wood, CNC-Milled

9. General Study Models



- Museum Study Model (6)



- Chermayeff Study Model (2)



- Sunnyside (1)