

Desert House

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The formal argument of the Desert House project begins with a cube conceptualized as a flat, unfolded box, composed of six, two-dimensional surfaces. Each surface is structured with a grid, and understood as a graphic problem. Taking a cue from Swiss Modernist graphic design manuals, the surfaces of the box are cast as improvisatory games where particulate elements are distributed within the bounds of a sixteen or nine-square grid. Four drawings, nine elevation studies, two furniture elements and a short pamphlet construct a visual narrative around the design at different scales and levels of resolution.

The aesthetic program of the house is situated within a historical, formalist discourse exploring the relationship between painting or graphic problems, architectural surfaces, and tectonics. The narrative begins with the collapse of hard-edged, geometric painting and Modernist architecture through the De Stijl discovery of the “screen” as a primary or base compositional element in the conception of three-dimensional form. The Postwar neo-avant garde took this problem as the foundation of their gestaltist investigations of complex elevation logics and striated spaces in plan. The ambition of the formal language embedded in the Desert House is to offer an elaboration or extension of these theories catered to the speed, surface-centric material sensibilities and graphic, hyper-flatness that characterize a more contemporary elevation sensibility.

The site is an experiment with a loose, but finite grammar of objects, architectural elements, and graphic fragments distributed in a (primarily) plan-based matrix. Ambiguous in scale and program, different iterations recall game-board layouts, athletic fields, and vacant stage sets. The site also embraces the semantically charged obstacle course-gardens or “complexes” developed by Post-Minimal sculptors like Alice Aycock, Nancy Holt, Mary Miss and Robert Morris as a formal type. Like the complexes of that era, the compositions that make up Graphic Fields are open-ended aggregations of overlapping visual systems; movements between structure and informality suggests growth and change.

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PARALLEL PROJECTION RENDERING IN CUSTOM LIGHTBOX



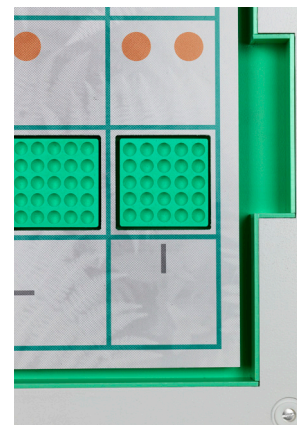
ELEVATION AND PARALLEL PROJECTION RENDERINGS



NINE SQUARE ELEVATION / PANEL STUDIES



PANEL DETAILS



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