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Project Name: sway – ultra-lightweight mobile shelter

Authors:
Matanya Sack, shelter_expanse, LandBasics Technion
Uri Reicher, shelter_expanse,
Liat Muller, matterarc,   Eyal Zur, nomadity
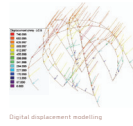
Country: Israel, Australia

The studio workshop rooftop, Florentine, Tel Aviv - Jaffa, Israel
The design was developed by the studio through 11 prototypes in a period of over a year.
Photo: Dan Perez

1. Walking out into the plain

We wish to address issues of transience and temporality. In a time when immigrants, businessmen or tourists continuously move across a global expanse, we would like to investigate the possibility for a shelter, an interior. It is a temporary structure which should not be built to last.
It arrives without foundations, a structure that takes from the site nothing but stories, and leaves behind only memories.
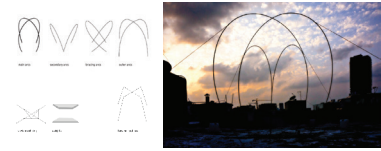

Photo: Dan Perez

Digital displacement modelling

Structural test of horizontal and twisting loads. The tester holds a digital spring scale which provides an accurate reading of loads. Each test lasted about an hour, giving both module and tester their daily exercise.

2. Raising a shelter

It asks for the research and development towards the lightest of possible structures, brought to site in several backpacks.
It was developed in our workshop, over a period of a year, via a series of prototypes and loading tests, accompanied by parametric modelling and digital structural analysis.
The materials used seem simple, they are, however, based on advanced technologies. It is not about a vernacular, but about simplicity of assembly.
Like the fable of the Reed and the Oak, the structure's resilience lies in its ability to sway.
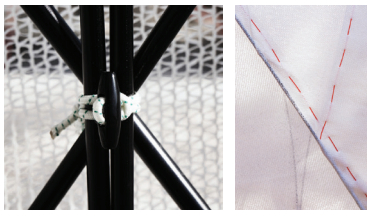

The reed and the oak

Argo's Shadow __

Aluminium poles (7075 T6) are assembled into two horseshoe-shaped arcs, crossed and doubled for load bearing, and braced with internal and external supports. A module is defined, each weighing 7 kg.
The way in which the building and it's inhabitants engage with the land is imperative. The ground holds everything, although we are just slightly touching it. The structure is held in place with weights, filled with material from the site. They are also used for seating and rest, engaging the visitors with the ground as well. In case of a storm, the sand is watered to increase its density and the overall weight. The shelter is formulated between weight and weightlessness.
Between technologies of exploration and technologies of agriculture. Between moving and staying.

The Ship of Theseus __

Above and below, locally sourced agricultural light diffusion nets, with filtration between 30-50%, are layered. The space changes throughout the shifting daylight and daily events, throughout the changing climates of the seasons, throughout its lifespan. It engages constantly with its visitors. Like the Ship of Theseus, it pledges for gradual recycling, reassembly and re-emergence.

Better basics __ marks __

Button-knots fasten the arcs at their intersections, as flexible, universal joints.
Webbing straps hold the ends of the arcs in tension on the ground.
Like a Semperian enclosure, The nets are hand sewn to the structure with the string of an agricultural cutting rotor.
They are the woven marks, the ornaments, of the craftwomen and men.

3. Gathering __

When positioned and com-positioned on site, the generic module becomes contextual. The context as a three-dimensional physicality to integrate into. The context as a situation. It creates a place for a multitude of events - hosting, gathering, solitude and contemplation. It call for movement, transit. But into a suite of interior and exterior environments in the space of the site. The composition of modules offers new environments on site - multiple situations, episodes, atmospheres to be explored, inside or outside. It is a safe place for rest. It forms a vestibule, an series of rooms, a court within a court, an exit.

The pavilion in the garden of the Sherman Contemporary Arts Foundation

Events in the garden of the Sherman Contemporary Arts Foundation

4. Walking out into the plain __ hosting __

The structure is as an episode, a station, in a visitor's day. It is not only about the experience of arrival and staying, but also about the experience of an ongoing travel to be continued. Architecture, therefore, could also be about leaving.

All the worlds. Just one world
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