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Project Name: Redrawing the Lines: An Exercise of Boundaries and Urban Interspecies Belonging
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ABSTRACT:

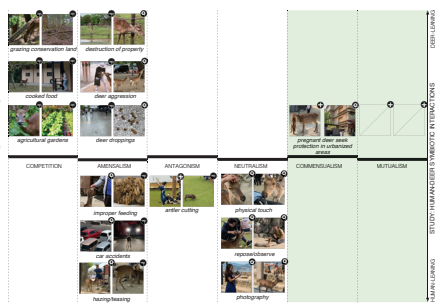
Swarms of semi-wild, semi-tame Sika deer roam freely in both the primal forested mountains and urbanized coastal town of Miyajima, Japan. Rising deer populations, and mass tourism has blurred the boundaries between human and deer territories, resulting in landscapes of intense interspecies frictions leading to declined deer health, human injuries, and degraded landscapes. This is not an isolated incident - across the globe, rapid development has led to the clash of urban bestialities and human city dwellers. Urgently, we must invent new ways of knowing and interacting with these non-human animals with whom we share a common habitat. This thesis asks: rather than pets or pests - could we recognize the deer as neighbours and co-inhabitants? How might we achieve this new perception of - and relationship to - the deer, through architectural and landscape interventions? A series of site functions and typologies are explored - including the port, the crossing, the guesthouse, and the campsite - testing methods of separation, stratification, coupling, and integration, in order to shift the human-deer balance of each site in sync with the seasonal flux of territorial needs. The explorations offer varied strategies for imagining alternate ways of interspecies living post-anthropocene.

Keywords: posthuman urbanism, interspecies territories, zoopolis, urban wildlife, symbiosis, thresholds, boundaries, interfaces, post-anthropocene architecture.

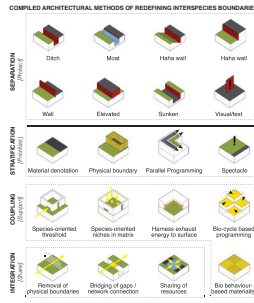
EXISTING INTERSPECIES CONFLICTS:



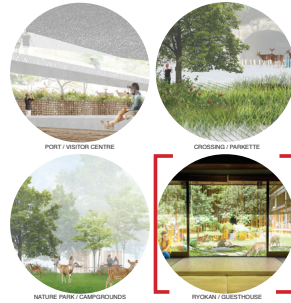
INTERSPECIES RELATIONSHIPS/OPPORTUNITIES:



METHODOLOGY:



PROTOTYPE SITES:



GUESTHOUSE REIMAGINED:



The traditional Japanese guesthouse (Ryokan), a cross between a Bed and Breakfast and a homestay, is a common lodging typology that offers an intimate, down-to-earth experience for travelers. Architecturally, ryokans typically feature landscaped courtyards, faced by large verandas (engawa) enclosed by sliding screen doors (fusuma). During my stay at Guesthouse Mikuuya in Miyajima, I noticed that Sika deer would frequently forage outside of the guest entrance, waiting for guests to enter or exit so that they can follow. Once inside, the deer like to graze in the gardens, which currently sit unoccupied. There is great opportunity to adapt the traditional guesthouse garden into a space that facilitates human-deer engagement and understanding.

The proposal modifies the landscape of the ryokans specifically with Sika deer behaviour and life cycle in mind. The ryokan becomes an auxiliary space that offers support and protection to the deer during times of crisis and vulnerability, such as rutting and birthing seasons. The proposal continues to encourage deer visitation of ryokans, but limits deer occupancy through natural means such as scent-carrying waterways from the back gardens to the entrance gates. Human guests are offered close views and sounds of intimate deer behaviours and rituals during the day and night, bolstering understanding and respect for the spiritually-significant local Sika deer.



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