Reflection

Explore Lab 2021-2022
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Guidance
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In the early stages of the research phase, the project was conceived between the three of us firstly as a method to explore the contemporary domestic condition through sensing technologies that inhabit our homes. At this stage, we each had a mutual fascination for these 'sensors', not only because they were a gateway to introducing a media-studies approach to the discipline of architecture, but also because in these sensors, we could see tools and instruments, which were capable of documenting a non-human 'vision' of space through their collection of data.

Elaboration on Reserach Method, Reflection on Scientific Relevance

However, instrumentalising these sensors, and revealing such visions, was noticeably more challenging than we had initially thought, mainly because the data that we required wasn't as openly available as we had hoped. As a solution, we took advantage of the individual skillset and specific fascination that each of us brought to the project, and approached each sensor from a set of three different lenses, each utilising a different methodology ranging from a material analysis of each sensor, to a global tracking of resource and data flows linked to the sensor, thus treating a variety of scales. What had resulted from the collective research body, was a very intricate set of relationships to which each sensor was linked to, that started to resemble a network, both material and virtual. It was the mapping out of such a network that allowed us to acknowledge the 'house' not as a singular entity, but rather, as a consequence and a condition of a series of global links and infrastructural relationships.

Relationship Between Research and Design, Design Methodology And Relationship to Master Program Architecture

Entering the design phase, our collective approach contrasted starkly with the traditional academic design process, which would often start from an already known site of intervention, from which the gesture and form of the proposal would later be defined. As we had learned from our previous collaboration in the Datapolis studio at M.Sc2, dealing with a systematic architecture requires a reformulating of the entire design strategy. After compiling our research body, we started treating the work as a 'manual' of sorts: a cartography which would allow us to navigate the complexities of the system we had researched, helping us transition into the design phase. Whereas in the research phase, we unwrapped the 'home' and made all of its dependencies visible, in the design phase we redesigned a specific set of those dependencies and 'rewrapped' them. What resulted, was not only a new 'domestic' that is notably more affected and influenced by the infrastructural network that we have made visible, but also a redesigning of this network itself. Designing thus meant contextualising the house not only within its apparent location but first and foremost within its network, thus creating context by designing material and immaterial dependencies.

Relationship to Wider Social, Professional and Scientific Framework

The project in this sense can be considered as a speculative commentary on what a system would look like if we design not only the nodes, but also the material (and immaterial) flows in between them. It does this by taking a technology-oriented point of view, acknowledging that in today's context, labour, extraction and living have become so 'datafied', that technology's influence on them should not be ignored and pushed aside, but rather, should be considered essential.

Despite this, the resulting narrative addresses the human 'body' nonetheless, using the human worker as the navigator for the final designs. By speculating on the human body's role, specifically in the context of contemporary and emerging forms of labour, the project attempts to elaborate on notions of remote working (specifically in the mining industry) and how it affects the building.

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Ethical Issues and Dilemmas

While in conversation with our tutors, this focus also allowed us to further explore the architecture's role in emerging ethical dilemmas relating to labour, such as automation and the increasing replacement of the human workforce and the resulting influence of architecture. The design responds to these challenges by designing not only a house for remote miners but maybe more importantly multiple automated landscapes that do not use the human body as the benchmark for architectural design but still create conditions for human and non-human inhabitation - establishing dependencies in the form of resources and labour.
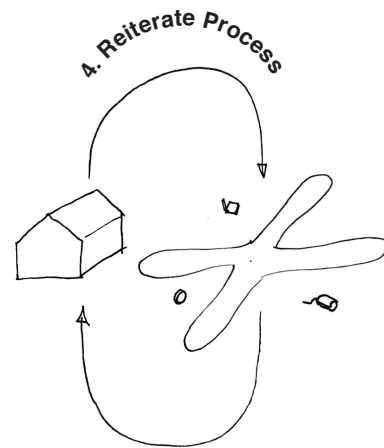
Aims Towards P5

Throughout the entire project, the main overarching challenge for each of the three of us was to find a simple and coherent way of telling such a complex narrative. As suggested by our tutors, we have been looking towards the medium of video and animation as an option that is suitable to convey our thinking in different time phases. In the period between P4 and P5, we aim to refine our story in a clear and comprehensive audiovisual story, which would highlight the intricacies of our designed system and package the year-long accumulation of our research.

Process Diagramm
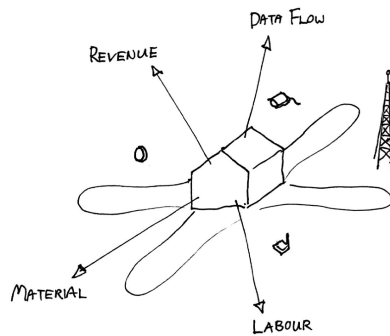
1. Research / Unwrapping   2. Design House   3. Design Context