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UMI
Urban Frame;
after endless [inner] deja vu
by
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ABSTRACT

The continuous interior of endless Junkspace, is, at its best, the compulsive repetition of itself. This architectural condition, which exists worldwide, is characteristic of airports, casinos, malls, urban tunnel/skyway systems and transit-linked nodal developments.

Constantly expanding due to the elevator, escalator and A.C. Unit, this endless internal condition is completely self-sufficient, operating without formal, programmatic or site constraints. The inside is the extreme of “Bigness”; a seamless, generic, interiority where the relationship between inside and outside no longer exist.

By pairing the current endless interior with post-bigness urban strategies, a new urban scenario emerges that problematizes the genericity of the seamless interior while simultaneously disrupting the undifferentiated urban relationship of the block or mega-block to its non-context.

The project uses the scale of the endless building as infrastructure to explore the possibility of an After-Bigness, After-Generic moment.
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Thesis Statement

The continuous interior of endless Junkspace, is, at its best, the compulsive repetition of itself. This architectural condition, which exists worldwide, is characteristic of airports, casinos, malls, urban tunnel/skyway systems and transit linked nodal developments. Mark Pimlott, writing in last winter’s issue of the Harvard Design Magazine title Inside, remarked that the continuous (or endless) interior has become, perhaps the pre-eminent architectural typology.

Constantly expanding due to the elevator, escalator and A.C. Unit, this endless internal condition is completely self-sufficient, operating without formal, programmatic or site constraints. The inside is the extreme of “Bigness”, a seamless, generic, immensity where the relationship between inside and outside no longer exist. While previous discourses and projects engage this condition by celebrating a disregard for context [such as Archizoom, Superstudio, Yoni Friedman’s Urbanisme Spatiale or Corb’s Plan Vision] this project reformulates the relationship between inside and its surrounding context without reverting back to dichotomies of either romantic contextualism [Colin Rowe] or ironic intensification [Rem Koolhaas]. Also, while “urbanization” [as Aureli defines it and opposes] argues for infinite expanse and the destruction of boundary - this project proposes a limit.

By pairing the current endless innerter with post-bigness urban strategies, a new urban scenario emerges that problematizes the genericity of the seamless interior while simultaneously disrupting the undifferentiated urban relationship of the block or mega-block to its non-context.

The project uses the scale of the endless building as infrastructure to explore the possibility of an After-Bigness, After- Generic moment.
History of the endless interior growth

This condition spawned over 150 years ago with the Parisian arcade, glass enclosed exterior shopping streets. As merchants realized they would erect awnings over their shop entrances during calamite weather, they soon decided to enclose the entire street and since then, the endless interior has expanded and oscillated between a network and a nodal condition.

Department stores, in the 20s, expanded interiority by connecting mini-arcades to a central atrium and by the 1940s and 50s suburban malls took the department store, multiplied it in a field, connected them with arcades of boutique shopping.
By the 1960s, tall, mixed-use urban buildings would create big public occupy-able atriums on the ground floor to double as lobbies and in the late 70s, cities such as Houston, Toronto and Minneapolis networked these atriums together with pedestrian skies ways and tunnels to create internal micro-cities within cities.

In the past twenty years, bigger nodes have emerged in the form of airports, casinos, malls and tower/podium buildings functioning as interior mini-cities. Today, these multi-
In plan, I have mapped benchmark moments within this history. The arcades in Paris; the Marshall Fields department store in Chicago; Victor Gruen’s Southdale mall; Portman’s Peachtree hotel in Atlanta.

The scale of growth shifts with the Toronto PATH system, which is currently the largest tunnel system in the world with 33 km of connected pathways; and the City Center Casino in Las Vegas with over 15 million sq ft of dense interior space.

Today, the scale of bigness has grown exponentially with the connected tower podium buildings in Hong Kong, networked together by the MTR.
Hong Kong as Extreme Case of the Endless Interior

These nodal developments along the airport line alone interiorize over 33 million square feet and provide every amenity for living, from offices and housing to cinemas, kindergartens, and wine stores to doctor’s offices. This architecture has reached the epitome of junkspace and the generic, an extreme Bigness that is completely internal, and operates by utilizes a tabula rasa.
Examples of internal spaces in Hong Kong

The next few slides show a series of images taken while researching the spatial conditions of these tower/podium buildings. I have coupled my spatial analysis, broken down into six categories: seamless, network, self-similar, edge, vertical to horizontal and nodal with passages from Junkspace to give an overall understanding of this building type.
Today, the endless interior exists everywhere and it is Bigness. Bigness is no longer apart of any urban tissue. It exists, at most, it coexists. Its subtext is "fuck context." This thesis is apart of urban tissue. It coexists. Its subtext is "transform context."

Shift bigness will transform.

Today, the endless interior exists everywhere and Bigness, as Koolhaas defines it in his text, is no longer part of any urban tissue. It exists, at most, it coexists. Its subtext is "fuck context."

This thesis argues for a post-bigness moment such that the Inside is part of all urban tissue. It coexists. Its subtext is "transform context."

I am using this building scale as infrastructure to explore the possibility of an After-Bigness, After-Generic moment.
This project will transform context by taking the megaform of an urban frame that creates a void [rather than solid] within the site and engulf a section of 'the endless field.' The Frame generates a boundary, creating an inside and an outside and establishes new relationships between those realms as well as within the horizontal and the vertical domains. Formal operations on this building as edge, will promoting difference within the frame, along it and in proximal areas outside of it.

The Frame as edge is meant to create a polarized context, a charged area, on both sides of the edge - not just the inside - such that the context develops, re-configures and transforms.
Site

I have chosen a site for this frame in Kolwoon where three MTR metro lines (the airport line being one of them), a major highway and a railroad exist. Here are the typical nodal developments that are built along this line, this one just opened last year.

This project is located within the site such that it intersects with these existing infrastructures and two major highways. Unlike the tower podium buildings, this frame intersects these infrastructures at numerous points along it, rather than a central point, which makes the frame roughly one mile in length along each side. It is 100 feet wide, typical of the average tower sitting atop a podium and comparatively short at 600 feet tall, where most buildings in the area are 750 feet, and the height remains constant from its lowest ground level point, such that, due to the sites topography, the northwest corner, the Frame disappears completely, further transforming it.

Operations on the edge – solid and void manipulations – transform the site further, such as creating a barrier to allow different activities to occur on either side or voids to allow the harbor to extend inside. Also, manipulations along this edge permit a green belt to flow and activate areas on both sides of the frame. I see some bigger program badges, such as a school to create sports fields and other activities within the context.
Internal Working of the Building

This frame has a number of components to make all this possible. Here I have taken a partial section of the site, the southeast corner where three metro lines run under the site and two highways above it.

Your path via the vertical metro takes you from one of these current infrastructures [when it intersects the frame] vertically through the frame.

One destination from the elevators is at either continuous void datum line – outdoor public space – which connects all the cuts in the frame.

Another destination is a horizontal interior path connecting major internal programs. Between these two highly public spaces are general programs, such as housing, offices, grocery stores.

And along these solid extrusions and void spaces are massive escalators that provide access to distal areas around the frame.

This frame is meant to take people from these existing infrastructures, and through its form and organization, redistribute them throughout the context, reconfiguring and transforming it.
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