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P. E. T. S
PERSONAL. EMPATHIC. TOPOLOGICAL. SERIES.
IAN MULICH + JOSÉ SÁNCHEZ
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Range</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>CONTENTION STATEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>WORKSHOP 1: IMAGE ARRAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-13</td>
<td>WORKSHOP 2: ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-19</td>
<td>MIDREVIEW: STUDY OF CONSUMER QUALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-31</td>
<td>PRODUCTION PROCESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>FINAL REVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-39</td>
<td>CATALOG OF P.E.T.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-46</td>
<td>ADVERTISEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THESIS STATEMENT:
In our present market economy, where even architecture has become commodified, there is a growing need for new models of responsive design. In search of architectural forms that can participate productively within contemporary systems of exchange, bodies, or serially-derived topological characters, present themselves as appropriate objects for architectural engagement through their companionable subject-object relations. By appropriating market logics of production-consumption to develop these bodily forms, a design model can be arrived at that both compliments and complicates the neoliberal framework of engagement.

Notoriously characterized as the post-critical turn, architecture has become subsumed into the neoliberal paradigm of the global commerce. Defined partly by a valorization of the market and the emergence of the entrepreneurial self, neoliberalism has shifted the disciplinary discourse of architecture towards the embrace of organizational efficiency, research and development, and resource optimization. As such, design models that are critically responsive to this managerialist turn towards the market and its effects on engagement should be sought after and explored.

Positioning architectural design within the market requires a vessel that can maneuver both sides of the production-consumption binary. Through formal traits that provide them with vitality and subjectivity, bodily objects serve as architectural forms that are liberated from obfuscated entry and instead generate companionable subject-object relations. By combining objecthood with these qualities of subjecthood, bodies present themselves through empathy, communicating on an individual level with those that engage with them and thus building architecture’s ability to capture new audiences.

To further interrogate the logics of late-capitalism, the development of these bodies requires the appropriation of manufacturing and marketing logics that are derivative of the market. Through seriality, or the iterative and relational logic of mass customization, bodies can begin to express both an alignment to and uniqueness within a morphological diagram. In encompassing the resulting system of distinctions into a brand, a nexus of system of individual affect is created that allows for dialogic and personalized relationships to architectural form. In embracing the ethos of the neoliberalism, a model for design can be formulated through and within market logics that is both communicative and critical of contemporary neoliberal engagement.

IMAGE CAPTION:
Form For Everyone.
P.E.T.S
PERSONAL.
EMPATHIC.
TOPOLOGICAL.
SERIES.

FORM FOR EVERYONE.

#260504
IN XXS

PRODUCT LINE 01
WORKSHOP 1: IMAGE ARRAY

Embracing consumerism as a means of design production, we aspire to do what the rock does best: proliferate itself across markets, media, and matter. Maintaining our prior analog of the rock, we have expanded our image selections in order to represent the logics of contemporary production-consumption by way of one ordinary object. The object expresses no chronology in regards to a narrative or genesis (mode of production). Inherent to commodity culture, the object possesses the ability to saturate across infinite markets and media. Rock can transform in qualities and character from each repetition and representation of itself, presenting an individuality in each, while sitting within a non-hierarchical sequence. This metamorphosis of rock into new commodities also contributes to itself as an ever-expanding object.
This image array intends to capture the hierarchical flattening that is characteristic of global commodity culture. In the array, fine art and cheap trinkets exist on the same datum, neither is more valuable over the other and instead present an encapsulating logic. Complex expressivity and rapid consumption become hybridized and elaborate on a mode of production that treats distinction on lateral and interchangeable relations. In the case of rock, a flat hierarchy allows the object to move across boundaries of high and low, 3D and 2D, art and commerce, with limitless ease.
WORKSHOP 2: ANALYSIS DRAWING

As objects of contemporary capitalist culture, commodities are injected into market networks through their abilities to hold atmospheric qualities that permit their systems of exchange. Serial objects thus present an idealized form of these consumable artifacts through their strategies of hierarchical flattening, maximal transformation, and flexible production. The ability for serial objects to proliferate endlessly with unique customizations enables them to achieve massive market success and relentless consumption, fitting right in line with commodity logics. By mining characters that are successful in encapsulating their consumer aesthetics, we hope to uncover what drives their successful claim within market ecologies and thus enables their proliferation.
Within logics of seriality exists the distinction between two series types: the discrete and continuous series. Discrete series prove minimally productive as they are guided by a single concept with difference taking place only externally. An appropriate example of this discrete series type would be Andrew Warhol’s soup cans series where one model is varying only in color or size. Continuous series thus offers more projective approach to seriality as they are guided by the repetition of an internal difference that manifests through metamorphosis and translation. Indicative of emerging paradigms related to post-industrial globalization, the continuous series encapsulates Post-Fordist production methods that avoid origin, rely on horizontality, and enable individuality.
Perhaps most appropriate tool for continuous/contemporary seriality is the character-brand, a quintessential commodity manifested through iconic shape, frictionless translation, and empathetic relationships. Characters provide no originary form and instead exist as a proliferation and morphing series that is united by its defining style. As a consumable, characters cater to modes of product-consumption that are themselves serial; a character is consumed by way of many object forms, exchangeable pieces in an expanding series that constitute it as brand. Character design thus provides a valuable strategy to achieve new seriality and enact the potentials of rabid consumerism.
These character commodities enable their consumption through their inherent atmospheric aesthetics. The character holds atmospheric aesthetics as defined by its brand-style that inject themselves into the systems of production-consumption, situating themselves within ecologies of consumer qualities. These characters define themselves through ever-expanding boundaries within these ecologies yet maintain a necessary cohesion through guiding traits. Through new seriality, the object can propagate into new qualities with each iterative form that is still united by the commonality of its brand.
Trying to uncover the latent aesthetic strategies that characters hold, we chose to analyze four iconic characters that are suggestive of dominant aesthetic qualities: cute/happy, cool/sleek, comedic/wacky, scary/upsetting. Each character holds their atmospheric aesthetics through crafted strategies of color, forms, material and graphics. Their resulting matrices help indicate what are the elements that define their style which enable cohesive maximal difference. For example, with pikachu, the quality of cuteness and happiness derives from its definitive features of bright coloring, graphic cosmetics, round and bunched forms, and a variety of facial gestures expressing happiness. By mining characters that are successful in encapsulating their consumer aesthetics, we hope to uncover what drives their successful claim within market ecologies and thus enables their proliferation. In doing so, languages of design can begin to be developed that can be exploited within the logics of transformation inherent to new seriality.
QUALITY: SCARY | UPSETTING
Character: Ghost Face

QUALITY: COMEDIC | WACKY
Character: Goofy

CHARACTER ANALYSIS
MIDREVIEW

In order to capture various consumer aesthetics, we devised a character that could translate through various these qualities. The character was informed by a guiding set of formal elements and cosmetic strategies that present it as a cohesive series guided by a brand style. With each iteration incorporating an abstracted tear drop form, five attached limbs, and gradiating tones, the character maintains an overarching sensibility while adapting into distinct market territories. These various aesthetics were arrived at through a projective analysis of consumer products to mine their design strategies.
Cute: chubby and soft
Grotesque: motile and extravagant
Sad: slumped and saggy
Aggressive: protruding and sharpened
Sleek: aerodynamic and apaxed
Scary: gaunt and stretched
Glamorous: plump and sinewy
Ugly: deflated and rumpled
Goofy: floppy and lopsided
SAD

AGGRESSIVE
Diagramming a design model that critically works through and within the market structure arrives at a mapping of production-consumption logics that influence one another. By designing forms that embody architectural character through, an activation occurs with the individual consumer through empathic relations. Each of these bodies are didactic of the binary model of production and consumption, reconfiguring through the iterative procedure of seriality and stretching the thresholds of a defining brand. The resulting, overarching design model is one that responds to market logics through the consumption of iterative morphologies, manifesting a system of exchange that is mediated by an encompassing brand.

In defining a model of design that satisfies this diagram, we are introducing our own brand of bodies. PETS, short for personal emphatic topological series, is a line of architectural objects that invites everyone to engage and communicate with these forms. As pets, these forms act as neither as objects nor as subjects, but rather as elusive figures have the potential to induce empathic subject-object relations between consumer and product. We posit that by developing our line of pets through the appropriation of the production-consumption binary, a model of design can be formulated that is critical of architecture’s convergence with market structures and contemporary modes of neoliberal engagement.

As with typical commodity production, these pets are iterated serially in order to produce an encompassing style defined by marginal differences in figure, posture, cosmetics, and scale. This style is adapted and mediated into a system of branding that further invites consumers to engage with PETS, encouraging them to pick favorites, collect sets, and play with friends.
#260504
IN XXS

COLLECT THEM ALL.
HANDLE WITH CARE.

#390105
IN XS
P.E.T.S PERSONAL EMPATHICAL TOPOLOGICAL SERIES

PRODUCT LINE 01

PERSONAL P.E.T.S

FUN FOR EVERYONE.

#240005 IN M
FORM FOR YOUR TASTE.
#392317
IN XXL

WITH PETS, IT’S ALWAYS A PARTY.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


ARTICLES/CHAPTERS


ARC 505/508/998 THESIS PREP/THESIS DOCUMENT

Advisor Approval for Submission Form

This completed form is required for the submission of final Thesis Prep and Thesis Documents. For every project (individual or team), the thesis student(s) must obtain the Advisor’s signature on, and submit to Carol Pettinelli, a hard copy of this completed form prior to the deadline for submission of the Document.

As stated in the syllabi (please note that deadline below is later that stated in the syllabus):

“A final version of the Thesis Prep Document has been approved by the Advisor must be uploaded to the School archive no later than December 18 in order for the student’s earned grade (which is determined by the Advisory Group after the final Thesis Prep Review) to be posted with the registrar. A grade of “F” will be posted if no Thesis Prep Document is uploaded to the archive by the deadline.”

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Student(s)’ Name(s) ian mulich and jose sanchez

Advisor’s Name greg corso

I have reviewed the final version of the Thesis Prep Document or Thesis Document (PDF) to be submitted by the above named student(s) and approve it as meeting the requirements for thorough documentation of the components, ambitions, critical development and outcome of the project presented at the final review.

Advisor’s Signature _____________________________ Date 12-17-18