Bridge: Fantasy of the demilitarized zone

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BRIDGE
FANTASY OF THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE

Yifei Li, Lan Li
THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE

FANTASY OF THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE

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Architecture can do many things and solve many problems of the local condition. For example, skyscrapers meet high demands of housing and offices; sustainable green buildings are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. When it comes to bigger topics like dealing with social and cultural conflicts which influenced by national and political decisions, the usual architecture types may not resolve or help as much as expected. So, for dealing with these topics, we find that architecture has limitations.

However, when we look through other fields like art, we can find an opportunities to address them. For example, Ben Shahn was American artist, He is best known for his works of social realism. His works are often critical of American life, but by exposing social problems. One of his works, “The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti” (1967, mosaics) is established on the wall of H.B Crouse Hall in Syracuse University. His works were generated based on the real story that Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were framed by murdering in Massachusetts and executed in 1927. But even there was no enough evidences and government still insisted to arrest them because they were anarchist and Italian immigrants and placed them on the federal government’s watch list of dangerous subversives. This sensational case captured the attention of people around the world, many of them protested against the convictions. The author translated the whole processes of arrest, trial and execution into ironic and sarcastic way to express on the paintings. He encourages people to understand the reality of the condition.

Though architecture cannot solve large social and national conflicts, but it can review and expose the realities to public using symbolic forms and use theoretical approaches to draw people’s attention for realizing the significant of some conflicts and realities. We choose the DMZ as out site because it is one of the most dangerous and high-militarised borders between two neighboring counties, North Korea and South Korea. They had been one county around 100 years ago, while they have many conflicts and differences now. There are many stories and secret beyond the DMZ and the two Koreas. We would like to use architecture as a media to make people realize and understand what kinds of conflicts they have by exposing them theoretically through architecture.

Bridge is the name of our thesis. Our “Bridge” does not focus on deconstruction or emphasizing the DMZ, rather it frames the conflicts between the DMZ and two Koreas. There are three bridges for addressing three realities; first is lack of freedom to cross border between the North Korea and South Korea, second is that different social structure systems control and affect the two Koreas differently and last one is a large group of divided families will pass away without seeing their relatives once.

Thesis Statement

Architecture can do many things and solve many problems of the local condition. For example, skyscrapers meet high demands of housing and offices; sustainable green buildings are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient. When it comes to bigger topics like dealing with social and cultural conflicts which influenced by national and political decisions, the usual architecture types may not resolve or help as much as expected. So, for dealing with these topics, we find that architecture has limitations.

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DMZ-Division of the Korea

1896

38th Parallel Line was proposed to limit Japanese and Russian Empires' influence in Korea after the Sino-Japanese War.
Japanese Empire occupied Korea after Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese in 1905
1945

Japanese Empire surrendered to Allies of WWII, and Korea gained independence from Japan.
However under the U.N trusteeship, Korea is divided again.
1948

People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) established on 1948 September 9

Republic of Korea (ROK) established on 1948 July 17
Truce Talks began from 1951 July.

The Armistice Agreement was signed after two years of negotiation and battles on 1953 July 26.
DMZ Is An Isolated Barrier

DMZ is a border barrier that divides North Korea and South Korea. The border beyond that strip is one of the most heavily militarized borders in the world.

Northern Limit Line (2km offset)

Southern Limit Line (2km offset)

MDL (The Military Demarcation Line)
There are estimated 2.2 million landmines scattered within and around the DMZ.
DMZ Is An Un-isolated Barrier
The DMZ is now 43% less than the original footprint because of military transgressions.
BRIDGE OF EQUALITY
Form
- Ancient Greek Theatre
Form
- Traditional Korean House (Hanok)
Form
- Traditional Korean House
(Hanok)
Form
- Traditional Korean House
(Hanok)
Function

- Seating Area

North Seating Area

South Seating Area

MDL
The Military Demarcation Line
Function

- Seating Area
Program
- Playground
Program

- Playground with out hierarchy

 depends on Songbun

 depends on Financial Capacity

 Higher Price Ticket

 Hostile (30%)

 Wavering (40%)

 Core (30%)

 Kim Family
BRIDGE OF NO RETURN
The Amount of North Korean Defectors Arriving in South Korea and Its background

- Kim il-sung 1945-1994
- Kim Jong-il 1994-2011
- Kim Jong-un 2011- Present

Defectors: The North Korean Defectors refer to the people who fled North Korea and moved to South Korea, escaping the regime's control and harsh living conditions. Over the years, the number of defectors has significantly increased, reflecting changes in North Korean policies and external influences.

1950s-1960s: The early wave of defectors consisted of smaller groups who fled due to political and ideological reasons.
1970s: The defectors began to increase as North Korea's political climate became more repressive.
1980s: The number of defectors grew significantly as ideologically motivated North Koreans sought to escape the regime.
1990s: With the political changes in South Korea, the number of defectors continued to rise.
2000s-2010s: The defectors reached a peak as North Korea's political system became more repressive, and defection became a more viable option.

Key Events:
- 1950-1953: Korean War
- 1962: The first major wave of defectors
- 1970s-1980s: Political repression in North Korea increased
- 1990s: Economic collapse in North Korea
- 2000s: South Korean government's push for defector resettlement
- 2010s: Political changes in North Korea

Factors Influencing Defectors:
- Political repression
- Economic conditions
- Political changes
- Legislative changes
- Diplomatic efforts

South Korean Government's Role:
- Providing asylum and resettlement opportunities
- Legislative support for defectors
- Diplomatic engagement with North Korea

Impact:
- Cultural exchanges
- Economic contributions
- Political leverage

Graphical Representation:
- Timeline showing the amount of defectors arriving in South Korea
- Visual indicators for significant events and political leaders
Demanding of Exchanging Nationality

Number of North Korean Defectors Arriving in South Korea Annually

North Korean Defectors Settled in South Korea

North Korean Defectors Left from South Korea

About 2000 (69%)

About 32147
They have to take 8000km straight-line distance trip instead, which is 40 times as long as a 200km distance for crossing these adjoining countries.
North Korean soldiers walk on a bund from the North Korean side of the Yalu River, as a Chinese boat sails by with tourists, near Sinuiju in North Korea and Dandong in China’s Liaoning Province. April 13, 2017.

A North Korean soldier stands next to a watchtower on the banks of the Yalu River near Sinuiju, opposite the Chinese border city of Dandong. April 14, 2017.

"The Most Popular Trip"

Our story starts here. Left of image shows South Koreans can directly take the train crossing DMZ to the northside. On the contrary, this is also the beginning of the journey for North Koreans.
North Korean men ride a makeshift raft made of fastened logs down the Yalu river that divides North Korea from the Chinese border town of Linjiang in northeastern China’s Jilin province. December 25, 2017

North Korean men on the Yalu River, which marks much of the border between North Korea and China. April 1, 2016

The River of Death

The chessboard road is bound to be impassable that implies more than 10% of north defector died in the Yalu river when they are crossing China-north Korea border.
Up to 30,000 children born to North Korean mothers who have fled the regime are living in China without access to schooling, health care or citizenship, MPs have heard. February 5, 2016

North Korean women live desperate lives, even after escaping from North. November 9, 2016

Ramp as a symbolic element which represents the longest journey to Taibando that dominate the whole image, two sides view represents north defectors temporary life in China.
A group of five North Korean who fled North Korea were arrested by Chinese police and detained in Shenyang. The family refused to be forced to repatriate to North Korea, so they were likely suicided themselves by taking poison.

May 8, 2002

Kim Han-mi, aged 2, watches her mother being dragged by Chinese policemen when her family attempted to enter into the Japanese Consulate in order to seek asylum in Shenyang, China. May 8, 2002

Not until escape arresting and preventing from China armed policeman, North defectors can enter the South Korean embassy.
North Korean defectors were waiting for the flight. August 15, 2015

North Korean defectors arriving in South Korea Thursday. April 11, 2016

Invasion tunnel used to be planned as a military invasion route by North Korea. It was also a first try to make connection between both sides. Now, North Korea defectors can directly cross DMZ and use this fast path.
Thousands now make their way along the more than 5,000km, often dangerous route, through China and Laos to the kingdom en route to South Korea. August 9, 2011

North Koreans crossing the Mekong into Thailand. February 20, 2013

Over thousands of miles long trip is tedious and unromantic, the only thing they should do is keep going.
A defector from North Korea hoping to reach South Korea via Thailand sits in her cell at the Chiang Saen police station in Thailand. May 9, 2007

The entire group was transferred to an immigration detention center to await repatriation, but police said the North Koreans were hoping to be declared refugees and to be relocated to South Korea instead. August 22, 2006

The Prison of Hope

After 6 hours stay here, North defectors are free to go. This mini prison represents when people arrive Thailand, they were treated as illegal travelers, waiting around 6 months in real life in order to delivering to South Korea.
North Korean defectors wave after arriving in South Korea. January 10, 1997

North Korean defectors aim to be deported from Thailand to South Korea. August 8, 2017

Exchanging Nationality
This is the last step of Bridge of no return. North Koreans will change their nationality here. Crossing the border, they no longer belong to the north side anymore.
Han Seohhee (right) and fellow North Korean defectors Lee Gwang-sung (left) and Hwang Soyeon (center) are regulars on Moranbong Club, a South Korean talk show featuring North Korean defectors. January 31, 2016

The scenery of South Korea fills the window, which indicate people will start their new life in the south country.
BRIDGE OF REUNION
Because of different attitudes and policies of the North Korea and the South Korea, we think mountain as a metaphor of the reality of reunion of divided family, and I express their condition in our project. The North Korea cuts the whole piece of mountain, and the South Korea keeps the original topography of mountain and generates a natural pathway on it.
Crossing Section
FANTASY IMAGES
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