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[GERMANY/ AUSTRALIA]

[ TWINKLING ]

[ THE JUNGLE SHEDS HER SKIN ]

[ DOCKS DEPTHS ]

[ SENSORY COUNTERPOINT ]
Ambient Loop is a compilation of student projects that interweaves the evolving legacy of urban territories. As the name implies, ambient loop both draws from the richness of the endless connected walk path and creates an incredible new layer to the island by forwarding the idea, that the spatial path as a tourist destination shifts expectations and allows to occupy the island in a diverse way. It is the chance to incorporate the historic impact of Cockatoo Island to occurring issues like tourism, leisure and outdoor activities and new cultural and economic questions. Instead of having historic preservation plans to create a tourist destination as a place that is meaningful organized, as in European traditions, the students added the ambient loop as an oppositional strategy. This strategy is much more powerful and sensitizes us to suppressed conflicts and reveals fracture points of Australian history on Cockatoo Island.

The ambient loop is a composition based on an intuitive sense of topology, achieved through the interconnected parts into the loop circulation. It’s more than a elementary platonic geometry of single objects. It’s the use of context through the programmatic device of the loop. By prioritizing circulation, students formed the islands historic impact. In other words, circulation typically peripheral to architectural program, becomes program itself. Circulation, elevated to the status of program, absorbs this amorphous void that is carved out and wrapped on to the island, to become its own identity. It functions like a praniesian space, the loop interior is distinctly urban: generating public traffic through its multidimensional qualities, like caves, bridges, ramps and other ambient spaces. Therefore the ambient loop also derives its intensity from the island itself. The visitors’ diverse experience offers a wide range of spaces with quite different atmospheric qualities. Visitors wander through the loop space like strollers in the city. The different spatial configurations have different effects on the role played by the visitors themselves. The loop allows the visitors to constantly find new modes of access, but at the same time compels them to relate to the configuration of the island.

Unlike the usual tourist experience, the visitors do not disappear in the neutral mass of the tourist cloud. They remain individuals. Personal spatial preferences emerge and visitors start to develop their own manoeuvring in their desire to understand the Cockatoo Island. They follow the loops shifts from inside (the rock, the industry buildings, the dock etc.) to outside (top of the rock, the gaps…), from intimate to open. In this sense the ambient loop develops effectiveness. This effectiveness lies in making the dynamics, beneath the surface of the usual conventions of contemporary lifestyles, perceptible for a magic moment. This various sensibility stimulates the ambient loop as open, curious, sceptical, ease and electrifying.
This project responds to a work by performance artist Rebecca Horn in which the artist and cockatoo communicate via an exchange of motions, gestures, and sounds which are characteristic of the bird. The dialogue continues in a cycle where the artist imitates the bird and then inversely the bird imitates the artist, leaving you to wonder which member was leading the other.

The initial prototype draws on the idea of communication and imitation which were compelling themes revealed in the performance. The structure is based on a relationship between density and lightness in a seemingly transformative cycle. Formally, the areas of density and lightness twist create shifting openings and enclosures which transform the quality of the spaces.

At Cockatoo Island the site chosen was deliberately an ‘in between’ space where the dialogue between lightness and density could be most strongly expressed. The structure forms part of
the walk path throughout the island which reveals aspects of the site in an intuitive sense. At this point one is confronted by the relationship between the towering sandstone cliff and turbine hall, the narrow void between these masses naturally addressing the idea of density and openness.

Emerging from the sandstone, the structure leads visitors through the historic silos which were carved into the cliff, through the chasm in between, to finally enter powerfully into the turbine hall. Throughout one's journey, the areas of openness and enclosure morph from wall to ground to ceiling, wrapping around throughout one's progression through the space. The form and positioning of density responds to the nature of the void and nature of the built and natural volumes. A clear form of communication and imitation exists during the journey through the structure as openings in the structure twist and turn revealing different aspects of the site and surrounds.
Before visiting the site, some independent research was done, concentrating on space, movement and body, we looked at different performance artworks by Rebecca Horn, defining elements and ideas in the artwork which we wanted to explore architecturally. I concentrated on the artwork “the jungle sheds her skin”, this explores light and dark playing on the skin, revealing certain things about the body at different times. At some moments features are discernable, at other times the texture of the skin is all that can be understood.

To translate this into an architectural idea, I considered how the body can interact with light and dark to create shadow, ambiguity, distortion and pixilation of surface, and hence alter understanding of place. Essentially in interplay between light, body, filter and surface. In applying this idea within the brief of an interpretive walk path on site, I chose to carve my walk path through portions of the sandstone cliff face – using the sandstone itself as the filter and the surface, revealing the layers of sandstone.
which have been pierced and marked throughout the history of the place, and henceforth allowing a new layer of history to be added, or carved away. What were also interesting to me were the differing conditions that are created by day and by night. By day light coming from outside creates an intrinsic experience that allows close examination of the space immediately around the body. By night, light from an internal source cast shadows of the body on the filter and out to the city beyond.
Concept: a foreign object berthed at the dry dock forms a series of discreet spatial experiences along a continuous narrative path. This path begins at the edge of the dock and descends down into its damp depths, where walls of water reach up above the body into the sky. From the lowest point movement east leads under the route taken in and the smooth echo of a ships hull sweeps up and away to form enclosure and enable inhabitation. The massive scale of the space is revealed in this moment when this element is simultaneously
roof, high above and wall, a tactile possibility at arms reach. Westward, out beyond this element is sunlight, cascading down into the space through water and transparent dam walls. A ramp rises to a contemplative space at a level halfway up the full height of the dock. Water surrounds a floating platform; the body now isolated from solid earth is enveloped by water, dock walls and the sky.
This project emphasises one's experience of a space by impeding one or more of the senses.

The sense to be emphasised is focused through the insertion of an unusual object into the space.
In order to make the sense to be experienced stand out, the experiences are ordered so that they work in counterpoint, and contrast each other.