CONTRIBUTOR: Anthony Ip & Dan Schulz

Email correspondence with Anthony Ip, RMIT Graduate 2015

Hi Anthony,
Would it possible to get a copy of your Major Project panels and some key images? I'm working on a publication about the RMIT short list for the 2016 Australian Institute of Architects Practice Prize for Architectural Excellence.

Would this be something you are interested in participating in?

Yeah would like to help you out with this, however I currently live in Brisbane.

The usual tendency is for graduates to stay in Melbourne seduced by its excitement, artistic environment and architecture!

But possibly foolishly, I chose to return to Brisbane because I believe Brisbane is a growing city currently going through 'architectural puberty' and has more potential to be influenced by critical design as compared to Melbourne and Sydney. Personally, I also think it lacks (other than m3 architects) academic discourse on the cultures, philosophy, utopic theory that Melbourne architecture is all about. Which could be a market for a practice to tap into and pursue.

Haha. 'Possibly foolishly' - you can always jump back on a plane! Melbourne will always be here for you!
So part of what you are hoping for is a sort of curatorial role perhaps?

Is your project a polemic (satirical perhaps) about the digital age or is there some formal interest?

ha ha, hopefully by the next time I return to Melbourne the Design Hub will have a REAL awning!

Haven't thought of it as a curatorial role yet, but the interest is something more social to gather a few other people equally as passionate about architecture and to debate over the bar table our opinions.

Actually I am planning with a few friends to create a research laboratory, hopefully as the momentum of that builds up we will have more influence in the scene.

In terms of teaching at uni, I think right now I am too young to teach and would need a few more years of maturity in the industry to be fit for the role.

"So if Italian cities were designed from a large mass entertainment what the basis of the digital the robotic Industry?

Hi Dan,
Would I be able to ask what type of publication you are working on?

It is an independent student publication called FLOG which is print media.
The request for work is just for the purposes of my own research. The piece I am submitting is an essay on awards systems and to question their place in a major project.
Thanks very much.

Sounds like an interesting piece, hope all goes well. Would you mind sending me the essay when your done, would be keen to see your perspective on the awards system for major project.

Thanks. Of course.
I'm also developing a serial to sit alongside it which is an interview with a MP student about their 'practice' (as to not be too cynical about the awards but to provide an alternative outlet for major students to represent themselves).

So don't know how that would work for you, maybe we could do this through email, Skype or other forms of media?

Well that's actually quite interesting though - I mean the conversation around Brisbane as a place to pursue practice.
I'm into all sorts of media forms, especially informal, conversational ones such as this email dialogue. Are you originally from Brisbane? Was Brisbane always 'the plan'?

Well, my architectural education began in Brisbane because I studied bachelors in the University of Queensland before the decision was made (like many others) to study masters at RMIT. This was mostly because it was almost discouraged to have radical ideas at such a technical university during that period, whereas you know rmit encourages 'rebellious' behavior through design. (Unless there is an rmit style that exists...)
Returning to Brisbane wasn't really 'the plan' but it was 'A' plan.

Are you a collector of interesting people - hoping to construct a community of rebels? Or is there a possibility to teach at the uni there and further your practice in an academic context?

I have explored glitch art previously - actually I think my current studio is slipping into glitch territory at the moment - which means my dreams are haunted by horrifying GIFF images of cats datamoshed with jack nicholson from The Shining.... (who comes up with this stuff?)
Where did you first discover glitch as architectural possibility?

Great to hear you have explored glitch art previously.

It's alright, there is no need to see a doctor...until you start talking to your friends with bright magenta cat parts merging with their faces...

Actually for the first four weeks of Major, I was struggling laboriously to find the idea, eventually I landed on the theme of the internet as this era's popular culture and that although it has connected us globally and an amalgamation of all ideas, it's own essence is style-less. Which eventually led to the glitch and that was the only phenomena that influenced us as a society now.

So if Italian cities were designed from a large culture of churches (creating the piazza) and Las Vegas was designed from mass entertainment (creating the strip) what would a city look like if it were designed from the basis of the digital glitch? Through research, this led to the largest question "Is Architecture truly safe from the robotic Industry?" "Can the Glitch be robotic creativity?"

Is the glitch the cry of the machines themselves? or is it ecology penetrating through the screen? Is it morbid or emancipatory? Accident or catastrophe? I feel like this article featuring Timothy Morton is one interesting take on it: http://archinect.com/features/article/149934079/timothy-morton-on-haunted-architecture-dark-ecology-and-other-objects

"I like how you went for a sort of orgy of digi-aesthetics... total porn... Roman-esque, Trimalchio's feast, 120 Days of Sodom...."
Yes. As we both know, internet content isn't ordered in a beautiful manner but rather (quoting Adam Savage) "Like a Serial Pervert" with a fucked up, mentally unstable and an essentially random mind.

Near the end of the research, Mark, Tim and I discovered that principles of this idea had already been used throughout history before in Ancient Egyptian architecture, Caryatids, Gargoyles, Petra are all examples of sculptural forms synthesized with buildings, Art AND Architecture, never Art vs. Architecture;

culture of churches and Las Vegas was designed from would a city look like if it were designed from glitch? Is Architecture truly safe from Can the Glitch be robotic creativity?"

You are right, the images produced are not construction drawings, but satires, memes and exaggerations of today's society depicted through architecture. The MP was not the design of a single building or masterplan, but the design of a series of images.

What kind of outputs were you thinking the laboratory would produce, paper experiments, small builds/installations? Or a combination?

I really like Brisbane. That trip along the river is like sailing down the river Styx and seeing the architectural rejects of the overworld on full display - couple of good brutalist carparks and stuff but you can't go past the State Law Building - that thing is like something out of Dark City (1998) where the world is ruled by a vampiric robot.

"Is Architecture truly safe from the robotic Industry?"
"Can the Glitch be robotic creativity?"
There is something about the glitch... our lives become increasingly governed by imperative algorithms underlying our social media profiles, communications systems, methods of production...

I like how you went for a sort of orgy of digi-aesthetics... total porn... Roman-esque, Trimalchio's feast, 120 Days of Sodom....

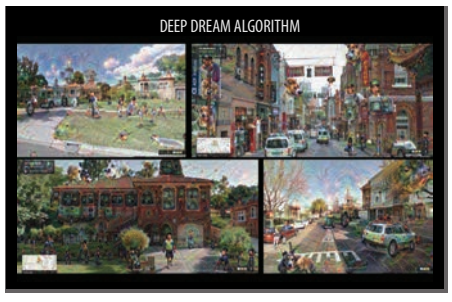
So obviously your MP stretched away from the original intention? how and for what reason did it change? what were the methods of production that were most useful for you? (peers/comrades, supervisor) Would you say MP is continuing? The beginning of something rather than the end?

We are still discussing the direction of the research lab, the idea would be to start with paper experiments with hard critiques and with time the longer goal would be for us to fabricate these visions.
Ha ha, I'm still trying to find people interested enough before the next step arrives!

That was an interesting read, I do think an OOO type of thinking could release us into understanding architecture as a whole new object and could be a tool for form-finding in the academic sense.
Totally off-topic, but this read was great. It's about past Melbourne competitions : http://architectureau.com/articles/another-failed-melbourne-design-competition-c1978/

This over-saturation of content (orgy as you say) was an interpreted depiction of how the Internet as a tool visualized/observed our world as a 'subjective vision'. This was illustrated through the design of the architecture and the medium of the images.

There were many original intentions from Robotic cities, Sustainability satires, an entire virtual reality world. It's difficult to describe every change that occurred in the evolution of the idea, but the best thing I did was to constantly propose new directions for the project each week. Although, most of the time these ideas were on the table my tutors looked a bit bamboozled and slaughtered me for the poorer ones - the better ones matured through guided discussion. What also helped was to create a schedule of weekly goals to be achieved in the semester, like a timetable to make sure you keep yourself on track for the final goal of MP presentation.

I believe the Abstracted Glitches of Architecture were the beginning of seemingly a new trajectory though not a new idea of amalgamated culture and glitches manipulation for designing the built environment.

the Mannerist period of breaking all the rules of Classical architecture, killing it's father! Not unlike using the machine as a tool to break all the rules of modernism.
Thus, I would say I am only the observer of a repeated cycle of design history and this MP was only the foreplay, we will see how long the sex lasts.