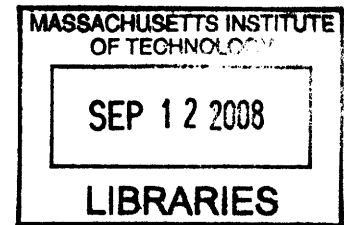


Daydreaming Devices
by Ana Sofia Lopes da Ponte

B.F.A Sculpture
University of Oporto, 2001

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Visual Studies at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

August 2008



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Signature of the Author: _____
Department of Architecture
August 8, 2008

Certified by: _____
Ute Meta Bauer
Associate Professor
Director of Visual Arts Program
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: _____
Julian Beinart
Professor of Architecture
Chair of the Department
Committee on Graduate Students

Daydreaming Devices
by Ana **Sofia** Lopes da **Ponte**

Thesis Readers

Antoni Muntadas
Associate Visiting Professor

Andrea Frank
Lecturer

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Abstract

Daydreaming Devices is a project on aspects of daydream and the design of convertible furniture within the context of art. This thesis addresses the concepts and the design of two daydreaming devices developed during my studies at MIT, the *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit*. Both works create a place for contemplation and generate what I call “ambiguous forms of knowledge.”

These art works cultivate relations between personal and collective agency while demystifying implicit aspects of socialization. They were designed as utilitarian and emotional artifacts; existing in public or semi-public spaces, they reach their maximum potential when activated within a group of people. Their aim is to affect an understanding of the waking life, sometimes uselessly and strictly relegated to the obscurity of intimacy.

Thesis Supervisor: Ute Meta Bauer

Title: Associate Professor and Director of the Visual Arts Program



Dreaming Lounge

Mechanical chair-bed with canapé for library reading rooms

Displayed at MIT Barker Engineering Library

December 2007-April 2008

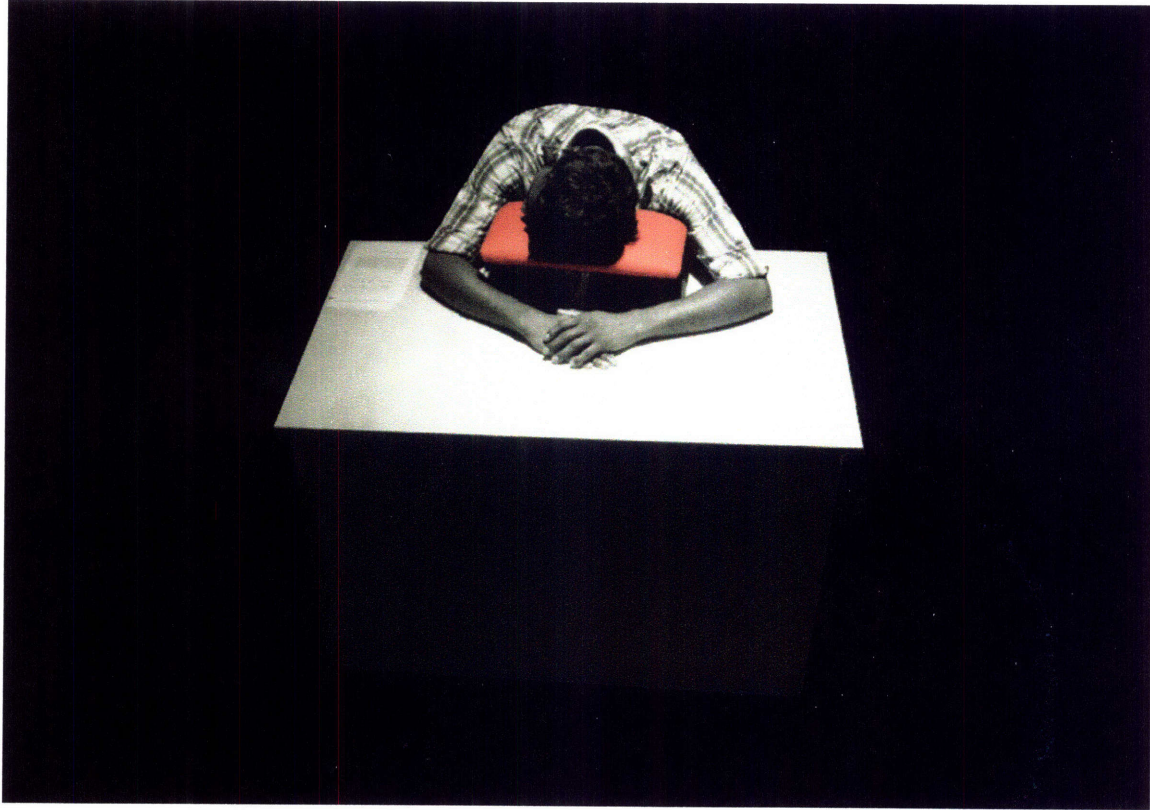


Dreaming Lounge

Mechanical chair-bed with canapé for library reading rooms

Displayed at MIT Barker Engineering Library

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Working Unit

Desk with mechanical pillow-board

Displayed at *Articulare*, SMVIsS graduate show at MIT
May 2008



Working Unit

Desk with mechanical pillow-board

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Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 9
Concept(s) for supporting Daydreaming in Public	p. 15
- Daybeds	p. 17
- <i>Dreaming Lounge</i>	p. 20
- Dreaming	p. 31
- <i>Working Unit</i>	p. 33
- Daydreaming	p. 40
Conclusion	p. 42
Appendices	
- “Grand Pram” by Sarah Wright / MIT Office News	p. 47
- “I Don’t Sleep I Dream” by REM	p. 49
- “The Artist in the World of Science” by Marcel Breuer	p. 50
- “Manifesto” by Siah Armajani	p. 56
- “These Things I Know For Sure” by Andrea Zittel	p. 59
Images Index	p. 61
Bibliography	p. 62
Acknowledgements	p. 66

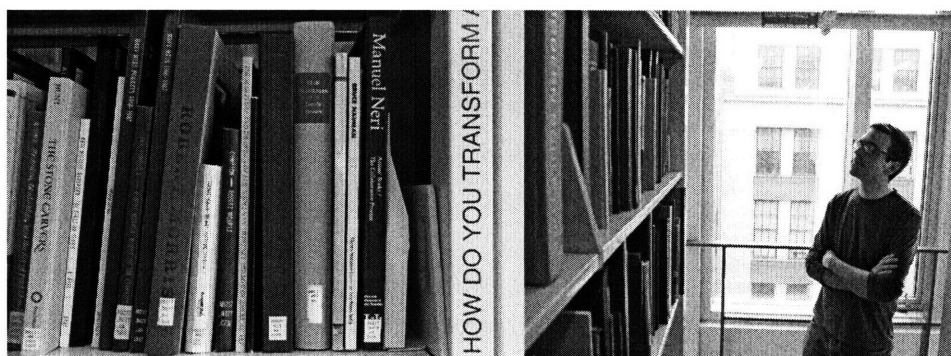
Introduction

During my two years at the Visual Arts Program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I created a project addressing the theme of daydreaming. From this project two works emerged, the *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit*, generating what I call “ambiguous forms of knowledge.” This concept ties a theoretical and practical understanding of how we spent our time in the everyday life, which I believe has fundamental responsibilities in determining our motivations and interests. It transforms familiar spaces in places from where one can observe and navigate (or both) through the world, and learn more about it. Cultivating relations between personal and collective agency unveiling some of the implicit aspects of socialization.

In earlier works I attempted to deconstruct art categories, to question their parallelism with other social and cultural constructions, and to reflect on the role that artists play in contemporaneity. I have frequently used text, images and installations to represent an idea maturing from the state of intuition to expression, both visually and metaphorically. For example, if passing by Rotch Library – Architecture & Planning at MIT today, on one of the edges of the metal book stacks on the 4th floor, you may discover *How Do You Transform a Question into a Sentence*, a work that I made of a printout of this combination of words in vinyl and installed in May 2007. Letters in book spines do not really inform us much about what is inside books but they tend to seduce to inquire beyond them, just as the added book spine tries to encourage to triggering the place beyond the book(s) one is looking for.

Exploring art as a realm of knowledge, such as design, engineering, science, or philosophy, that tries (and fails) to understand the world, is part of a framework that has nothing natural about it. Actually, it is quite the opposite – contemporary art is a constructed realm of practice deeply

rooted in a system, that can be, described as democratic, capitalistic, technological, multicultural, specialized, networked, and global, that renovates itself like any other discipline: through artists' experiments, audiences' expectations, experts critics, public investment, media speculation and market profit. Art as a realm of knowledge is also the focus from which I “naturally” construct my dilemmas, crisis and works. My interests have been cultivated and expanded alongside with my education, experiences, and motivation. However, my instinct is what I think sets the playful nature of my artistic and philosophical inquiry. It is what makes me place the word “ambiguous” together with “forms” before the word “knowledge,” tracing atypical meanings in relation to each other. Such juxtapositions, I believe, provide a good opportunity to exercise intuition and reason while adding novelty and understanding to things taken for granted.



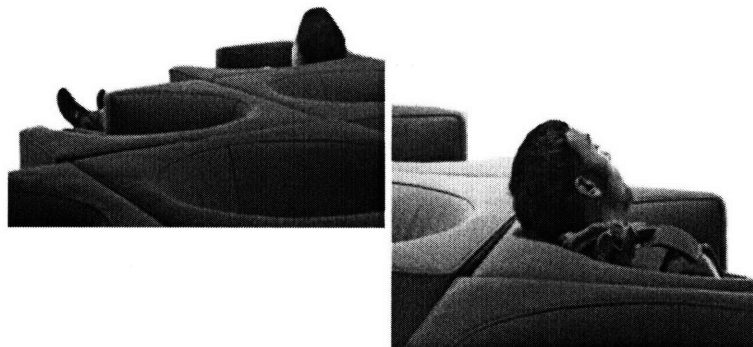
View of the installation *Rotch Spine - How do You Transform a Question into a Sentence*, Rotch Library at MIT, May 2007 - ongoing.

While developing my works I came across with other forms of knowledge produced by artists, such as Sirah Armajani and Andrea Zittel; architects and designers, such as Marcel Breuer, Charles and Ray Eames; and philosophers, such as Ernst Bloch. The works of these scholars, much more systematic and exhaustive than mine, have broadened even more my curiosity about the range of human action and the present state of its connectivity.

Under the theme of daydream, and built as public interventions, the *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit* follow the mood of Georges Perec's¹ curiosity:

“What we need to question is bricks, concrete, glass, our table manners, our utensils, our tools, the way we spend our time, our rhythms, to question that which seems to have ceased forever to astonish us, we live, true, we breathe, true; we walk, we open doors, we go down staircases, we sit at a table in order to eat, we lie down on a bed in order to sleep. How? Where? When? Why?”

The *Dreaming Lounge* was developed during my third semester of studies, between October 2007 and April 2008. It follows a tradition of contemplative and resting environments and connects it to the symbolism of libraries in Western societies. It draws on the symbols of equality and democracy, work environments, and public places that contemporary libraries represent.



MIT Barker Engineering Library lounge chairs (designed by Victor Vasarely in 1960's) on November 2007.

¹ George Perec (1936-1982), French writer and filmmaker. I recently came across, coincidentally (or not), with *A man asleep*, a book Perec wrote in 1967 and that was adapted to cinema by Bernard Quasenne, in 1974. The film that was awarded with the Jean Vigo Prize, narrates the story of a nameless student who tries to detach himself from materialistic desires and needs through wonder and sleep.

In Michel Foucault's² description of heterotopias – real places that disrupt our common set of spatial relations – libraries are places “outside time” due to the present and obsessive desire of our society for containing all times. Foucault refers that this abstraction is symptomatic of a collecting impulse rather than the nature of these places. Jorge Luis Borges³ also pictured this in his short story “The Library of Babel,” an excerpt of which I include for the sake of exercising our imagination:

“When it was proclaimed that the Library contained all books, the first impression was one of extravagant happiness. All men felt themselves to be the masters of an intact and secret treasure. There was no personal world problem whose eloquent solution did not exist in some hexagon. The universe was justified, the universe suddenly usurped the unlimited dimensions of hope. At that time a great deal was said about the Vindications: books of apology and prophecy which vindicated for all time the acts of every man in the universe and retained prodigious arcane for his future. Thousands of the greedy abandoned their sweet native hexagons and rushed up the stairways, urged on by the vain intention of finding their Vindication. These pilgrims disputed in the narrow corridors, proffered dark curses, strangled each other on the divine stairways, flung the deceptive books into the air shafts, met their death cast down in a similar fashion by the inhabitants of remote regions. Others went mad...” (Borges 2007: 55).

The *Working Unit* was designed and built in my last semester, between February and May of 2008. As the previous device it allows one to explore ways in which pre-existing working environments can facilitate a temporary withdrawal during the day. However, in this situation the effect of the device is created with a different kind of *delay*.

² French philosopher (1926-1984) frequently associated with post-modernism.

³ Argentine writer (1899-1986) who influenced greatly the 20th century literature.



Humanities Library at MIT, study desk with library user on November 2007.

In this thesis I attempt to layout some of the elements that led to the realization of the two works created from observing how sometimes (more often than expected) people rest in public. “The more we make visible, the more we can see,” mentioned our Professor Ute Meta Bauer, in one of the regular 2008 graduating students’ thesis group meetings, reinforcing what the *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit* make it difficult to ignore. Because I see informal situations, such as sleeping in common places, destabilizing the current state of living I believe they are a good pre-text to deep in our social nature and question our judgment of public life.

Key words: delay, spectacle, experience, daydreaming, socialization⁴.

⁴ During Spring 2008 semester of Independent Studio course, Prof. Antoni Muntadas challenged the students to pick five key words that synthesized their work. I chose *delay*, *spectacle*, *experience*, *daydreaming* and *socialization*. To these key words I relate other five: *immediacy*, *ordinary*, *boring* and *remoteness* respectively. They are dialectically related to the first ones I mentioned.

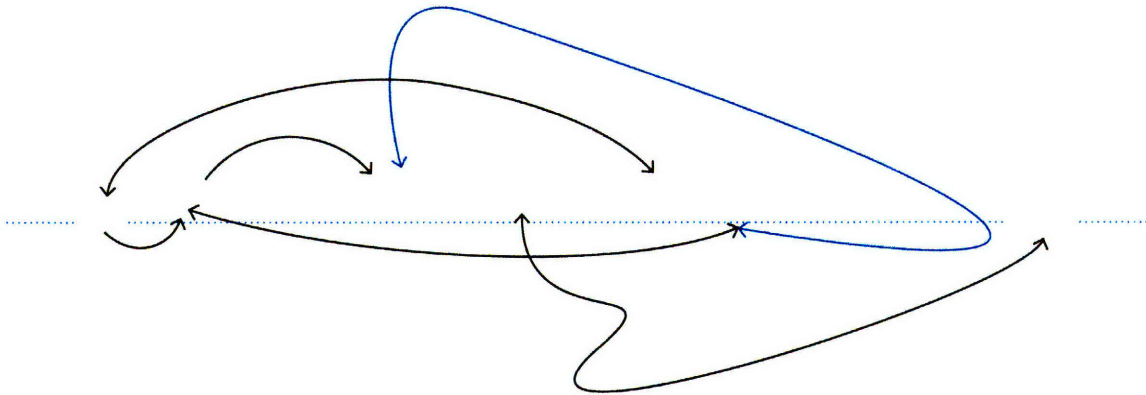


Diagram: before using a *daydreaming device*.

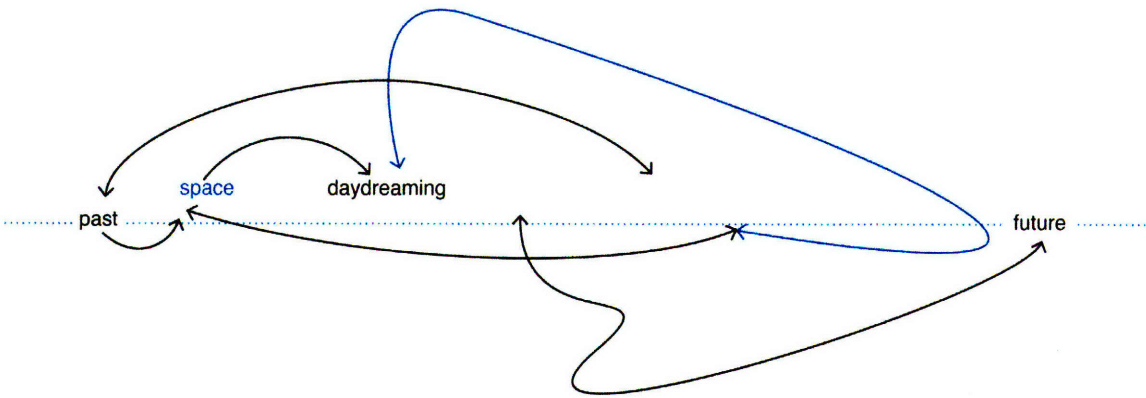


Diagram: while using a *daydreaming device*.

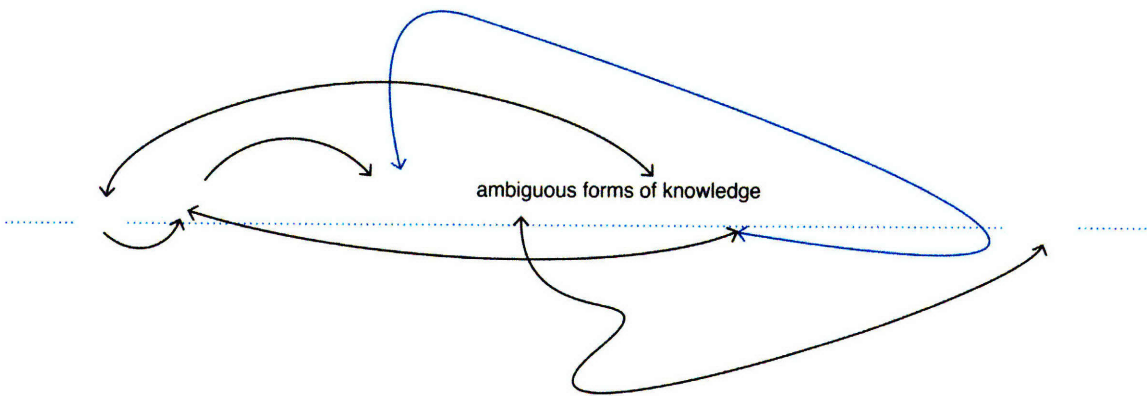


Diagram: after using a *daydreaming device*.

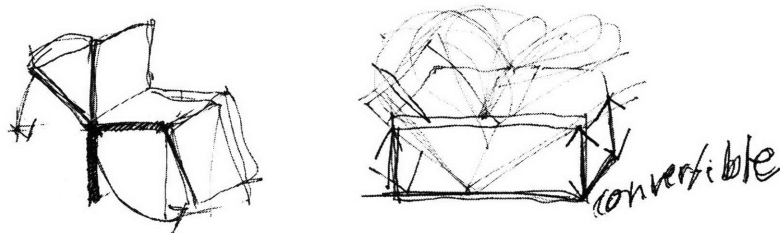
Concept(s) for Supporting Daydreaming in Public

*Knowledge also requires a certain distance, a negative contact, a withdrawal;
and it comes about when there is a break-down in one's activity.*

Siah Armajani⁵, 1991

Since I built the *Dreaming Lounge* many aspects to the concept of “ambiguous forms of knowledge” have arisen. The public notion of daydreaming, which developed from the experience of displaying the *Dreaming Lounge* at a public site, conveyed me very appealing anthropological, scientific, sociological, and philosophical elements to the initial concept. I just started to excavate these facets, thus adding new motivation to continue to develop the subject. When later I was designing the *Working Unit*, I understood that I was creating a family of devices that was not only addressing the theme of “ambiguous forms of knowledge,” but that was also exploring it in complementary new ways. This “naturally” stimulated me to understand these art works in a larger and ambitious frame – the *Daydreaming devices* project. I will start by describing a *Dreaming Lounge* and a *Working Unit*.

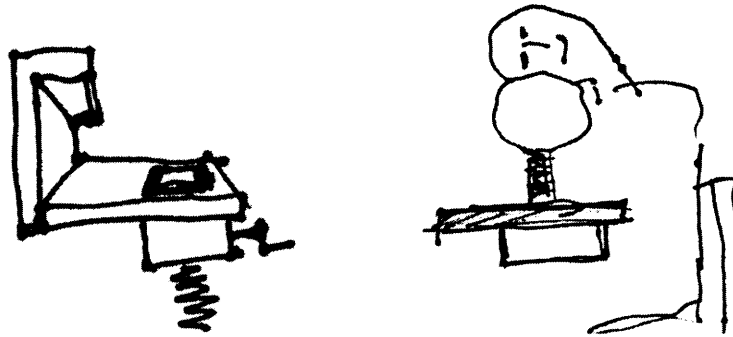
A *Dreaming Lounge* is a mechanical chair-bed that facilitates public rest and study in academic libraries. Its design is always a combination of a chair, a bed with a canapé, the furniture and the architecture of an existing reading room.



Sketches for a *Dreaming Lounge*, 2007.

⁵ Born in Tehran in 1939, Armajani is an artist based in Saint Paul, Minnesota, who has been developing a number of temporary and permanent public art installations.

A *Working Unit* is a desk with a mechanical pillow-board inside that allows one to work and disrupt work during office hours. The horizontal surface of the table has a rectangular cover, that when it opened, shows a pillow inside. This pillow was made in such a way that its height can be adjusted to the users preference.



Sketch of a *Working Unit* and a *daydreamer*, 2008.

The *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit* multifunctionality express the main design concern of *Daydreaming devices*: they are desired and designed as generic items, to be used in playful opposite ways, accommodating the intense anxieties about space and mobility that our society permanently lives. They have other key features:

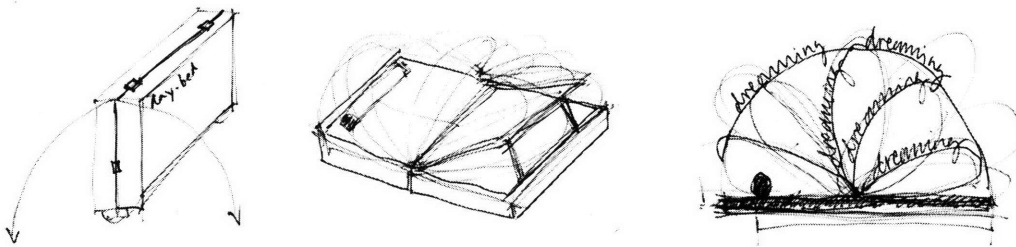
- they are both utilitarian and emotional artifacts;
- their acceptance depends on the user's adoption of the visual metaphor they express;
- they exist in public and semi-public spaces;
- they reach their maximum potential when activated publicly by a user;
- they bring expose notions of public and private;
- they attempt to affect an understanding of the waked life.

Multifunctionality has been a feature of furniture design since the 18th century and it grew enormously during and after World War II. This was mostly due to collaborations between designers and engineers, whose

work led to the design and mass fabrication of furniture coupled with machinery and new materials that brought a revolution to the way we currently live⁶.

Day-Beds

Day-beds inspired my first sketches for the *Dreaming Lounge*. They are, I think, very seductive items that express a sense of commodity transitory but at the same time exclusive. Properties that I wanted to see associated with a communal day-bed. To recline is a position of half-awareness. It represents a situation where the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness is often blurred. Reclining seemed to be a “natural” way of representing the invisible but extreme mental activity of people spaced out but intensely zoomed in, often present in libraries. Day-beds also evoked my question of what makes people feel confident to use libraries as resting environments as well as to study?



Sketches for the *Dreaming Lounge*, 2007.

⁶ Ray and Charles Eames, for example, two American leading designers in the 50's and 60's, created many innovative chairs, from light-weight, easy-to-clean, stackable chairs used in offices, schools, and auditoriums to sophisticated sofas and lounges available only for a very small upper class group. Chairs are good examples of the innumerable innovating sitting positions adapted to situations that vary from the casual stool to the straightness of a chair for a desk.

Daybeds have been intensely designed and transformed in relation to the needs and values of different societies. When researching on the history of daybeds, to learn how far in the past the reclining position was reported, what it possibly meant, and what did the different generations do about it, I learned that daybeds exist since the first Egyptian Dynasty (3100-2890 BC). There they were commonly used as a type of furniture to sleep and lounge during night and day. Representations of these items in tombs show that Egyptians made no distinction between the types of furniture they used to sleep. Ancient Greek (750 - 146 BC) used daybeds, which they called "klines," mostly in convivial parties. These artifacts were made out of wood and leather stripes. Painted scenes in vases of these events show, for the first time, the use of mattresses and ostensive cochins. Romans used daybeds that could accommodate up to three persons during reclined meals.

The early use of daybed is related to an intense communal living. In Chinese culture they built low box-style platforms that were displayed along rooms for individuals to lounge during the day. These places accommodated all sorts of activities, such as meals, reading, sleeping, and other working activities. Accessories such as footrests, backrest, cochins and blankets complemented these places. In Arab nomadic culture many social meetings with recreational or business purposes, as well as resting and sleeping, were set in tent-beds packed with rugs and pillows on the floor. American Indians used hammocks in communal settings and several other cultures still currently use similar objects.



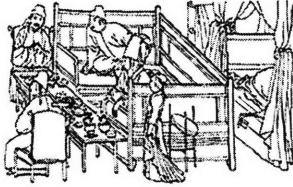
egyptian



greek



roman



chinese



arab

Though, there are cultures that did not use daybeds but have numerous representations of the reclined position. In India, for instance, Vishnu, the Indian God of Cosmos, is represented reclined, thus meaning that harmony between good and evil is being protected. In Buddhism, the reclined Buddha represents the moment of nirvana. The Olmecs, ancient culture of the east Mexico (1200-400 BC), sculpted reclined goddesses and gods. Many other cultures such as in Africa did not have the concept of formalized sleep, but traditionally used supporting items, like head and backrest, when lying on the ground.

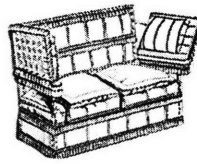
In Western societies, daybeds also served different purposes and expressed different symbolic values. During Medieval age, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the early 16th century, wooden chests were used to fit a person stretched. Because many of these cultures lived in camps they used portable daybeds to sleep. Some of them were made out of rope and richly adorned with drapery and cushions. By the 15th century, in the North of Europe, the bed was the central and ceremonial element in a house. By then it was common to rest and receive guests in a bedchamber. Royal and wealthy people used baldaquins above the bed with hanging drapes to magnified it and also protected it from dirt.



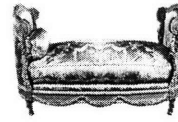
medieval rope bed



bed chamber
15th century



drop-arm chair
17th century

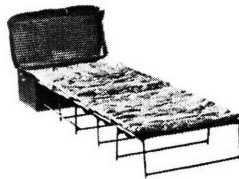


short day-bed
18th century

From the past to the present day, the design of daybeds assumed several transformable features, strongly reflecting the inventive skills of their authors, the technical development of times, and the emotional demands of society.



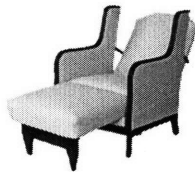
louis XVI
chair-day-bed, 1780



military camp
day-bed, 1861-65



freud coach, 1890



french recliner, 1920



ray and charles
eames, 1956



maarten
van severen, 2002

Dreaming Lounge

At reading rooms, a *Dreaming Lounge*, encourages people to feel confident to contemplate and rest beyond conventions, evoking whatever form of knowledge they feel like. MIT, for example, has a strong reputation for being a place where students can easily “burn-out” – a place where they are removed from a certain ordinariness of the world. My initial intention was to create a situation where people could be

(apparently) unproductive. In other words that allowed them to be unproductively productive. I wonder if such separation appears stronger than it actually is because I found people sleeping long before displaying a *Dreaming Lounge* in a library. When I “staged” this idle behavior as a metaphor for “ambiguous forms of knowledge,” I was also drawing attention to the spatial nature of the library itself. As I see it, it is a paradigm of social diversity and unpredictability, reflecting very practical co-existing interactions but also important existentialist values of society.

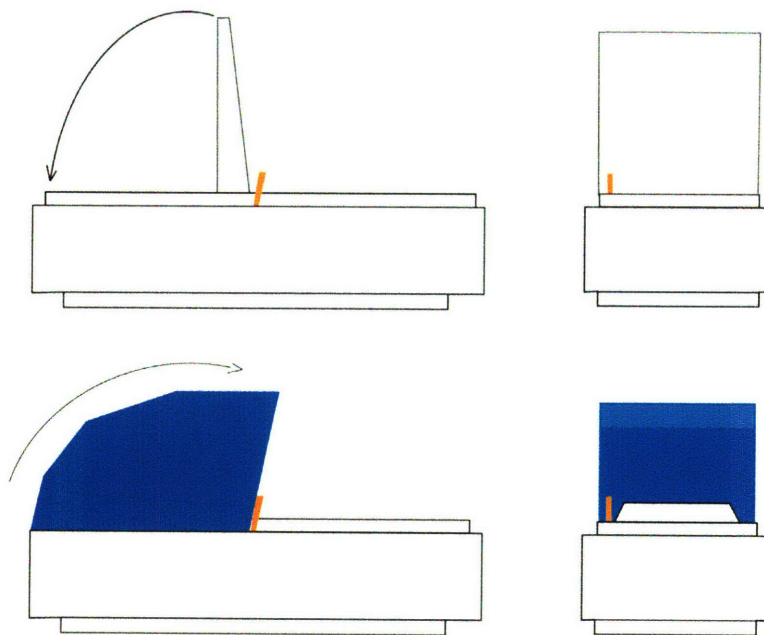
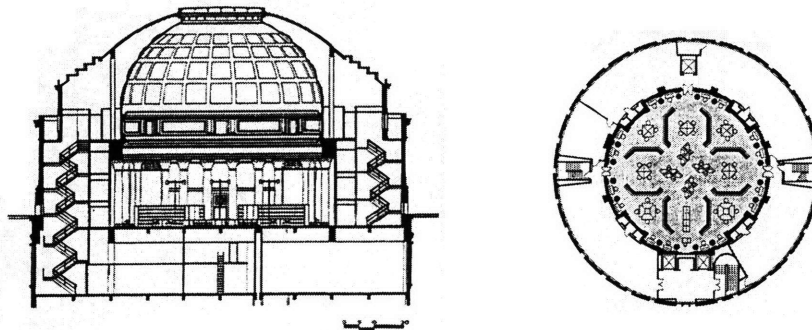


Diagram of the *Dreaming Lounge* converting from a chair to a bed with canapé, 2007. Specifically designed to blend into MIT Barker Engineering Library reading room. Dimensions vary from 71” x 40” x 35” to 71” x 50” x 35”.

When interviewing Anna Gold in October 2007, the Head of MIT Barker Engineering Library at the time, I asked her why she thought people still come to libraries. She considered that is because people are very interested in intimacy and place, “people still want facts [and] are fascinated by other times and spaces. In spite of being digital kind of spaceless some [people] got [the] sense [that] most of the stuff they are

getting in fact comes from a certain time and place and they are very curious about that.” Gold also suggested that people come to libraries because they are quiet places and added, which I find very interesting, “because people enjoy feeling the presence of others who are doing something similar.”

Students, faculty, and staff come to sleep at Barker Engineering Library⁷. Located in MIT main campus its reading room is precisely under the dome, far and quietly removed from the academic and visitors daily traffic. Like many other reading spaces, silence, is one of the most important features to maintain. One of the library staff that I meet described the situation at Barker as having a “pretty interesting acoustics you can be on the other side, whispering, just the way [making circular movements with the arms] the acoustics is in there you can hear everything.” This fragmented, disrupted and smooth soundtrack is still what actually most of the *Dreaming Lounge* users I meet were looking for when coming to Barker’s reading room. In fact, it is commonly known, among MIT community, that Barker has comfy chairs for a mid day nap.



East-west section and plan of MIT Barker Engineering Library reading room by architect Walter Netsch and Edward Durell Stone, published by *Architectural Record* journal, September 1972.

⁷ Barker library main collection is dedicated to subjects such as computer science, materials science, electrical, civil, environmental, mechanical, nuclear and ocean engineering.

During my visits to the *Dreaming Lounge*, a student once mentioned that Barker “is the best in campus because of the silence, it is almost like being in a church and I love that kind of feeling.” Another student that I found profoundly sleeping in the *Dreaming Lounge* said that “I was up all night long doing some thesis work, and just a few hours ago I was looking all over campus for a comfortable and quiet place to rest for a bit, maybe take a little *siesta*.” By the end of our (short) conversation, this person surprisingly realized that he had been sleeping for two hours. This happened to another user I talked to when asking what were his intentions when coming to Barker:

DLU⁸ – “... To take a nap for... I was supposed to take 30 minutes but”
[laughing]

S – “How long did you stay here for?”

DLU – “90 minutes. Yeah took 90 minutes!”

S – “How do you feel about it?”

DLU – “Pretty good! Kind of cozy.”

Most of the interviews that I conducted with people after using the *Dreaming Lounge* were brief and difficult to describe. I was left with the impression that they consciously knew that they would be seen sleeping but unconsciously hoped that nobody would notice. There was a sort of awkwardness, which I depict from the short answers I was given, in most of the conversations that I initiated. However, it works both ways, it was because a student saw people sleeping beforehand in the *Dreaming Lounge* that motivated her to try it:

S – “Can you describe me some of your thoughts while in the *Lounge*?”

DLU – “When I was sitting there?”

S – “Yes.”

DLU – “It was comfortable and very easy to fall asleep and my thought was many people have been sleeping here today, I should sleep too.”

⁸ DLU stands for Dreaming Lounge User and S stands for Sofia.

S – “You have seen people using it?”

DLU – “Yeah. It wasn’t here last semester so I knew that it wasn’t here and was confused at the beginning... Oh! This is new.”

S – “What led you to try it?”

DLU – “I just saw that it was free and decided. I have some time before I get picked up, I should sleep.” [laughing]

S – “What were your plans to do here today?”

DLU – “In the library?”

S – “Yes.”

DLU – “Just take a nap. That was it.”

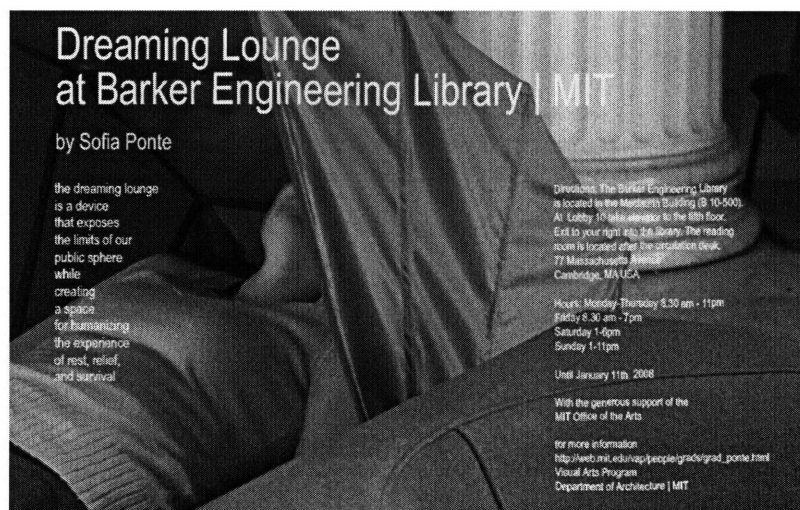
S – “What do you think about this reading room?”

DLU – “It’s very quiet. It’s kind of hard to study for me because it’s very dark but it’s good for sleeping.” [laughing]

S – “You come here often?”

DLU – “I used to come here more last year but I might come here more often now.”

As much as the *Dreaming Lounge* is perceived for facilitating an immediate physical relief, it was created with the intention to support awoken activities, such as reading or contemplating. The artifact was designed so that it allowed one to sit vertically, recline or lay down. The choice was in the user’s hands. During its display at Barker’s library the bed position was by far the preferred situation.

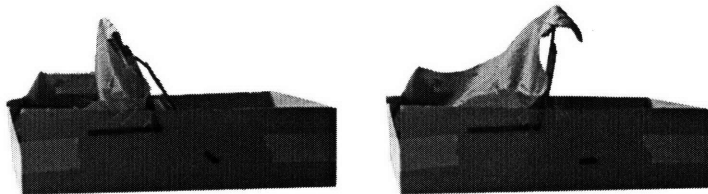


Flyer designed to advertise the *Dreaming Lounge* at MIT Barker Engineering Library.

By pulling a wood handle, placed on the right side of the chair-bed, a canapé unfolds over the upper part of the seat, protecting the user's body from exterior elements, such as light and sound. In addition to this practical purpose, the canapé color, fabric and scale, when opened produces an exceptional moment: it *shows* people sleeping making it acceptable to fall asleep and withdraw in public circumstances; it *shows* how unordinary and unfamiliar an ordinary chair and bed, can be; and ultimately transforms social indifference into personal curiosity.



Model 1



Model 2

Models 1 and 2 were developed to study the mechanical application of a canapé to the back of a car seat. The chair-bed was built using a passenger's seat from a GMC Suburban truck (model from the 90's), steel, plywood, foam and fabric.

I received several feedbacks concerned with staging sleep in public and disrupting some of the rules of sociability, and not so much about unsettling the representation of knowledge that I also had in mind. I learned from listening, discussing and observing the many responses to the work that, at least in Western culture, seeing somebody sleeping, in whatever public space it might be, enervates physically and emotionally individual's. I think that this "irritation" expresses as well, and I assume some risk when using this term, something simpler, it makes visible our

human condition and its vulnerabilities – our anxieties and strangeness towards each other's. This makes me think again about what Perec said, about needing to question the way we spend our time and in the immediate things that affect our lives. Things that exist to make our coexistence less alienated and that have the potential to create a rich and qualitative living between our private and social sphere. To sum up this idea, I would like to call attention to a study by Richard Sennett⁹, an American sociologist, gathered in his book, *The Fall of Public Man* in 1974, about the public domain:

“I think the defeat that intimate contact deals to sociability is rather the result of a long historical process, one in which the very terms of human nature have been transformed, into that individual, unstable, and self-absorbed phenomenon we call “personality.

That history is of erosion of a delicate balance which maintained society in the first flush of its secular and capitalist existence. It was a balance between public and private life, a balance between an impersonal realm in which men could invest one kind of passion and a personal realm in which they could invest another. This geography of society was governed by an image of human nature based on the idea of a natural human character; this character was not created by the experiences of a lifetime, but was revealed in them. It belonged to Nature and was reflected in man. As both secularity and capitalism arrived at new forms in the last century, this idea of a transcendent nature gradually lost its meaning. Men came to believe that they were the authors of their own characters, that every event in their lives must have a meaning in terms of defining themselves, but what this meaning was, the instabilities and contradictions of their lives made it difficult to say.” (Sennett 1974: 338, 339).”

⁹ Sennett, was born in 1943 in Chicago. He is the Centennial Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, the Bemis Adjunct professor of Sociology at MIT, and Professor of the Humanities at New York University. He has been researching social ties in cities and the effects of urban living in the modern world.



Dreaming Lounge
at MIT Barker Engineering Library
February 2008



Dreaming Lounge
at MIT Barker Engineering Library
March 2008



Dreaming Lounge
at MIT Barker Engineering Library
March 2008



Dreaming Lounge
at MIT Barker Engineering Library
April 2008
photo by Alia Farid

Dreaming

A man is not idle because he is absorbed in thought. There is visible labor and there is invisible labor.

Victor Hugo¹⁰

What is happening to people while sleeping? To sleep is a vital activity of the body in the physical and mental regenerating process from the intensity of a day. It is divided in two types, the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) and the Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) sleep. Each type has associated different physiological, neurological and psychological features. The timing for sleeping varies in relation to individuals' 24-hour cycle in the biochemical, physiological and behavioral processes of living, cycle that is denominated as the Circadian Rhythm. For adults eight to nine hours of sleep is considered to be an appropriate time that benefits alertness, memory, problem solving ability, and, in general, good health.

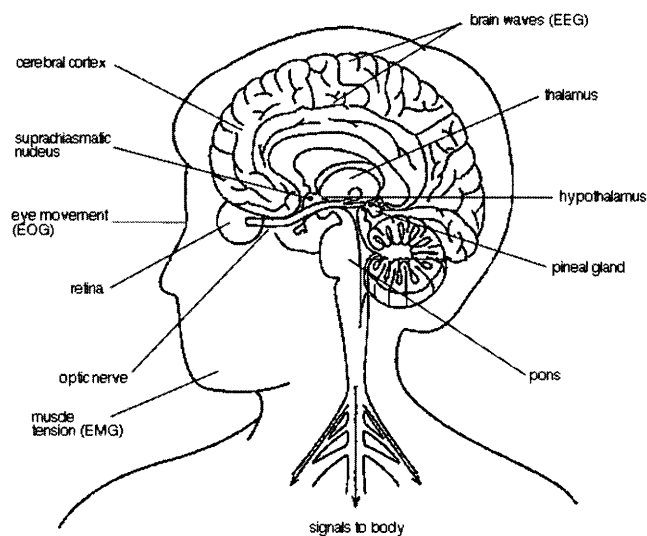


Diagram with the location of organs and brain activities during sleep.

¹⁰ Attributed to Victor Hugo (1802 - 1885), French dramatist, novelist, and poet.

Dreaming, however, is a much bigger mystery. Night dreams mostly occur during REM sleep which in an adult represents about 90-120 minutes of a night's sleep. We can have four or five REM sleep stages that are shorter at the beginning and gradually become longer towards the end of the night. These sleep stages are interrupted by light sleep, or even waking up experiences, moments where usually dreams can be remembered¹¹. To understand deeper the electrical brain activity and processes for storing, transforming and consolidating perceptual information from recent awakening events, the role of dreaming is continuously investigated. Although scientists still have great difficulty to understand the function or effects of dreaming in our mind, several studies on sleep and sleep disorders show that dreams might have something to do with memory and learning¹².

The effects of daytime naps in an adult working performance tend to raise more public debate¹³. On February 1st 2008, *HealthDay News* released "Daytime Naps can Improve Memory," a review article¹⁴ about the findings of the research team led by Matthew A. Tucker, a scientist at the department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Center for Sleep and Cognition. Published on the Journal *Sleep*, this study investigates the role of sleep on short-term memory consolidation. The research demonstrated through the results of three different memory tasks to 33

¹¹ The association of these phenomena was discovered in the 50s' by Nathaniel Kleitman, Professor in Physiology at the University of Chicago, and his students Eugene Asenrinsky and William C. Dement.

¹² More information on this hypothesis can be found in the book *Sleep and Dreaming*, edited by Ernest Hartman, (Boston: Little Brown and Company: 1970).

¹³ The scientific effects of resting during the day is being investigated since developments on sleep and dreaming research understand better their role in memory consolidation process. Nevertheless there are a few cultures that have traditionally accommodated a mid-day nap, such as in some Mediterranean, South-American and Arab countries, do to their heavy warm climate conditions.

¹⁴ To read more about this article visit <http://www.bio-medicine.org/>.

I also found this article quoted in other news websites, such as <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/02/01/health/webmd/main3780856.shtml>, <http://www.everydayhealth.com>, <http://www.homebiznotes.com/>, <http://www.forbes.com/health/feeds/hscout/2008/02/01/hscout612256.html>, <http://www.wect.com/Global/story.asp?S=7810727>

persons, that the ones who acquired higher levels of information previously to the nap had also better memory tasks results after a nap period¹⁵. It is more common to find researchers now agreeing that dreaming is an active process in the consolidation of memory and procedural learning. This is mostly due to its role in relocating recent perceptions from short memory stores to areas for long-term memory storage. This makes me think that my concept of “ambiguous forms of knowledge” is actually being reinforced by our biological nature. Besides restoring ourselves while sleeping and dreaming, we are actually doing something productive, effective and fundamental: we are randomly processing and transforming recent experiences with former ones, organizing and associating memories.

Working Unit

Some needs are ephemeral.

Charles Eames

The *Dreaming Lounge* inspired the *Working Unit*. It was the whole process of building, finding a way for displaying the lounge, and reflecting on this experiment that produced the need for other devices¹⁶. If during daytime we see someone passing by in a corridor, someone in a room sat on a chair, or someone standing in a line before a doorway, we also immediately forget this individual. But we hesitate or suspect when faced with a person with the eyes closed, still, or reclined. To add to this type of social pressure, people are also under a lot of professional pressure. During daytime one is expected to be dynamic and busy, knowing, or at least looking that way, what his/her next step will be.

¹⁵ A closer insight to this hypothesis can be found in the essay “Dreaming Plays a Role in the Organization of Memory” by Ramon Greenberg, published in the book *Sleep and Dreaming*, edited by Ernest Hartman, (Boston: Little Brown and Company: 1970).

¹⁶ I have started to work on other three projects that were inspired by the *Working Unit* which makes me suspect that I actually might have one day a bigger family of *Daydreaming devices*.



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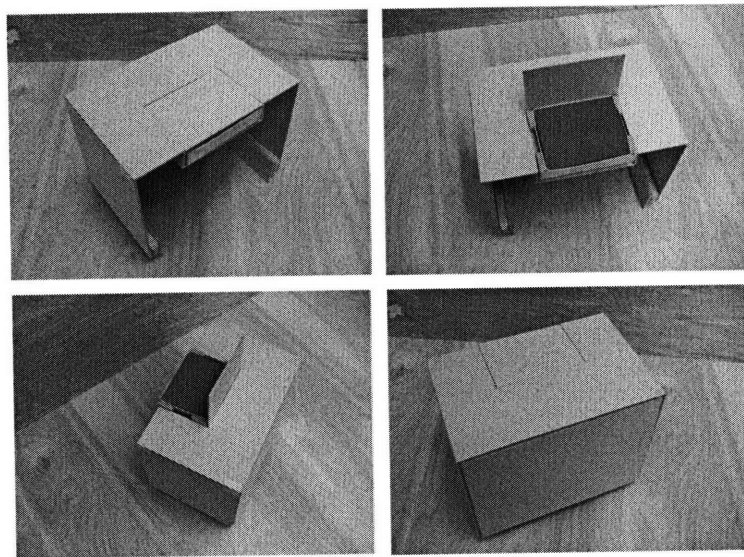
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society assigns to this piece of furniture. Andrew Blauvelt in his text “Strangely Familiar: Design and Everyday Life” gives some interesting examples of how objects and their consumption nowadays represent status and values: “sneakers are signs of wellness, competitiveness, and prestige, and coffee is no longer just a drink but the nexus of social conviviality and a barometer of lifestyle” (Blauvelt 2004: 16). The *Working Unit* accommodates an atypical need in the sphere of productivity, intense consumption, and unreflective immediacy of the lifestyle described by Blauvelt. Besides supporting work, it also offers a self-discovery and playful experience with a familiar object and inspires daydreaming.



Model of the *Working Unit*, 2008.



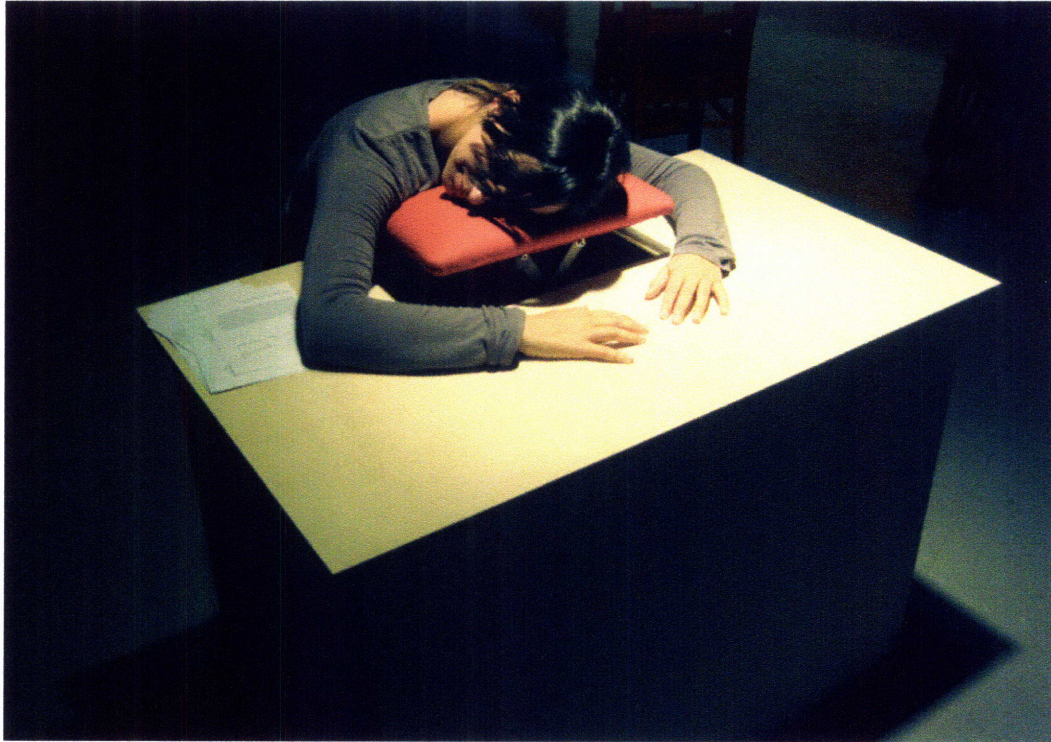
Working unit
Articolare show at N51 – MIT Visual Arts
Program
May 2008



Working unit
Articolare show at N51 – MIT Visual Arts
Program
May 2008



Working unit
Articolare show at N51 – MIT Visual Arts
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Daydreaming

Daydreaming is a state of fantasy that nourishes each one's agency. It is where, I think, we develop ideas that anticipate our unconscious desires and the feeling of Hope that follows thoughts on productivity; It is a praxis of each one's intellect, incubating, inspiring, and explaining life. It can take place at anytime during the day, during a lonely walk, a lively discussion with friends, in the twilight, It comes about because some other activity was temporarily interrupted; because there is a need to attend an anxiety, like fear, pain or, on the contrary, Hope itself. Its content is freely chosen and repeatable; it does not require the complete external senses shut down, and although it contains some aspects of the dreaming process, it is different from dreaming.

The German philosopher Ernst Bloch¹⁹, wrote an intense three volume essay on human emancipation, *The Principle of Hope*, between 1938 and 1947. He considers that it is crucial to understand that daydreams are not preliminary stages for nocturnal dreams, because:

“[They] Can furnish inspirations which do not require interpreting, but working out, it builds castles in the air as blueprints too, and not only fictitious ones. Even in caricature, the daydreamer is presented in a different light than the dreamer: he is then Johnnie Head-in-the-air, and thus by no means the sleeper at night with his eyes closed.” (Bloch 1988: 86).

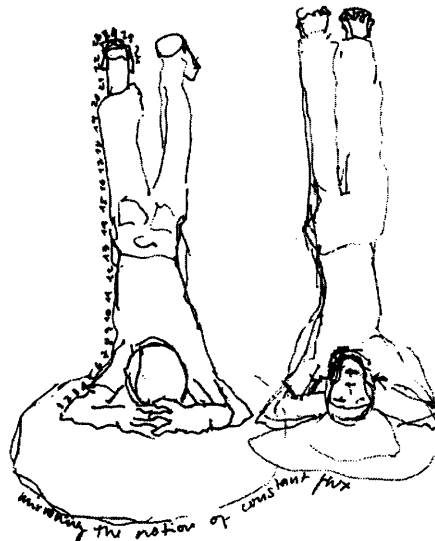
I identify my work with this blurry and flexible zone that Bloch describes as daydreams. I think that we not only should be encouraged to

¹⁹ Ernst Bloch was born in 1885 and died 1977, in Ludwigshafen, Germany. He was a Marxist philosopher also interested in music and art. His trilogy *The Principle of Hope* was written in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the reading room of Harvard's Widener Library. The essay gives an account of mankind's inclination towards a socially and technologically improved future.

daydream, we should be able and inspired to do it together. *Daydreaming devices* is my personal encouragement for generating a social space for reflecting in processes and experiences that shape our knowledge, reconstructing, hopefully²⁰, a public life richer and far more diverse than the present one.

Bloch says:

“Anticipations and intensifications which refer to men, social utopian ones and those of beauty, even of transfiguration, are only really at home in the daydream. Above all revolutionary interest, with knowledge of how bad the world is, with acknowledgment of how good it could be if it were otherwise, needs the waking dream of world-improvement, keeps hold of it in a wholly unheuristic, wholly realistic way in both its theory and practice.” (Bloch 1998: 95).



Sketch of a daydreamer, 2007.

²⁰ I am using Bloch’s philosophical definition of Hope, the content that carries imaginative ideas that are made of existing material but also made of existing material that anticipates a ‘Real-Possible.’”

Conclusion

We tend to relegate socialization to closed and intimate circuits. Because public space is currently under so much surveillance, the *Dreaming Lounge* and the *Working Unit* represent a sort of a provocation. But they also stand for something intangible and real, like a metaphor²¹ with no practical consequences that enables a transformative process with accomplices. Each device produces this effect in its own particular way. The *Dreaming Lounge*, by integrating a handle that surprisingly releases a canapé and converts itself into a bed; The *Working Unit*, through the rough and slow cranking motion of a knob that elevates, at an adjustable height, a rectangular pillow-board from the horizontal surface of a wood desk.

Both devices custom technology that needs only a simple²² physical investment, be it pulling a handle or cranking a knob, to ultimately produce a quite extraordinary experience: a suspension in the time narrative of a familiar place. I find this effect communicable in the word *delay*, a period of time by which something is propagated. Because the aesthetic qualities of this “something that is propagated” are subjective, I include drawings of what I believe is the *delay* quality of each device in the two diagrams that follow this conclusion.

I also think, if I might say so, that it is the non-immediate and non-invasive features of the devices that I built what attracts people to use them. It is their “weird” convertible design that transforms the awkwardness of their nature into something interesting, prolonged and public. At least, it makes me wanting to learn more about who is using these devices that generate

²¹ I have tried to demonstrate this through the three diagrams I included in the Introduction section of this paper.

²² So that my words do not betray me, it is rather complex and challenging to integrate a “simple” mechanical motion into what is meant to be used as a comfortable piece of furniture.

such unfamiliar type of strangeness.

I argued, with words and images, how I believe *Daydreaming devices* are a possible way for disrupting our obvious commonality. How we live will only change in relation to our own vulnerability and motivation to fulfill cultural, political, and economical needs. This consoles me, meanwhile, that artist and Professor Muntadas, who has dedicated part of his practice deconstructing media representations said last semester in one of his *Public Art* seminar classes: “there is always room for poetry.”

There is a lot to be said about daydreaming. The above references neither represent the density nor the complexity of the subject. This has been, so far, my understanding of how *daydreaming in public* can support our need for social identification. Right now, I know that *Daydreaming devices* can do this by sustaining a non-obvious commonality, without an obvious gratification such as money, status, or style, and by transforming ordinary places and situations into extraordinary discoveries.



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Appendices

Press Article by MIT News Office

Grand pram: Student's chaise offers temporary escape

Sarah H. Wright,

News Office

January 18, 2008

The coziest corner in MIT's Barker Engineering Library is Dreaming Lounge, a mocha-colored chaise with a green canopy at the head and a wooden lever on one side.

Designed and built by Sofia Ponte, graduate student in architecture, Dreaming Lounge is a prototype for what Ponte hopes will be a place for MIT students to get a break from all the rational knowledge they must soak up.

Resembling a baby carriage for grown-ups, Dreaming Lounge offers a way to center the student who's gotten off-balance: Settle in, pull the wooden handle back and the canopy lifts over your head. Once beneath this soft dark roof, the brain is shielded from the grid of rational journals shelved opposite the lounge--Nordic Hydrology, Noise Control, the Journal of Risk and Reliability, to name a few.

"Dreaming Lounge is a bubble of air, a way to breathe and access inner categories of knowledge, like ethics and dreams. It's a place to combine the rational and the irrational," said Ponte.

Ponte, a native of Lisbon who has traveled widely, cautioned the Lounge is neither a bed nor a refuge for people in transit.

"It's for MIT students and researchers. It's designed for libraries, but I'd love to see it in any learning situation," said Ponte.

She acknowledged the head-canopy, once in place, seems to exert a definite pull to sleep, perchance to dream. This was one reason not to extend the canopy to a full-body length: too cocoon-ish.

The other? "I tried it--too medical, too much like an MRI," said Ponte.

Once her basic design was set, Ponte turned to construction. Dreaming Lounge, it turned out, presented nuts-and-bolts problems and an adventure in MIT resourcefulness that would take her beyond the Institute's classrooms, libraries and studios.

Ponte needed a moveable seat; she found one in a Somerville dump, extracting the steel frame and some foam for the lounge from an abandoned Chevy Suburban. She carved the wooden handle herself from a 2x4, and she got the mocha fabric from a supplier to hospitals, airports and schools.

Her hunting and gathering didn't end there. "I'd never upholstered

anything like this, and now I was making furniture. I needed someone who knew how to sew," Ponte said.

The student was ready; the teacher appeared via Craigslist. Ponte's ad-- "will pay for upholstery advice on daybed with moving parts"--intrigued Magda Aliberti, a theater designer in her 40s based in suburban Boston. "We worked together for two mornings, starting at seven, stapling and gluing the foam, making a pattern and cutting the fabric. I stapled and sewed the fabric over the foam and sewed the ribs into the canopy. This is my final; with Magda's help, I met the deadline. Dreaming Lounge blends in with the library furniture," Ponte said.

Ponte, who hopes to refine Dreaming Lounge next term, tried footwork before hitting Craigslist: She took the Dreaming Lounge plans to Pacheco Brothers, upholsterers in Cambridge.

"They gave me an estimate of three thousand dollars--too much! But when they learned I was from MIT, they got into the project and gave me advice on it," she said.

Dreaming Lounge will recline between Machinery Annual and Tunnels and Tunneling in Barker (10-500) until Feb. 15.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar containing the URL <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2008/arts-dreamchair-0118.html>. The browser's address bar also shows search engines like Google and Bing. The page title is "Grand pram: Student's chaise offers temporary escape - MIT News Office". The page content includes a sidebar with navigation links such as "MIT news", "news", "recent", "research", "campus", "by topic", "events", "archives", "in the news", "subscribe", "podcasts", "e-news", "tech talk", "news releases", "rss feeds", "services", "request images", "submit news", "promote news", "media inquiries", "about us", "news office info", and "MIT background contact". The main content area features the article title "Grand pram: Student's chaise offers temporary escape" by Sarah H. Wright, News Office, dated January 15, 2008. The article text describes the "Dreaming Lounge" as a modern chaise with a canopy, designed by Sofia Ponte, a graduate student in architecture. It details the design process, including the use of a mobile steel frame and a custom-made canopy. The article also mentions that Ponte sought advice from a theater designer, Magda Aliberti, and that the lounge will be displayed in Barker (10-500) until February 15. The article includes a photo of Sofia Ponte and a caption identifying her as a graduate student in architecture. At the bottom of the page, there is contact information for the MIT News Office, including the address (77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307), phone number (617-253-2700), and email address (newsoffice@mit.edu). There is also a "ask feed" icon.

I Don't Sleep, I Dream

Lyrics and music by R.E.M. (Berry/Buck/Mills/Stipe)

Monster, 1994 (album)

I'm looking for an interruption,
Do you believe?
You looking to dig my dreams
Be prepared for anything
You come into my little scene
Hooray, hooray, hip hip hooray
There's one thing I can guarantee:
You won't have to dig, dig too deep
Said leave me to lay, but touch me deep,
I don't sleep, I dream
I'll settle for a cup of coffee, but you know what I really need

Are you looking to drive my dreams?
You here to run my screens?
You come, deliver my demons
Hooray, hooray, hip hip hooray
Are you coming to ease my headache?
Do you give good head?
Am I good in bed?
I don't know, I guess so
I don't sleep, I dream
I'll settle for a cup of coffee, but you know what I really need

I'm looking for an interruption,
Can you believe?
Some medicine for my headache
Hooray, hooray, hip hip hooray
I'm pitching for a new direction
Pinch me when I wake
Don't tell me my dreams are fake
You leave me to lay, you touch me deep,
I don't sleep, I dream
I'll settle for a cup of coffee, but you know what I really need
Leave me to lay, but touch me deep,
I don't sleep, I dream
I'll settle for a cup of coffee, but you know what I really need

“The Artist in the World of Science”
Lecture at St. John’s University Science Symposium, 1967
By Marcel Breuer

Webster lists 13 varying meanings for “ART.” Not until definition number nine does the notion “aesthetic” turn up in combination with a special skill, taste, and beauty; such as in painting, drawing, sculpture and architecture, - the art forms called “fine arts” of visual arts. However, definition number three already speaks of science and mathematics and sooner still, of a special learning. These definitions come very close to those for science.

If we then try to complete Webster by our own rather indefinite notions, for instance, that art has something to do with EMOTION (Van Gogh); that it has some noble dealings with CHAOTIC (Hieronymus Bosch, Kandinsky) and with ORDER (Mondrian); with instincts not yet analyzed; with things which cannot yet be expressed in another medium (Picasso, Rodin); that its message can be that of truth or imagination (Rembrandt or Chagall); that its attraction can be serenity or awesome terror (Leonardo da Vinci or Matthias Grunewald) – we do have problems to outline the subject matter of this paper.

While apparently the meaning of “art” today more than ever, needs explanation and individual interpretation, the meaning of “science” is clearer: something like knowledge based on verifiable facts. One can say in general that its development is logical; its truths are established or discarded through experience and deduction; its applications regulated by practical and economic considerations. (I hope to be forgiven for calling certain applications of nuclear sciences practical and economical!)

How easy it would be to over simplify and conclude that art is concerned with the world of emotion, science with the world of logic. Not entirely true. We know surprisingly methodical scientific and analytical artists (Leonardo da Vinci and the “emotional” Paul Klee); we know also of scientists who depend on intuitions as much as on logical deduction. (Einstein, we are told, was unable to handle methodically relatively simple mathematical formulas.)

Past periods of history knew the artist and the scientist as one and the same person. Our everyday language uses the terms interchangeably: the science of Architecture, the art of Engineering. We have good reason to suspect that our logical world and our emotional world have the same center-source and that only the channels vary, through which logic on one side, emotion on the other, work themselves to the surface – at least so far as creative work is concerned. We

suspect that such a center directs our feelings, as well as our thoughts and that only the medium of expression and the creative training differs: the language of the eye here, of the ear there; the language of conclusions here, of images there, - ideas here, limitations there. Which language the individual chooses depends not only on his particular gift, his “divine spark,” but on tradition and many factors of geography and history.

These factors, common factors of groups, nations, races, seem to influence greatly the individual’s natural choice. Thus we find, that while Russia produced very great writers in the 18th and 19th centuries, she did not produce comparable painters and sculptors. Although France had a secondary place in regard to painters of the caliber of the Spanish Velasquez, El Greco or Goya, she clearly took first position in the second half of the 19th century (Cezanne, Renoir, Henri Rousseau).

However it may be, creative common center or not, channels of expression dependent on times and surroundings or not, - the classic categories, painting, sculpture and illustration, lost a great deal of territory in our age, whereas the sciences and their applications gained immensely. This is indeed the age of technology, of applied sciences, of engineering.

Painters and sculptures had to submit the privileges of producing a portrait, of telling a story, of illustrating a scene, of documenting history, to photograph and film; the privilege or ornamentation has been submitted to illumination by lightening, and to textures and materials produced by many branches of our modern, ever active Technology.

Quite a few years ago, in the middle of the twenties, when I showed the X-Ray photo of a snail house to Paul Klee, an extremely untalkative man, he said: “They have again taken away something from us,” meaning the painters. And indeed, no artist could have produced a more impressive or illustrative picture than that X-Ray photo, with the sensitive shading of its halftone, with the snailhouses’ hidden structure of bulkhead cross bracings, expressing the floating structural stresses inside the spiral, - with a beautiful and poetic geometric precision.

The scientist has definitely the upper hand, his work is closer to essential needs, he is considered more comprehensible, more useful, - in the direct meaning of the world. While the artist is still the individual in his studio, engaging himself with his personal problems, his qualms, his “weltschmerz” and his peace of soul, the scientist has transferred the medieval alchemist to an all embracing, up-to-date force of our society. Our modern technology, with its applied sciences, dominates a very great segment of our life – electrons and atoms, synthetics and computers, the space, the depth of waters, the depth of the solids. I surely don’t need to sing

the hymn of technology. We are all part of it, directed and molded by it. The scientist not only does a lot, sometimes better than the artist of yesterday did, but he has developed entirely new techniques: photography and slow motion film, color lightning and projection. These are, in a manner of speaking, new art forms, with entirely new and original possibilities. A big photographic enlargement ceases to be an 8'' x 10''. It becomes a new material, a new experience, inducing new observation, creating a new scale, new textures. I have a 6 x 8 foot enlargement of Michelangelo's "Adam" on my wall. I have never before looked at Michelangelo this way. It is dimensional travel into entirely new territory.

Micro-films grow to new dimensions and the perception of these forms at that size is entirely fresh and fascinating – quantity is transformed into quality and the unknown microcosm reveals orders, some very beautiful ones and deeply moving. Our eyes are trained anew through science.

Seeing a skier come downhill in a slow motion film makes us aware of an elegance and dignity not before known in human experience, even in Art. This is a manifestation of an automatic quality, really a spiritual one, similar to what we find in nature or in the epic rhythm of the first page of Genesis.

Furthermore, I have experienced through contacts with scientists that often they have a rather straightforward interest in and curiosity about art, visual and other: they are fascinated by color, light, space, the creative instinct and its manifestations in architecture, planning and music. They are sensitive to the aesthetic forms, which are produced by technology automatically: a computer's circuit plates, a building-crane's delicate lacework. They do not hesitate to incorporate into their scientific lingo such expressions as an "elegant" theory, a "beautiful" line of deductions – terms formerly belonging to art critics. We have known the artist-engineer in past periods: Michelangelo. We may confront the age of the engineer-artist: Nervi, Maillard, Oppenheimer, if we speak of the dilemma of the artist in the World of Science, we refer, perhaps, to the transformation of the artist, rather than of art. Perhaps it is not enough to be specialized in one's moods, emotions, homemade philosophies and private interpretations. Many artists feel this. They attempt to change the medium of their work. We could also say that the artist shifts the channel chosen for the expression of art, - whatever art may be. The painter may use the camera, in addition to brush and paint, he may be consultant to industry, he may design street signs, messages in light, he may paint in a new, dynamic medium, color projection, moving or still. From this point of view, the artist has no dilemma. He was, in the past, the searcher who, like all creative men. Concerns himself with needs, which have not yet been met. He is likely to play a similar role in our industrial, technological era, perhaps in the disguise of a scientist, a technical perfectionist, an inventor, a photographer, a coordinator.

Technology rather than endangering the artist, fuses him with the engineer, with the scientist. It supplies him with new fields of activity, it boards his philosophies, it shows him new materials, processes, possibilities. If we have any criticism of Walker Evan's slum photos, it is probably that their composition and aesthetic perfection tend to let us forget the squalid subject matter, which is the actual message of the work. I would have had the same observation of Rembrandt, had lived in those days. That this art allowed us to forget the misery of the beggar, his model. If we have any critical notion about the epic dignity and visual majesty of an atomic explosion's slow motion film, it is perhaps that its breathtaking beauty makes us forget the awful potentials not yet mastered by our present day social regulations. If we take Eliot Porter's endlessly truthful and sensitive photos of natural forms, plants, reeds, flowers, etc., we have something comparable to Breughel's art. (By the way, Eliot Porter has the background of an active biochemist.) If we take the structures of engineers such as Fressnais or Nervi, we can justly compare them with the most recognized structures of the Romanesque or Gothic periods.

In all that I say here, the eye has a special role, visual arts, visual sciences. The eye travels by direct route to our reactions and sympathies. It prepares the ground for deeper interest, deeper understanding. In ancient days, the days of no other mass communications, the artist produced documents, he created portraits of and for the ruler, he created images to convey ideas. He was a story-teller. He was an instrument of communication, of information. That which was art in his work, was supported by an obvious need for his craft. His craft served society's necessities first of all; his art was acceptable because it served generally comprehensible things, aside from the fact that it may have been art. Will the future be similar? Will the practical engineer, the logical scientist, produce art automatically as a by-product? – Simultaneously logical, practical, human and – art? Art as emotion, as order out of chaos, as an automatic trend toward perfection, toward human equilibrium – perhaps a color, perhaps a decision where logic has not decided yet?

It seems that science is willing to embrace the artist, to make use of his qualities, to train him and to learn from him. On the other side, there is a large group of artists, many of whom experiment today with scientific media, who join industry as designer-associates. They join universities, not merely to do a teach art, but to discuss things with scientists, to participate in mutual stimulation (for instance György at M.I.T). We cannot help but think that our modern technology gives opportunities to artists of a new kind, although they may call themselves engineers, technicians or scientists. One of today's most fascinating achievements is the expansion of our dimensional conceptions. Large dimensions can be still larger, small ones still much smaller. A whole wall, easily, a whole

field, a whole landscape can be illuminated, changed, decorated, recomposed by projected light, by projected form or color. Another branch of the visual arts, architecture, also goes through essential changes. Its former methods had their origin in the crafts, its future methods will be formed by technology to a much greater degree. Formerly, architectural design developed through precedence, through previous buildings with formal motifs and a style, to be strictly respected. As to the present and probably the future, architecture approaches its job directly – analyzes the building program, the nature of the owner, the various functions, the circulation, the traffic, the most favorable materials, the climate, the available resources, the neighborhood, the psychology of the task. It considers computations of structural and mechanical experts; of acoustical experts; it uses laboratory tests of materials; it checks everything again and again, it coordinates the latest information. The architect learns rather thoroughly the language of the building industry and its laboratories. His constant aesthetic action very often derives from scientific synthesis. His approach is direct, similar to that of the scientist. His aesthetic judgment is one component of the total, perhaps the coordinating one. While this intuition inventiveness important, it cannot stand alone unless equally responsible weight is given to the technological demands.

We are conscious of the fact that the architecture already has a more established position in relation to science. Building, sometimes despite the architect, has been close to the technical science of the times and today, this is even more and radically true. For this built-in advantage, I apologize to the “pure” artist, to the painter and sculpture.

Art is in great demand today, in one form or another and all I have been trying to say is that I am unafraid for the artist’s future in our world of science. He may shave his beard – now that everybody else has one, - but if he regards the immense growth of science without personal jealousy, he will find that his field of activity has expanded too, and in a very important and respected way.

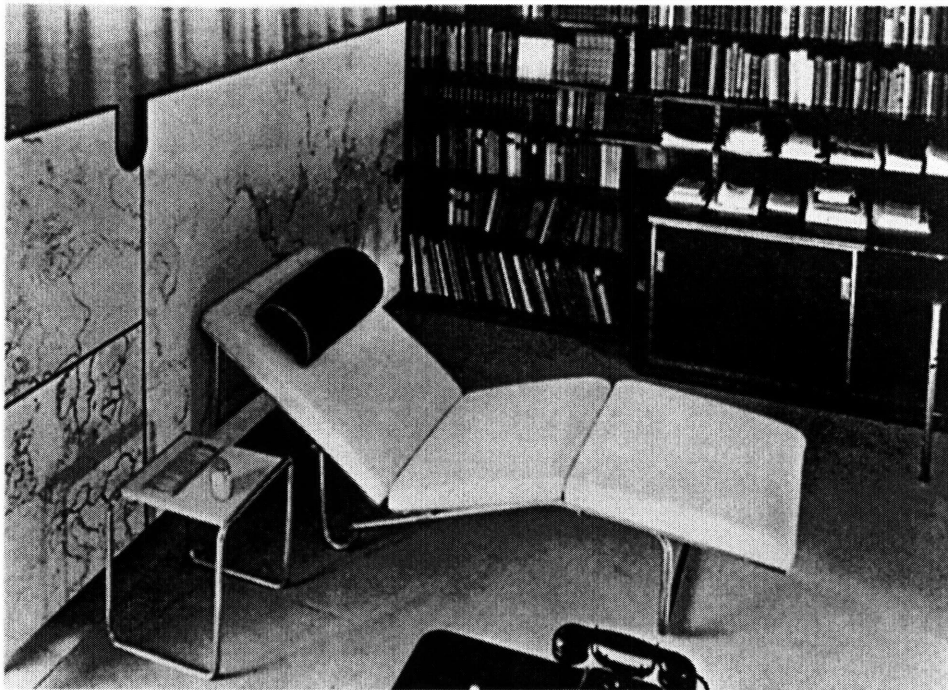
In any case, artists never had it better than in this epoch of science: a proof of this are art departments in colleges, in governmental and municipal bodies more and more of them, and a variable avalanche of new art museums with extensive educational departments. Could it be that, while the technocrats and technique itself seem to run away with us, philosophically, politically, socially and visually speaking, - one hopefully turns to the artist for a balance of values at least in visual sense? Justifiably or not. This may be one of the reasons for what we may call our “cultural explosion.”

What if “art” is produced not only by specialized artists, but also by sensitized scientists? By the technical scientist, by the social scientist and by the political

scientist? And by others? I think we should welcome this as a symptom of a broad cultural sweep indeed: artist or no artist.

Thank you!

Note: This paper was transcribed from the *Smithsonian Archives of American Art* online collections on July 1, 2008.



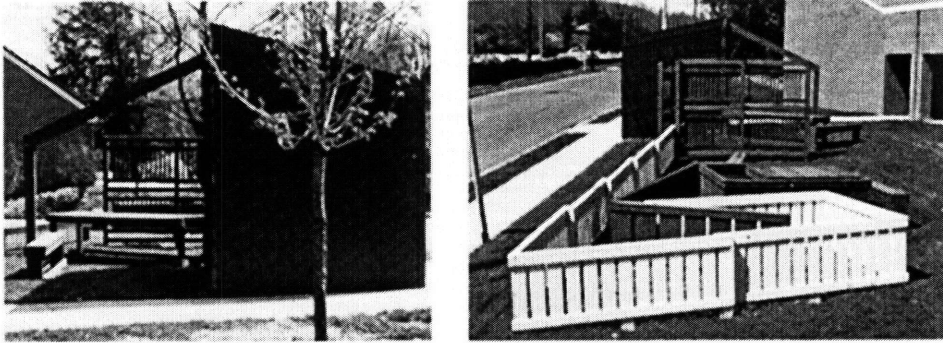
View of *Harnischmacher House I*, work room by architect Marcel Breuer, 1932.

MANIFESTO
Public Sculpture in the Context of American Democracy
by
Siah Armajani

“I embrace the common. I explore the familiar, the low (...). Give me insight into today, you may have the antique and the future.”
Emerson

1. Public sculpture is a logical continuation of the modern movement and the enlightenment which was tempered and conditioned by the American revolution.
2. Public sculpture attempts to de-mystify art.
3. Public sculpture is less about self-expression and the myth of its maker and more about its civiness. Public sculpture is not based upon a philosophy which seeks to separate itself from the everydayness of everyday life.
4. In public sculpture the artist offers his/her expertise, therefore the artist as a maker has a place in society. The social and the cultural need to support artistic practice.
5. Public sculpture is a search for a cultural history which calls for structural unity between object and its social spatial setting. It should be open, available, useful and common.
6. Public sculpture opens up a perspective through which we may comprehend the social construction of art.
7. Public sculpture attempts to fill the gap that comes about between art and public to make art public and artists citizens again.
8. Generally speaking, public sculpture is not of a particular style or ideology. It is through action in concrete situations that public sculpture will acquire a given character.
9. Public sculpture has some kind of social function. It has moved from large scale, outdoor, site-specific sculpture into sculpture with social content. In the process it has annexed a new territory for sculpture that extends the field for social experience.
10. Public sculpture believes that culture should be detectable geographically. The idea of region must be understood as a term of value. That is the case in politics. Why not in culture?
11. Public sculpture is not artistic creation alone but rather social and cultural productions based upon concrete needs.

12. Public sculpture is a cooperative production. There are others besides the artist who are responsible for the work. To give all the credit to the individual artist is misleading and untrue.
13. The art in public art is not a general art but a missionary art.
14. The ethical dimensions of the arts are mostly gone and only in a newly formed relationship with non-art audience may the ethical dimensions come back to the arts.
15. We enter public sculpture not as a thing between four walls in a spatial sense but as a tool for activity.
16. There is a value in a site in itself but we should keep our preoccupation with the site to a minimum.
17. Public sculpture is not here to enhance architecture in or out, nor is architecture here to house public sculpture in or out. They are to be neighborly.
18. Art and architecture have different histories, different methodologies and two different languages.
19. The use of the adjectives “architectural” in sculpture and “sculpture” in architecture, for the purpose of establishing analogy, simile, metaphor, contrast or similarity between public sculpture and architecture is no longer descriptive or valid.
20. Public sculpture puts aside the allusion, the illusion and the metaphysical supposition that the human being is only a spiritual being who was misplaced here on earth. We are here because home is here and no other place.
21. The public environment is a notion of a reference to the field in which activity takes place. The public environment is a necessary implication of being in the community.
22. Public sculpture depends upon some interplay with the public based upon some shared assumptions.
23. There is a limit to public sculpture. There are also limits in science and in philosophy.
24. Public sculpture should not intimidate, assault or control the public. It should enhance a given place.
25. By emphasizing usefulness, public sculpture becomes a tool for activity. Therefore we reject Kantian metaphysics and the idea that art is useless.
26. Public sculpture rejects the idea of the universality of art.



Top image: *Reading Garden #1*, 1980
Roanoke College, Roanoke Virginia
Bottom image: *Reading Garden #1* (model), 1980
by Siah Armajani

These Things I Know For Sure by Andrea Zittel

These things I know for sure:

1. It is a human trait to want to organize things into categories. Inventing categories creates an illusion that there is an overriding rationale in the way that the world works.
2. Surfaces that are “easy to clean” also show dirt more. In reality a surface that camouflages dirt is much more practical than one that is easy to clean.
3. Maintenance takes time and energy that can sometimes impede other forms of progress such as learning about new things.
4. All materials ultimately deteriorate and show signs of wear. It is therefore important to create designs that will look better after years of distress.
5. A perfected filing system can sometimes decrease efficiency. For instance, when letters and bills are filed away too quickly, it is easy to forget to respond to them.
6. Many “progressive” designs actually hark back towards a lost idea of nature or a more “original form.”
7. Ambiguity in visual design ultimately leads to a greater variety of functions than designs that are functionally fixed.
8. No matter how many options there are, it is human nature to always narrow things down to two polar, yet inextricably linked choices.
9. The creation of rules is more creative than the destruction of them. Creation demands a higher level of reasoning and draws connections between cause and effect. The best rules are never stable or permanent, but evolve naturally according to context or need.
10. What makes us feel liberated is not total freedom, but rather living in a set of limitations that we have created and prescribed for ourselves.
11. Things that we think are liberating can ultimately become restrictive, and things that we initially think are controlling can sometimes give us a sense of comfort and security.
12. Ideas seem to gestate best in a void—when that void is filled, it is more difficult to access them. In our consumption-driven society, almost all voids are filled, blocking moments of greater clarity and creativity. Things that block voids are called “avoids.”
13. Sometimes if you can’t change a situation, you just have to change the way that you think about the situation.
14. People are most happy when they are moving forwards towards something not quite yet attained. (I also wonder if this extends as well to the sensation of physical motion in space. I believe that I am happier when I am in a plane or car because I am moving towards an identifiable and attainable goal.)

—Andrea Zittel (*as of Spring 2005*)

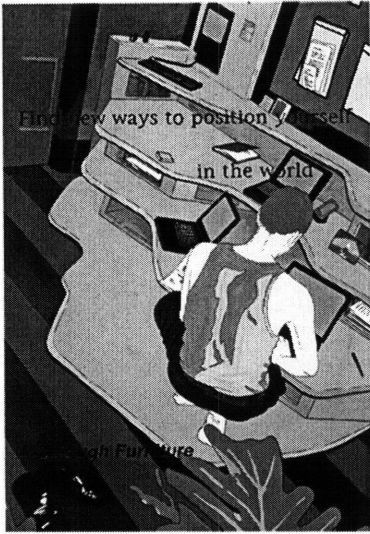
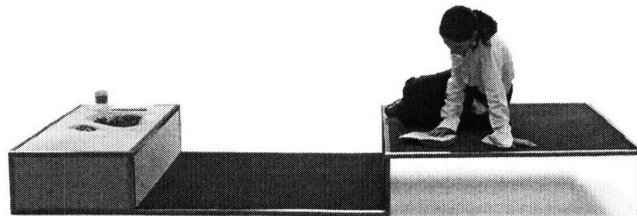
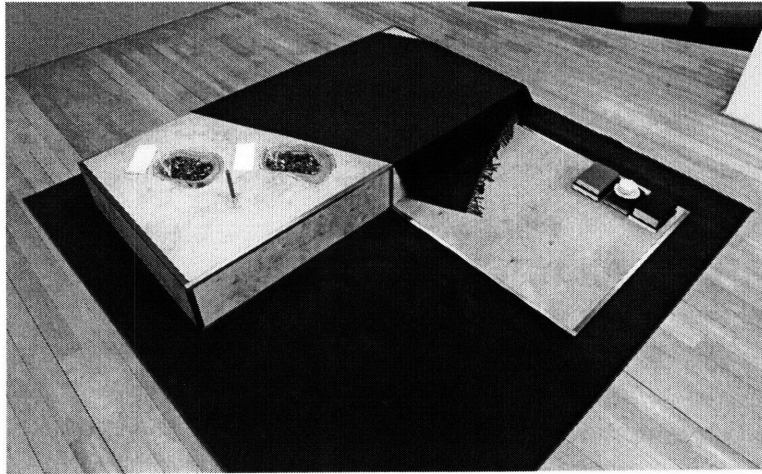


Image on left, *Find New Ways to Position Yourself in the World*, 2001
 Image on right, *Prototype for A-Z Rough Desk #1 A-Z East*, 2001
 by Andrea Zittel



Top image *Everlasting and Complete A-Z Food Group*, 2001
 Bottom image *A-Z Eating Environments*, 2001
 by Andrea Zitte

Images Index

Page 18 and 19 from www.designboom.com

Page 30 from National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
www.ninds.nih.gov

Page 33 image from the left www.designboom.com; image on the middle
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