Variables Assemblage

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Abstract

Variables Assemblage focuses on everyday urban objects that are ubiquitous and non-descript. These objects are embedded parts and foundations of cities that have specific functions. These objects possess no significant characteristics, but they are structural elements in their everyday urban environment, and the relationship between the objects and the environment is reciprocal. Through examining and transforming these objects, their presence and new contexts in *Variables Assemblage* interact in new and different ways according to the viewer's understanding and perception of these objects. This transformation considers the inherent quality of insignificant everyday objects, one's perception of them, and their relation to their environment.

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*All images and figures are taken and drawn by Alice Mi Jeong Kim

Introduction

The exhibition *Variables Assemblage* consists of three types of elements. One is comprised of virtual models that are installed in the corner of the gallery space shadowing and reflecting their geometrical shapes onto the wall. These virtual models appear like three dimensional transparent sketches suspended in the air rather than pieces of work. The second is composed of wooden objects scattered on the gallery floor. It includes three characteristics of objects: structural, framed, and spatial. The third type is site-specific work that interrelates with the exhibition space. This work was developed by observing the given space in the context of the thesis theme and used the utilitarian elements of that space. All of these elements reflect urban objects and their parts by existing in both controlled and uncontrolled ways.

Img 1

Variables Assemblage focuses on everyday urban objects that are ubiquitous and non-descript. The objects explored in my art practice are embedded parts and foundations of cities that have specific functions. These objects possess no significant characteristics, but they are structural elements in their everyday urban environment; the relationship between the objects and the environment is reciprocal. In reviewing these objects, there is uncertainty about their *gestalt* [1]. Thus, individual perception

[1] Derived from German, *Gestalt* in English means "an organized whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts" (The OED). Here, I use the English term rather than the German sense of the term for visible external form or geometrical appearance. According to Gestalt psychology, gestalt "implies that the mind understands external stimuli as whole rather than the sum of their parts".

and the properties of an object are regarded in the way that they relate to one another in their surroundings.

In this support paper, unspecific urban objects and their presence will be considered in the context of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'things' and Henri Lefebvre's concept of everyday 'space' and 'rhythm'. In addition, the constitutive paradigm and the perspective of 'place' by Giorgio Agamben and Miwon Kwon, respectively, will be articulated with the project *Variables*[2] *Assemblage*.

The segments of this paper are organized in order to highlight the fundamental exploration of our relationship to everyday objects, what they are, how we perceive them, and how they relate to our everyday space. They are aligned in the following sequence: everyday things > seeing everyday things > the presence of a thing > transformation > a free object > perceiving the world (Fig. 3). This entire exploration explains the developing thoughts of the thesis project, while simultaneously examining the uncertainty of the *gestalt* of the everyday objects. A detailed description of each created object and its visual and physical transformation will follow after the sequence.

The intent of *Variables Assemblage* is to explore urban objects that are non-descript and ubiquitous, which exist in our everyday environment. My practice is influenced by the

[2] In the title, *Variables* implies changing factors and applies to both 'everyday objects' and 'methods' discussed in this paper. In relation to objects, they connote circumstances, and to method, a change in direction. Variables are also considered an influential element in a complex system. The variables might be unnoticed when worked out through things and emerge as something new or changed. See more explanations in this paper p13, p15, and p16.

surrounding contemporary environment where I live. Through my experience, designing a space and creating a product develops a relationship between the space or object and the user. I consider and explore an object not by a defined context with its known name, but in an open and flexible way. We usually understand an object immediately with its name such as stool, handgrip, or handrail that provides a specific function. Then, each of these objects can be considered as something to sit on, to hold or open, and to rely on for body support. This way of perceiving things has led to the project, *Variables Assemblage.* My art practice in this project focuses on common urban objects such as utilitarian or structural objects. It is the insignificant characteristics of these objects which appeal to me. At the same time, the reciprocal relation between objects and space is also intriguing.

Thus, Merleau-Ponty's notion on how things are perceived and Henri Lefebvre's perspective on everyday space led me to further research their thoughts to articulate my work. We see things by their physical characteristics as well as by their temporal and spatial aspects. It is also an individual experience that affects the 'gestalt' of an object. Lefebvre's analysis helps to understand and observe urban space as a mutual relationship with the environment. Although we live in a different contemporary environment, Merlau-Ponty and Lefebvre's thoughts and analyses still apply to our perception and relation to daily surroundings and raise questions on how we understand and deal with a new and changing environment. Reflecting on all of this, my art practice observes surrounding elements closely and recognizes certain relations, particularly those that have an insignificant presence.

Experience with Space and Objects

My educational background is in design for product and space. I studied Visual Communication, specifically Space Formation, which deals with communication within space. My initial area of interest was to work with three-dimensional projects. During my studies in Berlin, I focused on experimenting with space as an artistic practice. As my core professor was an architect, I had many opportunities to develop diverse exhibition projects. At the time, I was able to experience an array of contemporary architecture and this peaked my interest in interior spaces that are empty. In such empty spaces, you can clearly perceive its spatial structure and fully experience the spatiality.

My accumulated interests and experiences with architectural space led me to continuously seek site-related work. My first space-installation project was developed in East Berlin where I used an old abandoned space, which was divided into three rooms, to carry out my work. I used the existing structure of the building and installed walls and wires to connect the three spaces through the openings between rooms. This project inspired my interest in using elements of space to create a site-specific experience in an interactive way.

Additionally, my career journey started from a design studio in Seoul and Tokyo where I gained valuable experience working with interior architecture, furniture, and printing material. One of my furniture projects was presented in Milan at *SaloneSatellite* and was selected by a British Company, Habitat, to be manufactured and sold throughout Europe. In this way, I have experience with creating and working with functional objects. Through this, I have developed a wider and more complex understanding of simple objects.

During my career as a designer, I traveled to and between cities in different countries. The change of character between cities made me realize the trivial differences in common objects. Every city has common things such as garbage bins, barricades, or exit signs. Although they hold similar shapes and scales due to their formation based on their basic common functions, they possess slightly different details because they were made in different places by different people.

All of these components, my experience with space and my interest in common objects, led to the development of my current artwork. My artwork relates, through transformation, everyday objects to viewers in particular ways. Specifically, my art practice draws attention to non-descript and ubiquitous objects that would otherwise go unnoticed. One of my main objectives of this project is for viewers to walk away with a newfound perspective in communicating with everyday space.

Everyday things

They are *particles*[3] of everyday life.
They are scattered urban elements and fragments of the city.

Everyday things are ordinary objects that we encounter in everyday space. They are fragments that we let pass our visions on any given day. We are desensitized to such objects because we come across them so often. They are human constructs or products. We are oblivious to them because they do not appear significant, as they are ubiquitous. Therefore, they are not considered valuable. They are *particles* of everyday life and scattered urban elements. These common objects do not stand out and have unremarkable features, but they are nevertheless functional parts in some way.

Seeing everyday things

Things are in the way you see them.
Things are there the way they are.

Things appear as you see them. They are perceived through your perspective. Things also exist independent of your or anyone else's perspective and view. Then, what relation does our everyday perception have to reality? Henri Lefebvre states that "every object has been calculated and technically realized to carry out a daily function" and "[e]very object is determined by its function and is reduced being a signal; it orders one thing and forbids another; it demonstrates behavior patterns; it conditions" (*Critique*, 2: 78-79). He considers everyday 'objects' as complex factors that serve daily functions. Thus, whether it is a

[3] Commonly used in physics, I use it for everyday things, which means a very small part of this everyday world. Also, a physicist, Max Tegmark, says that, "Everything, even light and people, seems to be made of particles" (183).

residential building or a utility object, everyday objects implicate and determine human activities. These objects are fragments of daily life and are designed, produced, and used in society. Consciously or unconsciously, we see them in specific circumstances: in particular locations and at particular times.

The presence of a thing

A thing is related to another thing in a certain way.
A thing is related to another thing in its own way.

A 'thing' is defined as "an object that one need not, cannot, or does not wish to give a specific name to" (The OED). We call an object a 'thing' when we cannot give it a specific name in a given moment. If an object is called a 'thing', it can have more abstract qualities because a thing is commonly understood by its given name, which helps to form one's perception.

A thing relates to other things as it is situated within a relational matrix, but a thing also relates to itself through its characteristics and circumstances. Things may be identified by their function and the way they occupy space. On the other hand, a thing is itself and relates to its environment and to other objects in its own particular way.

Things can be specified one way or another and can be seen in certain or uncertain ways depending on the situation. As long as a thing contains distinctive characteristics by relating to another object, it can be specified in relation to the other object by its surroundings, circumstances, conditions or other structural factors. For instance, a pedestal can be defined

by its function as a base, but it can also be specified differently as part of a statue's structure, or it can simply be a sculptural object on its own. Furthermore, it can be a functional stool if it

Img 2

is placed in a garden. In each case, the pedestal is a distinctive object within its characterized circumstance. It is perceived as a completely different thing in that relation while retaining its overriding function as a form of support.

In *The Visible and the Invisible,* Merleau-Ponty states that "[t]he thing … is a node of properties such that each is given if one is; it is a principle of identity…by its internal arrangement,… in an exterior array, which the circumstances allow for and do not explain"(161). He asks "if it is really through it that we can comprehend the rest, if our experience is in principle an experience of the thing, if the world, … or if we have not rather introduced as essential elements that in fact are derived and are themselves in need of clarification" (161). Referring to this thought, if the pedestal is removed from its original setting, is it understood apart from its original purpose? Yet, a pedestal separated from its

support can be partially recognized by its remaining form, style, scale, or material. In some cases, however, if the remaining object is obscure such as a block of stone, it can be hard to recognize where it came from. Then, how do we perceive the presence of an object as itself in the case of the pedestal separated from what it supports? How do we recognize its inherent character or non-character though nothing may remain? If we do, it might be the *qualia*[4] that are experienced by one's perception of an object's qualities within its internal properties, which stems from its non-descript features. In addition, one is pre-conditioned by prior experiences in understanding an object's functional and social implications, and this understanding is influenced by preconceived notions.

Merleau-Ponty assumes that the things "are only mild forces that develop their implications on condition that favorable circumstances be assembled. … the identity of the thing with itself … that we have recognized in it already exceed the experience, are already a second interpretation of the experience" (*Visible* 161-162). Thus, an object is an assemblage of its circumstances derived from personal, cultural, and social interpretation.

An object is easily recognized by its appearance, but the external properties are variable by its circumstance. These changes allow one to comprehend objects that are influenced by different situations. Therefore, what one sees is determined by the inter-relational changes within a given environment.

[4] *Qualia,* derived from Latin, means "of what sort" or "of what kind". By definition, it is a quality or property as perceived or experienced by a person.

Transformation

A thing as an entity unto itself loses its inherent character.
A thing in itself loses its actual function.
A thing as itself changes its appearance.

Transformation can happen through displacement, by taking out the object from its natural environment or from a relationship to another thing. If it is taken away, one notices that the absence of the object changes the space. If an object is displaced, the object itself is not changed, but our perception of the object is transformed by the change of its context. For instance, if exterior elements of buildings such as stairs and pillars, which are constructed to connect and stabilize spaces or use, are relocated to an interior space, they are perceived in an unfamiliar way. This is because their original connection to a parent architecture, through a specially designed form, has changed.

Transformation can occur by disassembling the object into parts and reconstructing its parts in different ways, and also by putting them with other objects. Such disassembling and reassembling can create entirely unfamiliar or new objects. To illustrate, if a pedestal is part of a statue's structure and the statue is replace by a different entity, the pedestal then becomes a different object.

When these transformations occur to everyday objects, we notice them because they are unusual. Then, does the object lose its identity? Does it lose its inherent character upon losing its function? Or does the object still contain its own inherent nature and appear to us in a different way? Is it a different entity?

A free object[5]

It cannot retain its identity if it takes on different characteristics.
It can be associated with something.
It can become an unusual thing.

An object is passive and has no will. It is produced by humans. If an object is taken out from its regular context, it becomes dysfunctional. Yet, it may be characterized as an unspecified object. Its shape may be recognizable as something functional, but displaced and out of context. For example, when a window frame is used as a fence, it loses its original function and becomes a different object. Or if the window frame is combined with other objects, it becomes a new and composite object, as in the case that a window frame becomes a picture frame. It is still a window frame with its original properties intact. However, it loses its purpose until it is put to a new use.

A free object, which is out of its original context, takes on diverse or ambiguous characteristics in such manners. If it is associated with something, it alters its identity but partially retains its recognizable shape or characteristics. It can be classified differently or can become an unusual thing. In *Rhythmanalysis,* Lefebvre states that 'the thing' can be perceived free from the ideology through 'the act of rhythmanalysis' [6]. He says that if one takes the stream of media as rhythm, one can "avoid the trap of the present that gives itself

[5] I call something *a free object* if it is detached from, independent from any circumstance or context, namely, a freed object.

[6] Referring to his book, *Rhythmanalysis*, in the analysis of rhythm, Lefebvre considers *rhythm* within the interrelation of time, space, and everyday life. Thus, in 'the act of rhythmanalysis', what the rhythmanalyst concerns is "himself with temporalities and their relation within wholes"(33).

as presence and seeks the effects of presences" (32). And "it perceives the *thing* in the proximity of the present, an instance of the present, just as the image is another instance" and it integrates things "in an ensemble of full meaning, transforming ... into diverse things, but into presences" (33). Therefore, "nothing is immobile" and one should situate oneself in a position that offers access to both the inside and outside at the same time (37).

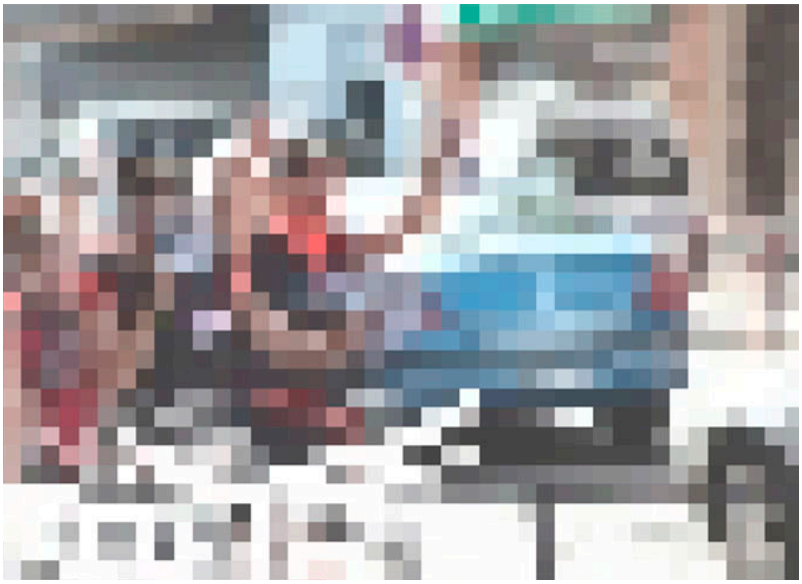
According to his perspective, we perceive things as part of environments, situations, and diverse factors. A thing has its original appearance, function, form, and other characteristics. Through placement in new contexts, its previous appearance and purpose with its affected environment became merged as one. The object is still familiar but in a new configuration.

Perceiving the world

The world where we live is complex.
The world is something we look at and perceive.

The world is like a 'complex system' [7]. The things we see are like *particles*/parts from the everyday world, and we only understand them through our perceptions. The things we experience are tied to their environment, whereas the experiences themselves are individual. While every individual is a member of the social structure, individual perceptions exist within a larger realm of culture and society.

[7] "*Complex Systems*" studies "how relationships between parts give rise to the collective behaviors of a system, and how the system interacts and forms relationships with its environment. Social systems formed (in part) out of relationships between people, the brain formed out of neurons, molecules formed out of atoms, the weather formed out of air flows are all examples of complex systems" (Yaneer 3).



Img 3

The *particles* that we experience everyday contain their collective properties. Their connection and unique nature are complexly intertwined, and they flow and change through their mutual links by gathering and combining. Andrew Ballantyne states, "towns, environments and subjects are presented as correlates of relation, the product of networks and flows" (87). The urban space is a structured network both in order and chaos, in controlled and uncontrolled contexts, and in balance and imbalance. Ballantyne explains the undiscovered structure of the 'milieu' that "our sense of form derives not only from the emergent properties of the 'milieu' or environment, but also from the regimes of signs that surround us" and "how the pattern of the city is generated not by the imposition of form from a higher level, but by decisions taken within the *milieu* " (90). The city is constituted by the regimes, but also by unnoticeable changeable variables. As mentioned above, 'the pattern of the city', the meaning of paradigm can be explained explicitly by Giorgio Agamben's analysis. It allows us to recognize how the urban elements are affected as *particles*.

In general, a paradigm is "a typical example or pattern of something; a model" (The OED). For Thomas S. Kuhn, the term 'paradigm' is a "disciplinary matrix" and "a single element within the set" that represents the common idea of a scientific community and serves as common and coherent tradition of inquiry (Agamben 11). Kuhn defines 'paradigm' as a combined framework of scientific knowledge, practice, thought, and values which dominates the era. Namely, what we see, understand, and value is influenced by the dominant beliefs and of a specific era and area. The everyday place we inhabit is structured and powered by dominant social, economic and political values that the term 'paradigm' signifies. Using Victor Goldschmidt's view that paradigm is a self-contradictory structure, Agamben claims that "the element – form…something like a relation between the sensible and the mental, the element and the form ("the paradigmatic element is itself a relationship")" (23). A paradigm is not just a given or patterned structure or rule, but it is production "… by means of an operation…[f]or this reason, the paradigm is never already given, but is generated and produced…" (Agamben 23). From this perspective, the interrelation of the *particles* as urban objects and urban space can be seen in the system of natural regenerative processes that continuously occur and change.

Variables as Methods

Refraction

The diagrams in figures 1, 2, and 3 express a mode of operation rather than serving as technical instruction. They apply to the process concerning the variables which are changeable factors in the everyday environment.

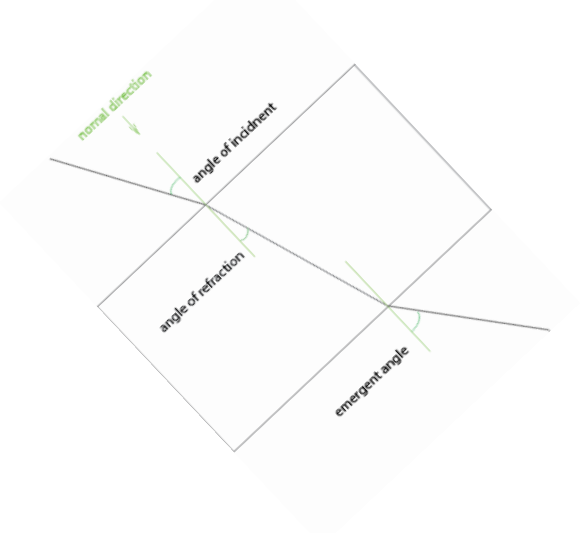


Fig 1

As the exhibition title, *Variables Assemblage,* implies, a method of this project is to allow contingent variables to influence my decisive processes. It is an experimental strategy that traces the course of the variables as they change direction. I refer to it as 'refraction'[8] using the term from physics in the sense of *change of angles of direction*[9] (Fig 1). In my work, the entire process resembles the growth pattern of tree branches (Fig 2). The final stage of work is unforeseeable from the initial stage. However, all branches are seen; every single branch is connected to one another, and every node of the steps has an intersected context. When variables occur, they affect and refract in every direction of the work continuously, changing

[8] In physics, when wave or light travels through a different medium from another, refraction is a phenomenon that wave or light is changed in a traveling direction so that the interface passes through the different medium.

[9] It also applies to the objects, Dash and Spatial object as physical refractions. Refraction can be seen when two planes are placed at an angle.

and developing. I leave the variables as they are and allow them to influence the direction of my work as it unfolds. Even breaks, faults, or flaws, all constraints and choices are parameters. The frequency of refractions becomes a pattern and can be seen as a rhythm in its irregularity, and the output to the work can be considered immanently as an assemblage

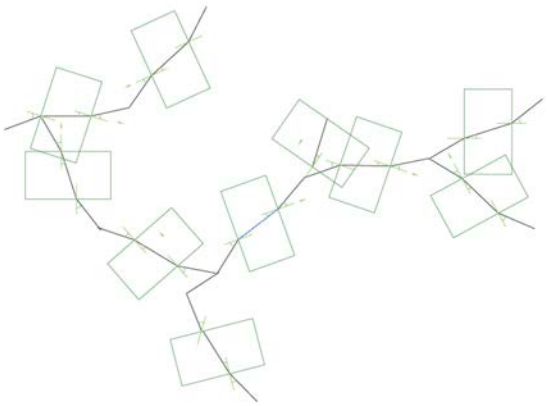


Fig 2

of variables. The work remains as it changes and every node builds a certain connection. Thus, as a method in this project, *variables* work as a changeable element, initiation, and methodical tool, and develops in both anticipated and unanticipated ways. These variables affect and reflect two planes, both practice and research. This method correlates between works and variables, and the variables are factors of the environment. Thus, while a work progresses, the work, variables, and environment engage one another like a biological connection (Fig 3).

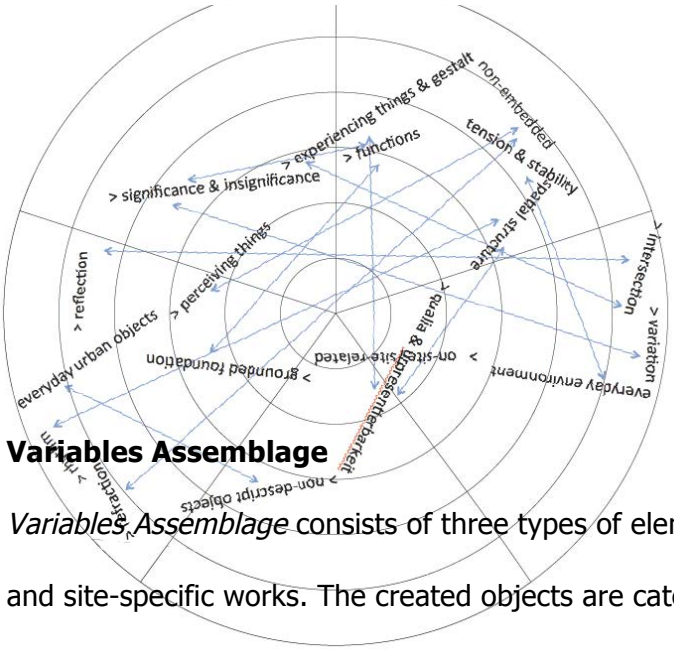


Fig 3

Variables Assemblage

Variables Assemblage consists of three types of elements: virtual models, wooden objects, and site-specific works. The created objects are categorized into four different characteristics: structural, framed, spatial, and reflective. The categories of wooden objects also act as the titles for each of the objects, namely, Structural Object, Framed Object, and Spatial Object. The two different pieces of site-specific works are Non-Embedded and Spatial Surface. I categorize these works and virtual models as reflective objects.

The created *unspecific objects*[10] have common characteristics:

- an object itself constructs a spatial dimension
- an object creates a spatial relation by its specific placement
- an object offers different spatial views in its three-dimensional form

Each object of *unspecific objects* has one or more of these common characteristics.

Unspecific Objects

In *Variables Assemblage*, each of the *unspecific objects* reflects either parts of urban elements or structures. The non-descript objects reflected in this project lack distinctive characteristics

[10] I refer to the created objects for *Variables Assemblage* as *unspecific objects* when they are mentioned as a group of objects. Simply, the word 'unspecific' here means not explicit or particular as it is used within common definition.

and outstanding features; they are dull, uninteresting, and not easily recognizable. Also, the objects are unspecific because they either are not in a specific context, or they partially contain familiar elements. The installation of *Variables Assemblage* allows the objects to be shown in a flexible arrangement. The variables influence the way each object is placed or shown in the gallery space. Each of the objects stands on its own and at the same time, coexists with its surroundings.

Structural Object

"Towns are circuit-points of every kind, which enter into counterpoint along horizontal lines; they effect a complete but local, town-by-town, integration. Each one constitutes a central power, but it is a power of polarization or of the environment [milieu], of forced coordination" (Deleuze and Guattari qtd. in A. Ballantyne 81).

Img 4

The structural elements are parts of buildings that support an existing architecture. The Structural Object is an embedded *dash* between the walls. The installed arrow-shaped line object between the walls in the corner is a structural object similar to the horizontal dash in the space (Img 4). This structural *dash* is fixed to fit in between the two walls, and the two walls are linked by the *dash* while standing with their edges touching at a 90 degree angle. The *dash* object and the walls work together either by supporting or resisting each other.

Similar kinds of structures can be found frequently in architecture, furniture and other supporting fixtures. It is a common and basic structure in a 90 degree construction for joining and supporting. If the angled structure falls apart, the *dash* keeps or pulls it together. If the angle narrows down, the *dash* resists. Namely, the paradoxical relation of pulling and resisting coexists.

If the *dash* object is installed seamlessly onto the wall and finished with the same material, it will certainly look like a part of an inseparable architectural structure. On the other hand, if the *dash* object is attached only by one end to the wall, it will not be recognized as a part of

Img 5

the wall structure like the previous one, but moreso its purpose remains open to interpretation (Img 5). If the arrow *dash* stands by itself and lies on the floor, then it is no longer a structural element. Its shape can be interpreted differently once it is freed from its functional or structural role. The freed *dash* appears in a folded shape that has a internal surface and external surface. It is on its own, but still movable or removable. Then, it becomes *a free object*.

In general, a structural element is identified by its function and how it is connected to another object, space or place. A structural object is what offers stability and support due to its shape and scale. These characteristics can go unnoticed and appear insignificant. If a non-descript structured object is by itself and unrelated to its environment or to other objects, it becomes a discrete component and appears in its own particular way according to its own nature: The thing as it stands in its present state. Thus, its relationship becomes open, changeable, and unstable. On its own, it has some qualities, and its *qualia* can be discovered by the viewers seeing it through their own exploration.

Framed Object

"Architecture is good at monumentalizing the institutions that a society values, finding ways to frame the activities that are seen to be valuable in one way or another" (Ballantyne, 97).

The Framed Object consists of two moulded famed objects in different scales positioned to intersect each other (Img 6). Each one is structured with repeated vertical grid openings, and the openings in between each grid are surrounded using the pre-existing mouldings. Their

Img 6

intersecting arrangement forms spatial views and reinforces an architectural perspective for the viewer. It is constructed in a position close to the wall so that the end of the smaller scale Framed Object can be attached to the wall. The attached end, which comes through one opening of the large Framed Object, connects to the wall. The attachment can either be seen as an end to the wall or a continuous element of the wall.

In general, frames are attached to buildings and have various functions: entering and exiting, opening and closing, and emitting or changing the air. The openings are often designed by a grid side-by-side or upward and downward in a repeated structure. Reflecting everyday architectural objects, the Framed Object concerns limiting, crossing, emitting, acting through opening, closing, and repeating. The physically repeated moulded openings reflect not only the circulation function of the everyday environment, but also the emitting function. The industrially produced mouldings that are commonly used for a specific object or place such as a door or a ceiling in interior spaces are used to enclose the inside of a framed object.

A frame creates boundaries that determine or limit a certain area. The frame can either be a basic structure or indicate the same principles. In general, it refers to various elements such as a picture frame, door, window, or grid frame. Linguistically, it also means a basic structure, concept, or system. The frame also means a standard, a framework or a set of criteria that measures or judges certain values. When the physical shape of a frame creates an opening, it also creates a closing at the same time. It opens a centered space and closes the surrounding space to it. The openings of the Framed Object allow for the passage of something to go in and out while the rigid frame is inflexible. It divides the area into inner and outer spaces. It regulates entry and exit.

A picture frame is a place to present and to replace another image. A doorframe partitions off indoor and outdoor spaces. It determines and protects the compartmented space and becomes a passage. A window as an exterior frame and interior frame divides two worlds. The outside space can be seen only through the frame from the inside space. In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre proposes a window or balcony[11] as an ideal framed place "in order to grasp" the outside. He affirms therefore that one should be situated "simultaneously inside and outside" (37) to view the everyday space. Frames can be borders of distinctive space, thus, the open or closed frame can become a barrier to cross. The created Framed Object also reflects these conceptual perspectives.

Spatial Object

The Spatial Object constructed by a flat frame structure is subdivided horizontally by 19 vertical rectangular bars. The structure is made of wood and is rectangular in shape. Each divided segment is linked, and the flexible joints can be set at different angles. The joints are movable, and the angles can be changed. Its spatiality and the scale of inner space are changable by these reformations. The changes of dimension, angle, and the layers of

Img 7

[11] I find balcony is also a framed space attached to window frames.

structure create a different object that is derived from previous inherent properties. Spreading, folding and unfolding of joints offer distinctive internal and external shapes and forms. The structure of the object can be shaped with various levels of elevation by adjusting the joints.

The rolled Spatial Object is seen entangled (Img 7). The looseness of the connection makes the structure susceptible to twisting and fails to keep the wooden sticks parallel between the rigid geometrical elements. This approximation allows for tilted angles and creates obliquely intersecting structures that are in proximity to horizontal or vertical sticks, but are not parallel or 90 degree angles. The obliqueness appears as slanted, chaotic mixed compositions of sculptural space. 'Proximity' is defined as nearness in place, time, or relation. The proximity of the joints of the Spatial Object enables for flexibility, at the same time as it offers a lack of rigid form. Ballantyne explains this kind of flexibility by using an example of the Ladder at Epoisses, Côte d'Or[12]. He says that the ladder sacrifices straightness, but it becomes a proper flexible match by splitting apart from one piece of wood and as described, "it does not conform to the geometric idea of good form", and "it is a beautiful and skillfully wrought thing" (94).

The structure within the space of the Spatial Object appears to intersect. When the flat shape of the object is folded into a circle, it becomes an object that has a complex internal space. The basic flat structure of the Spatial Object resembles a plot of compartmentalized land. The

[12] It is the long curved ladder built to access all the nesting places in the *pigeonnier* of the chateau at Epoisses (Ballantyne, 94)

inner space of the folded structure is like a spiral shaped building. In Deleuze and Gauttari's description, "[t]he town is the correlate of the road. The town exists only as a function of circulation, and of circuits; it is a remarkable point on the circuits that create it, and which it creates. … It is a phenomenon of *transconsistency*, a *network*, because it is fundamentally in contact with other towns." (qtd. in Ballantyne 81). When the flattened subdivided frames are linked and adjusted, the tilted joints fall in different directions at each part, but the internal space is a lined roll in circulation.

Reflective Objects

In the category of reflective objects, there are two site-specific works; one is installed in a studio space of Artscape[13] (Img 8, 9), and the other is in Gales Gallery (Img 10, 11).

Non-Embedded

Img 8

As the work title implies, the *non-embedded* object deals with the hidden structures in buildings. This piece is developed particularly by examining the inner space of a gallery

[13] Exhibited in the Flex Studio #107, Artscape Youngplace, Toronto, in a group show separate from the thesis exhibition but in the same theme.

building and measuring the specific wall of the exhibition space (Img 9). Based on the measurement, the two curved PVC pipes in different shapes are joined and cut off in exact angles to fit the upper and lower parts of the wall where the lower part protrudes (Img 8). The joined curved piece is in a gradual 'S' shape and installed at the height of 6ft. It can be viewed as different shapes depending on distance and angle. This object can be seen as a covered object being uncovered, and the exposed object can suggests that there is a continuing functional line in the hidden area.

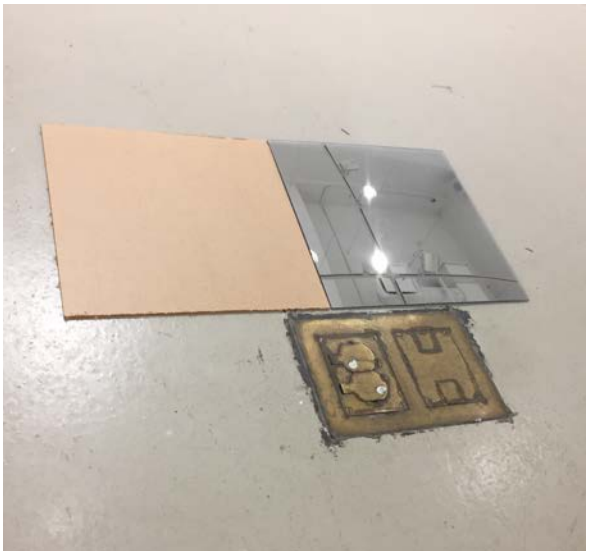
Img 9

As viewers see it, they notice an embedded thing while the *non-embedded* thing goes unnoticed.

Spatial Surface

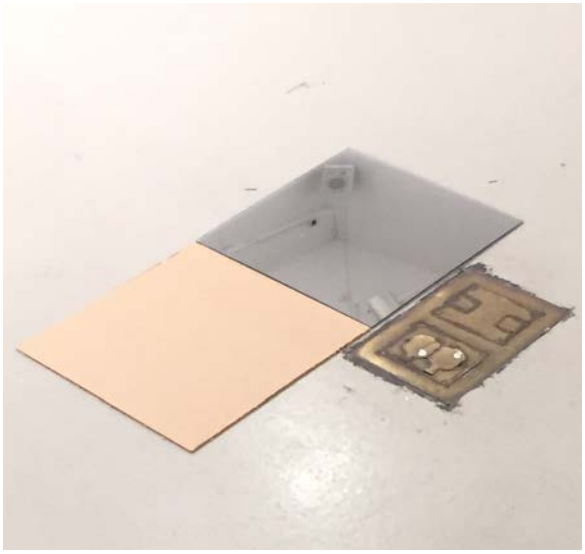
On the floor of the Gales Gallery, three sets of a pair of transparent acrylic plates are placed side by side. In each set, one plate is covered by a solid sheet at the top and bottom, and another plate which mirrors the ceiling is uncovered (Img 10). The non-mirrored plate on the side of the mirrored plate marks the distinction between the two; while one plate opens a view, the other is blocked. The small square (1ft by 1ft) opens up a virtual space that reflects the exposed ceiling elements upside down. Through this opening, specific utilitarian objects on the ceiling – e.g. ducts lines, pipes, light fixtures, light beams and speakers can be partially

seen (Img 11), and the view of the space changes depending on the viewer's standing position and movement. These objects reflected through the virtual opening are intangible while they mirror the real structure. Although this work is related to the site, it is not



Img 10

inseparable from the site. It signifies the presence of elements in that place along with its functional relation to the space.



Img 11

As Miwon Kwon discusses 'sense of place' in *One Place After Another* using the concept of a "wrong" place of Don DeLillo's play, she states that "…spatial experience, like the broken temporality of language, is discontinuous and creepily disembodied. … and vision does not

(cannot) distinguish between what is seen and the mediation of that scene" (162). Similarly, this installation offers a connected but discontinuous spatial experience. The set of mirrors are fragmented places, and through them, the components of space are displaced. The spatial view of mirrors disorient viewers while the places are *spatial surfaces*. The *spatial surface* that takes out the 'sense of place' becomes a broken relation to the gallery space. Thus, this spatial experience is discontinuous and fragmented.

Non-descript objects

Everyday Space

By discussing everyday terms such as 'room', 'corner', and 'marketplace', Lefebvre proposes that, through them, a certain paradigm exists because the terms "corresponded to a specific use of that space, and hence to a spatial practice that they express and constitute. Their interrelationships are ordered in a specific way" (*Production* 16). He believes that "these words make up an unrecognized code" and a "construction of a system of space."[14] As we encounter unnoticed, everyday, and non-descript objects, we use their common names without knowing how these names imply the presence of a thing that is socially tied to the environment, which is everyday space.

Among other artists, Andreas Fogarasi deals with architecture "as inherently political objects" (Polyak 207). He uses architecture as a medium to project architectural and social values. In his work, such as *Kultur and Freizeit,*[15] architecture as an object represents places, cities, and political history. Fogarasi depicts the everyday life of specific cultural buildings with

[14] Lefebvre also defines art as "a code of representational spaces" (*Production* 33).

[15] *Kultur and Freizeit*, 2007, Installation in Hungarian Pavilion, 52nd Venice Biennale

architectural images through the sculptural theatric box (Polyak 213), which resembles a non-descript object. Fogarasi's work transfers a particular spatial and social relationship to the public.

Conversely, the objects in *Variables Assemblage* do not represent an object or place in a specific context although they reflect everyday urban objects. According to Merleau-Ponty "[t]he world is precisely the one that we represent to ourselves,…insofar as we all participate in the One without dividing it" (*Perception* xxv). *Unspecific objects* belong to the condition of a space, and one's view is not separate from that relation. Perceiving is "a flow of experiences that implicate and explicate each other just as much in simultaneity as they do in succession" (*Perception* 293). In this sense, perceiving things in everyday urban space is seeing a part of the whole space, and identifying the specific appearance of the place or space.

Nobert Bolz states that what is provided by artwork is 'the staging (of) the perceptible things' to bridge between perception and communication (Niklas Luhmann qtd. in Bolz 129).[16] Our views are often held to a certain formality. *Variables Assemblage* invites viewers to see or experience things flexibly through the new and reformed objects, although the work can be viewed as an experiment, simulation, or virtuality.

Variables Assemblage transforms non-descript, unspecific objects, altering their contexts and reflects the elements so as to orient and disorient the viewer who perceives their inherent properties of *unspecific objects*. Through observing these objects in their new or changed

[16] Translated from the original text: "Geboten wird die Inszenierung von Wahrnembaren."

forms, situations, arrangement, or environment, the viewer may perceive and experience them in a different way. This exhibition questions the nature of everyday objects and explores the inherent qualities of ubiquitous objects and their relationship to their environment in a variable context.

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