INTRSECTION NEWS

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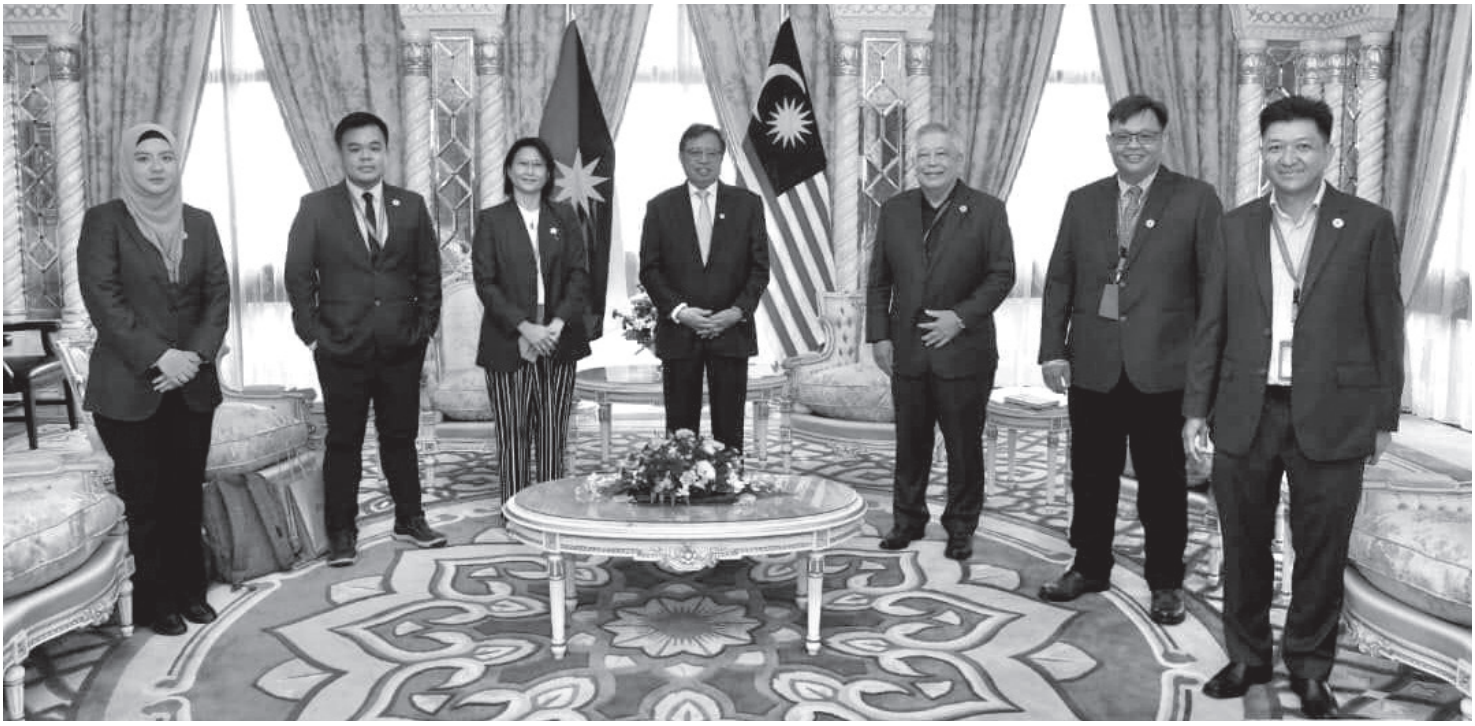
News+FLASH is the digital offspring of INTERSECTION. It is published digitally each fortnight for the foreseeable future, until we run out of ideas, articles or money.

PAMSC Met With CM

Reported by Ar. Chai Si Yong



Group photo with Chief Minister of Sarawak.
Ar. Ivy Jong was accompanied by Ar. Chai Si Yong (Deputy Chairman), Ar. Hajah Noraini Narodden (Vice Chairman) and Past Chairmen involved in Practice & Government Liaison (PGL) Sub-Committee, Ar. Philip Chang, Ar. Stephen Liew & Ar. Peter Wong.

On 22nd December 2020, PAMSC led by Chairperson, Ar. Ivy Jong made a courtesy visit to Chief Minister of Sarawak, YAB Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Abang Haji Openg at his office at 22nd floor, Wisma Bapa Malaysia.

During the courtesy visit, Ar. Ivy Jong reported to YAB Datuk Patinggi that the E-Submission system (eLA2) developed by SAINS & MLGH is ready for implementation starting January 2021. PAMSC had the privilege to work together with MLGH on this in line with Sarawak digital economy initiative to increase the efficiency and transparency of the public sector in dealing with building plan submission, checking and approval, construction permits and notices, Occupation Permit and registration of Qualified Submitting Person (QSP).

PAMSC also took this opportunity to update YAB Datuk Patinggi that the draft of the amendment to Sarawak Building Ordinance (SBO) is currently with the Sarawak Attorney General (SAG) Office waiting for the final draft to be presented in the next DUN Meeting. The amendment to the SBO shows the essence of a joint effort between government agencies and local professional bodies in uplifting the building industries in term of rules and regulations. The same initiative is also practised by MUDeNR in the current lab sessions reviewing the new housing policy in Sarawak and formulating planning guidelines for Development Control Standards (DCS).

To conclude, Ar. Ivy Jong reassured that PAMSC will continue to be actively involve in discussion with State and Federal agencies in formulating guidelines and policies for better development planning in Sarawak.

THE EDITORIAL TEAM: CHAI SI YONG:BIOGRAPHY CHEN HUI JOO:CRIME FICTION LEONG PIK SHIA:ADVENTURE & SUSPENSE WEE HII MIN:AUDIO

State Public Transport Committee (SPTC) Meeting No. 2/2020

Reported by Ar. Chai Si Yong

PAMSC represented by Ar. Ivy Jong and Ar.Chai Si Yong were appointed as member of SPTC under Ministry of Transport Sarawak during the first meeting in early 2020. The 2nd meeting was held via Zoom on the 29th December 2020.

The members of this committee were further divided into four sub-committees based on expertise and task from each agencies and professional bodies. These sub-committees are as follows:

1. Land transport
2. Maritime and riverine transport
3. Aviation, and
4. Logistics

The meeting was chaired by Minister for Transport Sarawak, YB Datuk Lee Kim Shin, assisted by Permanent Secretary, Datu Buckland Bangik.

PAMSC was assigned under land transport sub-committee headed by MUDeNR together with agencies like Ministry of Infrastructure and Port Development (MIPD), Land and Survey Department Sarawak, JKR Sarawak, ACEM & others.

Briefing & Training Session For E-Submission

Reported by Ar. Chai Si Yong

The Electronic Local Authority system (eLA2) was developed by SAINS about 10 years ago mainly to enhance billing and payment system in the local councils. The function for E-submission for building plan was added on later where trial runs had been carried out in Kota Samarahan Council and Bintulu Development Authority in different stages. However, it was not implemented due to some technical issues.

During the review of Sarawak Building Ordinance, the by-law had been revised to allow for online submission instead of conventional hardcopy building plan submission. MLGH once again reactivated the eLA2 system and SAINS were instructed in the JTCC Meeting to work together with PAMSC on the format of the submission.

Discussions were held between SAINS, PAMSC, MLGH, ACEM and Sheda to fine-tune the submission system in eLA2 to simplify the submission, checking and approval processes. However, the submission process is more complicated than just technical, because it involved external agencies from a different authority such as Land & Survey Department, Bomba and Chief Minister's Office (DBKU & BDA).

In the last JTCC Meeting by MLGH, SAINS was tasked to organise training to all QSP before the implementation of E-Submission in Jan 2021. PAMSC & ACEM took the initiative to assist in the training and briefing session as almost all QSP are members of both institutes.

We wish members can give full cooperation for the training session showing the best commitment to the change or new normal. Essentially on the registration of QSP/QP as one of the new rules under the revised SBO to regularised all submitting person in Sarawak. The E-Submission system is not perfect, and we seek members' feedback to SAINS or PAMSC to raise the issue in JTCC Meeting.

Thank you.

SAINS informed all training session for QSP after 13rd Jan 2021 to be postponed until further notice due to CMCO. Thanks.

ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION 1.5

DIAGRAMS (*'MARKED OUT BY LINES'* IN GREEK)

The use of architectural diagrams in design process can be briefly categorized into three stages:

Stage 1 - Pre-design
Site, experience or some characteristics expressed by other factors.

Stage 1 - Designing
Using diagrams to find out the system in the building.

Stage 3 - Post-design
A more intuitive and clear diagram to express the design ideas.

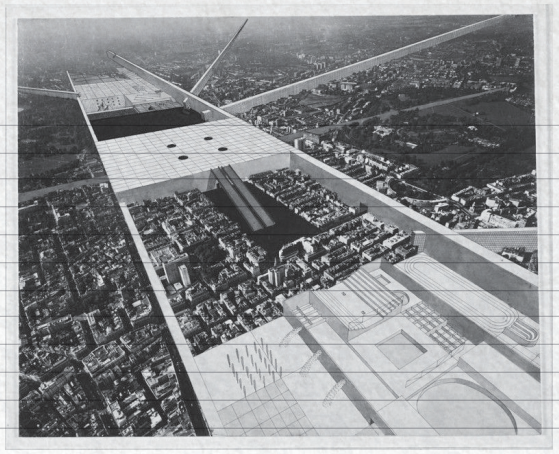
The first and second stage are inter-related and can integrate abstract, non-architectural vocabulary or concepts. Architectural drawing techniques such as lines, edges, text, shapes, surfaces, forms can be used to reflect abstract content such as literature, music, feeling, experience, physiology.

However, most students choose to abandon the earlier stages and reply solely on the third stage diagrams as a means to present their design ideas; typically the to B.I.G. style of diagrams. Some students even replace plans with this type of diagrams, which is more like a representation of form derivation. Students should not limit the use of diagrams to representation.

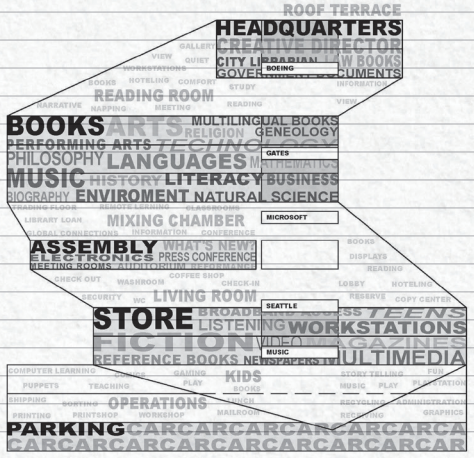
How to use architecture diagrams?

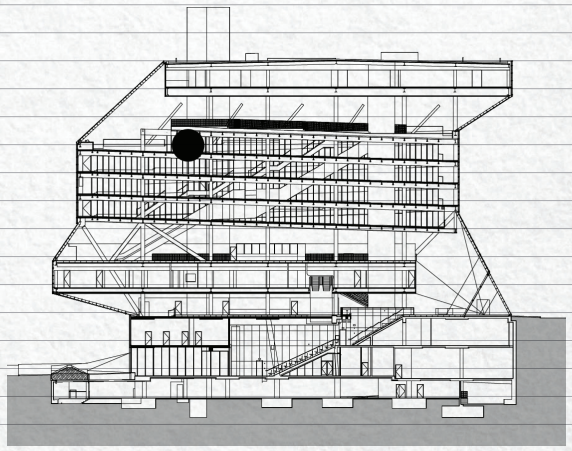
'The diagram is architecture's most condensed and powerful tool for thinking about organization. A diagram is a description of potential relationship among elements; not only an abstract model of the way things behave in the world, but a map of possible worlds.' ('Notations + Diagrams: Mapping the Intangible', Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation, Stan Allen, 2009)

The use of diagrams in pre-design and designing stage has an extremely important role in organizing and shaping the framework. It helps to clarify a building, relationships between elements of a building, or a process connected to a building. It does not have any constraints or methods, but it can graphically explain complex ideas. Diagrams also have the advantage of being able to show different types of information within one image. It helps us analyze what we need to do to create an effective building or space, discover the potential of the relationships, and potentially positioning the design direction, followed by the operation of adding or simplify the information, discussion, research, anatomy or analysis, and sometimes responsive to the interference of other factors by experimenting with a new method, and then develop into the architectural drawings.

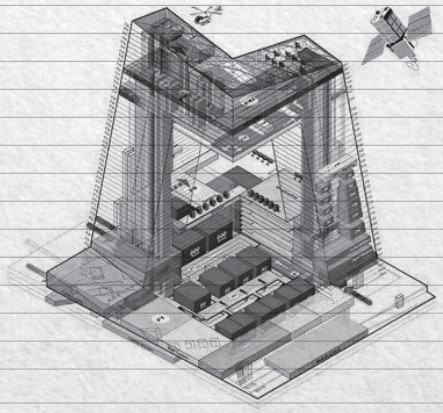


Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, AA Thesis, Rem Koolhaas, 1972.





Seattle Public Library, Rem Koolhaas, OMA, 2004.



Beijing CCTV HQ, Rem Koolhaas, OMA, 2012.

The diagrams do not have to be obtained from the existing orders or patterns of context. It is not like a student's site analysis, which records everything about tangible by collecting data. It has to be analyzed in a more abstract or intangible way and presented with two-dimensional graphics. The overall architectural design process should be based on an orderly architectural diagram as the main consideration, instead of simply explaining the shape directly and plainly in the way of 'reverse engineering' - the outcome is too monotonous.

'The procedures on architectural design appear to have shifted from drawing to the diagram (or collage), over the second half of the twentieth century.' (Robert Somol). Regarding the initiation and prevalence of architectural diagrams, these architects are the great masters - Rem Koolhaas , Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi. They all use the diagram as the main design process. They use this method as a language, a grammar for generating the architectural concept, form, and space. The architectural diagram used by Rem Koohaas is a means of organization and planning in programmatic definition, with collage, graphics, layers of contents, programs, functional and aesthetic presentation.

Peter Eisenman calls it 'Content is Form', in his Diagram Diaries, Peter Eisenman reflects on the nature of the diagram:

'In architecture the diagram is historically understood in two ways: as an explanatory or analytical device and as a generative device. Although it is often argued that the diagram is a post-representational form, in instances of explanation and analysis the diagram is a form of representation. In an analytical role, the diagram represents in a different way from a sketch or a plan of a building. For example a diagram attempts to uncover latent structures of organization, like the nine-square, even though it is not a conventional structure itself. As a generative device in a process of design the diagram is also a form of representation. But unlike traditional forms of representation, the diagrams as a generator is a meditation between a palpable object, a real building, and what can be called architecture's interiority.' (Peter Eisenman, 1999, 27-28), from article by Jan Verwijnen.

The Maquette, mentioned in an earlier Intersection article, is a more perceptual design idea while the diagrams are relatively more rational. As long as they are used properly, both have their ingenuity and usefulness as a concept, form and space generator. I encourage the use of architectural diagram in the architectural design process. It allows students' design projects to be preconceived, multi-leveled, diverse, breaking away from the immutable old ways and systematically driven architectural design process. Diagram, in general, is a single graphic representation that allows the consideration of a great number of combinations and relations in architectural design.

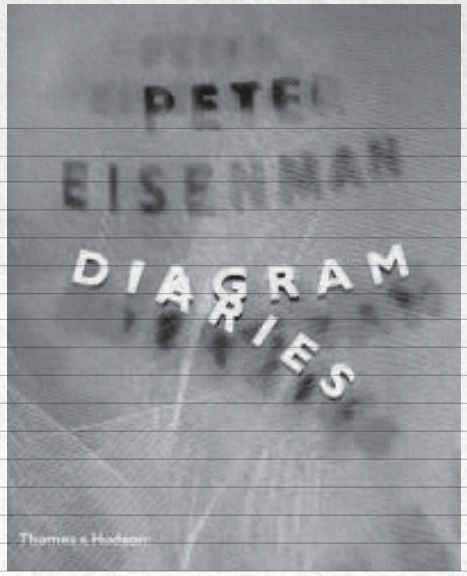
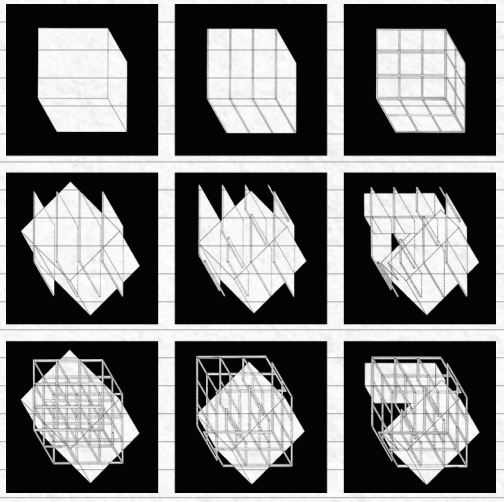
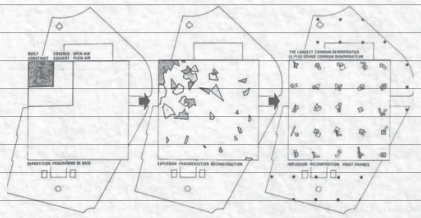
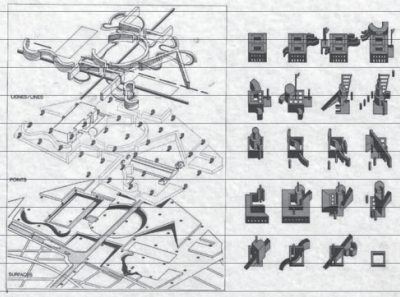


Diagram Diaries, Peter Eisenman, 1999.

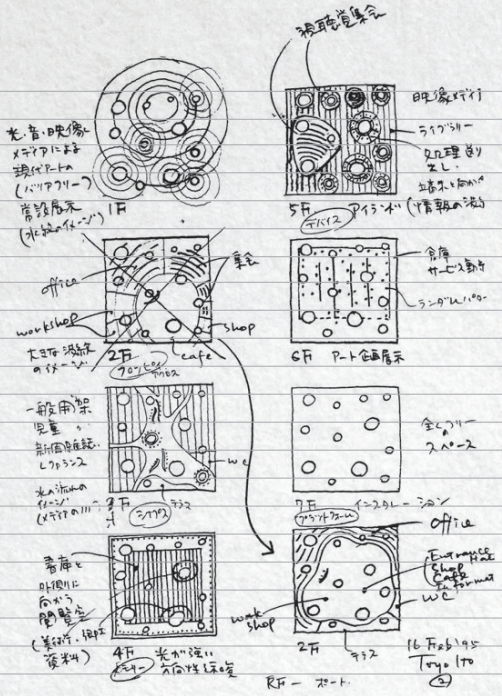


House III, Peter Eisenman, 1971.

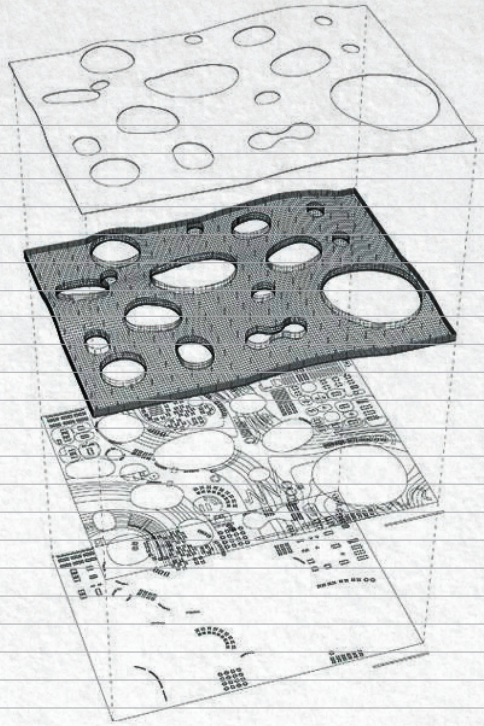




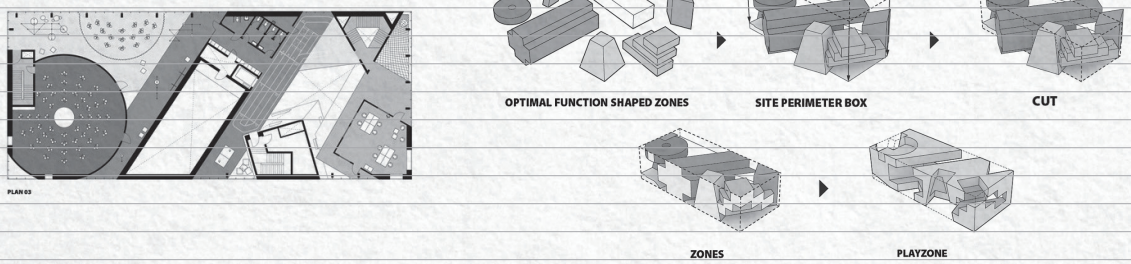
The Superimposition of the three systems (Points, Lines, Surfaces) creates the park as it generated a series of calculated tensions which reinforce the dynamism of the place. Each of the three systems displays its own logic and independence, Parc de la Villette in Paris, Bernard Tschumi, 1982.



Sketch diagrams of relationship of Spaces, Bone and Skin, Sendai Mediatheque, Toyo Ito, 2001.



Examine the relationship of landscape and architecture, exploded diagram of Rolex Learning Centre, SANAA, 2010.



"We designed Ku.Be to encourage the unexpected", Ku.Be House of Culture and Movement, ADEPT & MVRDV, 2016.

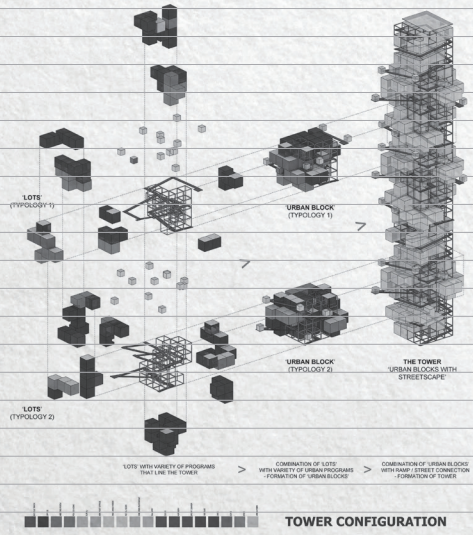
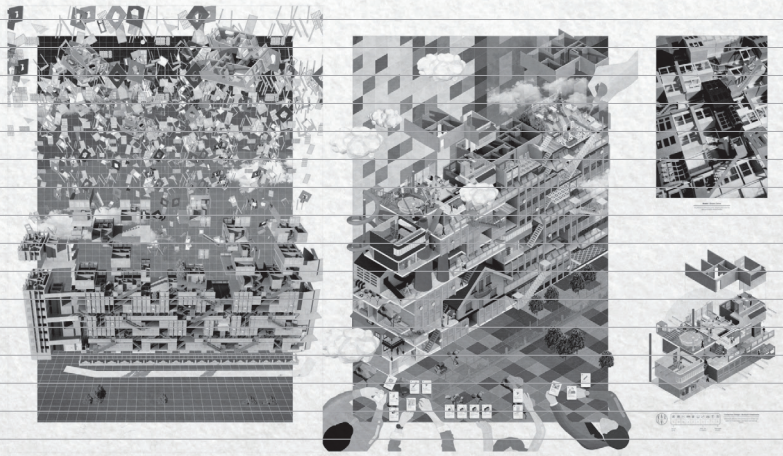


Diagram produced by my office to examine the relationship of movement, programs and typology of spaces within a tower, competition by PAM, 2011.

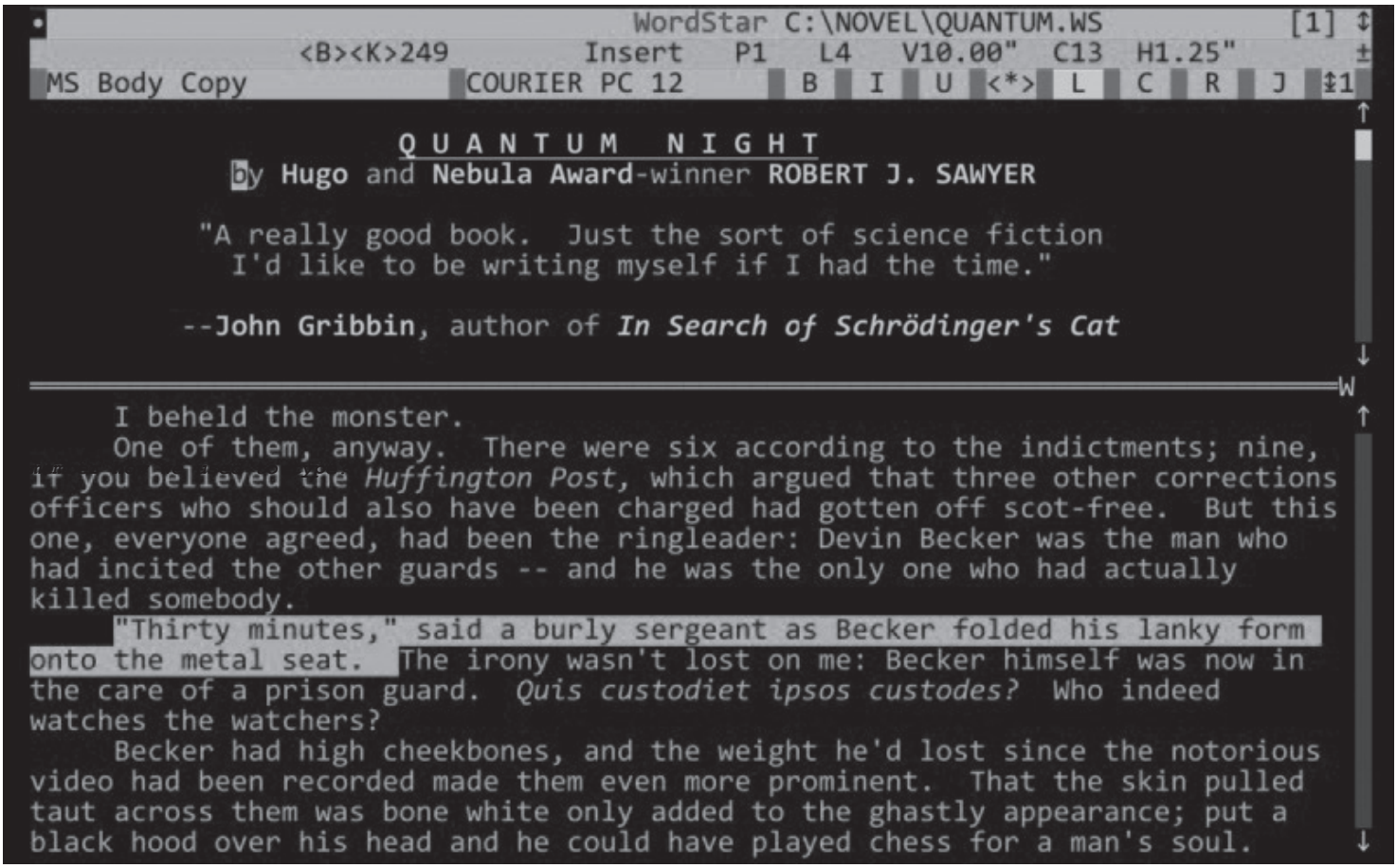


'Phygital Habitat' uses video game elements and brings them into the physical world in order to solve real life dilemmas, Ryan Tung, MArch, Bartlett UCL Architecture, 2020.

by Tay Tze Yong

Will Covid 19 change our lives forever?

Written by: Ar. Ng Chee Wee



Buzz Word of the day - "New Normal". Read the newspapers, open a magazine, tune in to YouTube – and you can't escape a pundit or two talking about how Covid-19 will fundamentally change how we live, work, eat and travel. All this noise inevitably brought me back to the uni days. It was the early 80s, and we were the generation just before the invasion of computers and CAD. Those days laptops were the size of suitcases the price of a small car, and computers were the size of mini-fridges. None of the students I knew own anything close to a digital calculator. My final year thesis was written in longhand and I paid a typist to type it up just in time for submission. Yes – you could absolutely get people to do that in the good old days!

Then came the Mac. It was a very compact computer compared to the regular behemoths of the day – and it was great for typing documents – compared to the monstrosity that was Wordstar! It could even be used to do basic CAD. Countless architectural prophets claimed it was the dawning of the New Age – it was going to change everything – revolutionize how buildings were designed and built. The paper and pencil were going the way of the dinosaurs. But to use the Mac – one had to queue up for hours at the computer lab. Most of us did all our drawings by hand – even up to the final presentation.

Even to this day – I think most of us veterans and at the risk of going the way of the dinosaurs – would smile secretly at the thought that we could design better and faster with pencil and paper - than the whiz kids with the latest laptop and 3D software. No – the pencil and butter paper hasn't gone away – and the "New Normal" is very much like the "Old Normal", albeit with better 3D visualizations.

Will Covid completely change the way we are as social animals? It will be extremely sad if we become creatures who are paranoid about close contacts, the company of strangers, hanging out in public places, and the joy of shared experiences - not virtually but together in real spaces. There is a danger that we will all retreat into the nostalgia of a life in country idle – away from the urban chaos and congestion. Such longing for a quieter, less congested and therefore "safer" life runs counter to what we actually need to do to prevent the next even bigger disaster – that of Climate Change.

To avert or at least slow down the coming environmental catastrophe, we need to live closer together – in denser cities, smaller spaces, commute much less, consume less resources, and do much less damage to the environment. There is a danger that due to the experience of this pandemic we and policy makers will veer to the direction of moving life away from the city again, to de-densify our living and working environments - spread the population out to the suburbs – and repeat the environmental disaster of the urban sprawl.

And what about the new enthusiasm for Working From Home. Will this really replace working together in the same physical space? I personally doubt this very much. Communication is not just about speech – much of that happens through body language and subtle signals that virtual meetings just can't capture. For creative professionals such as architects – nothing can really replace sketching on the same piece of butter paper.

The other unescapable reality is that we are after all social animals. The solitude of working from home – even though we are with family – cannot replace the social connections that we develop in a physical office. The office is not just a place for work – it is part of our social fabric that takes up often more than 50% of our life and losing that would be quite a big blow to our psyche and wellbeing.

Bill Gates recently predicted that one of the things that will change is "we will socialize less at work and more in our community", because remote working will be normalized and many people will choose to live in places where the cost of living is lower and quality of life is better – as they are no longer tied to a place of work. But I think he speaks from the perspective of a technologist – where technology will solve all our problems and make everything better. He also speaks from the perspective of somebody who does not need to work. I think there is a big difference between those who have social and financial power to choose their work and lifestyle, and those who don't.

There is no doubt that working from home has its benefits. The saving on commuting time, more time with family, ability to connect with people across distances and boundaries – these are all net positives. So I believe that there is a hybrid future on the horizon – a combination of traditional physical offices and remote working. Perhaps we will divide our time between the office and the home – find a balance that works for each individual and each work environment. Afterall, not every job is the same – so this new freedom and flexibility to work from home and the office may allow us to finally seek some kind of work-life balance that is sorely lacking for many people.

How would this impact the design of future cities? I think we can borrow from the idea of **Living-and Aging-In-Place** - how about **Living-And-Working-In-Place**? We should cut the talk and finally try to live closer to the workplace and cut down commuting time. That means multi-functional cities with work and living spaces inter-mingled instead of segregated. Maybe the promise of SOHO, SOVO and SOFO will finally find their rightful place in our future urban fabric. We should also try to design shophouses that people actually want to live in – not the drab and dull concrete boxes that they are now. I look forward to the day when I could just go downstairs or walk a couple of blocks to the office, stop by the corner Earthlings Café for a coffee, go home for lunch before going back for a 2.00p.m. meeting. When will that happen? And will it be affordable?

END