URBAN ROOM PANORAMA
Spring 2016 | Ryan Murphy

As the conventional role of the library as a physical source and keeper of knowledge diminishes in our present age of digital resources, this project proposes a new identity for libraries as cultural condensers that welcome diverse publics. By including programs typically foreign to the library, such as a grocery store or a kindergarten, the design strives to integrate the library into the city’s everyday life. These shifts in program allow the library to become a place where knowledge as well as culture is exchanged. The entry sequence, which first submerges the visitor and then decompresses him/her into an immense democratic space, as well as the great reading room, form the project’s main design elements. These elements are influenced by the 18th-century creation of the Panorama pavilion in England. Instead of observing a 360-degree mural painted on the walls, however, visitors of the Lechmere library witness different kinds of people traversing the space with book stacks in the background. Highbrow with lowbrow cultural activities, i.e. grocery store and modern art gallery, are superimposed to reveal different social strata inhabiting the same space.

The square figure of the great reading room anchors the project’s programmed areas. By having busy commercial spaces—bookshop and a grocery store—on the ground, the city is invited into the library and injects its energy into the interior. As one moves up the floors, the other programs that “hug” the central figure are a theater, kindergarten and a gallery. The overlapping zone between the individual programmatic floors become circulation areas. The floors of the book stacks that coincide with the different programs become a free urban library where one can take and leave books at will. The managed book collection shares this circulation system but also possesses its own means of travel, which controls the afterhours access. By compelling the visitor to traverse the stacks and having them serve as a background for the great reading room, the project emphasizes the presence of the book as a relevant physical artifact today.
MYSTERIOUS MALLEABILITY

Fall 2015 | Brandon Clifford

The project takes on the artificial manner in which Frederick Olmsted constructed the Emerald necklace and offers a new public space situated below the surface of the park. By treating land as a thin layer of veneer which is peeled up to reveal the two entrances to the theater complex, the building takes the visitor on a journey through a mysterious vertical atrium. Taking humans natural affinity towards curves and trying to incorporate similar logic to Olmsted’s picturesque park paths, the project explores the concept of formal mystery: the further investigation of a scene will reveal new information. The scenic vertical circulation offers visual stimulation to the visitors and encourages them to keep exploring the space as one experiences the voyageuristic qualities of the form. Using the spline as a generative device, the interior is never static as malleable spaces fluidly spill into one another and reveal the non-hierarchical organization of the building. The visitor is implicated in a space which startles him/her with its walls leaning towards or away, as the complexity of the curves is rendered hard to understand do the lack of previous information. The moments of compression and decompression combined with proportions closely related to the human body strengthen the progression of process-movement-time-space.

The back of the house theater spaces, instead of being kept private, are incorporated in the design as part of the public routes. One offers a path to a viewing platform situated on top of the fly tower of the larger theaters, where one experiences a view towards the rest of the park and the surrounding neighborhoods. The fly tower itself is rendered as a foreign object emerging from Leverett Pond encouraging the park visitors to find the way to reach it. Combined with the new artificial mounds created by the entrances and the back of one theater, these elements are the only indexical evidence that there is a new world hidden underground. The project aims to take a sympathetic approach to its context, trying to preserve the beauty of the park.
EUROPA INTERNATIONAL EYEWARE OFFICE
Fall 2014 in collaboration with Hammersley Architecture

After many years of success in the eyewear industry designing and representing eyeglasses and sunglasses, clients for this project sought to expand their facility to include an attached eyewear factory to provide greater product and manufacturing flexibility. This strategic advance required a new, beautiful and expanded space. Four major program requirements directed our approach including the need for creative design spaces, public meeting and display spaces, executive offices, and product processing. Our concept centered around two basic elements of sight: visual experience and light. We sought to combine existing skylights with new ones, allowing the natural light from above to tie all spaces together. Our simple and rich material palette of wood, concrete, tile, and sisal present a tactile and visually dense experience that interacts directly with light throughout the day and seasons. Public spaces for both client and staff dance with natural light.
Calculations

Volume of Concrete: 650 cu ft in per tributary

Weight per tributary (580 cu ft x 1.5 lb/cu ft x 10 ft) = 70 lbs

Tributary Length: 44.1 ft

Tributary Width: 11.8 in

Dead load
31 modules to span 100' x 70 lbs (per module) / 19.8 in = 1315 lbs/ft

Live load per foot
30 lbs/ft x 111 ft (length of curve) = 3345 lbs/ft

Minas: W=6/3+1/2 = 4.705 ksi x 1000/1.322 = 5460 kips

Carbon footprint: 4400 members x 0.8 density x 0.2 = 18,650 kg.

Load Path Digram
MICROMANSION
Fall 2013 | Xavier Vendrell

The project challenges the typical linear organization of small living prototypes as it uses the small footprint to transform itself into a space which feels big and spacious. The programs of the house are arranged around a central core, which allows for an open floor plan with no partitions on the inside achieving visual continuity between different zones. The central habitable core is then shifted asymmetrically to open up diagonal views and introduce difference to particular spaces as they start to possess their own unique character. The sectional qualities of the split and second floors allow for various degrees of open versus private space within the same open plan. This is further emphasized by the ability of some areas to remain completely private by separating them with a curtain. The isolation of these zones does not affect the circulation flow of the house as one can still freely reach the desired destination. Spaces like the bedroom and the working desk are cantilevered from the main form in order to create the feeling that the user is almost outside of the volume. The large thresholds located in those areas strengthen that effect. The transformable built-in furniture allows for various configurations and flexible uses of the same space, making the house adaptable to different events.

Total area: 602 sq. ft