

DO WE DREAM UNDER THE SAME SKY?

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Do we dream under the same sky asks something obvious. Of course our sky is the same. But is it, really?

The Land is a self-sustaining environment that emerged from the artistic community initiated by Rirkrit Tiravanija and Kamin Lertchaiprasert. Located in the northern part of Thailand, near the village of Sanpathong, 20 km southwest of the city of Chiang Mai, it is intended to be cultivated as an open space free of ownership, an environment conducive to discussions and experimentation in the fields of culture. The Land is open to the day-to-day activities of local living (i.e., the cultivation of rice) and to the neighboring community. A hybrid of innovation and traditionalism, the Land juxtaposes contemporary materials and technologies with ancient forms of practice.

While the Land is inherently a rice field and a garden, freely accessible to all, it also supports architectural constructions that may be utilized in a variety of ways: from shelters for sleeping, to kitchens for cooking, to platforms for lectures or performances. A number of artists and architects are involved in this aspect of the Land's potential, though participation is not confined solely to those in the arts. The people who have contributed to the Land's structure thus far hail from both local and international backgrounds, with artists such as Kamin Lertchaiprasert, Tobias Rehberger, Philippe Parreno, François Roche, Angkrit Ajchariyasophon, Carl Michael von Hausswolff, Superflex, and Rirkrit Tiravanija. The most recent project at the Land is being designed by Frankfurt-based architects Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Müller: a structure that comprises studios, workshop space, and shelter, and involves a number of international partners.



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Nikolaus Hirsch, Antto Melasniemi, Michel Müller: Do We Dream Under The Same Sky, Art Basel, 2015.

Exhibition as Component Development

Together with artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, we develop a new building component of our ongoing project that produces building elements for future edifices via exhibitions and collaborative work with architects, engineers, and artists. The first component of the building, a structural system consisting of a bamboo-steel roof and flexible columns, was realized on the occasion of Art Basel in 2015; the second element, a hanging façade structure, was constructed for the Garden Triennale in Aarhus (Denmark, 2017).

The third building component, integrating both a protective façade material and an energy-

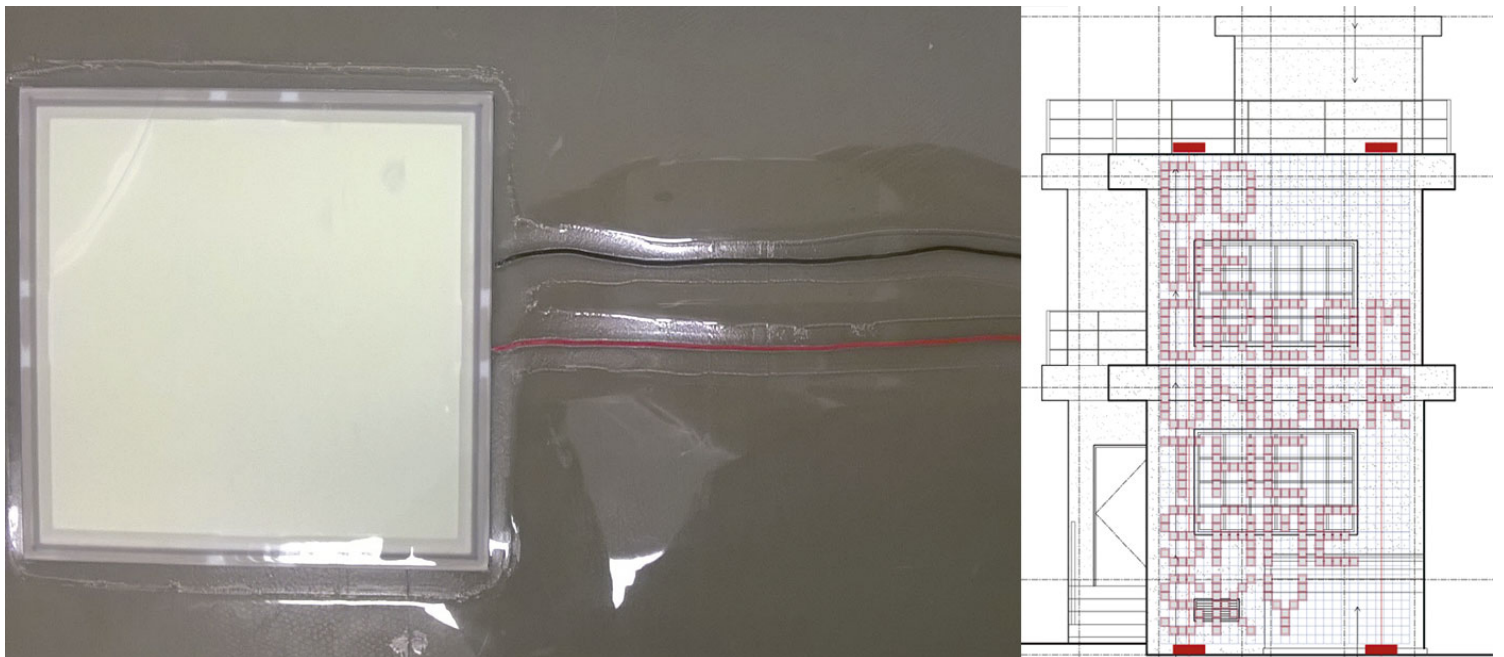
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producing device, was developed for the Biennale in Seoul: a textile façade that produces electricity and emits light, using advanced organic photovoltaics (OPV) and organic light-emitting diode (OLED) technology. The shingle-like system includes 1250 OPV and 403 OLED modules (each 155 x 175 mm) suspended from a grid of bamboo tubes. The energy is produced during the day and emitted during night, highlighting the question "Do We Dream Under the Same Sky." The title refers not only to the commons of energy but also to the question of whether a universal culture exists in the context of rising national, ethnic, and religious particularism around the globe.

Instead of focusing on the single-author figure of the architect, the project aims to highlight the multidisciplinary work and complex, often contradicting geographies of architectural and technological processes. As much as we are interested in the finished product, what we expose as an aesthetic question is the material history of a building component: its primary sources, its manufacturers, engineers, designers, locations, trajectories.



Prototype of OLED façade element, 2017.

Nikolaus Hirsch / Michel Müller with Rirkrit Tiravanija, Elevation of OPV-OLED façade, 2017.

Expansion and Contraction

The project aims to reflect on new forms of contemporary architectural practice. The focus is the increasingly broad, yet in its core expertise limited, often threatened role of the architect. We face a paradox: the field of architecture is both expanding and contracting. On the one hand, architects pride themselves on their multidisciplinary practice, and on the other—contrary to the classic self-image of the generalist architect-genius—they have become marginalized experts on formal packaging.

In this disciplinary context, the project aims to critically investigate the conflictual question of transdisciplinary collaboration. It will discuss the potentials and contradictions of the “architect in the expanded field” (to rephrase Rosalind Krauss). Squeezed between art and engineering, between an increasing number of consultants, controllers, developers, manufacturers, etc., the contemporary architect needs to search for a new position.

How to Lose Control

The classic self-image of the architect is someone who controls. Yet, how can an architect avoid the profession's ambitious yet problematic heritage, that is, its tendency to predetermine a future end state (*telos*)? How can he or she counter the primacy of *telos* that is based on a procedure that determines and subordinates the place of the various parts?

One way to lose control while stressing the importance of a particular strategy is the concept of the exquisite corpse, which refers to the Surrealist drawing experiment: a collaborative drawing of the human body, fragmenting the human corpse into its parts and members, from head to feet, introducing a moment of chance and improvisation that questions the teleological masterplan. If we apply this logic to a building—what would it look like?

A Building as Exquisite Corpse

It is a banality to say that planning and building are the result of collaborative processes, involving

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many authors and reflecting on larger political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts. Yet, paradoxically, it is still broadly assumed that this complex spatial-physical entity called architecture must imply a coherent language conceived by a single author (usually, the architect).



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Nikolaus Hirsch, Michel Müller: Do We Dream Under The Same Sky, ARoS Triennial, Aarhus, 2017.

In contrast, our project for the Land proposes an approach that questions notions of coherence and homogeneity. Following the sequential and accumulative logics of the exquisite corpse, different partners, manufacturers, architects, engineers, and artists are selected to participate in the development of several building components that—when seen as a whole in a 22 x 22 meter building—make time and process visible. As a collective work, it will be reminiscent of a surrealist “exquisite corpse,” a collective work that begins with a single contribution and continues to grow.

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Never finished, never complete, as an organic entity, it knows no endgame.

In this sense, *The Land Workshop* is both a building and a practice. The aim is to investigate new models of building that use the logics of a collaborative workshop as a trigger and to seek the therein appropriate architectonic, programmatic, and organizational languages. This "workshop of workshops" will itself be constructed through a series of sessions, hence reflecting on the potential and contradictions of a workshop as such. In each step, one spatial element will be added: foundation, structure, façade, energy, services, studios. Eventually the building will be readable like an exhibition that evolves in time.

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