

PUBLIC SPACE AS INFOGRAPHIC: MVRDV'S MEGA MAT

Posted on March 3, 2025 by Dima Fadel



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Public Space as Infographic: MVRDV's Mega Mat

<https://urbannext.net/public-space-as-infographic-mvrdvs-mega-mat/>

MVRDV has completed a temporary installation at the heart of Bangkok Design Week, creating a public space that also tells a story of plastic waste and recycling in Thailand. Located on Lan Khon Mueang Town Square outside the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority City Hall, the Mega Mat is a modular piece made of over 500 recycled plastic mats, showcasing the possibilities of using recycled plastic in everyday objects. Its bright colors add a burst of energy to Design Week and connect the Mega Mat to its surroundings, while also forming an 860-square-meter infographic about Thailand's plastic waste processing.

Thailand produces around 2 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. The issue has become a hot topic nationwide as industries and the government introduce policies and frameworks to reduce plastic consumption and increase the percentage of waste that is recycled. To build on this national momentum, MVRDV's contribution to Bangkok Design Week celebrates the versatility of recycled plastic as a material for everyday products.

On one corner, the Mega Mat is lifted, with the upwards-curving shape again reminiscent of the roofs of Wat Suthat Thepwararam. This sheltered corner provides a space to share information, where visitors can find an exhibition about the story of plastic waste and recycling in Thailand and the meaning woven into the recycled plastic of the Mega Mat. The rest of the installation allows people to sit on and enjoy the Lan Khon Mueang plaza as their outdoor living room.

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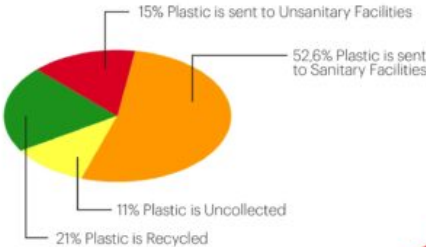
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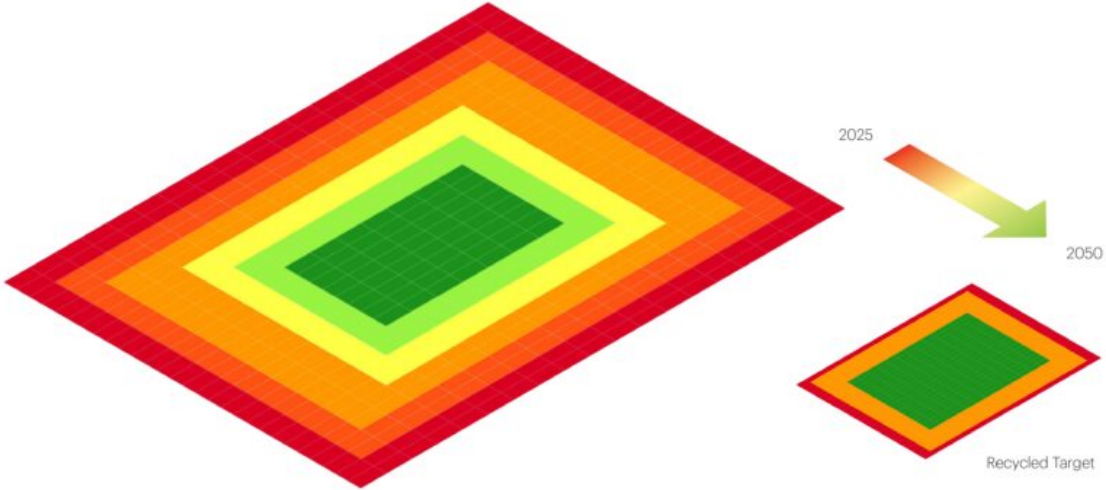
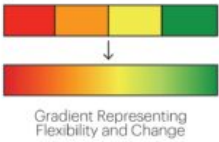


Wat Suthat roof design



Data input

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Gradients of change

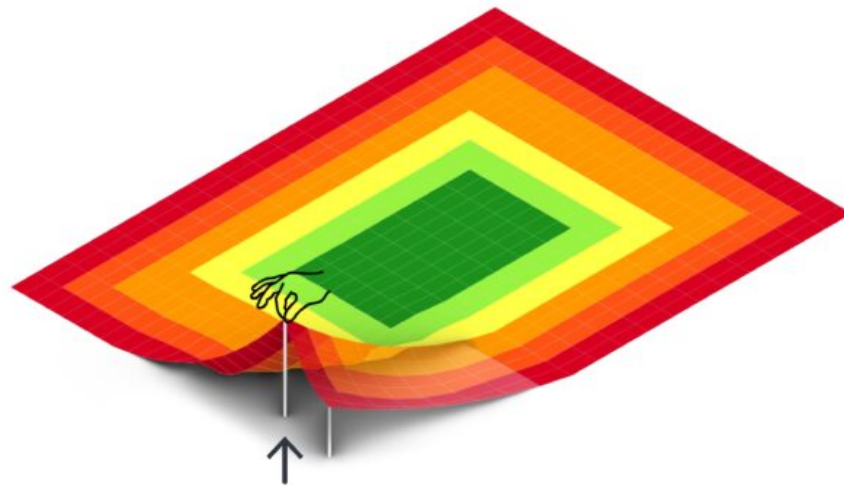
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Wat Suthat Roof Profile



Lift the corner of the Mat

The Mega Mat takes recycled plastic as the material for a ubiquitous household item—the “Sua,” or mat, on which Thai families have been sitting for generations. A total of 532 modular pieces, woven with a traditional Thai textile pattern, come together to form a supersized Sua for the whole city. Each module measures 1.8 by 0.9 meters. After Bangkok Design Week, the Mega Mat will be dismantled, and the individual mats will go on to live a third life—some will be donated to local temples, others will become yoga mats, and others will be upcycled into products such as bags.

The bright colors of the Mega Mat form a gradient that serves as an infographic display of how plastic waste is currently disposed of in the country: red signifies the percentage of waste sent to unsanitary landfills; shades of orange represent the percentage sent to sanitary landfills, where barriers prevent ground pollution; yellow represents the percentage of waste that goes uncollected; while the shades of green at the center represent the percentage of plastic that is recycled. The colors, with their concentric arrangement, also reference the colorful roofs of the Wat Suthat Thepwararam, a temple located behind the plaza.

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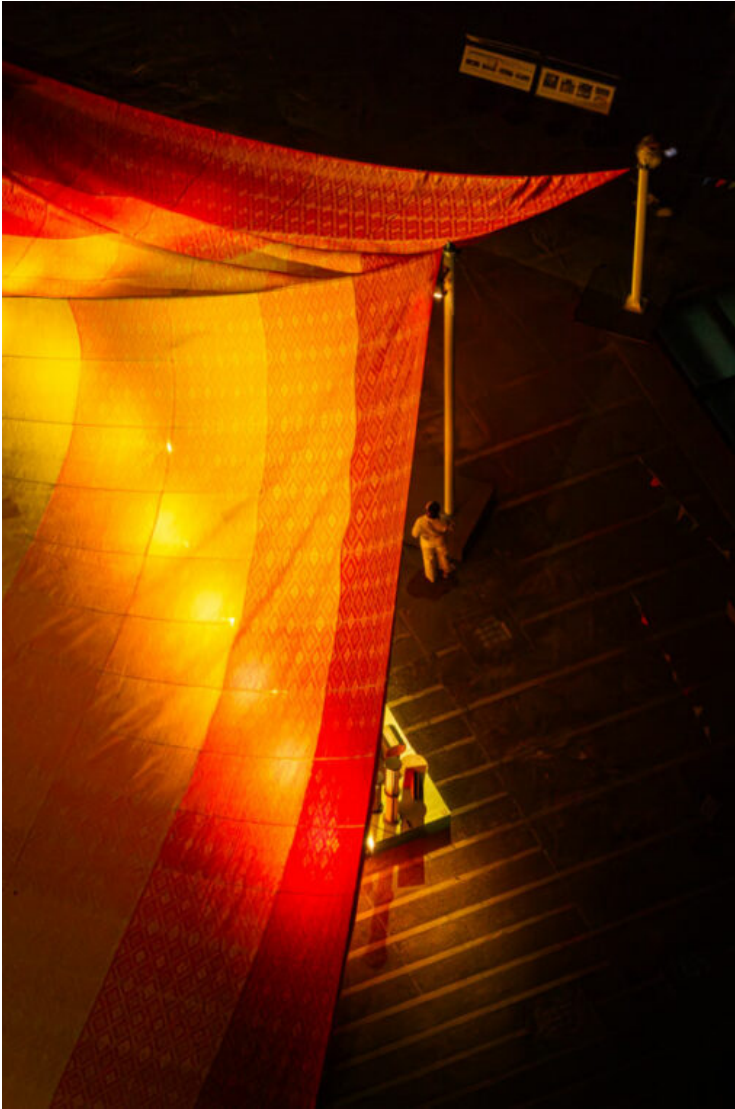
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“Around the world, people are understanding the need to think more about the objects they use, and to see products as part of a connected ecological web,” says MVRDV founder Winy Maas. “In Thailand, this conversation is already well underway. I encourage that. With our design of the Mega Mat, we also wanted to celebrate it as an opportunity to see the possibilities created by putting an emphasis on recycled materials. In a city dominated by concrete, this mat creates a soft space where you can take off your shoes, sit, lie down, read, and play.”

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