

MORPHEUS: DREAMSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL OPERATIONS

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Abstract

This study explores the narrative of dreams as a basis of architectural design operation. This study positions its exploration within a dreamscape; or a surrealist situation that becomes the basis of architectural design. Current architectural discourse has explored design based on some structured and rigid operations. However, understanding dreamscape as a design medium positions the importance of explorative and unstructured operations as the basis of the alternative spatial narrative. Morpheus is a title of experimental architecture programming in this design study which is driven by a series of speculative dream operations. This study employs dream narratives to develop architectural programming languages, from the initial exploration to the materialisation of its architecture. In this study, architecture emerge as an experimental instrument based on speculative and unstructured operations of dreamscape, as an alternative method in constructing narrative relationships.

Keywords: dreamscape, dream operation, narrative architecture, architectural programming

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Introduction

This study explores architectural operations created by narratives of dreams. Exploration in forming architectural works has become crucial in searching for new spatial experiences. Yet, the boundaries created from the context of this world have significant limitations, where the designer exist as a creative agent with past experiences in the real world. This paper aims to expand these limitations by exploring human's subconscious as a virtual context independent of the actual world, which is their dream world. Dreams are a virtual embodiment of real life. A dream setting reflects the fragments of reality, merged together in an improbable way (Hobson, 1988). Despite their improbability, dreams' unique quality sometimes exists as a method of problem solving in our daily life (Barrett, 2017). This proposition becomes a system that can open the possibility for an exploration process to reach a new understanding or even a problem-solving method. To achieve a "dream-like", it is necessary to build an operation with a complexity that can emulate the characteristics of the illusive operation of a dream.

In exploring dreams as the basis of architectural operations, this project employs the concept of the *multitude* by Virno (2004), which defines multitude as an indicator of plurality that persists in collective action, interpreted in this article as the design process of architectural formation.. The primary purpose of this study is to create an experimental architectural design that unites multitude of dream narratives, building an operating method of architectural exploration with various levels of complexity.

Dreamscapes: The three remarks of multitudes

Earth has limitations. As an explorer of the earth, this fact indirectly limits one's thinking, especially in trying to befriend this planet. It implies a thought to look back at life but in a landscape with limitations only limited by the capacity of one's imagination, namely through the concept of a *dreamscape*. According to Hobson (1988), the dream characteristic is as follows:

Dream characteristics and dream objects may be of an everyday nature or altogether fantastic and impossible collages of existing reality; they may behave normally or indulge in the most absurd, improbable or impossible actions in settings either familiar or bearing only the faintest resemblances to those of real life. (p.6)

The definition of dreamscape can be interpreted as a surreal situation that is awakened from the characteristics of a dream (Merriam-Webster, nd). It can also be seen as a realm open to many potentials without overly constrained by facts and logic. It is an expansion of a series of information that celebrates the exploratory process (Hobson, 1998). To understand the abstract narrative of dreamscape as the basis of architecture operation, this study utilises the concept of multitude, interpreted as the 'many', or a parable of a plural concept. Virno (2004) defines multitude as a condition where diverse individuals collectively share life experiences. Such collective action can potentially

overcome communal problems (McEwan, 2020). Virno (2004) elaborates more on the multitude through explaining the three things associated with understanding pluralism: language, repetition, and real abstraction. In the following section, this study attempt to connect these three aspects of multitude to generate frameworks in designing architectural operation based on dream narratives.

The multitude language of dreams

Language becomes an instrument of interpersonal communication that binds humans in a plural manner. The essential characteristic of language itself is to be intersubjective or open between one subject and another. Every human being capable of performing linguistic actions is considered a subject of a multitude (McEwan, 2020). Contextually, language provides an everyday basis for patterning daily human life (McEwan, 2020). Yet, in the realms of a person's dreams, shifts, and transitions across multiple languages may happen (Martinelli, 2020).

In architecture, the concept of type has functions inherently related to a language, where types can name and describe an artefact, especially as part of a group of objects (Lathouri, 2011). Understanding architectural typology can be an associative concept in the efforts to open new perspectives, and therefore provide potential to serve as a tool of language. Types are abstract and conceptual rather than concrete and literal (Lee & Jacoby, 2011). Typology can be positioned as a conceptual tool that manifests the contextuality of its content, and typology can mediate between humans and their environment. Martinelli (2020) discusses such mediation in the way one's collection of dreams enable movement between realms, mediating between the imagination and reality. An architectural proposition based on the multitude language of dreams demonstrate possibilities of moving across different types of contexts and the realm of which human is positioned within their environment.

Operation of repetition within the dreamscape

Repetition is defined as a product of technical reproducibility or repeated events produced by technological agents (McEwan, 2020). Repetition enable distinction between the common and the unique. Even a work of art, as a man-made artefact, could always be imitated through mechanical reproduction (Benjamin, 2008). The role of repetition in a collective life can also be related to the acceptability of an idea; the more familiar something can be, the more it will be readily accepted by a group of individuals. Repetition can clarify the position of an idea in a plural context based on the familiarity of the subject toward it. For example, when a dream evolves as a form of hope within the reality, the language of dreams may also be collectively shared, and repetitively enforced as identity (Sejrup, 2018).

However, dreams may not only be defined by the familiar, but it can also be assimilated with something unfamiliar or transgresses. What are the possible impacts if something unfamiliar is assimilated into a collective environment? Will

there be a blatant rejection? The architecture of transgression is framed as an architectural output that is unsettling, literally and metaphorically as they agitate our understanding of architecture which tends to search for stability (Mosley & Sara, 2013). Constructed of implausible architecture, they violate the boundaries of accepted architectural endeavours. The transgressing action is a tactical response to trigger destabilization while simultaneously strengthening, questioning, and inciting change from the previous way of thinking (Mosley & Sara, 2013). The instability created then triggers the emergence of improvisation and interaction between subjects and their environment (Mosley, 2013). Acts of transgression are seen as breaking through specific limits, potentially breaking through the repetition of instability itself.

Trying to correlate the two ideas, operation of repetition in the iterations of dream put the system that acts between the familiar and unfamiliar. Martinelli (2020) discusses dreams consists of continuous transition, translation, and transfiguration, which generates evocative compositions that transcends between words, languages, and places. Another example of the existence of the unfamiliar operation of dreams is in the conflation sense of time, the missing parts, or the ambiguity of where things begun and stopped (Meyer, 2023). Aligning with the concept of transgression and the awareness of boundaries and limitations could create the operable strategy necessary in this search for a unique existence.

Real abstraction of dreams

Real abstraction is the final material embodiment of the multitude (Virno, 2004). Real abstraction discusses how a subject's understanding of perception can be materialized (McEwan, 2020). The language aspect of dreams are necessary to generate primary fragments of realms and the movement between them; whilst the repetitive operation sorts the fragments of dreams between the familiar and unfamiliar. The real abstraction of dreams, on the other hand, is positioned as what Meyer (2023) describes as the new way of experiencing space, "A state more akin to dreaming, where people move as dreamers through shimmering personal worlds, oscillating between total control over and total scepticism of narrative, meaning and phenomena" (p.59). It became an artificial reality.

Real abstraction is seen as an endeavour to materialise the perception of a subject, to simulate one's view of reality. Meyer (2023) explained:

Reality is both subjective and mediated by technology, format, place and narrative; or, to put it differently, that there is no appreciable difference between reality and the stories we use to navigate it, and our storytelling techniques and operations are personal, many and evolving. (p.59)

The abstraction of dreams is informed by the narrative approach in architecture, it implies the idea to become a unique navigation tool in forming a combination of all the familiar and unfamiliar fragments of dreams. According to Coates (2012), "To understand

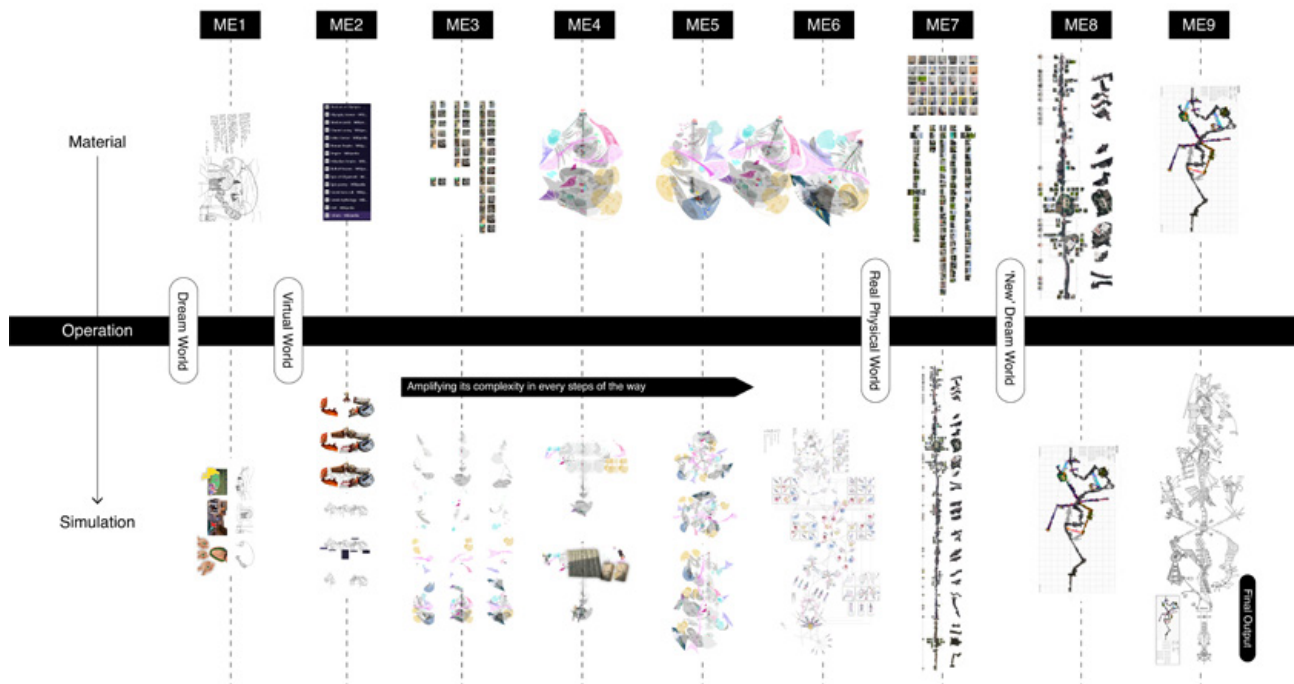
the dynamics of architecture you need to fully surround yourself by its complex and often bewildering phenomena" (p.9). The method of delivering information through narration also has the potential to support the assimilation of an idea to a collective subject through a retelling effort which, if done repeatedly, can increase familiarity with the idea. In the design proposition articulated in this article, the narrative of dreams becomes a simulation stage, which can trigger and provoke the viewers to experience the spatiality of the dreaming process.

The experimental architecture project discussed in this paper tries to translate the three remarks of multitudes of dreams discussed above into a procedural concept from various design approaches to initiate a reorganization process and expand one's understanding of the multitude as an exploratory instrument. The choreography of these three remarks of multitudes simulates the choreography of chance, an idea of unexpectedness introduced by Spiller (1998) that is important to emphasise the playfulness of dreamscape narratives. Further investigation of this series of procedures is carried out by emulating the characteristics and parameters of a dreamscape as an alternative reality, taking it to a new level that also provokes the limitations of everyday reality.

Design approach derived from the multitude of dreams

The series of exploratory methods was built in three stages, based on the previous discussion of the three remarks. The first step was the definition of the dream fragments as the language of the dreamscape, followed by the application of the dream repetitive iteration towards the fragmented material as a procedural operation to define the familiar and unfamiliar. Finally, the article discusses the resulting experience of the exploration itself, which become the realised simulation of the dreamscape.

Figure 1. The exploration methods roadmap



The design study consisted of nine series of exploratory methods (See Figure 1). The first four stages analysed the characteristic of dreams and their potential as part of the spatiality of the dreamscape. While the two following exploration stages were devoted to developing a geometric logic to form a spatial program relationship. The last three stages carried out exploration based on the walking tour through a series of specified contexts to form a narrative structure for the 'new dream world' context for the final architectural demonstrations. This narrative structure is loosely based on the marking boundaries procedure introduced in Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), where new territories and appreciation of space are created through the walks in the city.

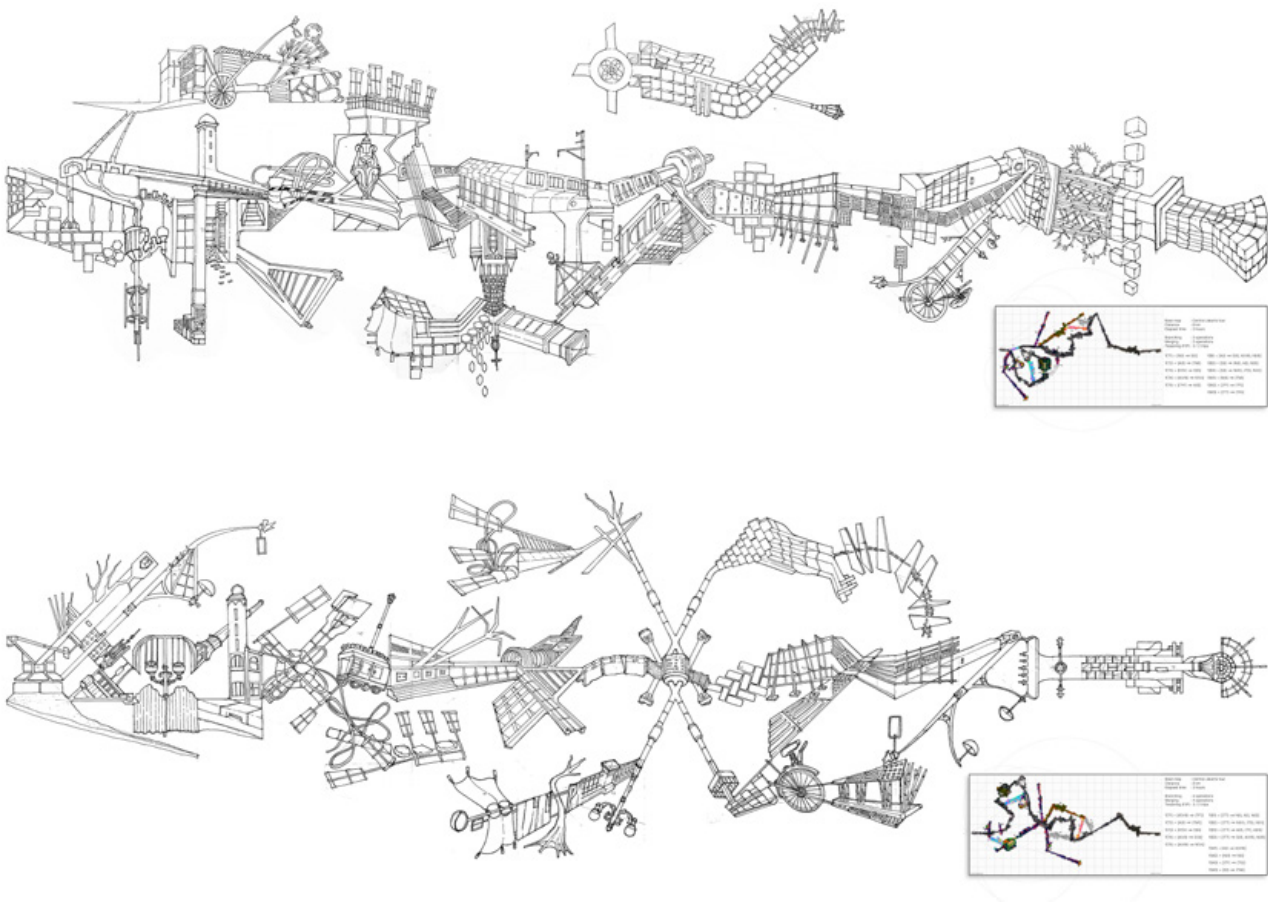


Figure 2. The prime map drawing

The final output, which in this study is referred to as the prime map, played a vital role in forming the final design of the architectural demonstration (See Figure 2). The prime map will also generate a collection of components in a 3D model kit through the kitbashing method, or creating a model based on separate parts of kits. This modelling method becomes necessary in materialising the relationship between components with dream specific material characters.

The nine stages of design development also collectively serve as the basis of forming the speculated scenarios of this architecture. All elements that make up the dreamscape narrative are represented through cards, diagrams, and

illustrations depicting the atmosphere of the situations and site models as context representations.

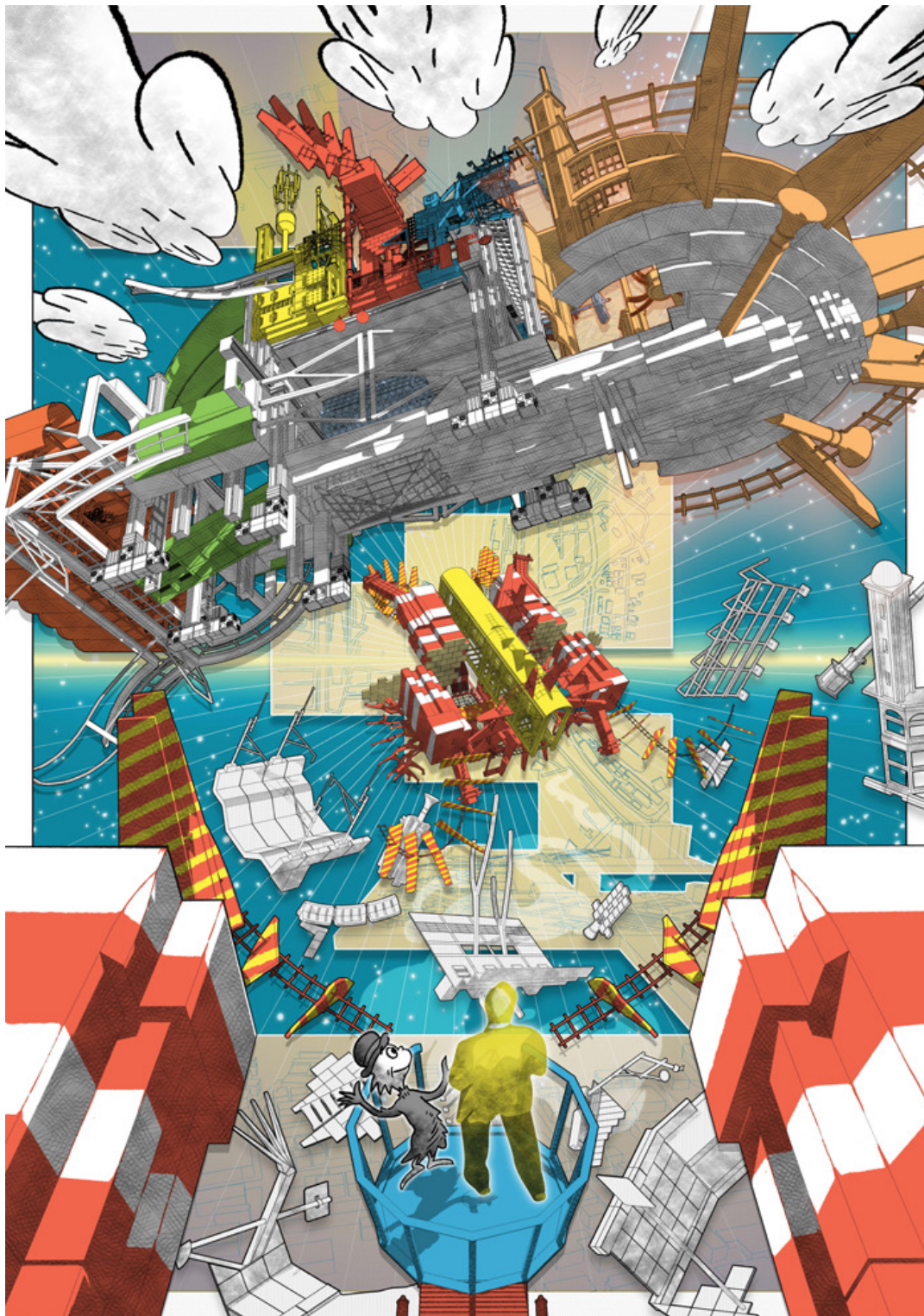


Figure 3. Visualization
"Towards Morpheus"

Into the dreamscape

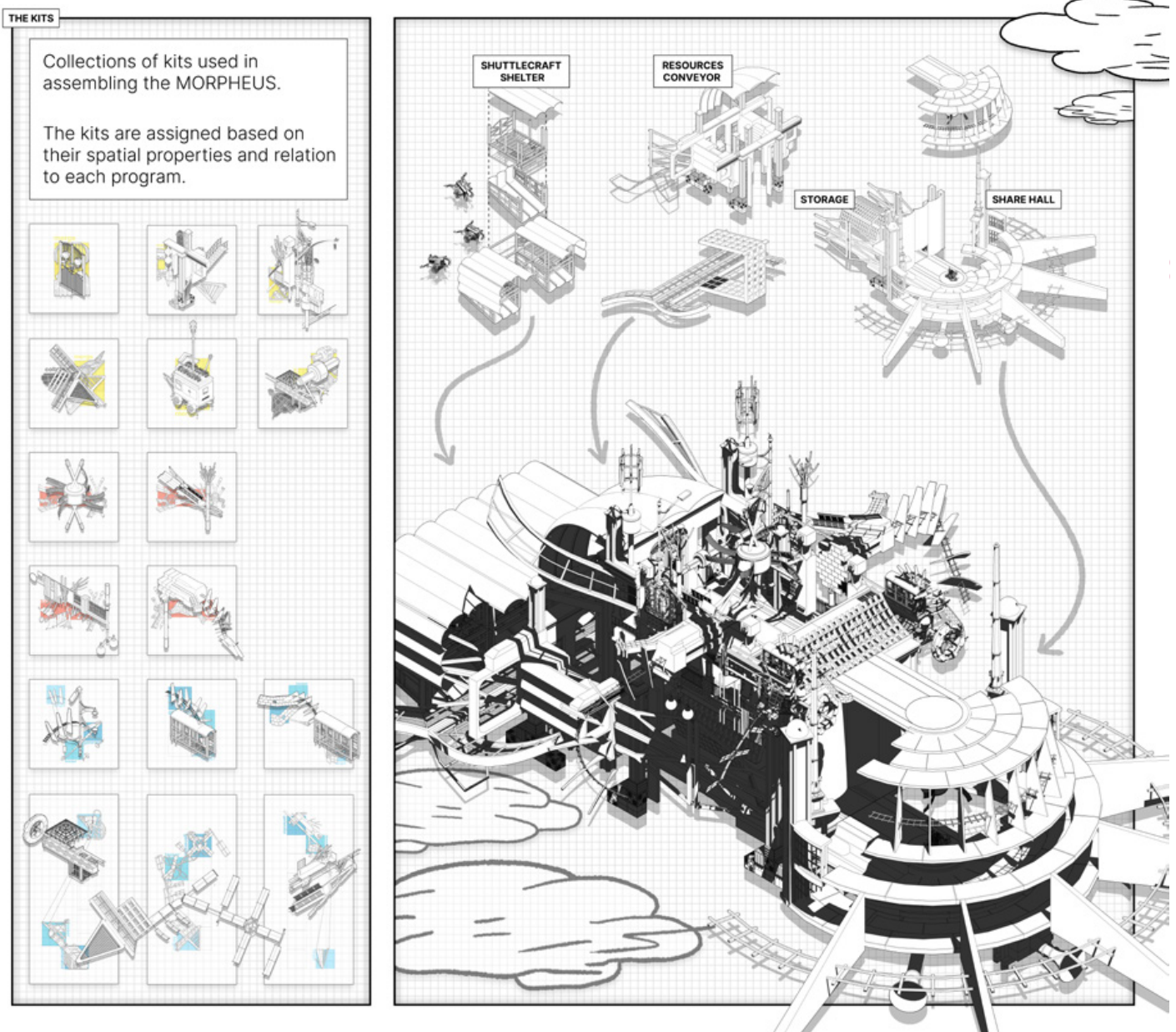
The background of the situation tries to depict a condition where narrative becomes a make-believe currency and a valuable resource to this world. The overall situation happens in a human subconscious, with two roles, namely the

narrator as the embodiment of the designer and the spectators, which will determine the value of the produced dream arenas. However, the narrator and the spectators are only visitors to this place. The original inhabitants of this realm are haunted by five types of entities with unique traits and personalities from each other. These imaginary situations and actors manifest the whole ecosystem of the dreamscape. It creates an immersive experience in understanding the multitude of dreamscape narrative.

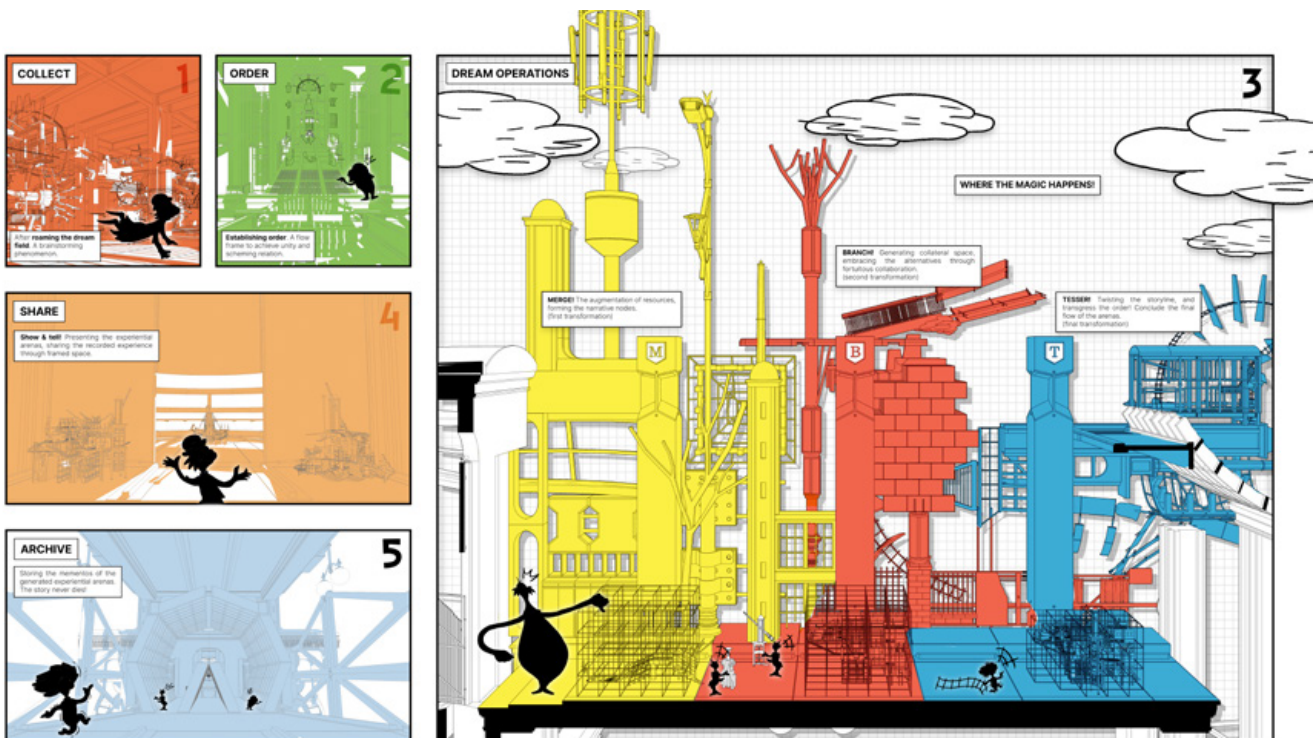
Real abstraction of dreams

The dreamscape project is named Morpheus, who, according to Williams (2022) was the personification of Sleep as the god of dreams in Greek mythology. Morpheus means "form" or "shape", forming the dreams of the sleeping persons (Williams, 2022). The name Morpheus reflects how this project unfolds through layered transformation within a speculative situation.

Figure 4. The parts and whole of Morpheus



Morpheus is an architectural design that actively travels around the dreamscape. It resembles a giant ark that continues to sail through the dreamscape, so the whole design of Morpheus does not rest on a surface. The process of forming the Morpheus was constructed through the collection of kits, which demonstrates the multitude of tools which navigates the design simulation. As Morpheus works in the dream realm, the building logic that works for it is not the same as the laws of physics in the real world and possesses more freedom (See Figure 3 for visualisation of Morpheus, and Figure 4 for the parts of Morpheus, which consist of a kitbashed shuttlecraft shelter, resources conveyor, and shared hall). Overall, the design study results are communicated as architectural speculative scenarios of the investigated methods and theories.



The representation of media used to communicate the Morpheus narrative in this study consisted of visual illustrations, site models, and the accompanying components which is needed represent the overall situation in which the design works. The use of illustration plays a role in narrating the speculated scenario of Morpheus (See Figure 5 for articulation of the scenario). This scenario focuses on the 'dream narrator' journey in exploring the dream world. His sole purpose in travelling the dreamscape is to lead Morpheus in generating the 'dream arena' – or the parts defined as artifact of the dreamscape. The meaning of artifact is the possible documentation of impossible objects (Cantley, 2013). which will be discussed in the following section.

Figure 5. Visualization of the program scenario

Scavenging the dream field

Dream field was the name given to the areas explored by Morpheus, consisting of 20 separate districts. These districts are the alternate version of the real-world places that were explored in the earlier exploration phase. Figure 6 shows all the unique objects that exist in this dreamscape. These 77 objects were obtained from the deconstruction of the prime map drawing (See Figure 2), which is then assigned with its specific information indirectly stating their respective identities.



Of these 77 existing objects, 40 objects are scattered through the dream field with two kinds of objects in each region (See Figure 6 for the collection of the dreamscape objects). The narrator will explore the dream field to determine five unique objects that will be used as the primary material to form a single dream arena. On every production cycle, Morpheus produces three sets of dream arenas so that the narrator will need to gather 15 different objects for a single trip. The narrator will then instruct the 'collector' ships to gather the materials in a particular order determined by the narrator to be brought to Morpheus to be assembled. At this stage, the objects act as independent variables. The object's unique characteristics will determine how the form of the dream arena will turn out. This stage shows the potential of spatial permutation in the exploration process of the dreamscape. The existence of the dream field in the whole scenario demonstrates the "multitude of things" of this simulation.

Figure 6. The collection of speculated objects of the dreamscape

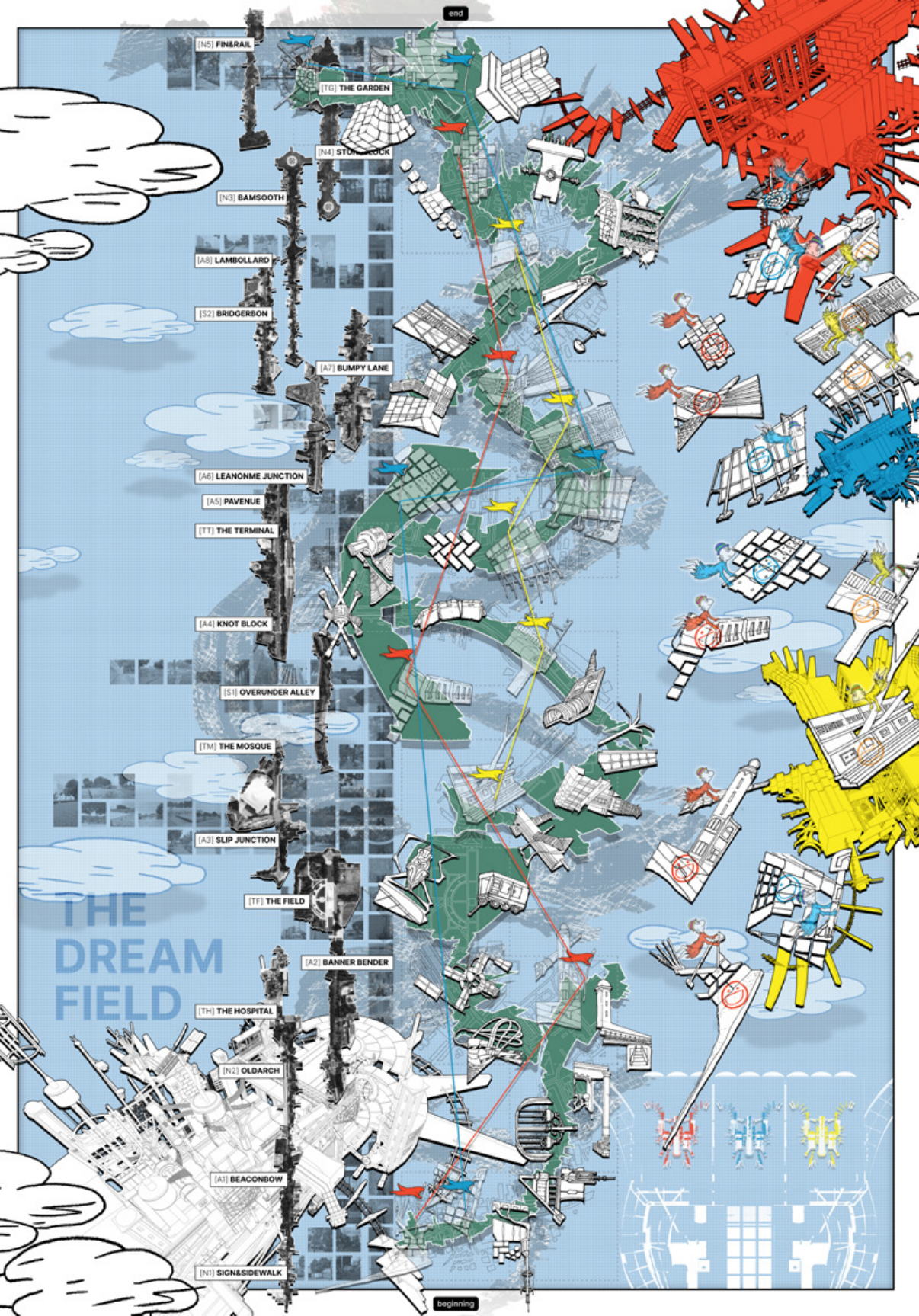


Figure 7. Visualization of the overall Dream Field

Assembling the dream arena

The objects collected as raw materials were used to generate three series of dream arenas in one production cycle (See Figure 8). This stage demonstrated the scenario in forming a spatial narrative through three layers of the transformation process, which in this simulation was also called the dream operation.

The dream operation process was divided into three phases: merge, branch, and twist. During the merge phase, the objects are put through a spatial augmentation process to form a particular hierarchy and form its structure. This is followed by the branch phase, which generates collateral space, interacting with the other structure from the other two sets. Finally, during the twist phase, the fully formed arena will go through a twisting process that will conclude the final flow of the arena. These operations were done to induce the spatial qualities of a dream to the arenas to complete it as a dream arena. The layered stages also incorporated different imaginary entities for each step, demonstrate the 'multitude of thinkers' within the simulation.

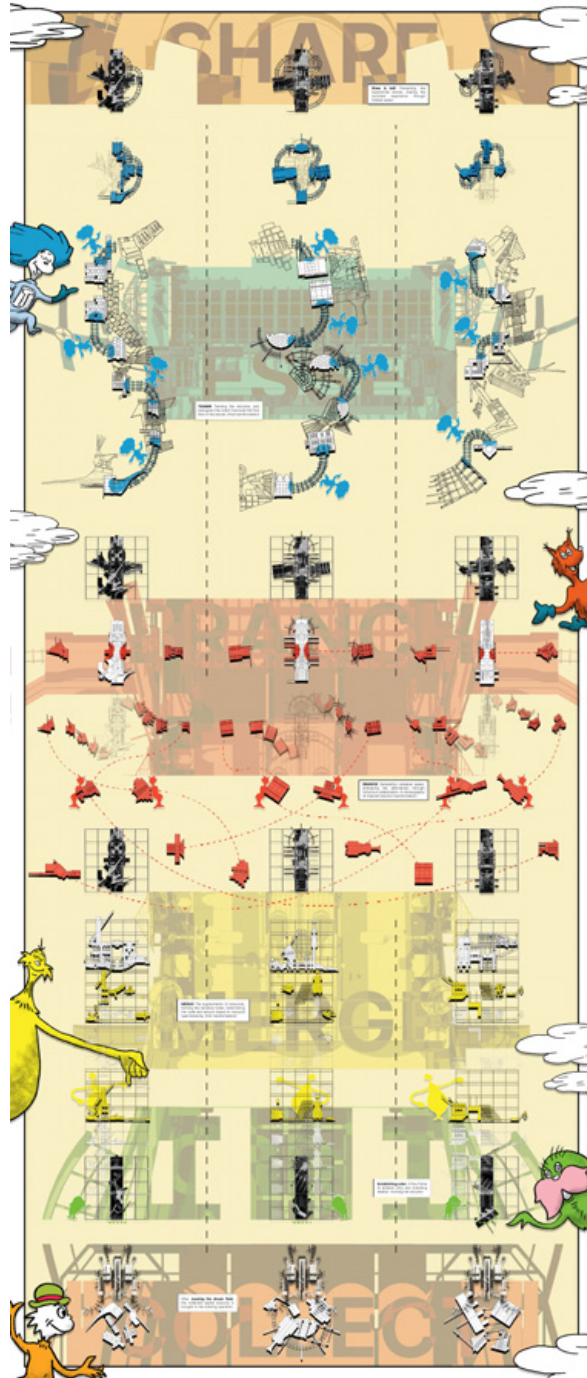


Figure 8. Scenario for the formation of Dream Arenas

Experiencing the dream arena

When the narrator shares his findings for the day, the spectators determine the narrative value of the dream arena that has been built. Their decisions will also determine the output for the lone storyteller.

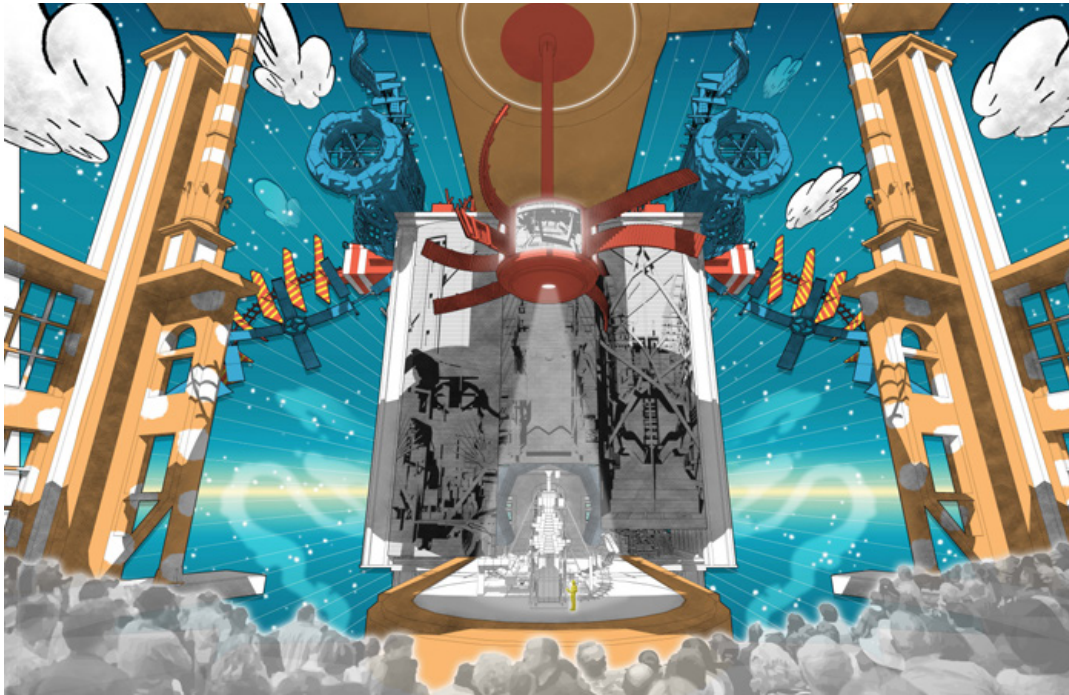


Figure 9. Visualization of the Sharing Hall

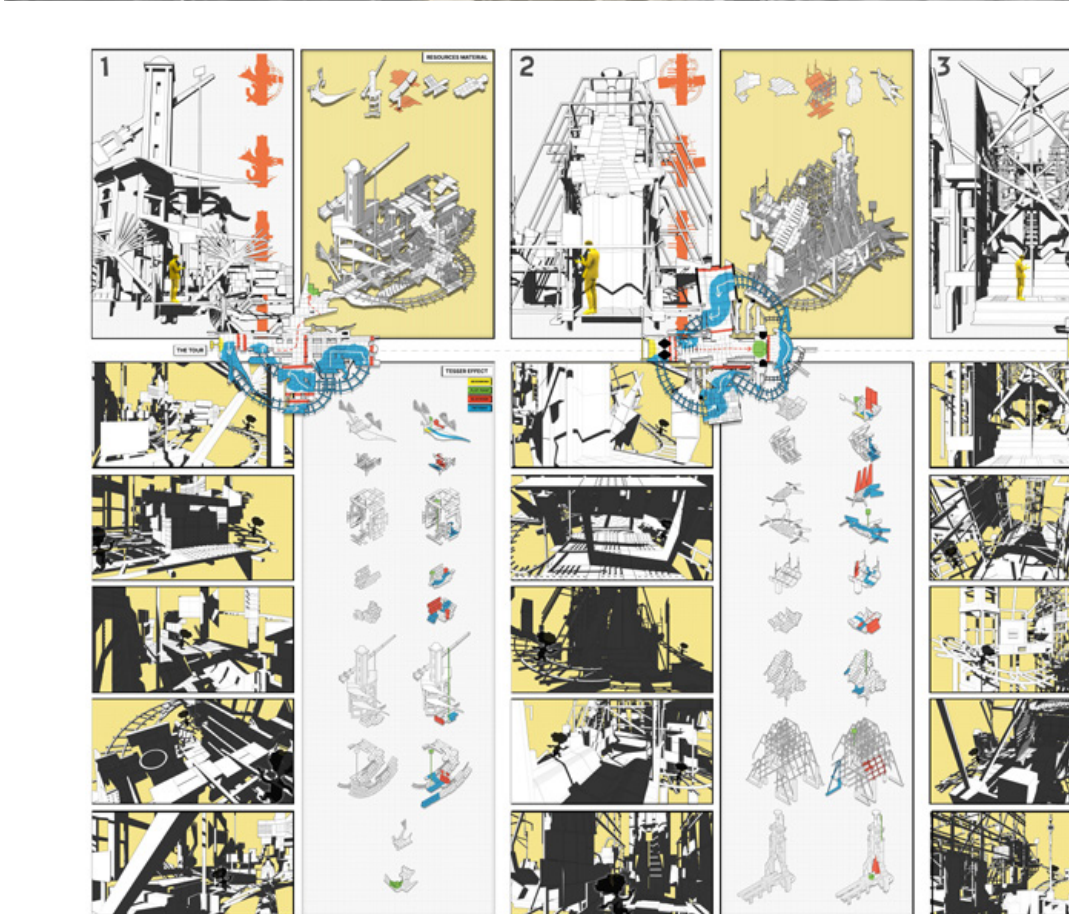


Figure 10. The spatial quality of Dream Arena

Based on this understanding, the dream arena becomes the final product as a manifestation of the author's interpretation of an artifact. In the visualization of the diagram, the narrator's findings are represented both at a macro level from the perspective of the overall design projection and at a micro level from the direct perspective point of view of the observer towards the space (Figure 10). A dream arena demonstrates an extreme and spontaneous spatial transformation that is almost impossible to execute in the context of the real world. However, through the surreal collaboration between actors and objects, the impossibility of this spatial narrative might become a trigger of inspiration for those who witness the dream field.

Dreamscape as a manifestation of a design driven by the notion of multitude

Reflecting on Virno's (2004) idea of the notion of multitude, this study positions Virno's remarks of the multitude to the whole idea of this project and develop three approaches on speculating dreams as the contextual basis of architecture. Those three remarks of multitude, namely the language, the repetitive operation, and the real abstraction become aspects that directly contribute to the overall scenario of the dreamscape design system.

The making process of the dreamscape involved model kits that were generated from the exploration stage create their own identity of a practical component which in the dreamscape scenario. The separate parts of the kits becomes a material embodiment of the multitude of tools that act as the compositional instruments that are both familiar and unfamiliar, especially in the process of forming Morpheus itself.

The deconstruction of the final output of the exploration stage produces 77 collections of objects (See again Figure 6) that specifically have their respective identities making them a unique entity from each other, which then in the scenario becomes an embodiment of the 'multitude of things' that act as the basic material fragments in the process of forming the dream arenas. The dream arena formation process is formed through a transformative operation through five layers of fictional characters who have different characteristics and goals in carrying out their roles, embodying the multitude of thinkers as the collective individual in the overall scenario.

Conclusion

The entire architectural exploration in this study aims to investigate the various speculative design possibilities, utilising the narrative of dreams. The characteristic of a dreamscape lifts the limitations of one's knowledge, which broaden the horizons to explore scenarios of an architecture beyond physical and environmental limitation. Understanding the design method based on the dreamscape demonstrate a transgressive and speculative practice of architecture. This investigation transposes the three remarks of the multitude idea into the design process, initially consist of the language, repetitive

operation, and the real abstraction of the dreamscape. The designed project generates three narrative responses towards the idea: shaping the "multitude of tools" as the way design is being assembled, "multitude of things," as the parts of which it is shaped, and the "multitude of thinkers" as the agency of the dream narrative. All these aspects are intertwined with each other, building a relationship full of paradoxes but rich in possibilities. Through understanding dream narratives, this study explores a situation full of instability but simultaneously escapes the limitations of basic logic that opens the door to unlimited freedom of thought.

Project Morpheus emerge as the interpretation of the multitude of dreams; coming from the intertwined layers of exploration that collaborate as a single scenario. Morpheus becomes a theatrical stage in practising narrative architecture, imagining an architectural program that might happen in a dreamscape, which in this demonstration derived from an in-depth investigation of the preceding layered exploration methods. The spatiality of Morpheus that makes up its architecture is crafted through the speculated dream operation, interweaves towards a series of complex objects in a dream realm context, potentially opening a new perspective regarding the formation of interior space that celebrates multi-interpretative qualities.

In this design experiment, two-dimensional diagramming and three-dimensional spatial exploration methods became essential instruments in this architectural simulation. The role of narrative and diagram becomes very significant in realising the dreamscape structure. This experimental design can be further developed using different basic materials and other unique diagramming methods. Each exploration stages were consecutively related, alternating between physical making process and digital drawing, which greatly influences the components that play a role in the final forming process. In addition, as the understanding of the dream narration in this study is precisely the result of the author's interpretation, different kinds of dream narration situations may produce different scenarios. The diverse synthesis that may be collectively produced from this study opens up new search of architectural possibilities based on narrative design approach.

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