

BLOOM THE GAME

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1 Bloom in Victoria Park for the London 2012 Summer Olympics (Sanchez, Andrasek 2012)

Commissioned by the Mayor of London as part of the London 2012 Summer Olympics, Bloom is one of the winners of the Wonder series competition, which sought to engage the collective nature and festivities of the Olympic Games.

Bloom is an interactive installation constituted of thousands of identical flexible units that can be recombined in multiple ways, allowing the public not only to alter the installation done by a design team, but also contribute with their own design, by discovering and feeding into the universes of creation for which the project allows.

The Bloom project is presented through five key points that allow one to understand its conception, development and relevance: Project, Computation, Manufacturing, Installation and Gameplay.

As Bloom was conceived as an interactive installation, the life of the project is relevant for research far beyond the built form. It is in the interest of the research team to present both the notions prior to development as well the outcome and reactions from the public after its installation. The project connects ideas of expectation and crowdsourcing,

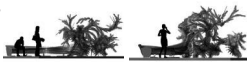


the project

"All possible branches are real"
J.L. Borges / Garden of Forking Paths //

BLOOM is an interactive architectural installation developed by Alisa Andrasek and Jose Sanchez within The Bartlett, UCL, as part of the LUnder series competition commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) for the 2012 London Olympics.

The project proposes a game of assembly of thousands of identical units connected to a helicoidal urban furniture structure.



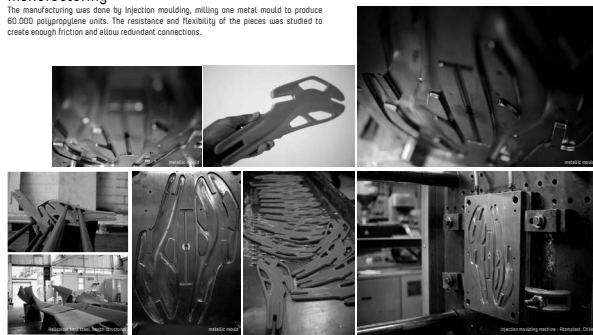
computation

The project utilizes recursive aggregation algorithms to simulate the assembly of pieces. Both the definition of the geometry and the recursive aggregation where done simultaneously, in order to determine how the definition of the geometry would affect the final formation in real time.



manufacturing

The manufacturing was done by injection moulding, milling one metal mould to produce 60,000 polypropylene units. The resistance and flexibility of the pieces was studied to create enough friction and allow redundant connections.



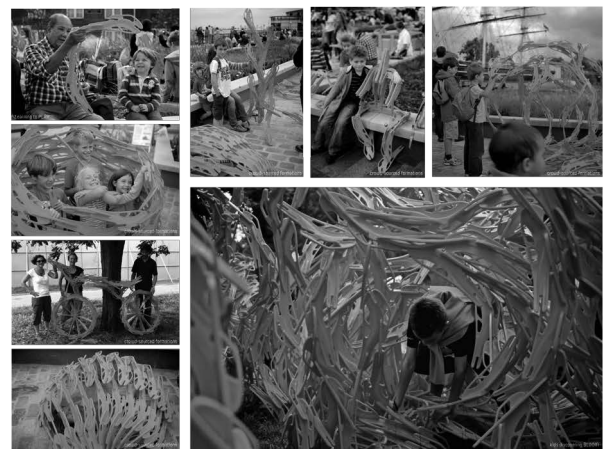
installation

Bloom was installed in 3 different locations during the London Olympics: Victoria Park, Greenwich and UCL main Quad. The initial formation would invite people to play and participate altering and building new structures. Every user, including the Bloom team, would have to learn how to "PLAY", as no blueprints would be present at the moment of construction. The rules of structure become self-evident at the moment of iteration and improvisation. The formations created live outside the realm of simulated forecasts, but rather within a notion of contingent adaptations.



game-play

BLOOM became an educational game. Encouraging people to work together to create all sorts of structures. People would soon realize that by following "recipes" or sequences, they could repeat formations and discover hidden patterns. Rhythmically would create loops, and logic would allow kids to create stiff structures. The Game mechanics designed into the project cater for the local adaptation of the pieces, allowing for contingent formations in every site. In this context, BLOOM became a social experiment of the use of game logics as a crowd-source medium for adaptation.



and allows the reimagining of the means of production through playful hints in geometry itself.

Today, the Bloom project is an ongoing initiative traveling to different cities, where the documentation of creations by the public provides essential feedback for the progress of the research.

JOSE SANCHEZ is an architect, programmer and game designer based in California. He is the director of the Plethora Project (plethora-project.com), a research and learning project investing in the future of online open-source knowledge. Today, he teaches at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he explores generative interfaces in the form of video games, speculating in modes of intelligence augmentation, combinatorics and open systems as a design medium.

ALISA ANDRASEK is an architect and curator. She is a founding principal of Biothing (biothing.org), which operates at the intersection of design, complexity and computer science. Andrasek teaches at the University College London Bartlett School of Architecture and has taught at the Architectural Association, Columbia University, the Pratt Institute, the University of Pennsylvania and RMIT Melbourne. She received numerous awards and her work has been exhibited worldwide.