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Bigger than a Breadbox, Smaller than a Building

June 17 through October 4, 2015

[Editor's note: High-resolution images and interviews with the curators are available upon request.]

From the earliest forays of Italian Futurists to the more recent provocations of Gordon Matta-Clark and Christo and Jeanne-Claude, the medium of installation has been a powerful tool to push the boundaries of architectural practice by enabling architecture to adapt to the evolving demands of research and professional practice.

In *Bigger than a Breadbox, Smaller than a Building*, BSA Space explores the power of architectural installations by featuring works by architects and designers who use this medium to test new technologies and building techniques, while executing pieces that are both sculptural and visually arresting. Curated by Rob Trumbour AIA and Aaron Willette of the design/research practice Khôra LLC., the exhibition presents more than 10 physical examples of the medium by an array of Boston-based and international designers.

As the curators explain:

"As a medium, installation serves a unique function in the architect's toolbox. Larger than an architectural model but not quite a building, it allows designers to bridge the gap that exists between the conceptual and physical practices of architecture. The architectural installation introduces new ideas and methodologies to the design process, questioning long-held notions regarding the nature and purpose of architecture."

"BSA Space welcomes this exhibition, which explores expressions of design at the very edge of architectural practice," says 2015 BSA president Tim Love AIA.

Largely solicited through an open competition hosted by [Archinect](#), the works on display showcase the medium's popularity within contemporary practice by highlighting its practical and evocative qualities. The examples on display will encourage visitors to engage with the medium itself and the ideas being explored to gain a better understanding of the often perplexing role of the architectural installation.

For the competition, participants had to reimagine a new installation for the Atlantic Wharf lobby, a large space adjacent to BSA Space. After reviewing numerous international and local projects, the jury selected *The Pulp Canopy* by Katie Donahue, Mason Limke, and Yandy Cheng of MYKA as the winner.

The Pulp Canopy investigates potential applications for reconstituted cellulose fiber, or paper pulp, in architecture and design. Over 800 rolls of toilet paper were collected from

airports that discard hundreds of pounds of partial rolls each week, as is common practice in many businesses with large facilities that find it more economical to replace and refill all rolls at once. This remnant paper has been broken down into its fibers, pulped, and reconsidered using digital and hand craft techniques to produce more than 4,400 triangular objects strung from one end of the Atlantic Wharf lobby to the other. The multiple strands of panels, organized into a massive overhead canopy, create a dynamic piece that explores texture, color, light and movement. Donahue, Limke, and Cheng's research considers characteristics of materiality and tactility, and how something as everyday as discarded paper can provoke new experiences and alternate forms of interaction.

To complement the scale of the winning work, the following large installations by invited Boston-based designers and practitioners will also be on show:

Microtherme

By Brandon Clifford and Wes McGee | [Matter Design](#) and Thomas Schroepfer
| [SUTD Advanced Architecture Laboratory](#)

An avant-garde thermal experience, this installation explores sensorial self-awareness. With an innovative approach in the use of materials, the design team successfully challenges conventional notions of comfort while overlaying the power that architecture has in producing a pleasant or not experience for the user. In this way, the visitor becomes an integral part of the installation by immersing into the illusion of wading in a thermal bath of sumptuous concrete. This project is funded in part by the SUTD-MIT International Design Centre (IDC).

Catenary Compression: the Tensile Vault, reconsidered

By [NADAAA](#)

This installation and its associated research imagines an architectural extremity comprising a series of carved blocks. The exposed sectional thickness of the blocks reinforces the monolithic nature of the vault, while custom joint connections interlock the pieces together. Digitally fabricated from high-density rigid foam using a 3-axis CNC machine, the composition, color, and texture of the material invoke a vault constructed in stone. Each block is designed to allow slivers of light to filter through the global form, calling into question concepts of geometry, structure, and performance typically associated with the archetype of the vault.

Step 7: Spatial Dissections

By [IK Studio](#)

Architecture is approaching a new state where agency and adaptability can bring the environment and the occupant together in a new synthetic relationship; how we create space and adapt to new agencies of space will be the defining trait of this century's

architecture. *Step 7: Spatial Dissections* will present an aspect of this agenda via a series of environments that are reactive and active. The installation belongs to a family of components that produce new architectural characteristics that are both self-supporting and expressive.

Along with these large-scale installations, a series of small works by the following designers and architecture firms will further illustrate the premise of the exhibition:

Michael Leighton Beaman and Zaneta Hong from Beta-field; Catie Newell from Alibi Studio; Justin Diles; Clay Odom from StudioMODO; +FARM; Skylar Tibbits from the MIT Self-Assembly Lab; the Institute for Computational Design and the Institute of Building Structures and Structural Design at the University of Stuttgart; and Interboro Partners.

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The curators

Rob Trumbour AIA and Aaron Willette are founding partners of the design and research practice Khôra LLC. Operating as a collaboration that exploits their overlapping interests, the practice provides the opportunity to explore ideas tangential to their daily activities.

Rob Trumbour AIA is an associate professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology and the founding director of the Boston-based design collaborative Artforming. Educated in the fields of the fine arts and architecture, Trumbour's current work engages in art, architecture, and landscape through the medium of installation art and emerging technologies.

Aaron Willette is the Digital Fabrication Lab (FABLab) coordinator at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Ann Arbor. His work operates at the intersection of design and technology, exploring the application of manufacturing and computation techniques via their intersection with contemporary interpretations of craft and culture.

About BSA Space

BSA Space is Boston's leading center for architecture and design, and is home to the Boston Society of Architects/AIA and the BSA Foundation. BSA Space hosts exhibitions on design and architecture, architectural cruises and walking tours, and other programs and events that foster exchange between design and construction, and the profession and the public, and encourage collaboration across the city and world. For more information, visit architects.org/bsaspace.

About the Boston Society of Architects

The Boston Society of Architects (BSA) is committed to professional development for its members, advocacy on behalf of great design, and sharing an appreciation for the built



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environment with the public at large. Established in 1867, the BSA today consists of nearly 4,000 members and produces a diverse array of programs and publications, including ArchitectureBoston Expo and *ArchitectureBoston* magazine. A chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the BSA is a nonprofit, professional-service organization. Its partner organization, the BSA Foundation, supports the civic and public outreach of the architectural community. For more information, visit architects.org or architects.org/foundation.

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