Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
KRESGE COLLEGE RENEWAL: CONNECTING PEOPLE, OBJECTS, + THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SUPERGRAPHICS

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• Abstract (300 words):
Kresge College at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), originally designed in 1971 by Turnbull Associates and Charles W Moore Associates (MLTW), is well known both for its “stage set” like architecture and its innovative use of environmental graphics. As stated by lead architect Charles Moore: “to make a place is to make a domain that helps people know where they are and by extension who they are.” The redwood forest, the architecture, and students’ daily lives are all figures orchestrated in a discourse created by architectural and graphic elements, unfolding along what was referred to by the architects as the “village street.” This included celebrating and highlighting the banal objects within the community: for example, the storm drain, payphone, mailroom, and laundry.

A current renewal and expansion of the College is being led by Studio Gang Architects and poses the question: what contemporary conceptualizations of place can bring logic to the new environmental graphics? This paper will explore the historical context and its evolution through the planned renewal of Kresge College. The project presents a unique opportunity to reconsider the role of signage, wayfinding, and experience design to produce an environment in which residents and visitors are not only oriented, but also active participants in shaping their relationship to this unique site. This renewal broadens the sense of place to include the dynamic socio-ecological conditions operating at Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, and the San Lorenzo Watershed. While the original supergraphics used primarily paint and highlight purely human activities, the new supergraphics are both embedded within the architectural materials, incorporate visitors’ mobile devices, and expand to connect people to the multiple species native to this complex site. These graphics highlight the complex history and topography of the site and produce a more multispecies oriented experience.
• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

N. Claire Napawan is a landscape architect, urban designer, and academic who has designed and studied urban environments for over 15 years. Her research and creative work includes co-design methodologies to achieve community resilience to climate change. Examples of her design and research include: Smart Sidewalks, the winning proposal for Reinventing Payphones in New York City, which seeks to address the digital divide and improve urban environmental resilience; #OurChangingClimate, a research and design project that broadens and diversifies climate conversations; FOGWASTE, a public art installation that seeks to bring greater awareness of San Jose’s vital infrastructures to local communities; and Unlocking Alameda Creek, a selected proposal for the Resilient by Design Bay Area Challenge that looks at unlocking flows of sediment, people, and fish. These projects represent award-winning proposals, commissioned by local municipalities, and/or exhibited at notable venues throughout the US. Claire currently resides in the San Francisco Bay Area; she is an associate professor within the Department of Human Ecology at the University of California Davis and co-founder of the non-profit design collaborative, group projects. She holds advanced degrees from Washington University in St. Louis’ School of Architecture and Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design.

Brett Snyder is a principal of Cheng+Snyder an experimental architecture and design studio based in Oakland, California, an Associate Professor of Design at the University of California Davis, and a co-founder of the experimental collaborative Group Projects. He is a co-lead of Imagining America’s Collective of Publicly Engaged Designers, an organization that highlights the way in which an engaged design process can foster community resilience. Much of Snyder’s work focuses on the way that mobile media has changed the way that we navigate, understand, and experience the environment. Recent projects include Smart Sidewalks, a winning entry to the NYC Reinvent Payphones competition, Museum of the Phantom City an architectural iPhone app to view visionary but un-built architecture, and Public Sediment, an award winning collaborative project to unlock Alameda Creek. Together, these projects represent the forefront of climate engagement, with an array of experimental methods, including analog and digital techniques to foster civic participation.