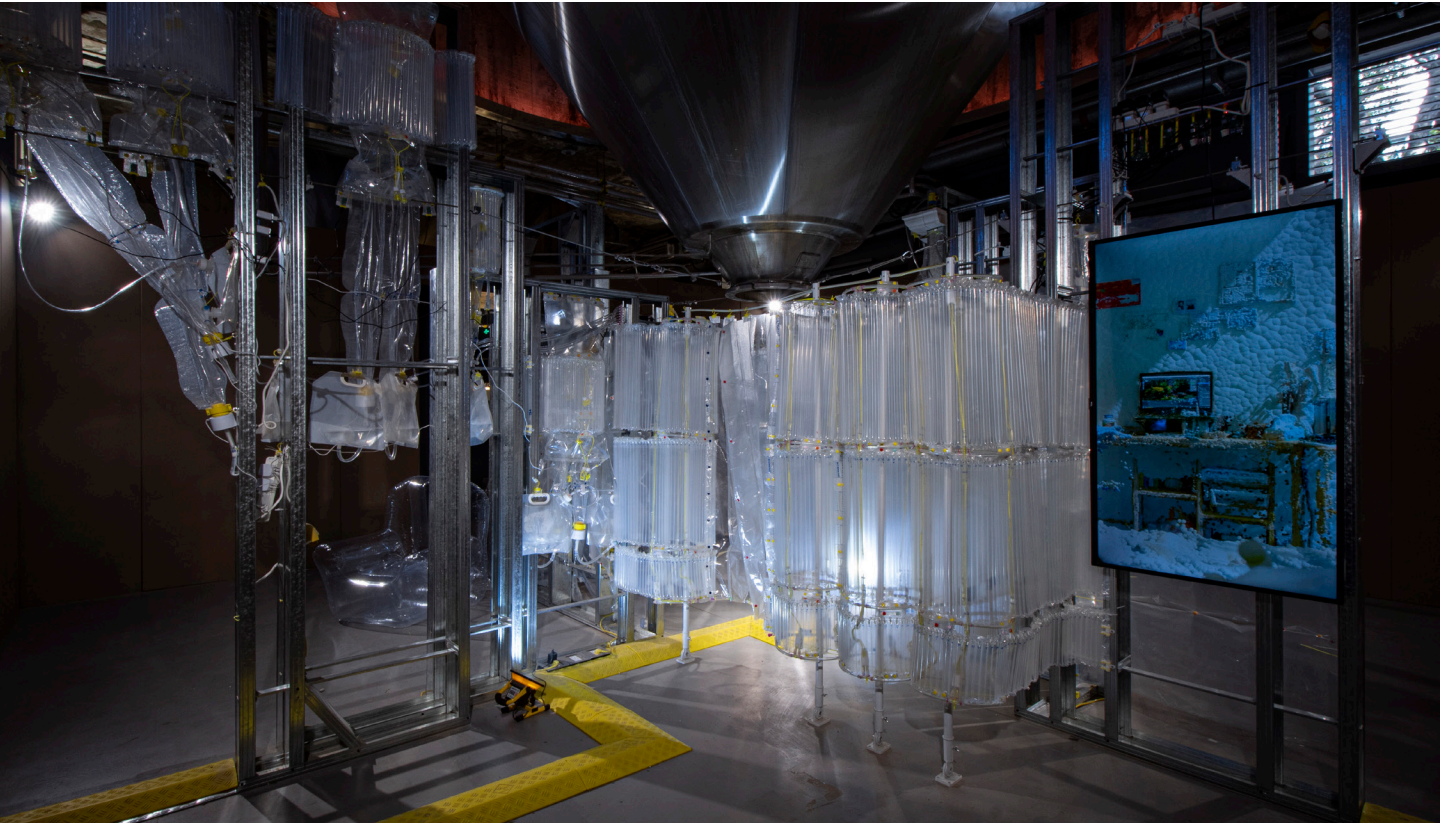


Flooded House: A Disruptive Comfort Zone

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1 "Flooded House" installation in the "Cosmic Cities" section of the 9th UABB, 2022.

"Dirty eroticism gives way to clean pornography. ... Today's society, obsessed with cleanliness and hygiene, is a society of positivity which feels disgust at any kind of negativity. ... From the perspective of hygienic reason, any ambivalence and any secret are also perceived to be dirty. ... Data and information deliver themselves to total visibility and they make everything visible.

Byung-Chul Han, "The Smooth." *Saving Beauty*, 2015.

Introduction

"Flooded House" questions the concept of hygiene of the domestic space from a post-human perspective assisted by an experimental modeling process specifying ready-made plastic products.

Against the threat of water, the nemesis of indoor space, modern architecture shields it as a submarine to retain the interior bubble of the comfort zone. The "Flooded House" is

PRODUCTION NOTES

Architect: FrankanLisa

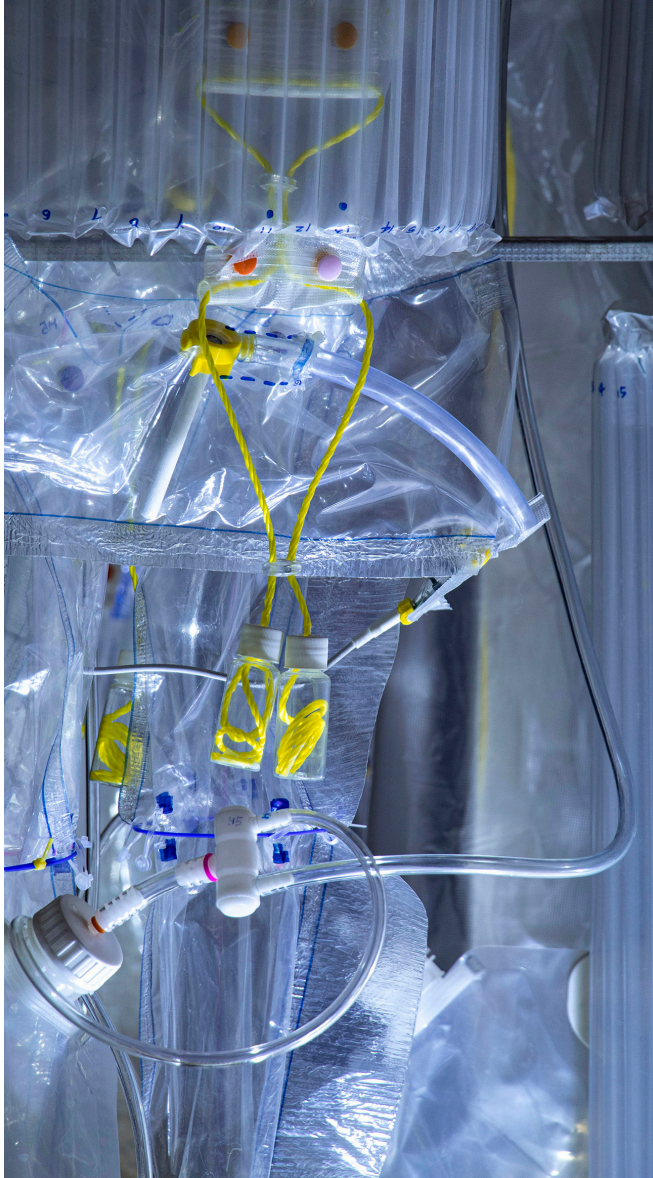
Client: The 9th Bi-City Biennale
of Urbanism and Architecture
(UABB 2022)

Status: Built

Site Area: 540 sq. ft.

Location: Shenzhen, China

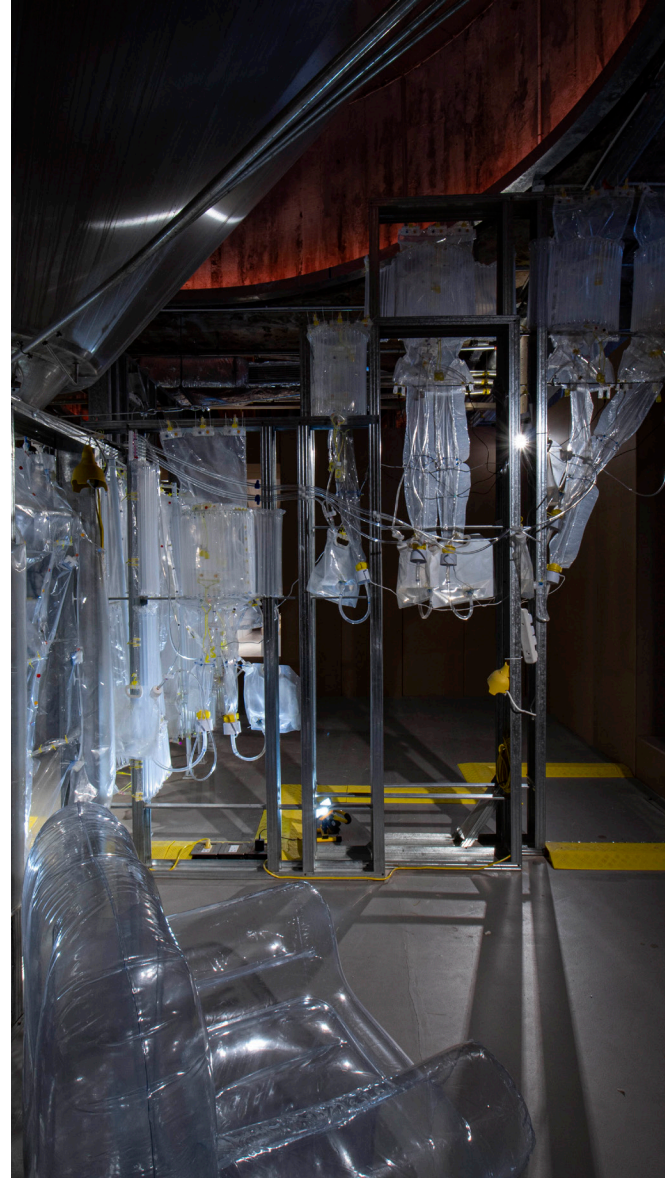
Date: 2022



2 The prolonged and exposed experience of cleansing.

instead an aquarium. While a modern home strenuously excludes nature to retain the climatic management inside the bubble, the installation, "Flooded House," presents faithfully the precarious condition of architecture by stripping bare the wall surfaces and exposing the plastic organs in architecture, an ad hoc assembly undergoing the crisis of water.

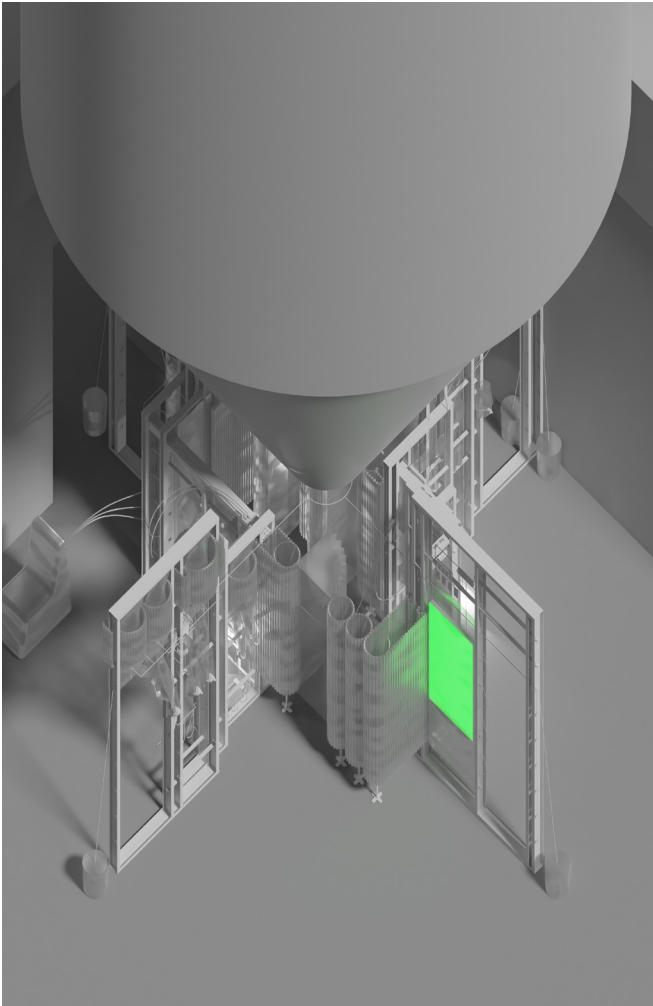
"Flooded House" is a structure that divides the 7-by-7-meter space under the remaining brewery tank of the old beer factory into four chambers through a cruciform plan. The transformations of water in nature -- evaporation, filtration, condensation -- are sealed in transparent walls for display. The exterior of a building is folded into the interior of the interior. The audience can walk between the



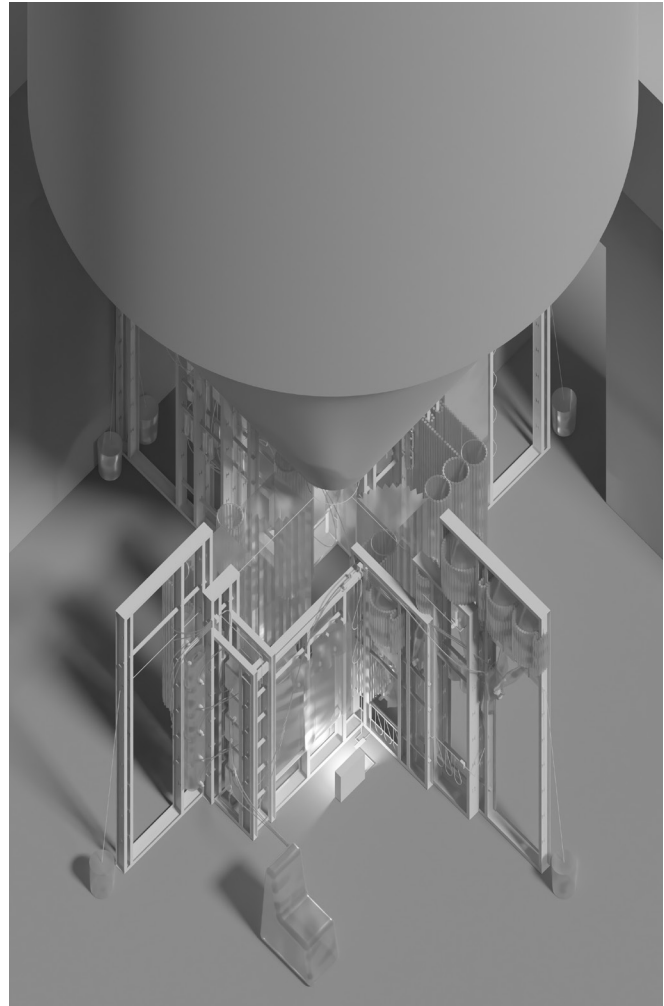
four chambers, yet cannot enter the fifth one, the space enclosed by the plastic membrane directly underneath the tank that symbolizes the unattainable nature beyond the boundary of architecture. A dehumidifier embedded in the wall continuously absorbs water from the exhibition space, which then cycles behind the transparent plastic layer until it fills the inflatable furniture. The screens immersed in water symbolize windows from which we see the world outside. To look beyond the periphery of architecture, we now gaze inward.

Instant Cleanliness

Water and plastic both contribute to the construction of the hygienic experience of a modern home through their instant consumption. As the indispensable medium that facilitates



3 The quadripartitions displaying the water transformations.



material exchange in architecture, water is generated, yet consumed immediately, turning into waste as soon as it fulfills its duty, including bathing, laundry, and dish-washing (Shove 2003). Similarly, plastics secure the visual experience of cleanliness in the cycle of a modern home by sealing objects as the ultimate transparent, yet air-tight bubbles. In Haruhiko Kawaguchi's "Flesh Love" series, the plastic membrane that is shrink-wrapping the house evokes an uncanny perception of intimate daily settings. Using a similar-scale plastic membrane, the installation "Our Product" by Pamela Rosenkranz contains a pool of light pink water, revealing plastics' pervasive presence in human society. Disciplined by consumerism, plastics dwell only for a transient moment in the realm of everyday life out of the anxiety toward cleanliness (Han 2017, 9) and, thus, its unconscious consumption.

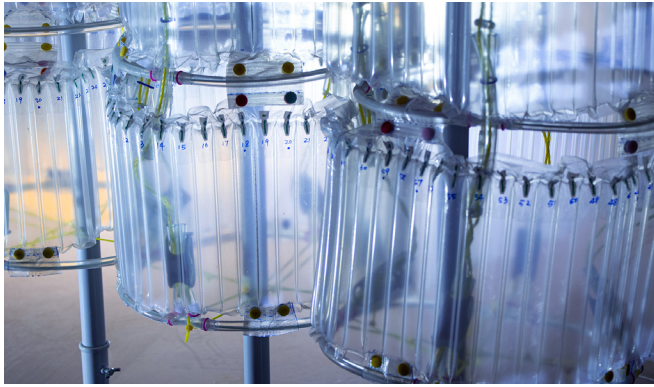
As plastics continuously devalue morally and culturally, they become an addiction that is increasingly hard to quit (Life Magazine, 1955). As a necessity in modern living,

plastic consumables inundate our surroundings, as illustrated in Richard Seymour's "Yiwu Commodity City" and Choi Jeong Hwa's installation "Happy Together." Despite the common belief in sustainability, the cheap comfort and recyclability of traditional plastic material still outweigh the performance of its organic substitutes. The recyclability makes it guiltless to discard plastic, which nevertheless accelerates unwitting consumption.

Myths of the Indoors

In search of the exact materials that outline a home, the definition of the very boundary becomes debatable. Is it the solid walls that define the interior and the exterior, or is it the thin membrane sealing moisture? The preset borders between in and out, clean and filthy, consumption and recycling, all deserve close examination.

The environmental bubble that Reyner Banham (1965, 77) depicted with François Dallegret epitomizes the explorations around the boundary of the artificial environment



4 Looking into the interior through the water-filled enclosure.

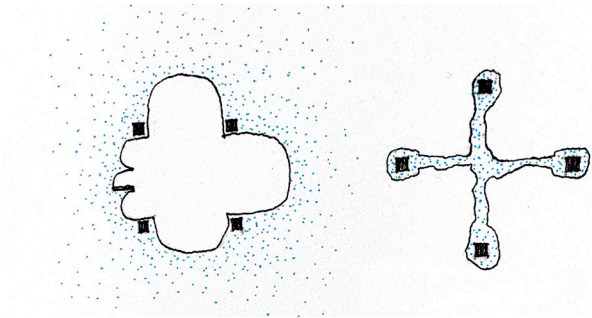


5 The aggregated plastic parts echoing the obsession with cleanliness.



since the space race in the 1960s with a transparent and supple outer skin encapsulating environmental controlling machines. This can be seen in the "Clean Air Pod" by Ant Farm, "Astroballoon" by Coop Himmelblau, and "Cushicle" by Michael Webb, which have superseded the space for gathering to serve as the new spiritual center (or the hearth). In more recent works, architects managed to create enduring projects with infrastructure exposed, as seen in Brandlhuber's transparent partitions in the German Aerospace Center (DLR) in Stuttgart, Germany, Vylder Vinck Tallieu's glazed layer surrounding the brick

structure of Les Ballets C de la B and LOD Production Studios, and Andres Jaque's "Cosmo" installation with tangling tubes and containers. The "Flooded House" flips the bubble inside the house. It externalizes and further visualizes the infrastructure that was once concealed inside the partition and enclosure. The installation is itself a machine that processes water: first as vapor, whereby the water is then collected, transported, gasified, condensed, filtered, and driven to cycle endlessly in the transparent infill of walls. A variety of parts, ranging from scroll wheels on infusion bottles to pinchcocks, are designed to be accessible,



6 The installation wraps the outside into the infills.

thus inviting the visitors to participate in conditioning the indoor environment. In the subverted relationship between structure and infill, the visitors are no longer situated in the stable indoor space, but swallowed into the interior of the interior or, in other words, the inside of walls.

Experimental Modeling: A System of Specifying

The "Flooded House" is composed of everyday plastic parts. Each unique in its shape, color, and function, they are connected tectonically and repurposed ad hoc.

Plastics are a type of fluid material. As Roland Barthes (1972) described, they are formless until they are given a function. Their assembly is tantamount to a physical collage, where products from distinct systems coincidentally interlock each other and forge into seamless joints.

In search of an efficient description of the construction, the modeling process was then transformed into a specifying system that unavoidably codified both the parts and the building techniques of assembly and, thus, interrogates the boundary between the architects and the builders (Osman 2020). The appropriated products are too dazzling for architectural drawing as they can hardly be precisely portrayed. Inherently antithetical to the standardization in drawing (Carpo 2011), these irregular and complex ready-made objects are instead represented as symbols, whose details and even dimensions do not matter as much as their interconnection and location. In Laida Aguirre's words, as a system that "strives for efficiency," (Aguirre 2019) the specifying system bridges the gap between the original purpose of the objects and their on-site assembly, creating a seamless whole. They appear as labels in the digital model, which itself is transformed into a 3D index. The true look of the objects can only be found on Taobao links.

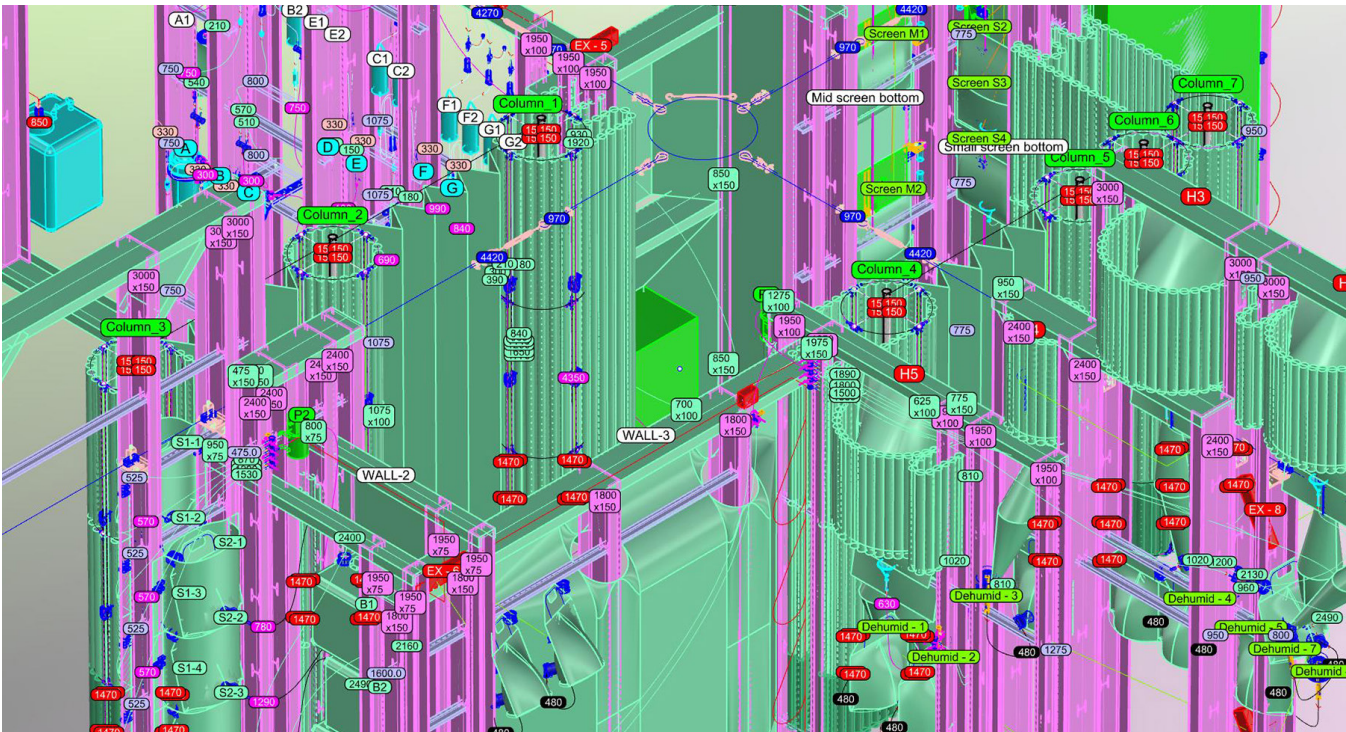
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project was supported by the 9th Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/ Architecture (Shenzhen) and Design Trust. The authors would like to thank the curator Zigeng Wang, and assistant curator, Yingxiao Chen, for their recognition and support. Credits are listed below:

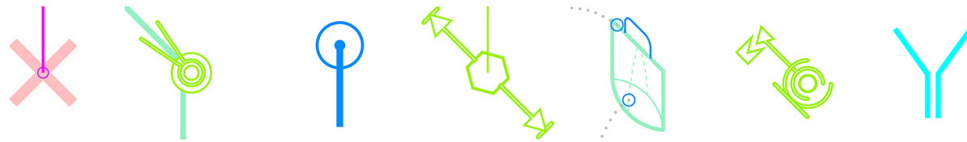
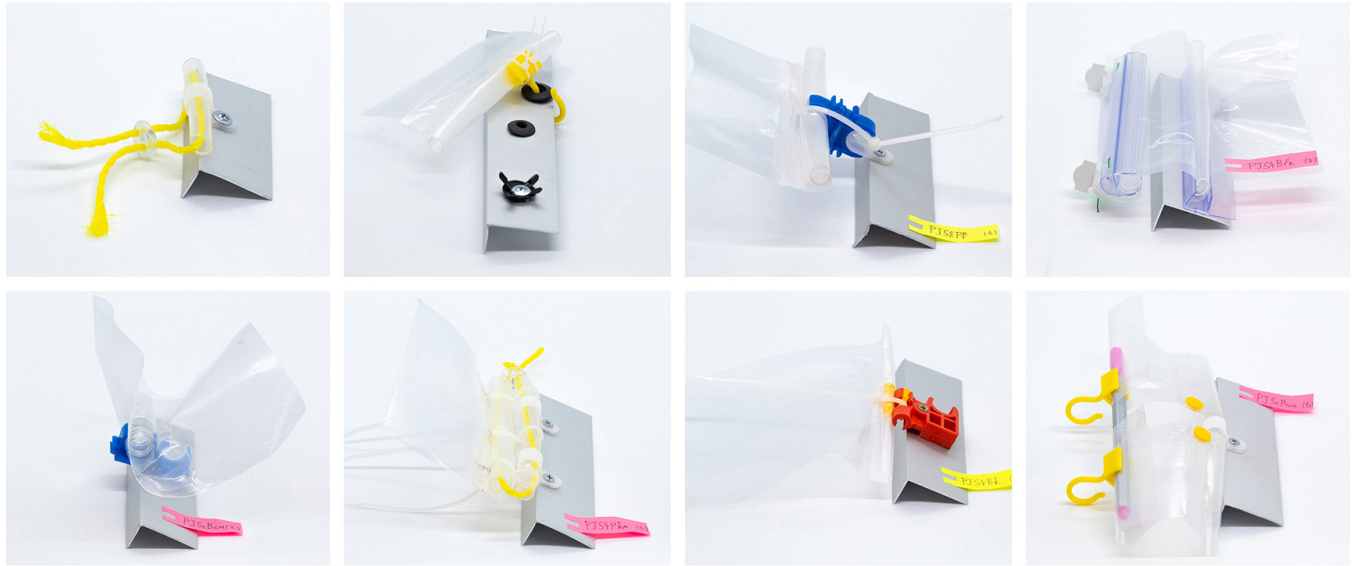
Project Lead: Tianying Li and Haotian Zhang.

Prototyping Assistant: Chris Shing Chun Iu

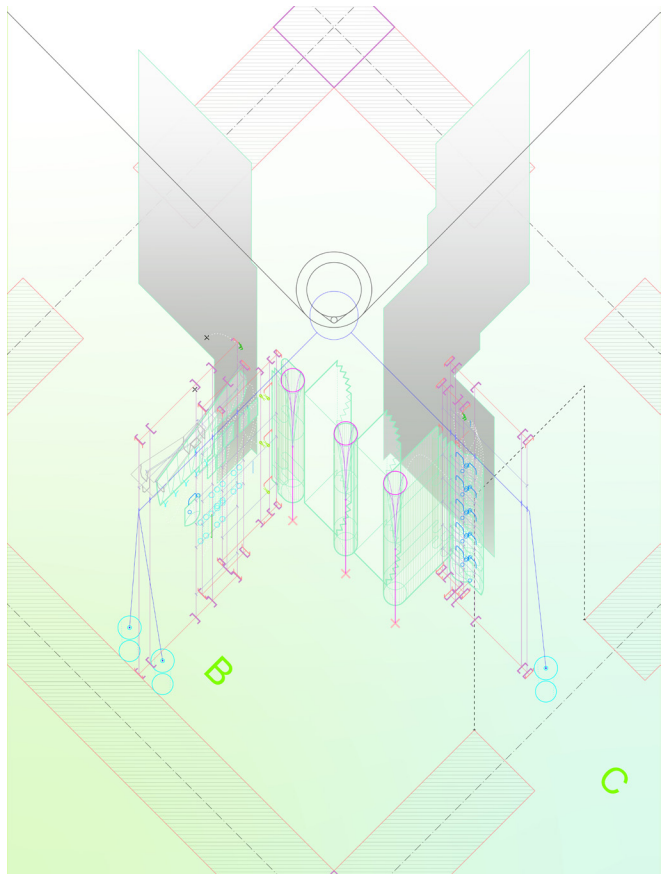
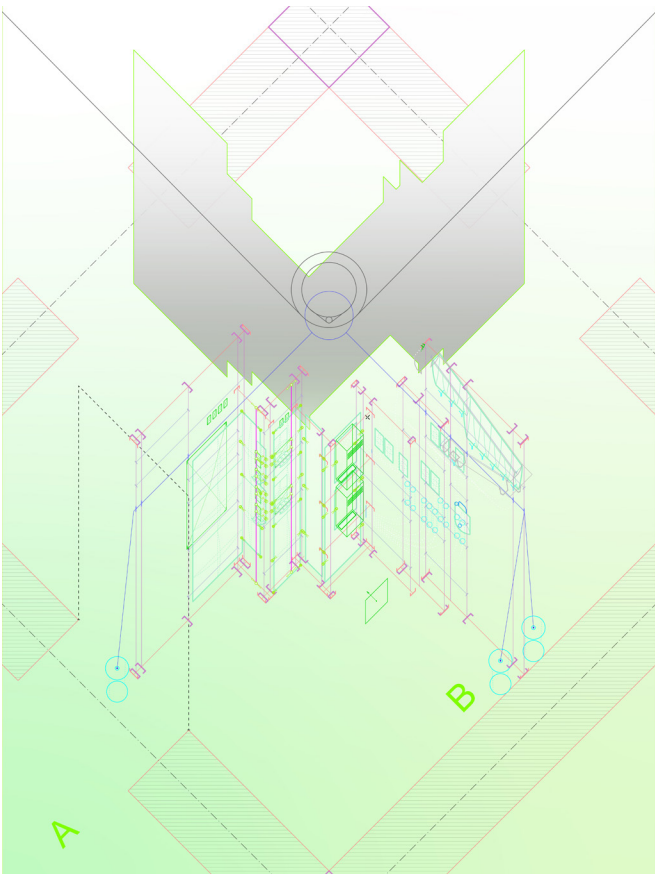
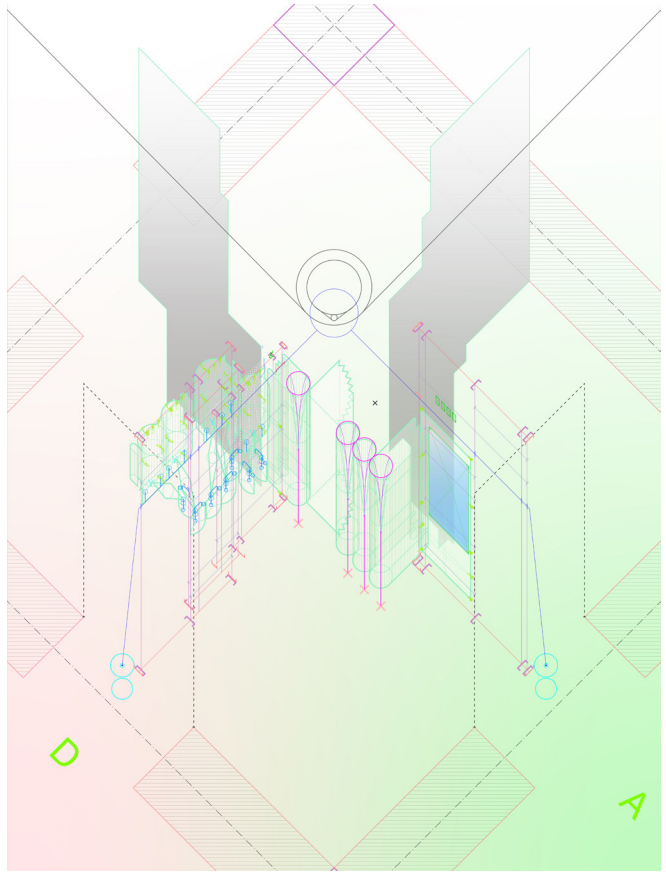
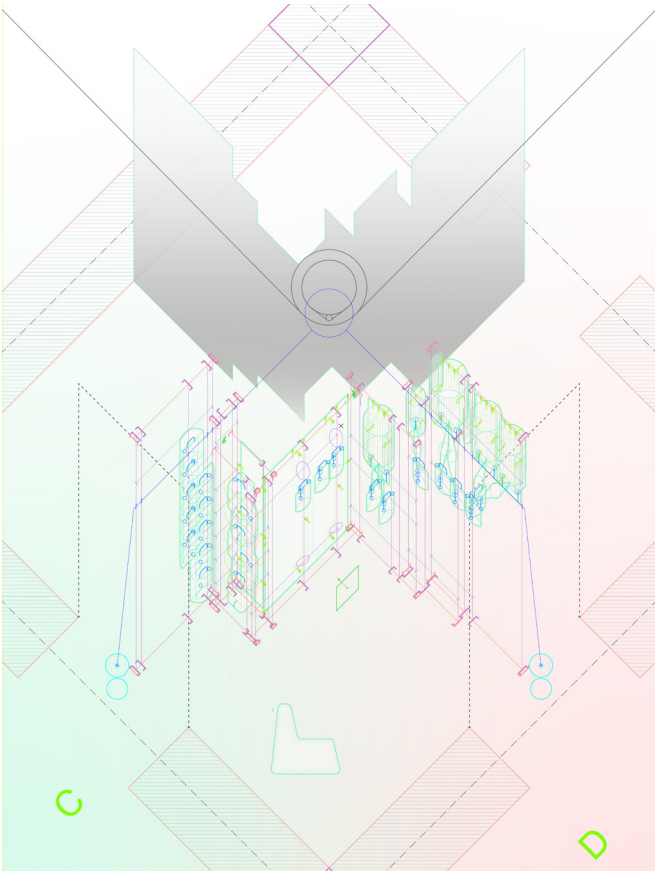
On-site Assembly Assistant: Xingdi Li



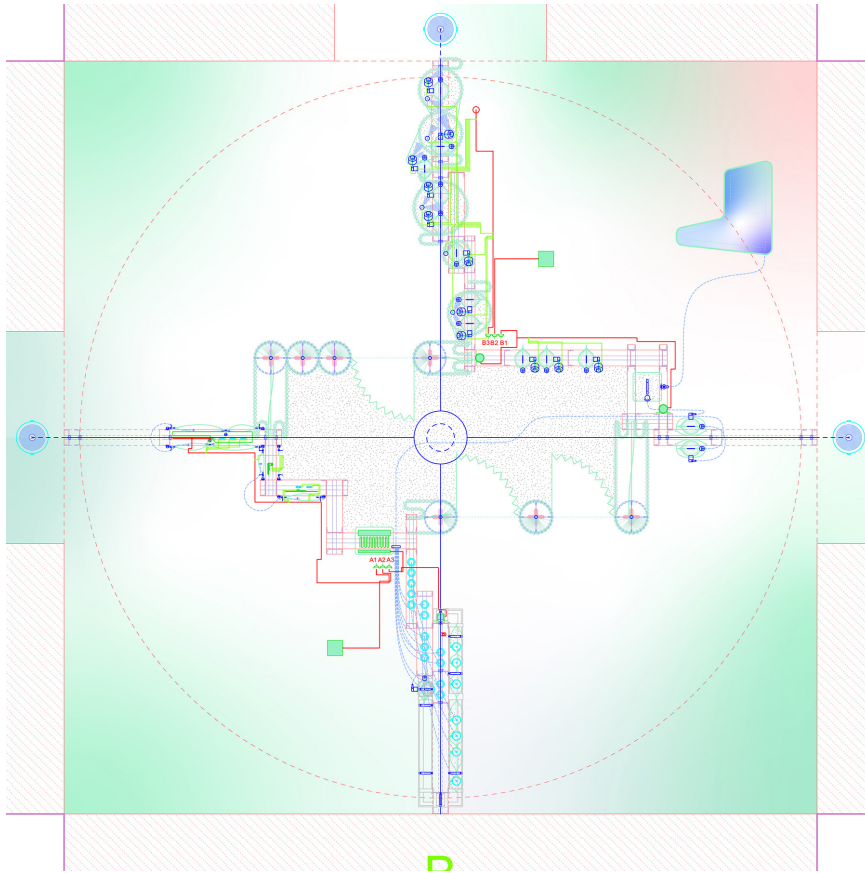
7 Digital model as a specifying system.



8 Symbols representing the ready-made plastic products.



9 Axonometric drawings composed of symbols.



10 Plan of the "Flooded House" installation.

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IMAGE CREDITS

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