faBRICK: temporary pavillion

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The traditional assumption is that masonry is permanent. Students in the UWM-SARUP Marcus Prize Studio, co-taught with Sou Fujimoto and Associate Professor Mo Zell, innovate new masonry construction assemblies that rethink brick as a lightweight and short-term material by exploring new options for the joint.

The faBRICK pavilion, a temporary installation, transforms an undeveloped lot into a public destination. An architectural installation, one form of temporary construction, is intended to be in place over a short period of time. As Sarah Bonnemaison and Ronit Eisenbach state in Installations by Architects: "(a)n installation ... is temporary, that is, its demise is planned from the outset; its function turns away from utility in favor of criticism and reflection; and it foregrounds the content." [Installations] also offer precious freedom to experiment." (PAP, 2009, p 14.) Implicit in this observation is an acknowledgment that installations require a different set of construction parameters; that they require a critical stance, one that provides opportunities to not only solve problems, but also to create questions.

For obvious reasons, masonry is rarely deployed in these types of structures. Bricks weigh between 4 and 5 pounds (1.8 kg - 2.27 kg) depending on the core pattern, number of cores, and the aggregate material. The weight of brick assembly increases rapidly within a small area. For instance, a 4" masonry wall runs about 42 pounds per square foot while 2x4 Douglas Fir lumber runs about 1.28 pounds per foot. Due to this weight, formwork or other assemblies of construction are often needed to help hold brick structures in place during construction. A lot of material is also needed to create a substantial visual impact. However, the oversight of not experimenting with brick installations limits the nature and type of construction innovation needed for this material.

In conceiving a temporary public pavilion, the project pays homage to Milwaukee's tradition of masonry construction. Through material explorations, this studio developed a novel method of linking bricks into billowing arches (no mortar), giving the traditionally heavy material a feeling of lightness and playfulness. These arches combine to form a rippling brick carpet that invites human interaction and exploration while critiquing the definition of pavilion. As a result, a hard material was transformed into something that appeared soft. The installation challenges the notion of a pavilion by changing the ways in which bodies exist in relationship to building - how we sit, stand, lean, move, interact and observe. Though the parts of the architecture are familiar - the brick and wood, it is the assembly of those parts that changes our expectations of the world around us.

The linking system provides a constantly changing texture—grass flows in, light flows through, nature envelops. This transformed brick wall, harkening back to Thomas Jefferson's garden walls at UVA, rotated 90 degrees horizontally, transforms heavy material into an open web of a rippling brick texture. The arches flow into and above the ground hovering in some areas, nested in others - the bricks seem to float.

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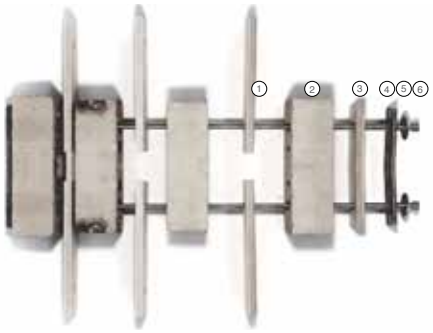
For obvious reasons, masonry is rarely deployed in these types of structures. Bricks weigh between 4 and 5 pounds (1.8 kg - 2.27 kg) depending on the core pattern, number of cores, and the aggregate material. The weight of brick assembly increases rapidly within a small area. For instance, a 4" masonry wall runs about 42 pounds per square foot while 2x4 Douglas Fir lumber runs about 1.28 pounds per foot. Due to this significant weight, formwork or other assemblies of construction are often needed to help hold brick structures in place during construction. A lot of material is also needed to create a substantial visual impact. In addition, the unit itself has spanning limitations requiring significant aggregation to stretch over distances. However, the oversight of not experimenting with brick installations limits the nature and type of construction innovation needed for this material.

In conceiving a temporary public pavilion, the project pays homage to BLANK's rich tradition of masonry construction. Through creative material explorations, this studio developed a novel method of linking bricks into billowing arches (no mortar), giving the traditionally heavy material a feeling of lightness and playfulness. These arches combine to form a rippling brick carpet that invites human interaction and exploration while critiquing the definition of pavilion. As a result, a hard material was transformed into something that appeared soft. The installation challenges the notion of a pavilion by changing the ways in which our bodies exist in relationship to building - how we sit, stand, lean, how we move, how we interact and observe. Though the parts of the architecture are familiar - the brick and wood, it is the assembly of those parts that changes our expectations of the world around us.

This pavilion connects nature and architecture. It pulls the city towards nature at the back of the site and out to the lake. It anticipates over the summer a regeneration of nature. The porosity of the brick carpet allows nature to erupt through the gaps (in this case grass) and also allows light to dapple through it to the ground. The linking system provides a constantly changing texture - grass flows in, light flows through, nature envelops. This transformed brick wall, harkening back to Thomas Jefferson's garden walls at UVA, rotated 90 degrees horizontally, transforms heavy material into an open web of a rippling brick texture. The arches flow into and above the ground hovering in some areas, nested in others - the bricks seem to float.



1 - plywood gasket
2 - five-hole brick
3 - plywood cap
4 - steel cap
5 - neoprene washer
6 - steel nut

uwm marcus prize studio with sou fujimoto