

## Make an Anthropo-Scene!

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As both a discipline and a cultural practice, architecture's expertise lies in its capacity to communicate new ideas through various media. We wield this expertise not simply to build buildings, but to build portals that connect reality as we know it to new realities conjured by our imaginations. We occupy this translation by straddling the line that separates what is from what might be through drawing, writing, and constructing at multiple scales. For this reason, our responsibility to engage with the real and serious issues in the world (social, economic or environmental) manifests less convincingly as policies or calculations and more potently as provocations that help us see a different future.

Make an Anthropo-Scene is a recent installation that produces a provocative, yet incomplete image of an alternative world where an animated collective life expands the boundaries of its environment to include new subjectivities. On one hand, the project reads as a line drawing of simple abstracted figures overlapping in elevation. On the other hand, the surface of the drawing is folded in plan to create nooks and crannies for occupation and interaction with the figural characters. By leveraging the disciplinary trope of the line drawing in a volumetric way, the project portrays an expanded environment of companionship, prompting engagement with overlapping creature-like architectural forms. The outcome is a flickering legibility that snaps into and out of completion and wholeness. The aggregation of parts is legible enough to suggest a possible story, yet still open to filling gaps or generating scenarios through audience participation and invention.

The project explores the potential for architecture to operate as a diorama and a caricature simultaneously, coupling the immersive world-making potential of the diorama with techniques associated with caricature—simplification, distortion, exaggeration, and humor. The medium-specific conventions of both diorama and caricature support the representation

of life. With the diorama, life is portrayed in situ, depicting a "realistic" context that generates narrative and empathy for its subject. Alternatively, the caricature depicts life distilled to an essential character, telling a story that privileges an observer's bias and perspective at the expense of detail and background. As a hybrid condition, Make an Anthropo-Scene reduces form to a simplified volumetric outline and a slightly erroneous and cartoonish shadow that makes occupiable space within and around a shallow alcove.

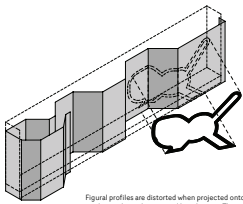
Located along primary circulation paths at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the installation engages a thirty-foot-long alcove to create an occupiable destination where passersby are invited to pop their head in, be hugged by, or sit between these creaturely figures—to become a part of the ever-changing scene. The installation does not claim to solve the problem of environmental degradation by the human race. Rather, it makes an animate scene and calls others to action to join in the making of the scene as well. In the process, it hopes to punch a small, cartoon-shaped hole in the fabric of reality in order to suggest that an alternative world is possible.



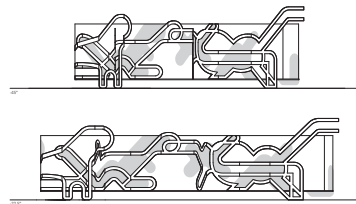
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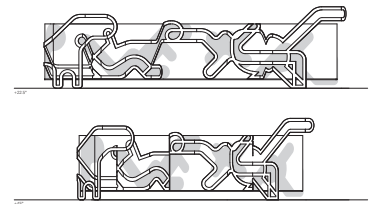
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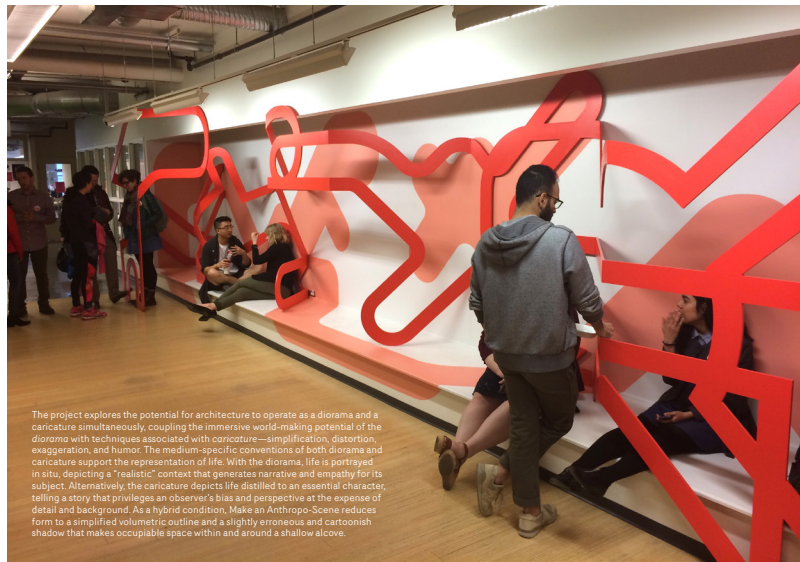
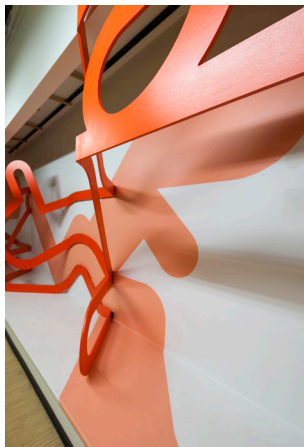
Figural profiles are distorted when projected onto a folded surface to produce a three-dimensional line drawing. The original figures flicker in and out of legibility as viewers walk past or occupy the alcove.



Elevation approaching from the left



Elevation approaching from the right



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