

Inventory: A Material Catalog for Concrete Rubble

ANG LI

Northeastern University

The demolition site is one of the contemporary city's most compelling forums for civic debate and urban speculation. Suspended within relentless cycles of redevelopment, it renders visible the spatial politics and material footprints of the building industry. According to the EPA, roughly 500 million tons of construction and demolition debris is generated every year in the United States, of which up to 80% consists of concrete from the demolition of infrastructural works, obsolete industrial sites and misunderstood Brutalist monuments. While many states have implemented waste bans and tax credits to incentivize the reuse of salvaged aggregate in new construction, the process of sorting and transporting rubble from building sites to recycling and distribution facilities remains an opaque and labor intensive undertaking filled with legislative loopholes and inefficiencies.

Inventory proposes an opportunist intervention that operates within the constraints of existing C&D waste streams to recast the pavilion as an on-site sorting station that translates the spatial voids and material surplus of active demolition sites into a temporary ruin-scape through aggregation. The structure re-imagines the Roman practice of embedding spolia in building facades through a ready-made, modular system of gabion wall units. The pavilion serves the dual function of a material stockyard and a transitory civic archive where concrete rubble is sorted, stored and displayed by size, shape and architectural integrity. At the end of the pavilion's lifecycle, the materials are liberated from their cages and returned back into circulation to private collectors, salvage yards and nearby recycling facilities.

