

Artifact analysis method exercise

Media Design Research Seminar

Autumn 2014

Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture

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The method

1. Take the artifact assigned to you from the EMMA exhibition (pp. 2-3) and do an artifact analysis. This means that you will create a description (pp. 3-4) that includes the physical characteristics as well as the intangible characteristics of the item such as for example:
 - a. material : construction, physical description, including size, the parts and how these are organized in space.
 - b. design: typology, what is it used for and how.
 - c. historical interpretation of origin: the author(s), date, changes it might have undergone.
 - d. context: environment, location, place.
 - e. significance: meaning, from the visitor's perspective
 - f. interpretation: sum of previous studies, if you can find any (e.g. newspaper reviews, interviews with the artists, entries in books.)
2. Consider the item's **Affordances** as well as its **Constraints**. Do these tell us something about the artifact? Do these tell us something about the structure of the artifact*?
3. Is it an **enabling** artifact? Or does it operate as a **constraining** one?
4. How would you **translate** the artifact that you have described above into a new artifact for the digital dimension? In your translation, please consider and describe the following factors:
 - a. form
 - b. interaction
 - c. emotional investment, response

* The structure of the artifact is the way the parts are organized in relation to its functionality and sense-making ability as a sign.



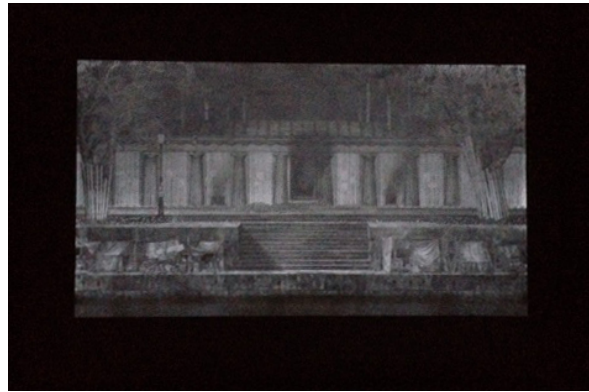
1.



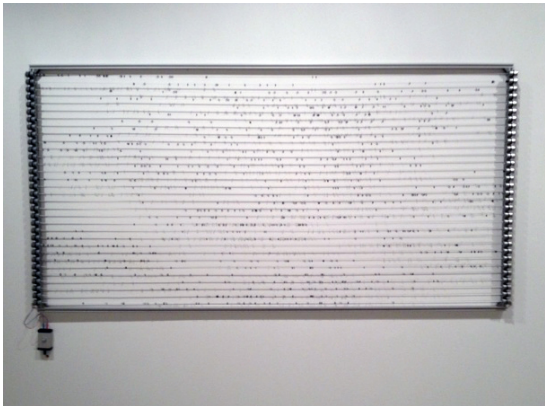
2.



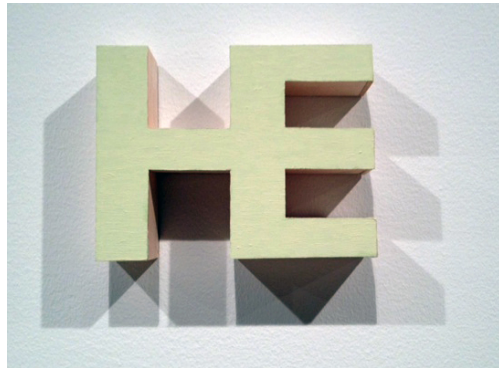
3.



4.



5.



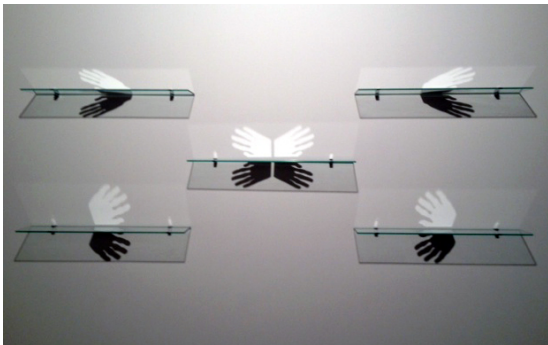
6.



7.



8.



9.

Doing the exercise

What?

You are certainly very welcome to look at other items on exhibit, however, for the purposes of this work I want you to focus on the items assigned to you. The number of the image indicates the artifact that has been assigned to your group. If you missed the first class and you do not have a group, you need to join one. There should not be more than 4 people per group. Yes, there are no titles for the works in the assignment. I want you to look for these and, once you find them, read the captions carefully.

Where?

Go to the EMMA Museum, Ahertajantie 5, Tapiola, on the second floor and find your artifact and do an artifact analysis of the piece. (You can also take this opportunity to enjoy the Vasarely exhibition currently on site!) EMMA is an umbrella institution that in addition to its own contemporary museum gathers within several other museums. It is located close to the center of Tapiola. You can walk there, or take several modes of transport, including regular buses, or the KutsuPlus service.

When?

You have the period of the class on October 14 that you can use. In addition you can go any other time, but on Wednesdays, from 18:00-20:00 entrance is free. The course will cover your fee. Please inform the lady in the ticket station that you are with the Media Lab, Aalto University group. Note: you (each group) must have this exercise completed by October 28 when it will be assessed by a group of reviewers.

How?

You will use the artifact analysis method as outlined in the description provided on page 1. You will create:

1. An abstract, with a title, describing the work done of not more than 300 words in length.
2. A short paper of not more than 1500 words in length.
3. A presentation that contains no more than 10 slides
4. The names and email addresses of the authors should be included in all of these

Why?

The course is about research methods. Through this exercise you will learn how to use the artifact analysis method as well as learn to deal with the basic issues of practice-led methodology.

About EMMA

<http://www.emma.museum/en>

Transportation

To consult the transit system and plan a trip. (There is translation into English.)

<http://www.reittiopas.fi>

To consult and use the on-demand transportation service, Kutsu Plus (In English)

https://kutsuplus.fi/home?lang=en_GB