DESIGNING AN ANTI-MEMORIAL TO LAND LOST

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CALIFORNIA IS SUBSIDING, SINKING, DUE TO GROUNDWATER OVER-PUMPING.

How can we use design to translate scientific data into an experience that will inspire people and state-wide policies to change?

Abstract: In 1950, the California State Water Project was inaugurated to provide water to the rapidly growing urban population. Over-pumping of the groundwater in California has caused land subsidence which is now being measured using real-time technology. Anti-memorials are a new medium for raising awareness and inspiring action. This project will develop a systematic process to evaluate the anti-memorial’s capacity to inspire action and gather feedback from the public.

How does one design an anti-memorial?

I inventoried 25 anti-memorials and compared them on spectrums based on their changeability, interactivity, longevity, and proximity to incident site. Anti-memorials come in many forms, including temporary, site-specific ephemeral and impermanent, or permanent, and are designed to engage individuals and communities in conversations, events, and demonstrations of their personal engagement with the issue.

Conclusion:

Anti-Memorial Design Guidelines

1. Framing: The anti-memorials helped the public recognize the issue through framing it in the existing environment and framing the cause with the effect. Anti-memorials are not to consult but to provoke, not to remain fixed but to change, not to be overwhelming but to disappear, not to be ignored by passers-by but to demand interaction, not to remain private but to invite their own volition and not to accept previously the burden of memory but to drop it in the public feet. James Young, architectural historian.

2. Multiscalar: The anti-memorials included multiple locations, different scales, and digital and analog components.

3. Performative: The anti-memorials were made by the public through mark-making, conversations, events, and demonstrations of their personal engagement with the issue.

ANTI-MEMORIAL TO LAND LOST IS ON SUBTERRANEAN STAIRS, BUT ALSO EVERYWHERE

Stairs connect elevation drops, time, and policies in the form of a human-scaled timeline that can be made by anyone temporarily. The anti-memorial also includes longer lasting digital components.

Change over time

Interactivity

Longevity

Proximity to incident site

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