

This thesis critiques and analyzes the persisting issues of the modern life as they impact architecture based on *The Society of The Spectacle* by Guy Debord. *The Society of The Spectacle* made such a profound impact on the French Society in the 1960s that it aided in the creation of the well-established avant-garde social movement dubbed by the term *Situationism*. The Situationists strongly believed in the fact that by constructing different *situations* within the existing city fabric, the common people, also known as the *spectators*, who were systematically and meticulously manipulated by the occularcentric and image-driven lifestyle, would be able to eventually contemplate that true happiness, contentment and *the ultimate truth* actually weren't a state of having, but a state of being.

Seeing the similarities between *Situationism* and *Mahayana Buddhism* in their ultimate quest to cease human suffering, this thesis then argues that the architectural significance of the idea of *Emptiness* in *Mahayana Buddhism* holds the answer to the '*Grand Spectacle*' proposed by Guy Debord and the Situationists.

Through an in-depth study and analysis of the Situationist's *Dérive* and *Détournement* as the means of production, the thesis aims to create an architectural state of *Emptiness* at the Geylang Neighborhood of Singapore, commonly known as the Red Light district. This project can be categorized into two stages based on the scale of intervention into the existing urban texture.

At the urban scale, the project would propose a number of conceptual '*Dérive*' and '*Détournement*' pathways as a method of connection between the human scale insertions. These urban interventions will serve their purpose as *the journey*, which encourages the spectators to

deviate from the ordinary and emerge into the unexpected. This thesis takes on a variety of *Dérive* iterations, which all appear to be significantly radical, based on Constant Nieuwenhuys' *The New Babylon Project*. However, after careful consideration, this thesis decides to opt for a more subtle approach, in which, three new urban hubs are nestled within the existing city fabric, rather than breaking out of it. The *raison d'être* of these hubs are determined based on the meditational practice of the Kalachakra Mandala, which is utilized to purify one's mind, body, and speech. These three hubs, named Samadhi, Sharira and Smriti, respectively take turns to purify the mind/spirituality, the body/well-being and the speech/identity of the neighborhood.

At the human scale, the practice of *Détournement* constitutes a series of unexpected architectural insertions, which serves as an invitation for the spectators to explore their taken-for-granted city life under different perspectives. The act of experiencing unforeseen changes within the periodic routine has been thoroughly embodied and cherished in both Buddhism and Situationism as a mean to achieve moments of enlightenment. These insertions are considered as *the destinations*. Due to the limit of time, the thesis chooses to develop three insertions/buildings within the first hub, Samadhi, which serves its function as an anti-mimesis approach to reveal the true meaning of spirituality, the connection between human and the cosmology.

The first insertion is called *Dukkha*, situated along the street frontage of Geylang Road, the main street of the red light district. *Dukkha* consists of a gilded circular ramp that leads up to the *Kaleidoscopic Chamber* on the third floor. The interior of the *Chamber* is clad with mirror with randomly situated apertures that take the form of the existing shophouse windows. Walking inside the *Kaleidoscopic Chamber*, one sees the daily life being reflected in infinity.

The second building is called *Kāla*, consists of *Moon Space* and *Sun Space*, which are tilted at a five degree angle against each other in elevation to resemble the movement of the Sun and the Moon as observed by human eyes. In *Moon Space*, the mirror clad oculus is pointed towards the location of the full moon in the night sky every lunar month of July, which is also the festival of compassion. The prism oculus in *Sun Space* is aligned to the location of the Sun at noon at the Spring Equinox. At this moment of the year, daylight will be split into moving color spectrum washing against the entrance wall of *Sun Space*. The interweaving set of stairs placed at the interstitial space between the two structures represent the eclipse, when the notion of day and night, darkness and light is in a state of discombobulation.

The last building, *Dhruva*, consists of a ramp that leads to the gilded *Star Allée tunnel*, which is parallel to the axis of the earth. Thus, the aperture at the end of the tunnel will always point to the location of the Pole Star. Due to the precession of the equinoxes, the changing field of vision inside *Star Allée* captures a period of more than 25.000 years.