

1-1-2017

Disrupt/Displace

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Recommended Citation

Datum (2017) "Disrupt/Displace," *Datum: student journal of architecture*: Vol. 8 , Article 11.

Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/datum/vol8/iss1/11>

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A contingency of students from Iowa State and Roma Tre identified the Bakken Oil Pipeline, specifically the portion that cuts through our home of Ames, as a FRONT and a field of action to REPORT. This REPORT is a record of a dialogue about the complexities of architecture's relationship to political and social issues.

Many of the 'fields of action' in our world today are complex issues, and the Bakken Pipeline is no different. The conflict surrounding the pipeline is intensely political but is also spatial. Any built or designed space may address certain, specific needs of the pipeline, or conversely, those it affects. However, we can not see a way in which architecture helps solve problems arising because of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Through transportable models we reinterpreted the unique spatial issues present during and after the construction of the Bakken Pipeline at a human scale. Rather than providing a clear answer, this process stirred up additional frustrations, questions, and concerns about architecture as an agent of social change. What follows is a RECORD of this dialogue.

The representation of the physical conditions of Iowa and the Bakken Pipeline stem from The Land Ordinance of 1785, which established a system of nested grids that would extend across the land of the United States. This Euclidean subdivision of the land was a total geometric system, applied without consideration for culture, environment, or occupation.









The process for this geometric installation included arrangement, disruption, and the displacement of the established grid. To exhibit the 'front' in Iowa, the displaced grid condition is constructed and represented through a transportable, repeatable, cardboard unit. The unit is crafted in three sections with multi-directional scores, which allows the piece to twist into a three dimensional form as well as lay flat for transportation efficiency. Upon completion of making in Ames, the process of disassembling, packing, and transport of the installation to bring to Venice began. To do so, the units were packed into carry-on suitcases and flown across the Atlantic. Each of the 28 students that traveled to Venice from Iowa brought 25-50 pieces with them, for a total of about 900 units for the installation in Venice.

The aggregation and disruption of the gridded units reflects the consequences of the Bakken Pipeline, invoking a larger discussion about architecture's role in displacement, not only of people and space, but also intangible dimensions of the human condition (regarding social, political, economical, and environmental conditions). The disruption of land and the displacement of peoples as a result of energy infrastructure construction is a global issue. It is crucial to understand the spatial effects of these types of displacements, as they will need to be addressed by citizens of the future.

This is a reminder that this REPORT is not an abstraction but rather a human and social condition with far-reaching consequences beyond the spatial concerns.