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The Bohemian Cyborg APARTMENT

Guto Requena

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ABSTRACT

"Bohemian Cyborg" is a refurbishment project developed to an apartment in São Paulo, which takes concepts from virtuality and allows its dwellers to become project's co-designers as they participate in the transformation and customization of spaces according to their needs. We assume that families and also their habits have changed. Therefore, their living spaces must follow these changes.

keywords: flexibility, interaction, affective memory, re-use, cyberculture.

In its conception the Bohemian Cyborg project makes use of concepts such as virtuality and allows its resident to become, in some levels, co-designer of the project, in the generation of a home in which walls and furniture can dislocate, customizing rooms and transforming the space, in an interactive design. The trend in the relationship between architecture, design and numeric technology seems to be moving in the direction of mutating buildings and interactive rooms. If families are changing, and their habits are changing, the space where they live should definitely follow such changes.

This project, located in a historical quarter in front of Paulista Avenue in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is part of the master research called "Hybrid Habitation: Interactivity and Experience in Cyberculture Era" (check it out at: http://gutorequena.com.br/site_mestrado/intro.htm)

developed between 2003 and 2007 at the University of Sao Paulo, at research group Nomads – Center for Interactive Living Studies (www.nomads.usp.br).

The 1970 apartment's original 80 m² plan represented a traditional spatial configuration based on the classic French tripartition from the century XIX (Social, Private and Service), splitting into isolated rooms and with two different entries: employer and employees. The property was completely abandoned, with numerous leaks, humidity and electrical issues.

After getting rid of all windows and doors, electrical and water connections of the property, we built an empty space, organized around an interactive cube. The cube is composed by translucent curtains, hiding all the water connections of the apartment: bathroom, kitchen and laundry room. This new flexible space holds now more than 10 different configurations like home, a design office, an art gallery or a perfect place for parties.

With an incredible tiny budget, we had to create unusual solutions like the yellow plastic salad bowl bought in a 99 cent store to be used as a sink at the yellow bathroom. Other example is the unique white sink called Narcissus, made from an abandoned gas barrel cut and inversed to hold the hydraulic and an inside mirror.

The furniture was thought out to support all the different possible activities in this mutating space, giving support to the flexibility needed. That way, all furniture equipped with castors (wheels) can regroup and be moved around the space. The apartment is not organized through stagnant and monofunctional rooms, such as bedroom, living room or kitchen, but through its potential activities, like sleeping, working, eating, making love, hygiene and laundry.

As we know the future of design will be truly based in less ambiental impact and that is also one of the goals of our studio project process. We also believe in spaces filled with identity and memory. For the Bohemian Cyborg project we looked deep in to my mother and grandmother oldest cabinets and closets searching for family objects. These memory pieces are all over the apartment now.

Our vision of what constitutes the human being goes through profound changes, at a moment of convergence between the organic and the technological. The man, in this condition brought by cyberculture, reframes his senses and his body is now a mix of physical and virtual, incorporating different technological prosthesis, neural networks, artificial life and robotics. Genetic engineering, new procreation techniques, transgenic organisms, genetic improvement, genome mapping and cloning are some examples of our biological controlling era, which turns the man into a hybrid between nature and technology.

Individuals increasingly equip themselves and are provided with autonomy from the physical space through the use of telemetric networks and the increase of wireless zones in urban centres. New behaviours remind us that we are facing an enhancement of long distance communication associated with mobility and emphasized individuality, which were unheard of until recently. It is clear that introduced in this communication environment, a new consumer

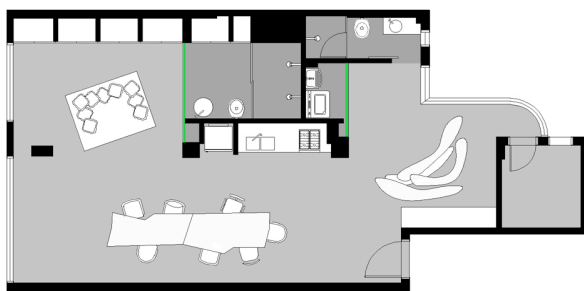
profile is defined, more naturalized with digital technology and increasingly able to establish an ongoing dialogue with machines. We're changing from a culture of sensibility from the reader, viewer and spectator, to a culture of user and interactor. This is a key concept to understand who is this cyborg resident.



Art Gallery



Dancefloor



Great Kitchen



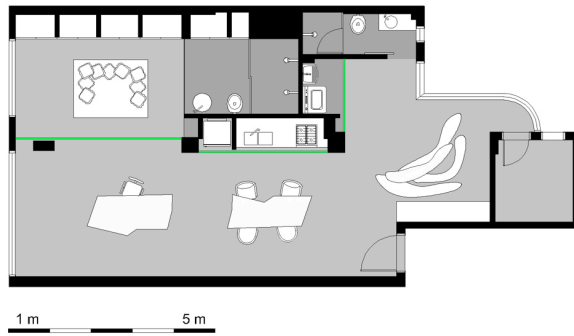
Home Office



Loft



Meeting Room



Romantic Night

