

Without Stability, Without Foundation on floatation

Editorial by Elina Axioti

<http://www.floatermagazine.com/issue01/editorial/>



1. Pull life-jacket over the head
2. Pass tapes round the waist, cross them and bring to the front
3. Tie tapes securely in a double knot under jacket
4. Inflate by pulling red knot at bottom of jacket smartly downwards. Mouthpiece on left side can be used if required

The instructions for use were written on a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). More precisely they describe the exact function of this peculiar inflatable object that could extend the human's body ability to float. There are certain rules that accompany the use of this object -an object useful only in a particular situation; in an emergency. However, we never really know if this supplement is really a safety valve or reinforces the illusion of safety provided by a body capable of floating.

An archeology of floatation could provide us with many examples of such structures; technological inventions that can resist gravity, like, bathyscaphes, missiles, ships, planes, and mythical islands as well are bound with floatation dreams in an imaginary space that often confronts the language of architecture. There is no limit within the idea of floatation where fictional scenes become reality, projecting the past onto the present. There has been a subtle conception of the transformation of preexisting fictional structures in the modernist's experiments of technological inventions in science, art and architecture, which generated contemporary digital architectural initiatives. This condition could be described as always existing on the border where fiction and reality are involved in a constant, mutual reflection and perception.

The term floatation is quite flexible, and Floater magazine, without defining it, uses its functionality to grasp certain spatial, political, legal, artistic, and architectural experiences. Issue 1 is not to be understood as a thematic display of projects and texts that seek a seamless completeness in the representation of a topic. Rather it should be seen as a discursive field in which the contributions expand the perception of floatation. The material -artworks, projects and texts- selected for this publication provide another format for such negotiation and investigation, emphasizing key aspects of a discourse initiated, this time, by the Floater group through the example of **FLIP (Floating Instrument Platform)**. The declared emphasis on this reference organises the direction of the group's thoughts on the floatation process.

FLIP is used principally for acoustics research and has the ability to flip from a horizontal position to a vertical position

while at sea. This unusual vessel manages to maintain its stability and its functionality as a structure in both positions. Its interior spaces are transformed while the change of position takes place and all space elements including all furnishing and equipment are especially designed for this purpose. FLIP's structure is a paradox of stability within floatation and acquires an emblematic character for us, as it truly offers several incentives to study the characteristics of a transformative space. While floatation becomes an archaeological field at the moment of investigation, and we seek to find more objects that confirm this condition of an unusual stability within floatation, Yannick Vassiloulis investigates the mechanisms of this concept of produced stability in FLIP by presenting a series of indicative videos.

Armin Linke's images of astronauts and divers project the realities of a utopian body, which technology has equipped with prosthetics that provide the ability to float and exist in **No Gravitation** conditions. Certain narratives emerge from the projected frozen moments of the images, instants of the everydayness of different realms.

"Neither entirely fantastic nor quite practical, *Wave Garden* is precisely utopian: it forces us to think 'Why not?' in a way that questions what is." ¹

Wave Garden is an artificial landscape, a metamorphic island, off the coast of California. It is formed as a platform composed of smaller parts and it has the ability to function as an electrical generator during the week and as buoyant park at weekends. Yusuke Obuchi aims for a generic architectural structure which produces transformative and flexible environments attaining floating public spaces.

Meduseabloo is a project by **b.** produced by visualizing a continuous constant slow floatation within water. The project concerns the utopian design and the digital simulation of an underwater mechanism capable of "copying" with its body the ocean bed using its technological flesh and its adaptation ability. Its sensitive skin reformulates according to the topography, collects data and transmits them to a remote server. Both *Wave Garden* and *Meduseabloo* elaborate the idea of performative environments that are highly intelligent and have the capacity to collect data and deliver information, which provides structures able to interact with their environments.

Within the concept of transforming the motion of the sea surface into kinetic energy, Takis produces **Oscillation of the Sea**, 1968 a technological invention that later inspired him to create a work in homage to Marcel Duchamp.

Dimitris Antonakakis narrates the chronicle of an unusual commission to A66; the redesign of the cruiser **Libra Y**, 1992. The lack of foundation and the parameter of instability demarcate a new territory for the architect.

Louisa Adam comments on the **Riga Port City** project by OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) for the re-development of the Andrejsala harbour in Latvia. She explores contemporary policies and practices of architecture within cultural concerns, underlining the establishment of new art communities.

Nikos Navridis cooperated with Floater magazine for the production of a digital re-enactment of his recent show **Tomorrow will be a Wonderful Day**, Bernier-Eliades Gallery, Athens. The observer acquires another perspective of the installation within a virtual environment.

Evi Sougara's interactive video is based on Jonathan Swift's mythical island, **Laputa**. In the novel, the flying island allegorically presents the social role of science in the community and comments on war politics. Despite the novel's linear structure, in this case, the interactivity of the video suggests a production of multiple narratives.

Takis Zenetos' *Electronic Urban Planning Utopia* (1952) is negotiated in juxtaposition to Mauricio Cattelan's installation *Hanging Kids*, 2004. Nikos Tsimas declares floatation experiences as parameters which provoke feelings of **pleasure and awe**.

Elysa Lozano in **Micro-organisations** explores the potential of registering and developing a nonprofit organisation in Sealand, a micronation established on an artificial island. Various reflections on the socio-political reality of Sealand present an example and a stable conception of the schema upon which the artist has centered her work. Documentation of the correspondence with Sealand's authorities is provided by the artist.

Nikos Sideris looks into cases of **Floating and Sinking in Psychoanalysis**; interviewed by Alexandra Chronaki, he analyses floating and sinking mechanisms in relation to both psychic structure and spatiality.

Giorgos Lagoudakis refers to legal aspects of **Floating Territories** presenting specific archival cases along with relative legal texts. Law is suggested as a system of rules that might be limited to territorial boundaries.

Floater is an open platform for digital contributions on the net, curated each time by a different editor or editorial team. Critical in its openness, Floater changes and alters its content under a conceptual umbrella. Floater does not aim to present the contemporaneity of architecture but amalgamations of past and almost forgotten or unpublished and present projects and texts in a resulting interdisciplinary archive where processes of recollection take place. In addition to this assemblage of different contributions, the Floater group and other guests are invited to participate in Floater's open library, and Floater's Productions -projects commissioned by Floater magazine. Floater's open library creates an ever growing inventory of objects related to the subject of the issue. Floater produces its own type of archive in the context of the internet, which aims to be a type of "idiosyncratic museum".

Floater #01 edited by Yannis Arvanitis, Elina Axioti, Yannis Papayannakis. Evi Sougara, Eleni Spiridaki and Yannick Vasiloulis.

Notes

¹ Hal Foster, in William S. Saunders, ed., *The New Architectural Pragmatism: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2007), 112.

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Floater is an architectural online production. Contributions are assembled by different editors for each issue around a theme. Floater aims to present not the contemporaneity of architecture, but amalgamations of essays, articles, past and present projects within processes of recollection, appropriation and archiving.

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