

26 Years Euregional Prize for Architecture

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Tales From A Funny Place

Participant info

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Project info

A little more than 100 years ago, Coney Island pioneered as an aggressive social testing ground for the masses. It promised temporary anonymity, it encouraged class equality and it guaranteed satisfaction, thus providing an open-minded space for human interaction and individual freedom. It has, through the creation of countless narratives and anecdotes, made its way into the collective memory of American society and its strong legacy acts as a reminder of a more glorious past. In contrast to its current physical state, the common consent on what it stands for enables people to exchange their interpretations of the 'character' that is inherent to Coney Island as a place.

In 2015, Coney stands at a crossroads between a nostalgic wish to rebuild the past and bold plans to create an unprecedented future. On the basis of an investigation into the experiential fundamentals of the perception of urban spaces, the thesis attempts to approximate the local character of Coney Island and the myth that serves as its vehicle. Coney Island's history is recounted in two different threads which are based on the cognitive and sensory aspects of experience, thereby differentiating between the 'logical' and the 'mythological' storylines. Myth and fact are put into perspective in an attempt to identify underlying forces, patterns and ideologies that have transcended different times and atmospheres.

In a second part of this work, the consequences of the theoretic endeavor described above are evaluated with regard to current social and cultural conditions as well as technological developments. A design project then proposes the application of the hypothesis in an attempt to demonstrate the way that the character of a place is manifested in urban development. The design project aims to synthesize this process by advancing the mythological history of Coney Island into the future.

