

## Projects 195: Park McArthur

Oct 27, 2018–Jan 27, 2019

The Museum of Modern Art

Organized by Magnus Schaefer, Assistant Curator, with Tara Keny, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints.

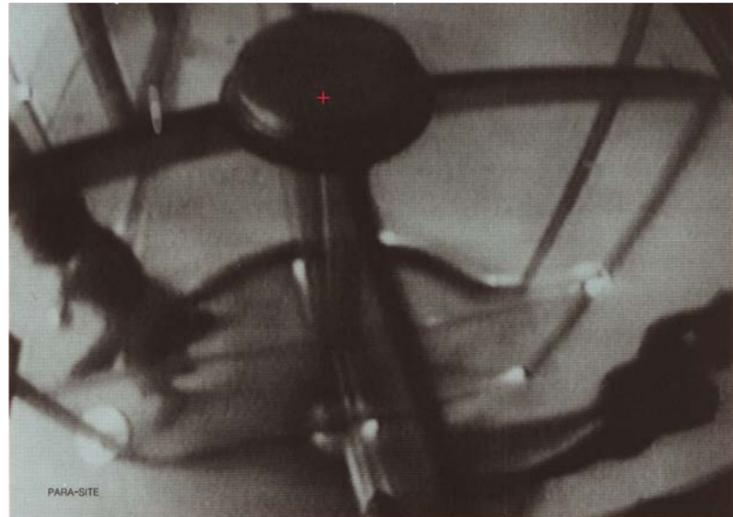
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MoMA Audio is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Park McArthur's exhibition *Projects 195* engages The Museum of Modern Art's ongoing building project and the history of MoMA's long-running Projects series through the multivalent framework of dependency. Established in 1971, the series serves as a platform for commissioned exhibitions by contemporary artists. Researching past Projects shows, McArthur homed in on *Projects 17*, by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, founding partners of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R), the architectural firm designing and realizing, in collaboration with Gensler, the Museum's current renovation and expansion of its West 53rd Street campus. Their 1989 exhibition occupied a ground-floor gallery with an arrangement of beams, wires and furniture fastened to the walls and ceiling, convex mirrors, and monitors playing live footage from CCTV cameras installed above the Museum's revolving entrance doors and escalators. Subtitled *para-site*, the installation played with the idea of a parasite attached to MoMA's existing structure and simultaneously approached the Museum as a "para-site or surrogate site" for Diller and Scofidio's architecture.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between *Projects 17*, which symbolically attached itself to the Museum, and DS+R's large-scale reshaping of MoMA's physical space throws into relief the different kinds of agency that the Museum has granted in these two cases. This contrast was a starting point for McArthur's *Projects* exhibition, which considers the position of artists commissioned by museums and departs from the notion of site-specific and temporary artistic interventions that informed *Projects 17*.

While Diller and Scofidio's *Projects* installation emphasized architectural elements like doors and escalators, McArthur focuses on the institutional narratives that the Museum produces and reproduces—through the title conventions for the Projects series, for example. McArthur's exhibition would have been *Projects 109*, but the artist changed this number to 195, in light of the eighty-six shows that the Museum mounted under the *Projects* heading prior to introducing the numbering system in 1986. At the time, there were discussions about updating the name, but the curators decided to keep "Projects" and add the number, starting with 1.<sup>2</sup> Doubling as a work in its own right, McArthur's modification of the title simultaneously foregrounds Projects' past and points to a later exhibition in the series. The future-oriented perspective of *Projects 195* is also evident in the artist's proposal for

Invitation and postcard for the exhibition *Projects 17: Elizabeth Diller, Ricardo Scofidio*, 1989.  
The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Images © The Museum of Modern Art, New York



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a building that would offer below-market housing for disabled and non-disabled people who mutually receive and provide care, as well as art studios, a ramped pool, and a public gallery. Two works in the exhibition outline exploratory articulations of this plan. One is a modular stainless-steel structure that also functions as an architectural model. Reminiscent of the way architectural elements are represented in design software as freely reconfigurable building blocks, this structure comprises twenty stackable units that will be rearranged periodically throughout the run of *Projects 195*. The shape of each steel unit replicates the floorplan of the exhibition space, merged with the landing of the nearby elevators, using the existing architecture as a surrogate for a future building. The second work is an audio guide, written and produced by McArthur and the museum educator Paula Stuttman. Available on MoMA Audio, it features an imagined walk-through of the building envisioned by McArthur and visual descriptions—like those used by visitors who are blind or partially sighted—of individual works in the show and a number of on- and off-site locations.

As McArthur notes, MoMA has numerous dependencies: on its staff, its donors, and its audience, among others. The real estate developments in the Museum's immediate surroundings also evince a form of dependency. MoMA shares its extended campus with two residential complexes: the Museum Tower condominium, which was constructed in the early 1980s as a mixed-use facility in connection with MoMA's west-wing expansion; and a new high-rise building, designed by Jean Nouvel and known as 53W53. The latter is a project by private developers who acquired the air rights for the lot from MoMA on the occasion of the Museum's current expansion project, which includes DS+R's addition of gallery spaces in the lower levels of the new tower. The *Projects 195* audio guide offers descriptions of a scale model showing DS+R's changes to MoMA's 53rd Street campus, currently on view in the Museum, and the offsite showroom for 53W53 and the building models displayed there. These descriptions chart some of the differences between the ways in which the two building projects are presented. The Nouvel building, for example, is not included in the MoMA model. Two related works on paper, which are also part of the exhibition, incorporate marketing material for 53W53, listing the sales prices of available units and the wide range of upscale amenities awaiting future residents. They offer glimpses of the financial reality behind the project and point to the question of which needs and desires these building features reflect.

Writing about the experience of participating in care collectives—groups of people who organize their relationships around dependency and care—McArthur has remarked that the lack of comprehensive public support structures in the United States, and the correlating emphasis on individual responsibility and dominance of free-market and unpaid family-based modes of caring, necessitate alternatives.<sup>3</sup> With *Projects 195*, McArthur treats the invitation to exhibit at MoMA, the Museum's existing architecture, and its institutional operations as proxies for thinking about dependency, care, and housing. McArthur's envisioned building finds a counterpoint in the ongoing construction on 53rd Street, but the exhibition does not opt for an interventionist practice that might hold the promise of temporary adjustments to the Museum's operations. *Projects 195* expands on ideas McArthur developed in previous presentations, including *Passive Vibration Isolation* (Lars Friedrich, Berlin, 2014) and *Poly* (Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2016). Utilizing a gamut of materials that mediate contact between bodies, or between bodies and objects—pajamas, loading dock buffers, various latex goods, moisture-absorbing polymers—the works in these exhibitions foregrounded the social nature of dependency and the limitations of conceiving accessibility solely in terms of policy or physical access. In line with these concerns, *Projects 195* focuses on the realities and possibilities that exist within—but also exceed—the architectural parameters of site and scale.<sup>4</sup>

Magnus Schaefer

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Matilda McQuaid, *Projects 17: Elizabeth Diller, Ricardo Scofidio* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989), n.p.

<sup>2</sup> "Curatorial Committee on Exhibitions, Meeting on (NEW PROJECTS) Series," October 16, 1985. Riva Castleman Papers, I.17. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Park McArthur, "Sort of Like a Hug: Notes on Collectivity, Conviviality, and Care," in "Heat Island," ed. Mason Leaver-Yap, special issue, *The Happy Hypocrite*, no. 7 (2014): 48–61.

<sup>4</sup> The ideas laid out in this text draw on a series of conversations McArthur and the author had throughout the summer of 2018.

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## Acknowledgments

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—Magnus Schaefer

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—Park McArthur

**MoMA**

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## Related Programs

A series of special gallery sessions will offer insights into core themes and questions informing *Projects 195*. They will be held in the exhibition, on the fourth floor.

**Monday, November 5, 2018, 1:30 p.m.**

### Site and Scale

Writer Andrew Blackley in conversation with Magnus Schaefer

**Monday, December 3, 2018, 1:30 p.m.**

### Where do we go from here? Creating a home in New York City

Museum educator and artist Paula Stuttman in conversation with Park McArthur

## Checklist

*Is this an investment, pied-à-terre, or primary residence?*, 2018

Paint on wall; altered Museum of Modern Art Projects logo scaled to gallery dimensions 37' 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" × 24 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (1141.4 × 63.2 cm) as installed at MoMA  
Edition of 3 + 1 AP

*PARA-SITES*, 2018

Mp4 file and written transcript  
Edition of 3 + 1 AP

*STUDIO/HOME*, 2018

Stainless steel  
Twenty parts, each 17 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 17 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (44.5 × 44.5 × 8.9 cm)

*Emergency Generator*, 2018

Printed paper  
15 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 10 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" (39.2 × 26.5 cm)

*After Projects 17*, 2018

Ballpoint pen on printed paper  
9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 7 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (24.8 × 18.4 cm)

All works courtesy the artist and ESSEX STREET, New York