

Rose Rosenhauer

अयातान ओ सतनिग प्लाचे

Ayatana: A Resting Place

Rose Rosenhauer

**Penny Stamps School of Art and Design
University of Michigan**



Ayatana: A Resting Place

India has always been the ultimate travel experience for real ground-level travelers. I had wanted to travel to the Asian sub-continent since I was a young child, and in 2012 I finally got the chance. India is a real visceral assault on the senses. It's intense, it's nonstop. It's squalid, but it's vibrant. It's rich and it's poor at the same time. India is everything you can imagine rolled into one. India is something that I just wasn't prepared for.



I choose to travel because it is my belief that, we think we know who we are and become very set in our ways. Traveling puts people in a new situation where they are forced to adapt. Living in India helped me gain a new world perspective and open up my way of thinking. I enjoyed India because I got the chance to get in touch with the culture as well as re-learning everything that I had taken for granted. Living

Rose Rosenhauer

in India helped me reach out of my comfort zone as an artist. This experience is how I came to build my senior thesis project, *Ayatana*.

Ayatana is translated from Sanskrit as “a resting place.” In the most obvious of cases a resting place literally refers to the act of resting the body, but *Ayatana* is also about a much more internal calmness. *Aytana* is about exploring fabric as a creative space. *Ayatana* is a Buddhist concept referring to achieving liberation through the six senses. In Buddhism these six senses are sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and most interestingly mind. I titled my work *Ayatana* because it is exploring ideas of self-reflection and positive growth through Buddhist studies, while creating a space to share with the art community. *Ayatana* is a free standing, three dimensional, sculptural installation that also functions as a sanctuary for the mind by offering the viewer a safe relaxed space for thought and conversation.

Early Formal Development & Inspiration

Initially, I looked at a sacred architecture and natural architecture for inspiration and found a book by Alessandro Rocca, called *Natural Architecture*. This book opened my eyes to what could be possible using natural materials. The book featured artists such as Patrick Dougherty, Sanfte Strukuren, and Ex.Studios.



Work By Patrick Dougherty



Auerworld Palace, by Sanfte Strukuren



Tambabox, by Ex.Studios

Rose Rosenhauer

At the same time I was also researching architectural forms as they appear in South East Asian Architecture and Buddhist art. I noticed many things that these structures have in common, such as the organic way that they are decorated, and the way that they build to a single point at the top.



Wat Rong Khun, Thailand



Great White Temple, Myanmar (Burma)



Angkor Wat, Cambodia

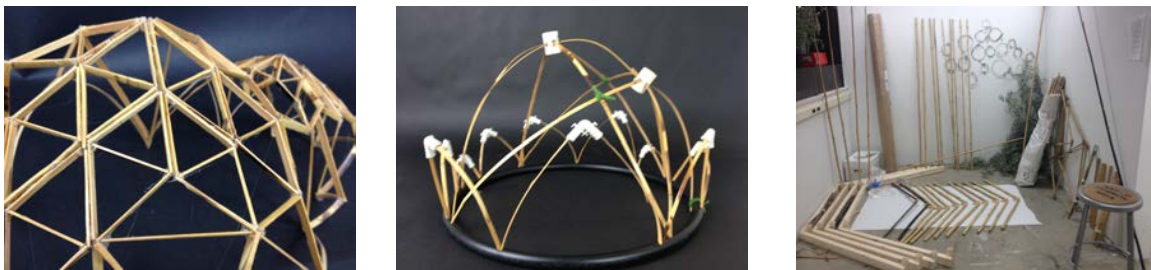
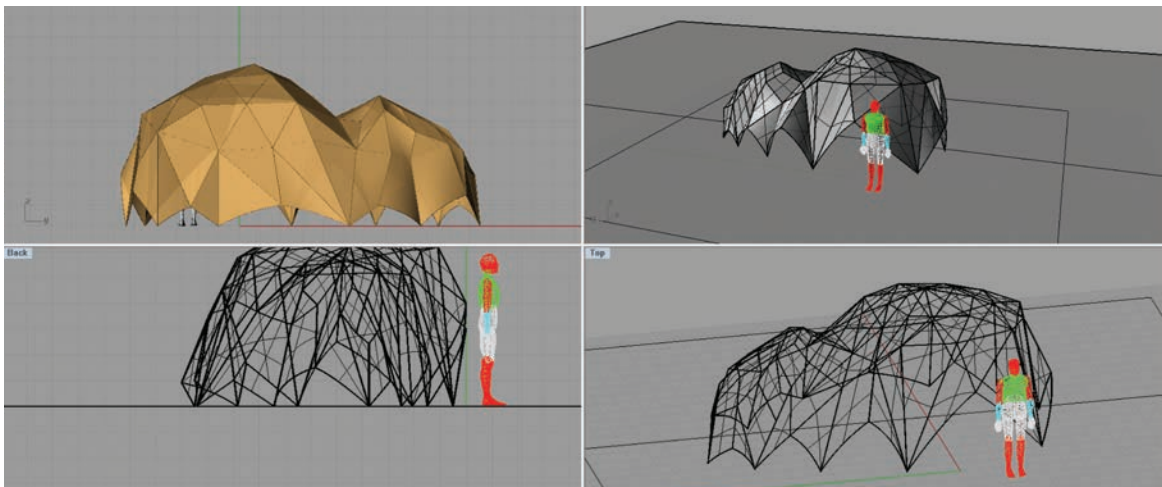
I was determined to work with the bamboo because I thought that it would show a connection with the Asian architecture that I was so inspired by. I discovered many genius ways that bamboo is used to create spaces such as the *Star Dome*.



The designers of *Star* used thin strips of bamboo and arched them into the shape, instead of the typical use of bamboo as small, planar pieces of wood (Daisuke).

Rose Rosenhauer

Taking formal, material, and construction inspiration from these sources I ended up creating a six-point bamboo frame that stems from geodesic dome construction principles, but using more traditional methods of construction, such as binding the bamboo poles with string. I worked diligently for six months to overcome obstacles with the bamboo. I went through many construction techniques and models. This page shows just a few of these models.



Rose Rosenhauer

Ultimately, I realized a little too late that bamboo was not the best choice for the shape that I was trying to achieve. At the last minute I switch from the itchy, splintery, brittle bamboo poles to fiberglass rods that are commonly used in tent construction. This allowed me to achieve a more organic shape with less material, and less effort.

Textile

I have specialized in fabric; specifically surface design and garment construction. However, for this particular project I wanted to break out of my comfort zone. I had many possible ideas including: making costumes, clothing, abstract sculpture, fabric lanterns, and wall hangings but the one thought that seemed to really stick with me was to explore using fabric as a creative space. It was intriguing to me that something as simple as a piece of fabric as well as a couple pins can transform a space, or create a barrier. It is interesting that although fabric is thin, translucent, and not normally water-proof or sound proof, yet when we surround ourselves with it we feel protected and separated. A good example of a simple fabric acting as barrier is a curtain, or an outdoor tent.

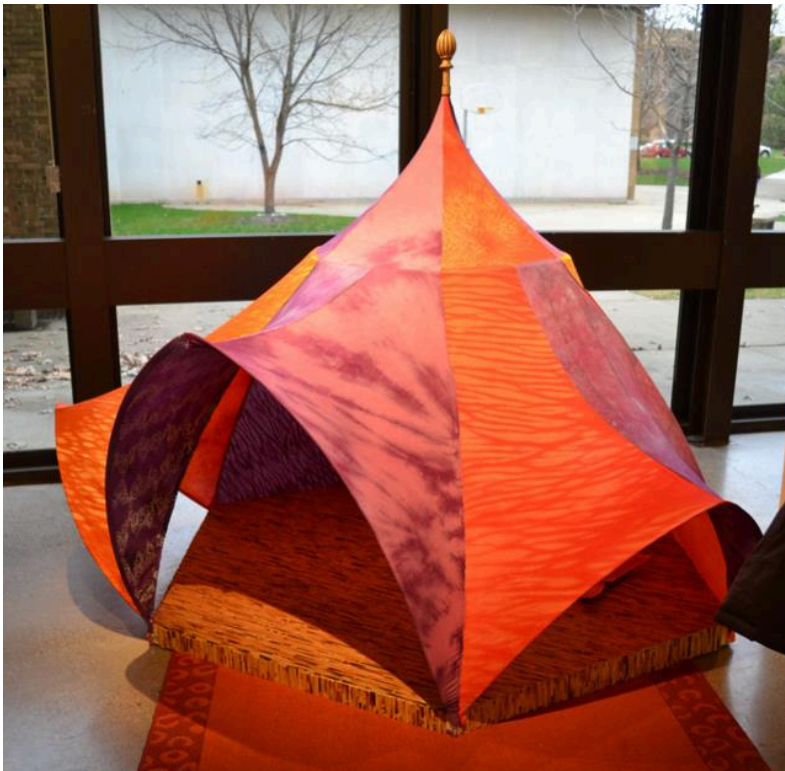
When I first started dying fabric I chose the color purple because it is a friendly, and welcoming color. Purple seemed like a happy medium that would be exciting for the viewer, but not too stimulating, and soothing all at the same time. I also decided to include vibrant oranges and yellows to create an invigorating, exciting feeling. I am a lover of color and pattern. I enjoy paring colors and designs that are unexpected, bold, and bright.



Once I dyed my first few yards of orange fabric I knew that I made the right choice. Not only did the orange brighten up the space, it created colorful shadows all over the white walls of my studio. The combination of purple and orange fabric reminded me of a vibrant sunset, and of some color combinations I witnessed in India. On a weekend vacation to Goa I met a woman who was part of the Gadia Lohar group. Gadia Lohar is a nomadic tribe that populates the desert in Rajasthan, India. They are known for wearing very saturated colors and a lot of gold jewelry, this contrasts with their desert surroundings and makes this tribe a distinctive group in the area (Gadia). I love the esthetic of bright color in the desert. This is an association that I was pursuing in my construction of Ayatana.

Form

My desire to build Ayatana stems from my love of designing surface patterns for fabrics as well as my desire to create 3D forms with textiles. I wanted to use the conceptual and technical knowledge that I had acquired through my time at the University of Michigan School of Art and Design, but also push my abilities further and experiment with mediums and techniques that I was not comfortable with. I sought to use my final semesters at college gaining new construction skills, and discovering new challenges. I wanted to see what fabric could become other than curtains, clothing, and upholstery. I decided to pursue transforming fabric into a three-dimensional form that is a creative space for contemplation and conversation. I knew that not just any shape would work; I spent most of my time manipulating the fabric pattern to fit the fiberglass rods just right.



The form that I finally settled on is a pagoda/lotus hybrid made from fiberglass rods on top of a wooden hexagonal platform that I had constructed. There are six sides to the structure and each rod attaches to one of the six corners, bending in an organic way to meet at the top creating a half-teardrop

Rose Rosenhauer

shape. Three of the six sides are flat and closed, while the other three have rounded openings that extend out at a 45 degree angle. These openings create the association of a lotus. If the viewer wishes to enter the structure, they must do so through one of the petals.

The shape of the entrances comes from Buddhist stupas, as well as Asian art where lotus petals are used to show figures “blooming” from the mud. The symbol of the lotus is so important in Hindu and Buddhist mythology, as it takes up the significant meaning of purity. The lotus flower grows in mud, in slime, it pushes it’s blossoms up through the mud and fully blooms above the water, the clean white color of the flower coming from the earth but never touching it. “Mud” in Asian art is generally a metaphor for worldliness. In Buddhist art, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are often pictured on top of a lotus flower. William Ward writes in his book about the meaning of the Lotus “The lotus supports the Lord Buddha as the flower supports the world above the chaotic waters of the universe.” In India specifically, the lotus holds important spiritual meaning for the people. In Hinduism it is believed that the universe was created out of a cosmic ocean, where a lotus opened up to reveal the god Brahma who then manifested our world, as we know it (William E. Ward). The lotus flower is a symbol rich in history, mythology, and meaning. This is why I chose it.



This figure to the left shows Shakyamuni Buddha, the Buddha of our time at the moment of his enlightenment. He is clearly shown sitting on top of a lotus flower.

(Buddha (item no. 94336) Tibet Buddhist Lineage Ground Mineral Pigment on Cotton Collection of American Museum of Natural History (70.0/ 6927)

Another visual object that inspired Ayatana is a Buddhist Stupa. Stupa in Sanskrit literally means “heap”. When Shakyamuni Buddha died his remains were cremated and the relics placed in stupas. In Tibet construction of stupas came to be an important part of spiritual life. The symbolism is complex and mythological. The stupa is considered to represent the enlightened mind and it is said that any person “who gives, who

sacrifices something of his wealth, of his person or of his very desires, makes an act of renunciation and succeeds, at least in that very moment, in putting others before himself.” It is also said that, building a stupa or a structure that in any way invites or

invokes peace is considered a good thing by Buddhist standards (Tucci, Giuseppe).



This is “The Great Stupa” in India, it is one of the oldest stupas still in existence and it is said to contain relics of the Buddha. (4th–1st century BCE)

Rose Rosenhauer

This project is meant to transform the ancient art of fiber arts into something three-dimensional that can be experienced and enjoyed by the public, as well as to create a tranquil space. So many different aspects work together to make this happen. I utilized fiber arts, construction with wood, color theory, and decoration with found materials and bamboo. The fabric became a very important part of the project, creating colorful shadows that the audience enjoyed. Ayatana, my senior thesis project is truly an integrative project.



Works Cited

Alessandro Rocca, *Natural Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), whole book.

Daisuke, Takekawa. "History of Star Dome," *Stardome*. July 2003.
<http://stardome.jp>

"Gadia Lohar Tribe." *Gadia Lohar Tribe*. Jupiter Infomedia Ltd, 6 June 2009. Web. 23 Apr. 2013.

Tucci, Giuseppe. "Introduction To Stupas." *Himalayan Art*. The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2013.

William E. Ward The Lotus Symbol: Its Meaning in Buddhist Art and Philosophy *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. 11, No. 2, Special Issue on Oriental Art and Aesthetics (Dec., 1952), pp. 135-146