

Material Assembly: the Moveable Feast

The moveable feast installations are a series of annual studio-based fabrication experiments which establish a temporary setting for an exquisite meal. The installations are self-supporting, designed to be quickly assembled and disassembled, and organized around an economy of means to minimize waste in the digital fabrication process. Rather than a typical top down development of form to then post-rationalization construction techniques, the moveable feast begins with materials first through a bottom-up process of material operations such as folding, pattern tessellation, or expanding patterns to exploit the nature of sheet-based material. The mandate to eliminate waste through maximizing sheet goods becomes an operative design criteria to exploit the nature of the material while creating a self-enclosing material assembly. In the development of a material system, focus is placed on the joining of material assemblies, or design for assembly.

As a two-week introductory project in a third year undergraduate design studio, these installations establish an intensive material investigation into what sheet materials can do prior to establishing any architectural form. This serves as an explicit critique of common approaches in digital fabrication which yield a great deal of material waste. This approach is only possible through playing with materials first, and testing out at full-scale through a series of prototypes, and only then employing digital fabrication to further refine prototypes and for final production of the material assemblies. Through making maximum use of minimal means, these installations are constructed primarily through cardboard while aluminum prototypes are developed to test the potential of more permanent applications of these material assemblies.

Beyond the material techniques, the installation binds the studio in a collaborative pursuit to test ideas out through full-scale prototypes shifting the studio culture from individual authorship to communal ownership through collective design research. These two-week intensive material collaborations culminate in an exquisite meal, situating the student in their own creation and in so doing, shift the design process from object to experience.







