

Playscape

(Experimental Submission)

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ABSTRACT

Playscape is an artist book and work on paper made in the format of a folding Chinese scroll. It began when Nelson and Ng were talking about their mutual enjoyment of public playgrounds as a form of sculpture. Both artists see playgrounds as places of fun, risk, exploration, danger, excitement, and learning. Following the design philosophy of Aldo Van Eyck, playgrounds are abstract modular landscapes that seek to maximise the expressive potential of young bodies and minds.

Public playgrounds are a critical part of childhood experience in Hong Kong, where open spaces unstructured by traffic or commerce are rare. In 2021, Nelson helped Ng develop a motion capture pipeline for visualising the improvised and ephemeral movement of children in Hong Kong clambering and climbing over these colourful structures. Ng developed this into an expanded technique for making large-scale steel sculptures, which visualised how this movement unfolded in time and space.

In 2022, when Hong Kong playgrounds remained wrapped in 'DANGER' tape due to prolonged pandemic measures, Nelson and Ng responded to the shared melancholy of these empty playgrounds and created a joyful, sprawling fantasy playscape with the motion data Ng had recorded the previous year. Drawing on his love of isometric computer games and their relationship to scroll painting, Nelson created a ludic landscape to house Ng's motion data, composed of equipment from her original studies and some he improvised, along with a gridded landscape inspired by utopian architects such as Constant Nieuwenhuys and Superstudio, who also saw play as a path to envisioning a brighter future. Into these landscapes Nelson also embedded fossils and procedurally generated flowers, highlighting the beauty and sadness of Hong Kong's empty playgrounds, as well as the fun and revelry of an imaginary world defined by thrilling monkey bars that span across terrifying chasms. Returning to her

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childhood, Ng introduced rainbow pens that change colour as you write, which the pair used to execute a unique physical version of the work, and which they replicated in the digital version contained in this book. Nelson and Ng hope you enjoy their scroll, and hope you find the same mixture of fun, melancholy, and wonder they see when they imagine a playground world.

IMAGES



Figure 1: Playscape Artist Book by Amber Ng and Peter Nelson

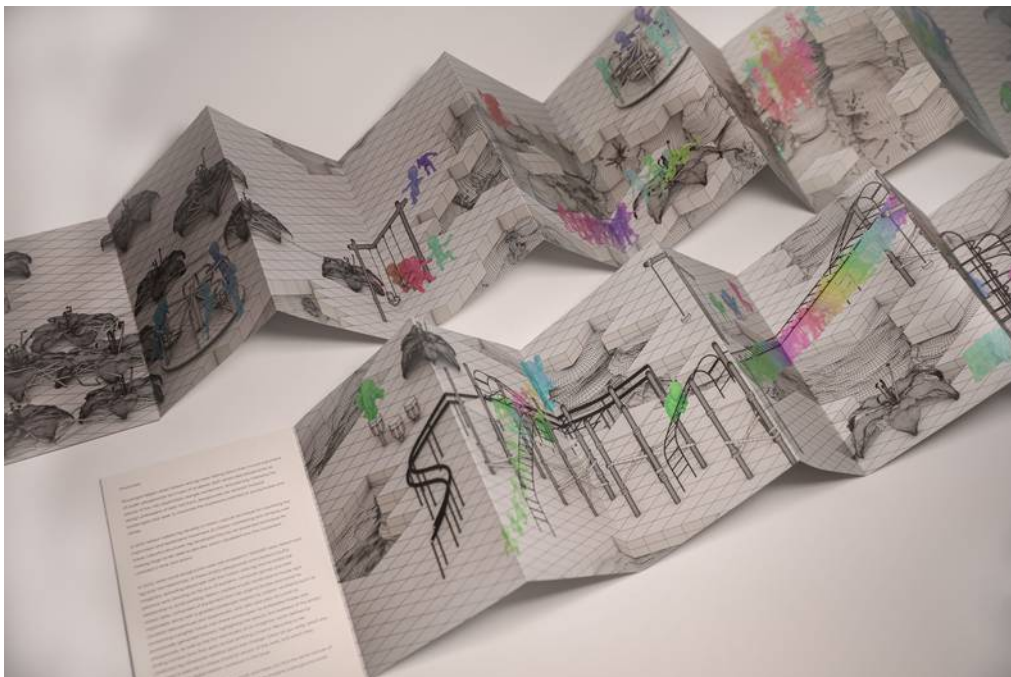


Figure 2: Playscape Artist Book by Amber Ng and Peter Nelson

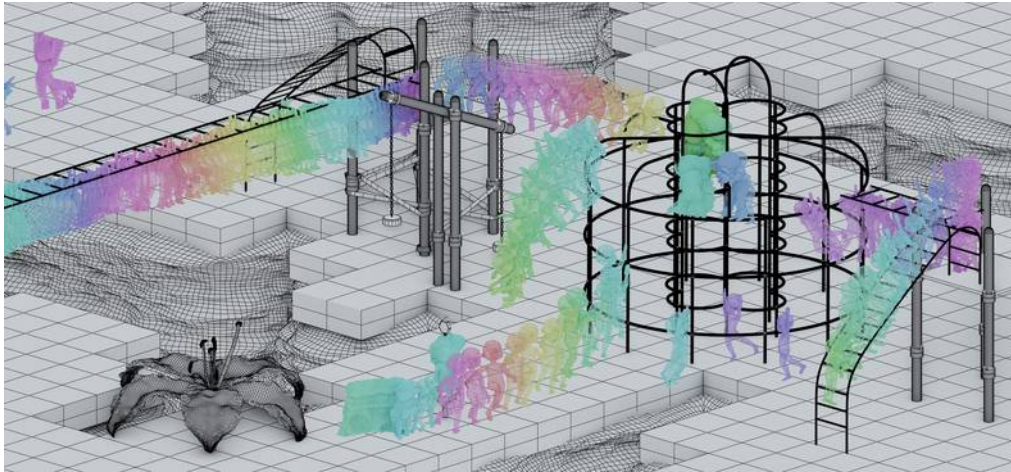


Figure 3: Playscape Artist Book by Amber Ng and Peter Nelson

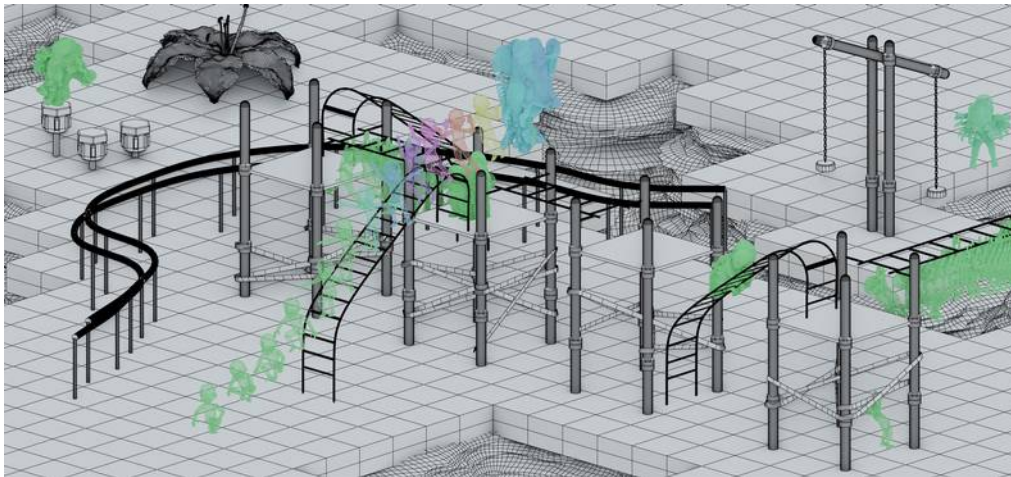


Figure 4: Playscape Artist Book by Amber Ng and Peter Nelson

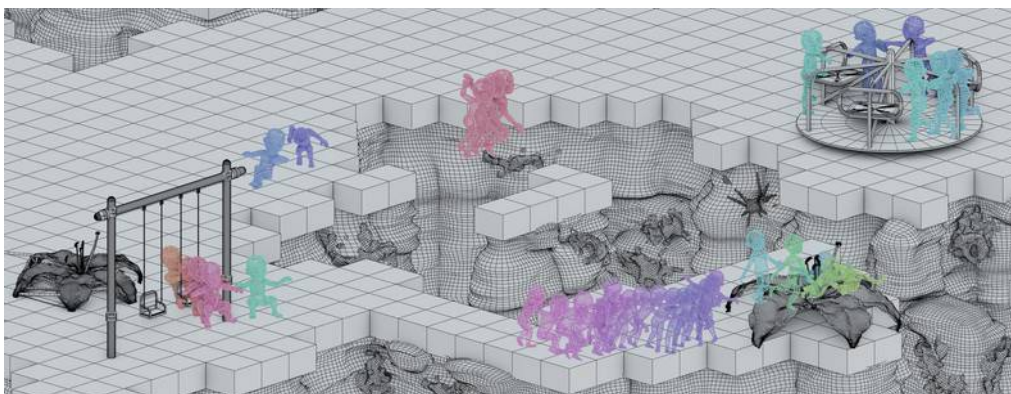


Figure 5: Playscape Artist Book by Amber Ng and Peter Nelson