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ROCK 'N' ROLL FANTASY

Created as a studio project by Ball-Nogues Studio and students from the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI - Arc), the Elastic Plastic Sponge turns up (and provides a respite from) the heat as a resourceful architectural installation at an annual music festival in Indio, California.



indicating that the parameters of the Sponge's potential shape were dependent on its material properties as well as how the material would be configured. Having a flexible structure not only entailed a spatial arrangement which could change in accordance with visitor attendance as well as unpredictable climate and site conditions, the compactibility of the cell modules also meant that one could also easily compress and flatten the entire unit, making for easy and lightweight shipping when it came to transporting the Sponge to its designated location. Embodying the capacity to be twisted, arched and curled into manner of different spaces, not excluding a lounge, a theatre and a large sculptural Mobius strip, the Elastic Plastic Sponge is a unique structure which ultimately exhibits both atmospheric and utilitarian qualities; the entwined cells generate shade and mist in the day, cooling down the sweltering effects of the desert sun while the accommodation of fluorescent tubes within the cells also enabled it to function as a lit platform for visitor interaction during the night, effectively making its presence felt amidst adjoining spectacles happening within the space of the expansive festival grounds. The temporary installation was on show from April 17 through to April 19 at the Empire Club in Indio.

www.ball-nogues.com



Throgs of music fans were in for an unexpected treat when they found themselves accosted by a large-scale installation at the most recent edition of the Coachella Valley music and arts festival, a three-day-long event held annually in Indio, a small city situated in the desert setting of Southern California. Initiated by Benjamin Ball, Gaston Nogues and Andrew Lyon of the young Los Angeles-based practice Ball-Nogues Studio as part of an upper division elective studio offered at SCI - Arc, the fabrication and assembling of the Elastic Plastic Sponge, a portable shelter-cum-art work, was manned by students over the constrained time period of 12 weeks. Prior to the initial design process, participants were required to read up on the structural logistics of large-scale art installations and undergo intense research on legendary rock 'n' roll gatherings such as Woodstock, Glastonbury Festival as well as other Coachella events held in the past. Finally, the class was broken up into separate teams assigned the task of coming up with their own respective designs. Chosen by

festival promoter Goldenvoice, the Elastic Plastic Sponge – costing just USD15,000 to construct – emerged as the overall winner out of the in-studio 'competition.'

Measuring 250 feet in length and 25 feet in width, the structure was composed almost entirely of lightweight plastic tubing looped together to generate a total of 250 springy cells or 'gems' which allowed the Sponge to occupy a great deal of space using very little material. The flexible durability of the chosen material additionally played an important role in the construction of the Sponge, appeasing one of the client's concerns – whether or not an onsite installation such as the one proposed by the design team could hold up against the rowdiness of the event. Studio leader Ball describes the project as 'form active,'

