GUIDING CONCEPTS

Destruction & The Presence of Absence

The Burning Man event is concluded each year by three acts of destruction:
- The burning of the Temple
- The burning of the Man
- The dispersal of the City

The absence of familiar surroundings, details and distractions in a place like the Black Rock Desert deprives us of the context with which we normally orient ourselves in reality. It can heighten our awareness of what is left behind, giving a stronger sense of the underlying, barely perceptible presence that exists throughout and imbues the world around us. These acts of destruction serve as moving moments of surreal, spiritual intensity that reveal this presence while simultaneously signifying the unimportance of material place. The temple, effigy and city acts of destruction serve as moving moments of surreal, spiritual intensity that reveal this presence while simultaneously signifying the unimportance of material place. The temple, effigy and city

The heat produced by burning waste, invasive plant species, or other scrap material produces steam which, in turn, generates energy to sustain extended site use and the creative work of visitors to Fly Ranch.

Participants will enter the structure through a low arched opening via broad stairs, with a merged ramp for accessibility, leading up to the main, occupied room. This semi-enclosed space forms an expansive, horizontal plane, leading to an open view of the playa. This space reinforces the “presence” of the desert through manipulation of the interior microclimate in juxtaposition to the hot, arid climate of the flat. Wind is channeled through the wide, horizontal opening over a shallow pool of water, covering the surface of the floor. This creates a natural evaporative cooling effect dropping the interior temperature generating energy to sustain extended site use and the creative work of visitors to Fly Ranch.

The proposal provides a place for mental contemplation and destruction through biomass incineration. This takes precedence from the ritualistic destruction iconic to Burning Man, preserving and reshaping a tradition amidst growing emission concerns being addressed in the organization’s 2030 roadmap.

“Burning altars” designed for individual use are utilized in place of a single burning chamber in order to reduce the auxiliary fuel load and affect intimacy of a solitary ritual. These altars are integrated into pillars, arrayed in a grid throughout the space. 

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