

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

PERIPHERIA X COR (AGENCY OF AMBER).

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ABSTRACT | Peripheria x Cor (Agency of Amber) is a research project that delves into the intricate dynamics of global structures, focusing on the historical impact of binary thinking, particularly within colonialist systems. Rooted in the concept introduced by Jane Schneider, the project distinguishes between a core of urban consumers, a periphery altered by its role as a raw material supplier, and an outer margin indirectly influenced by innovations. Exploring the post-pandemic world, the study seeks a paradigm shift away from binary perspectives. The investigation delves into the historical role of dichotomy in geographical, economic, and political structures, with a particular emphasis on the 'amber route' as a precursor to European polities. Challenging established perceptions, Peripheria x Cor adopts a post-humanistic phenomenological approach, rejecting human ontological primacy over material reality. The project engages artistic research methodologies, providing a structured and critical inquiry framework for artists to explore concepts and perspectives and foster innovation. The study focuses on amber as a foundation for interrogatory design research, aligning with the theory of material engagement, asserting the agency of inanimate objects. It argues that objects like amber possess a distinct agency, shaping human intentions, interactions, and cultural systems. Historical contexts, such as Lithuania's peripheral location on major trade routes and its evolution from Soviet occupation to colonial rule, are examined to understand the complexities of power dynamics and economic integration. As the research progresses, the project contends that the Global East occupies a unique position, being too rich to be part of the South yet too weak to be the center. The periphery, in this context, extends beyond geography to represent a space in history and culture. Addressing the colonial wound, the study emphasizes the need to consider colonial and imperial differences in global knowledge production and circulation, emphasizing the intertwining of the geopolitics of knowledge with the geopolitics of knowing. The creation of a new virtual earth serves as a symbolic space where global networks and local environments intersect, offering potential for new grounding. The study advocates for recognizing multiple virtual earths as sites for political alternatives, extra-earthly findings, and journeys into cores and cosmos.

While previous studies on amber often focus on symbolic analysis and historical contexts, Peripheria x Cor takes a unique approach by exploring the material itself and its motivations. Departing from conventional auto-ethnographic practices, the study utilizes creative production to showcase design's transformative impact on understanding the world.

The project acknowledges the challenge of conveying accumulated knowledge transparently in artistic studies, emphasizing that the artwork itself becomes a tangible representation of the research. The study aligns with postmodern critiques of traditional linear models of progress, acknowledging the importance of small narratives or micronarratives in understanding fragmented histories, especially within the context of amber material.

The narrative transcends individual experiences to describe collective culture, employing autoethnography as a method to access nuanced and specific knowledge. The significance of historical figures like Feliksas Daukantas and Hermann Brachert in shaping perceptions of amber is explored, emphasizing the need for small narratives to avoid ideologized histories.

In conclusion, Peripheria x Cor represents a multifaceted exploration of binary thinking's impact on global structures, leveraging creative production, autoethnography, and a post-humanistic phenomenological approach. The study challenges conventional perspectives on amber, advocating for a deeper understanding of material agency and its role in shaping cultural systems. Through an interdisciplinary lens, the project seeks to contribute to a broader discourse on post-pandemic shifts, colonial legacies, and the transformative potential of design research.

Research Focus: Exploring the Potential Shift from Binary Thinking in a Post-Pandemic World

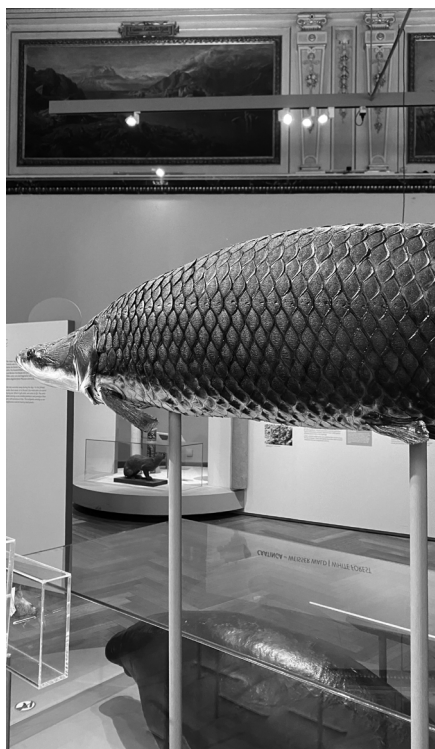
Peripheria x Cor investigates the historical impact of binary thinking on global structures, particularly in colonialist systems where power dynamics were determined by relationships with the center.

Objectives:

- Analysing the influence of binary thinking on societal constructs.
- Examining the post-pandemic scenario as an opportunity for a paradigm shift.
- Investigating the historical role of dichotomy in geographical, economic, and political structures.
- Tracing the historical significance of the 'amber route' in shaping European politics and its influence on later developments.

Following a suggestion by Jane Schneider, a distinction is drawn between a core area of urban consumers, a periphery that is actively altered by its role as a supplier of raw materials to the core, and an outer margin that is indirectly affected through the spread of innovations.

The 'amber route' was an important precursor of the structures underlying the later development of European politics.



My design research project, Peripheria x Cor, challenges established perceptions about the emotional impact of specific materials by adopting a post-humanistic phenomenological approach.

I reject the notion of ontological primacy of humans over material reality, proposing instead that both are part of the same "ecology of representations."



Employing interrogational techniques in artistic research, this approach provides me with a structured and critical inquiry framework. This enables me to refine concepts, engage with diverse perspectives, facilitate dialogues, and stimulate innovation. The methodology goes beyond surface-level understanding, fostering profound and meaningful artistic expressions.

Peri- phe- -ria X Cor

The current research phase centers on utilizing amber as the foundation for interrogatory design investigation.

Grounded in the theory asserting the agency of inanimate objects, this study explores the potential impact of such materials.

According to Renfrew's theory of material engagement, it is the experiences of things that make them come alive to the people engaging with them.



Renfrew uses gold as an example and claims that gold has a potent agency which is obvious because of all the trouble we go through to mine it. This means that people do not always choose to pursue ownership of things, sometimes things demand to be owned. The same could be said about amber.

Lithuania has historically been located on the periphery of major trade routes and markets, limiting its influence and potential economic integration.



According to Epp Annus, initially, communist Russia did not seek to colonise the Baltic States but rather 'occupied' them. However, this initial period of occupation later evolved into a phase of colonial rule.

Today the Global East is too rich to be a proper part of the South, but too poor to be a part of the North. It is too powerful to be periphery, but too weak to be the centre.

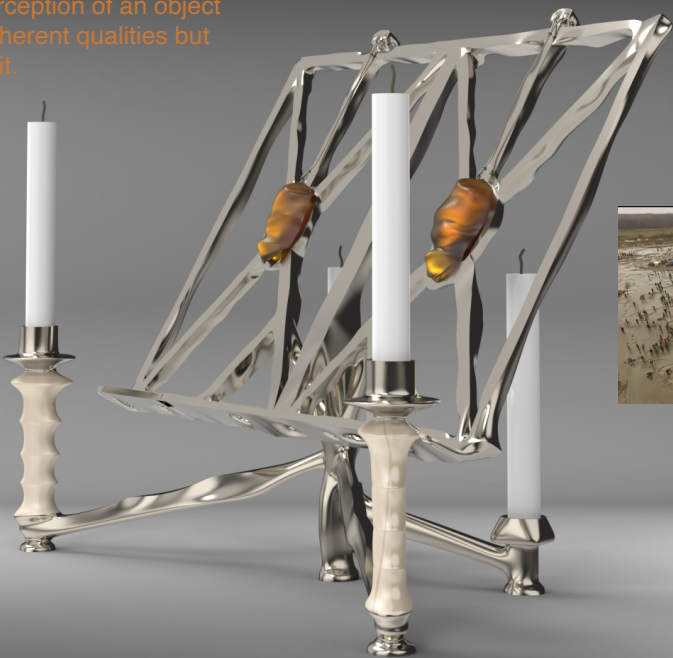


The periphery is not only a geographical location but a peripheral space in history and culture.



The de-colonial path has one thing in common: the **colonial wound**, the fact that regions and people around the world have been classified as **underdeveloped** economically and mentally.

Ian Hodder posits that our perception of an object is influenced not only by its inherent qualities but also by our knowledge about it.



Departing from conventional auto-ethnographic practices in anthropology, my project goes beyond mere reporting. Instead, it embraces creative production to showcase how design can have a transformative impact on the world we seek to understand.

By recognising the agency of objects, we gain a deeper understanding of how they contribute to the shaping of human intentions, interactions, and cultural systems.



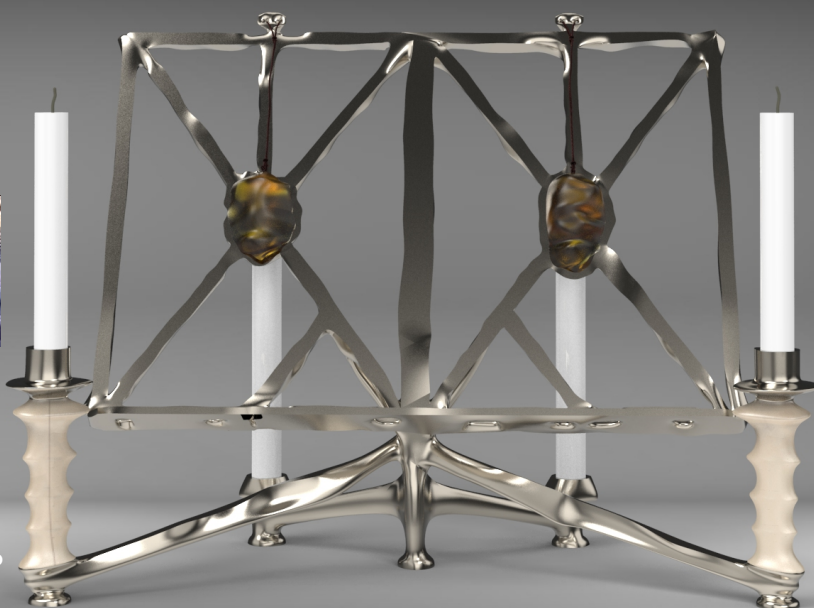
It calls for the necessity of considering colonial and imperial differences in discussing global knowledge production and circulation.

Geo-politics of knowledge goes hand in hand with geo-politics of knowing.

Cultural semiotician Yuri Lotman, who studied various cultural practices, argued in his theory of center and periphery meaning-making that it is precisely on the



periphery, i.e., at the edge of the dominant culture, where new meanings are most intensively generated, supporting (and sometimes overtaking) the relevance of the center. According to him, it is not the center, not the canon, but specifically the periphery that is the condition for cultural renewal.



The *crisis of representation* motivates researchers to recognize the limits of the knowledge claims they make about the contexts, subjects, and findings of their research.



The crisis considers the limits of *scientific* knowledge, particularly what can be discovered, understood, and explained about identities, lives, beliefs, feelings, relationships, and behaviors through the use of empirical or experimental methods;



Material kinship can illuminate the violent logics of history-making narratives.

If extraction means to draw forth by force, then something becomes 'material' or 'matter' - object not subject - through sheer will, force or domination.

Extraction is what fuels the engine of colonial-capitalism.

Through domination and oppression, colonialism named most life, land, people and waterways as 'material' or 'property' that can then be converted into capital.





New virtual earth
in this map is used
as the site where
an interconnection
lies between
global networks
and local
environment,
where potential to
form new
grounding exists:
where power-
seeping wires
become a site for
diffusion towards
peripheries and
overlooked actors.

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PERIPHERIA X COR
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