

*Parr*

- Project -

Grow Your Own House

2016



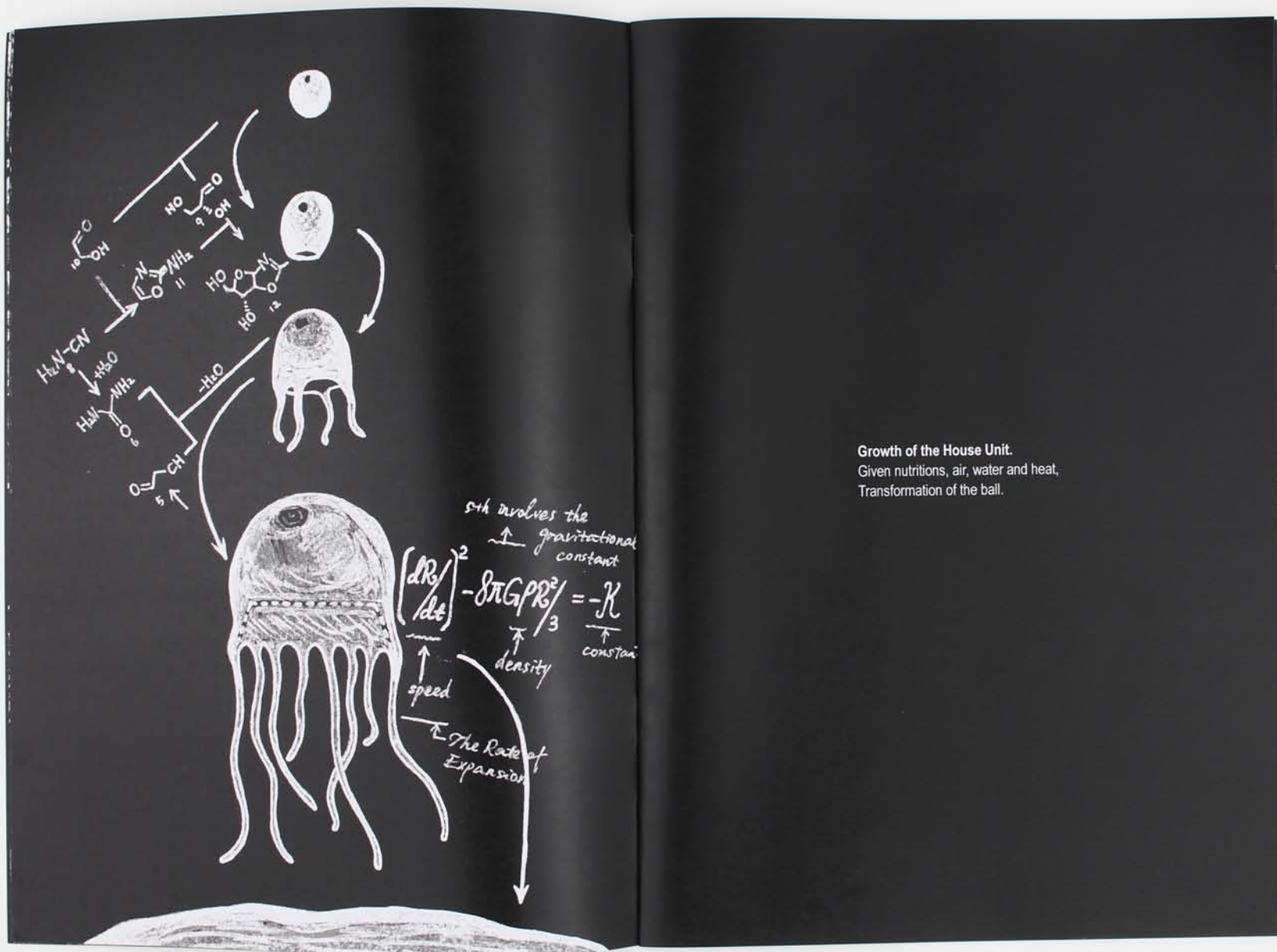
It's 2089.  
Fire, flood, earthquake, sinkhole  
pervasively sweeping across  
plain, desert, mountain, ocean  
Where to go, where to live  
Uncertain



**The House Unit.**

In an ordinary morning,  
alongside an ordinary river,  
she had an ordinary stroll,  
through an ordinary neighbourhood.  
A whirlpool. Emerging  
An ordinary ball.





**Growth of the House Unit.**  
 Given nutritions, air, water and heat,  
 Transformation of the ball.



**Synthetic Spider Silk as Construction Material.**

Strength, Elasticity, biodegradability.

Uncolling, extending, weaving.

A living creature it is.



**Jellyfish House.**

It livens up when you feel joyful;

It tenses when you feel agitated.

It can move; it can settle.

It's a floating jellyfish that you live in and with.





Floating, floating, floating.





**The Interior of Jellyfish House.**  
Breaking down and building up.  
It's change that never changes.  
Essentials for nomads and flauers  
are not books, vinyls and paintings.  
Free mind.



**The Inhabitant of Jellyfish House.**  
Gentle, idealistic, romantic,  
thoughts above the clouds.  
Empathy and Sensibility.



**A Neighbour.**

Life is a show, he is the leading role.  
Attention always lightens up his elusive face.  
His mysterious smile, slithering in the dark night,  
like a slug in the deep sea.



Imagine a possible future in which people live in self-sustained and affordable houses. There is no more need to rely on centralised organisations for water, power supply and such. Then what political and social shift it might cause? To imagine alternative futures is to inspire debates on the present.

To create this diegesis, I introduced a "living-creature"-like house that 'grows' out of synthetic spider silk because of its excellent strength, elasticity and biodegradability. With nutrients such as air, light and water, spider silk uncoils, extends and weaves. During the house shape transformation, pheromone exchange between the house and the inhabitant enables the house to sense emotion flows and represent personalities of the inhabitant. It livens up to your ecstasy and withers down to your agony. It can move; it can settle.

Therefore, I created this character who is gentle, romantic, idealistic and poetic and lives in and with this house in a jellyfish appearance.

## **Parr Geng**

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Interaction Design Arts  
London College of Communication  
2016

### **Bio**

Parr Geng grew up in a small town at Yangtze river delta where Classical Chinese Poetry and Natural Sciences laid the groundwork for her further exploration. She is currently studying BA Interaction Design Arts at London College of Communication. Before coming to London, she received a BSc in Biological Sciences from Fudan University as one of her 20th birthday presents and a MSc by research in Biochemistry two years later from National University of Singapore where she further worked as a Biochemist.

Recently inspired by writings from two French philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze, she is interested in exploring embodied experiences at an 'infra-ordinary' level in this digital everyday, such as the transformation of empathy and sensibility, and also the uncanny cognitive dissonance brought by the encounter of "Metis" and "Techne" which are interpreted in James Scott's book *Seeing Like a State*. Her works are in varied forms, such as performance art, interactive installation, moving image, poetry and illustration.

During her study in London, she has taken part in exhibitions at Tate Liverpool, Science Museum and Southbank Centre.

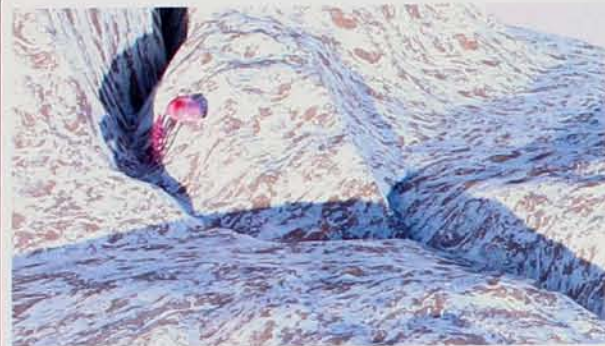


## The Unhelpful Guide to Living With Your Lifelong House

THE LON DONER | CULTURE MAY 3, 2089 ISSUE

BY DYMATION DOME

It has been almost two decades since three young biological scientists from London College of Spiders found out the key protein for the formation and spinning mechanism of spider silk back in 2070. During the past two decades, biological scientists, together with material engineers, have been researching on transgenic and artificial synthesis of spider silk for production in a larger scale. Regarding its unbeatable strength, elasticity, and biodegradability, it was finally used for architecture and construction last year, after its outstanding performance in military bulletproof clothing and medical wound dressing.



Given appropriate humidity and nutrient triggers, now the spider silk can grow out of a hand-size unit and into a single size flat in three months during which the behaviour and emotions of the future inhabitant will affect exterior shape and interior structure of the house in an unexpectedly large extent. It has also been examined that the shape and structure will constantly change according to the interaction between the house and the inhabitant.

Although it's unpredictable whether the house and the inhabitant will get along with each other, the idea of having freedom to live anywhere and anytime still intrigued 83.9% of the population during the 10th Annual Global Housing Survey. Further, life quality was improved significantly, which was reported by inhabitants who have developed healthy relationships with their houses.

Being one of them, Wei agreed to be interviewed about her experience. Passionate and alert, Wei told us that she started to feel tired of busy social life after her thirties. However, she had to follow formalities and attend monthly family gatherings which has been maintained as a tradition for centuries in her hometown. She also felt suffocated by the Renaissance of brutalist architecture. She has always been desperately looking for a chance to escape from her old life. But she admitted that she was also one of the majority who say more and do less.

"So how did you find the house unit?" I had a strong urge to interrupt her endless complaint about her personal life and possible following criticism on contemporary poetry as she started to compare herself with Jaromil in *Life is Elsewhere*.

"Well, I just picked it up on my way home." She had a pause afterwards, finally.

Just to explain, the access to house unit was randomized to limit any possible illegal usage. Inhabitants can only find it somewhere unpredictable rather than buy it from store. So far it's not confirmed yet whether it's our weakening government or an anonymous private company that decides where and when to deliver house units.

So Wei decided to move to the hillside and find her own Walden Pond. She was surprised to see how the unit turned into the shape of jellyfish as she actually used to work as a Marine Biologist in University of the Sea London. Her eyes were glowing while she described how the first tentacle extended from the dome and slowly but firmly attached to the ground. As we had a follow-up interview two days later, I started to know her better. Although Wei talks in a soft tone and behaves in a gentle way, her perseverance, sometimes maybe stubbornness, was displayed as time went. Isn't it just like a jellyfish?

During the follow-up interview in situ, I visited Wei's house on the hillside. Reflecting the sunlight, the dome was floating in the air and mov-

ing slowly up and down. The soft walls attached to tentacles were smoothly weaved out of spider silk. However, once I stepped into the house, the translucent dome turned opaque and froze still in the air until I left. There was invisible directedness being built up, which was more than tension less than agreement.

When asked about her optimum interaction strategy, Wei shook her head and shrugged her shoulder. Her daily activities followed the same routines she had when she shared household back with her parents, which were mostly reading and writing. If there was any change, she has been experiencing equilibrium in her psychological states. The house probably detected the chemical signals excreted from Wei and grew in an atmosphere of ease.

When asked about how long she will stay by the hillside for, Wei shook her head again, "I have no idea. Who is interested in a fixed future now? And who knows whether Pinkie (the house) might wanna leave me first." Although she wouldn't fancy the idea of combination of transportation and housing, she would love to imagine anti-gravity movable house unit in one of the possible futures.

Dymaxion Dome joined The Lon Doner as a staff writer in 2074.



# Grow Your Own House

## Exhibitions

--- Oct - Nov 2016. "[UN-STABLE.EU](#)" at Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz, Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin. Berlin, Germany.

--- May 2016. "[2025: Forecasting Futures](#)" at London College of Communication. London, UK.

The initial diegesis writing (please see the last spread) was a parody article I wrote in May 2015, accompanied by a short blender sketch. I imagined a possible future in which people live in and with a self-sustained and affordable 'living-creature'-like houses. There is no more need to rely on centralised organisations for water, power supply and such. Then what political and social shift it might bring? To imagine alternative futures is to inspire debates on the current.

In James Auger's article *Speculative Design: crafting the speculation* (2013), he mentioned a number of techniques to engage the audience, including borrowing from observational comedy, the use of the uncanny, ecological methods for understanding habitats and systems, and counterfactual histories. Since my previous narrative has already been formulated into text, it's the visual realisation that I would like to introduce some-

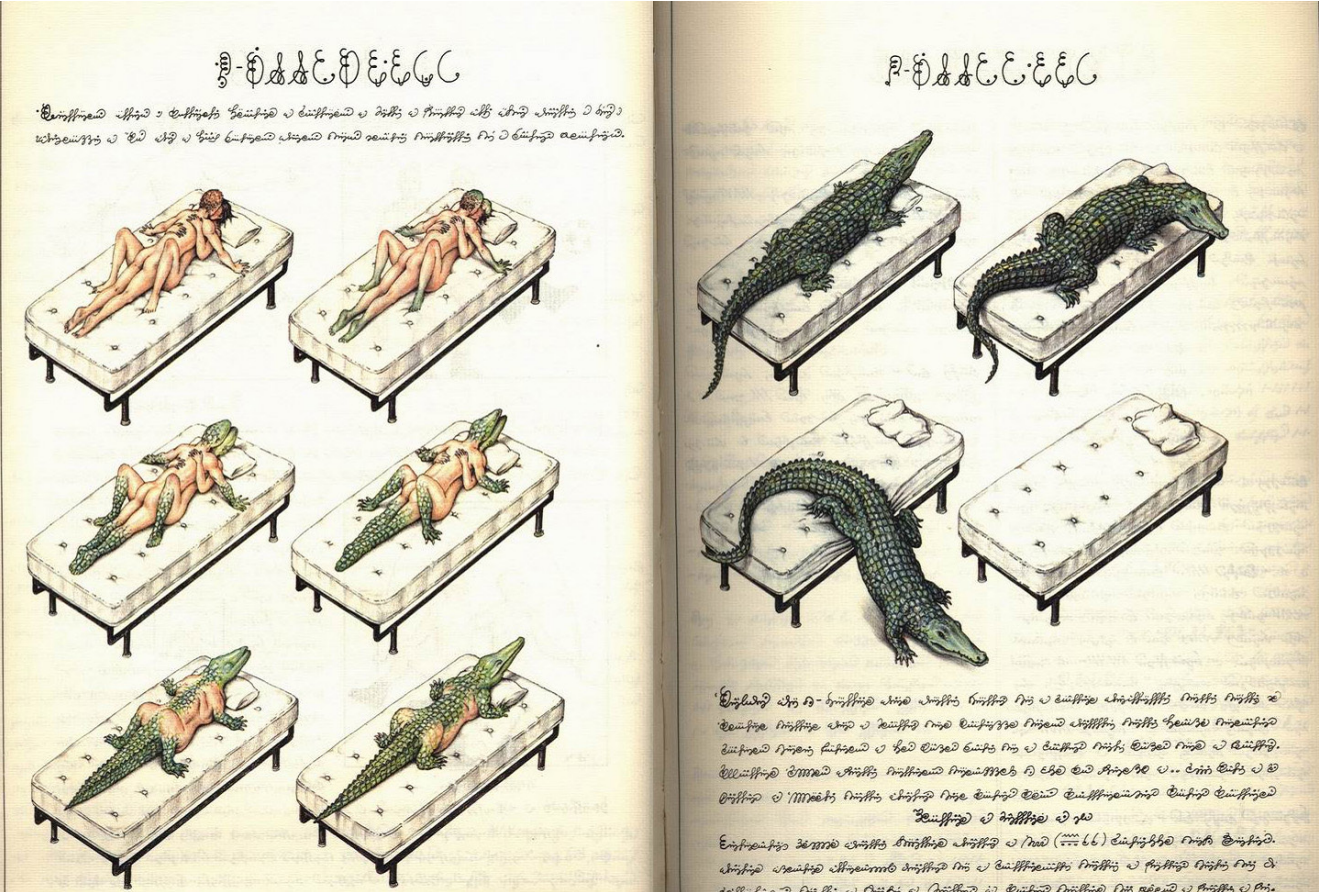
thing uncanny.

When jellyfish and house are perceived separately, there is nothing alien. However, when these two are visually combined together, it might bring up something slightly interesting, which has already been confirmed by most feedbacks from exhibition visitors. *Codex Seraphinianus* by Luigi Serafini is one of my favourite books. It's full of witty and humourous imaginations. The indecipherable script was to convey a sensation that children feel in front of books they cannot understand yet. Another inspiration for my narrative is *The Google Book* by Vincent Catwright Vickers, an illustrated book of children's verse. Meanwhile, I chanced upon AL and AL's black and white drawings in their exhibition *Incidents of Travel in the Multiverse* in Manchester this April.



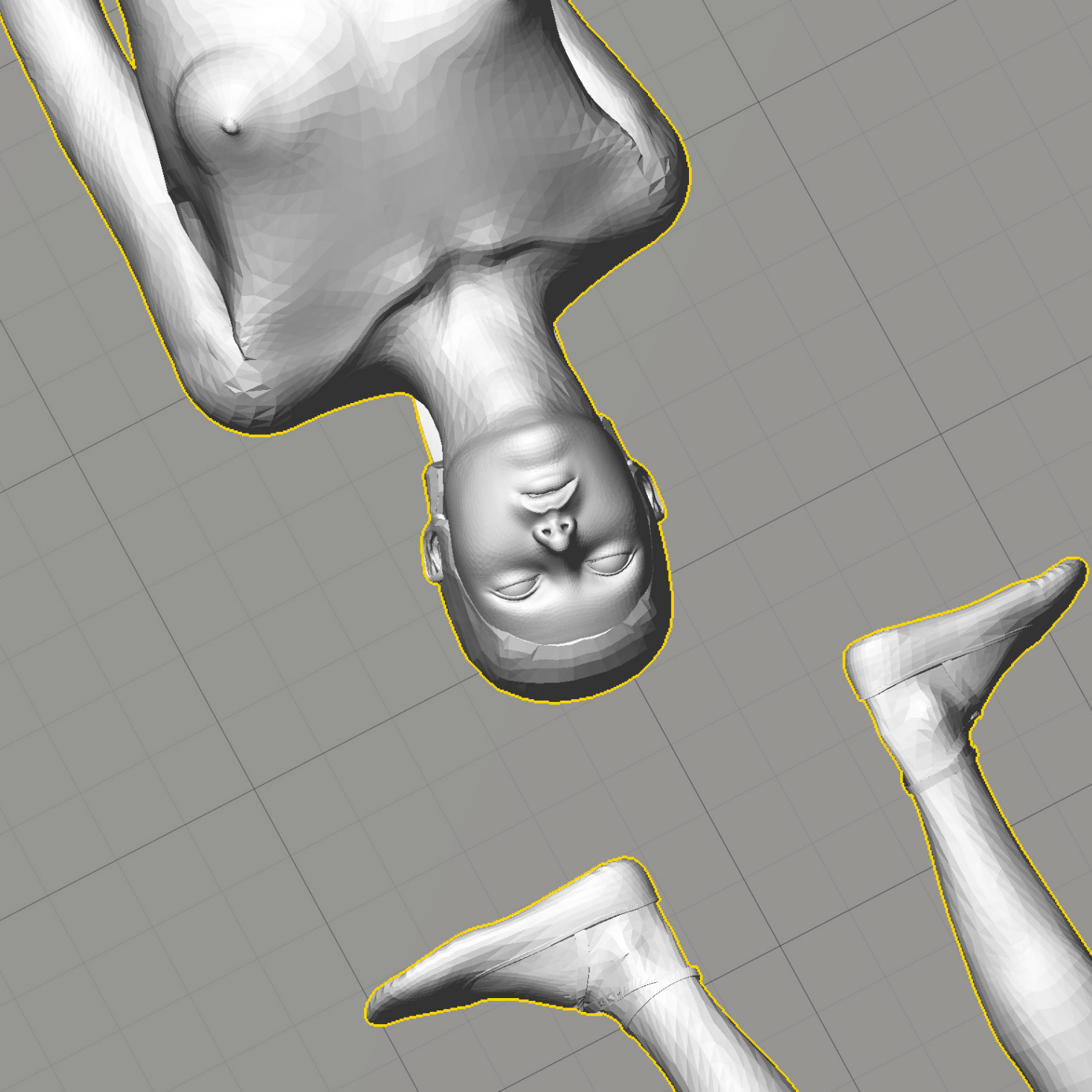
(Incidents of Travel in the Multiverse. AL and AL)

With the abovementioned inspirations and a few absentminded moments, I did a few illustrations to narrate the concept. The illustrations include a portraiture of the Jellyfish house, where the house unit comes from, where the Jellyfish house



Codex Seraphinianus, Luigi Serafini.





has been travelling across, the inhabitant of this Jellyfish house, some other inhabitants with their own house appearances and such. It's a style that falls in-between fantasy and technical drawing that I've never tried before.

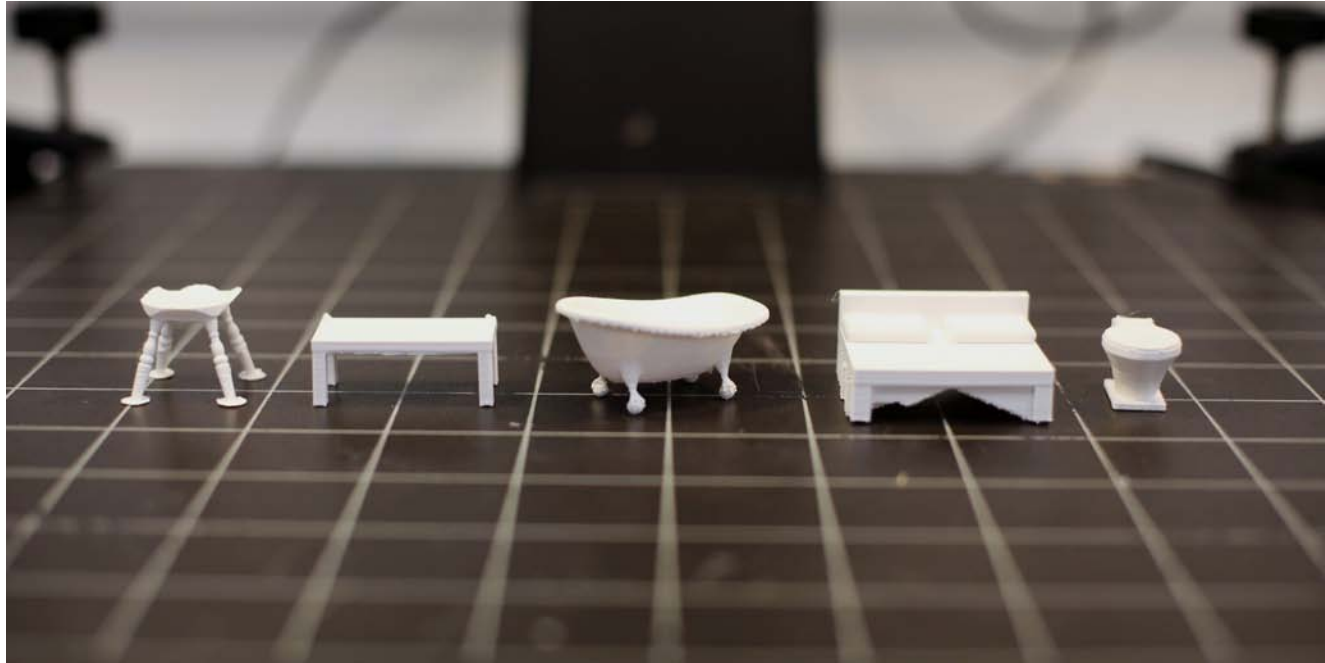
The personality of the inhabitant in this diegesis is a female figure, who is romantic, gentle, poetic, idealistic, mysterious, thoughts above the clouds most of the time, sensitive and emotional sometimes. Therefore I chose jellyfish as her house with the flow-like tentacle movement.

It was difficult to decide how the house unit is delivered by who. Any indication of one specific deliverer might contradict with my intention to avoid centralised power structure. Throughout

the human history, numerous civilizations have arisen, thrived and disintegrated along the river. So the mysterious water body was chosen to be where the house unit emerges.

Once the illustrated book was finished, I immediately sourced silicone to cast the artefact for the Jellyfish house. To indicate that it's an architecture model, I printed 3d models of a few household essentials that later were embedded inside the silicone. When I couldn't decide how to represent the tentacles, I read the news about the recent discovery of "Jack-O-Lantern" Jellyfish above Mariana Trench. So I thought of using LED lights to light up both the interior and the weaving tentacles.



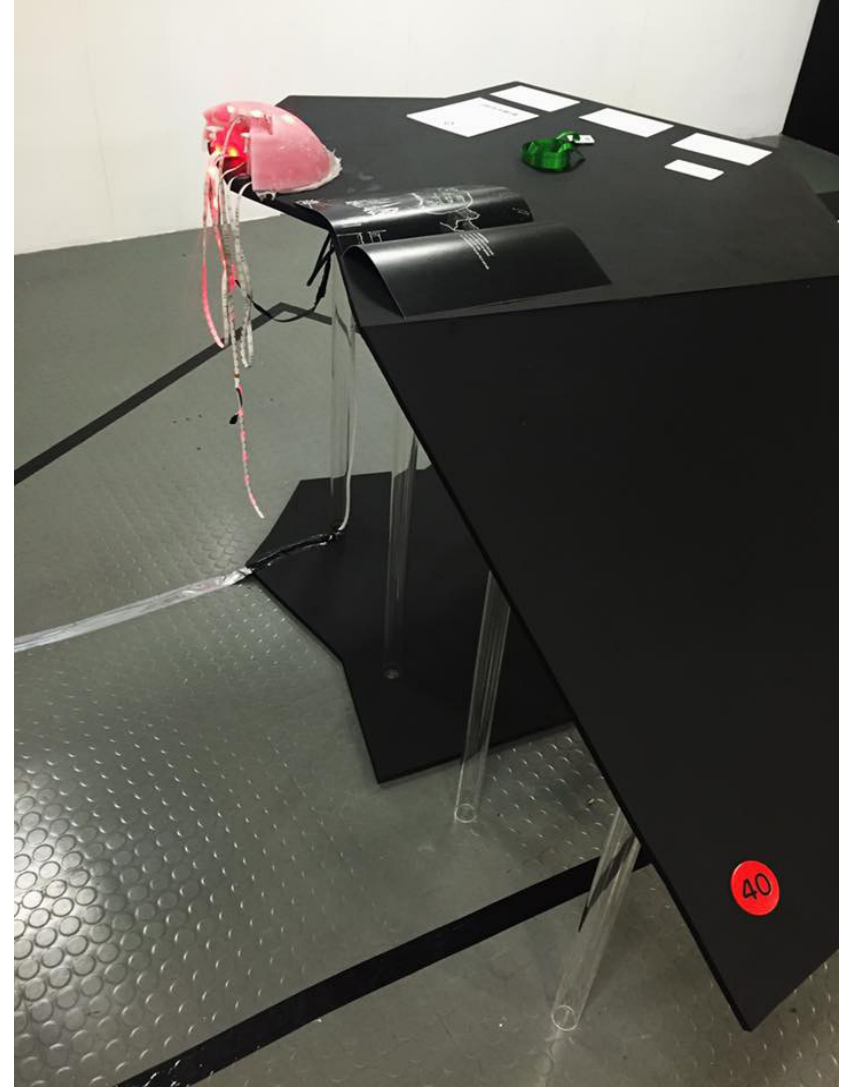


3D printed household essentials.



The Jellyfish House Model.











**Bruce Sterling**  
@bruces

[parrrgeng.com/filter/writing...](http://parrrgeng.com/filter/writing...) \*As  
jellyfish houses go, it's pretty good

**Parr Geng** @GengParrr



Glad to receive loads  
of feedbacks on my  
Jellyfish house from t...

23/07/2016, 14:39



**Bruce Sterling**  
@bruces



Following

\*Oh come on who can't like an artist talk about a  
jellyfish house

**Parr Geng** @GengParrr

I'll give an artist talk on my jellyfish house at Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee on  
24th Oct, 6pm. Come around and have a chat.

LIKES  
**13**



2:57 pm - 5 Oct 2016



