

Replicas Museum in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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The proposal is for a Replicas Museum, located near a highway on the outskirts of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. The design process started by exploring techniques of casting as the production of form, which imitates and fabricates variations, especially the relationship between a mould or even a flexible mould and its cast. Such process involves the reciprocal relationship of solid vs. void, positive vs. negative space, and ultimately the loss of authenticity in a contemporary culture of counterfeits and imitations. With the development of computer and visualization technologies, simulation becomes the major tool in the exploration of form making and the dramatic transition in the loss of authenticity: the multiple imitation of the formal language of architecture.

In this project, the process of molding plaster was developed parallel to simulating its formal variation using **form•Z**. The project established a sequence of both precise and intuitive techniques. Sections of thin strips of casts were fabricated, each one with a variation, and then assembled adjacent to each other. The result was a series of unpredictable spaces, which were developed as programmatic encounters and made up the interior for a Replicas Museum. In parallel to this, the digital counterfeit process allowed for topological variations, such as stretching, bending and deforming.

The result is a new prototype building, which was then situated on a flat and “fast” site, near a highway, becoming a floating three-dimensional billboard. This was set against the mirage of the romantic yet unfriendly desert in the nomadic and dynamic city of Dubai. What is more, the interior demonstrates a “slow” pace as users are trapped and delayed in fragmented enclosures.



