SURFACE TENSION
OBJECT PROJECTS

2X8 DESIGN COMPETITION PROPOSAL
July 2021
The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the importance of grassroots organizations while simultaneously highlighting the delicacy of supply chains and essential service infrastructure.

Surface Tension celebrates and monumentalizes the scale and complexity of mutual aid networks operating, oftentimes unseen, at the most basic and personal level. The exhibition design uses pallets of bottled water as billboards to present student work.
Surface Tension is assembled from ubiquitous industrial components: pallets of bottled drinking water, thermally insulating pallet quilts, and nylon strapping. Pallets are delivered to the site(s), arranged at specified locations, and outfitted with reflective quilts. Custom strapping printed with QR codes pointing to the exhibition's AR feature wraps and is interwoven between pallets, suggesting loose enclosure and areas for assembly. Exhibition boards are secured to the strapping with adjustable Velcro.

The installation reveals the staggering scale of water inaccessibility in LA. Each pallet contains a week's worth of drinking water for 34 people. As objects in an exhibition context, the cases of water bottles are transformed into monuments to the tremendous efforts of mutual aid organizations like Water Drop LA. Each Sunday, volunteers from this group distribute nearly nine pallets' worth of bottled water throughout Skid Row.

Surface Tension pauses a moment in the journey between warehouse and distribution in order to highlight the material reality of grassroots activism: in this case, the sheer effort involved in transporting and distributing a literal ton of water. Once the exhibition closes and student work is demounted, the exhibition materials will continue on their way to Water Drop LA. Pallet quilts and strapping will be reused for water deliveries and storage.

This proposal is directly in line with Object Projects' on-going research into the ready-mades of contemporary logistics infrastructure. Surface Tension elevates the aesthetic experience of the fork-lifted pallet of goods to present a public art object, and in so doing, transforms it into a symbol.

Object Projects is a woman-owned California-based architecture and design studio led by Ann Worth, adjunct faculty at Woodbury University, and Sarah Hirschman, Lecturer at UC Berkeley. OP makes objects and buildings and everything in between in pursuit of surprising, fun, weird, confusing, challenging, unfamiliar, etc. experiences. OP plays with standards and seeks out strategic and material opportunities to defy expectations. OP consciously cultivates curiosity and openness to ideas, wherever they may originate.
SPACES FOR ASSEMBLY

**Small:** 2-4 projects
1. pallets delivered and positioned
2. quilts and strapping added to pallets
3. exhibition materials attached

**Medium:** 4-10 projects
1. exhibition materials removed
2. pallets picked up and delivered to Water Drop LA
3. water distributed
4. quilts and strapping reused
5. pallets returned to distribution center

**Large:** 12-20 projects
1. pallets delivered and positioned
2. quilts and strapping added to pallets
3. exhibition materials attached

DISASSEMBLY
1. exhibition materials removed
2. pallets picked up and delivered to Water Drop LA
3. water distributed
4. quilts and strapping reused
5. pallets returned to distribution center
insulating reflective pallet quilt

72 cases of 16.9oz water bottles (1728 bottles, 228.15 gallons)

standard 48" x 40" pallet

custom strapping to secure pallet goods

exhibition boards

strapping

velcro on back of boards

adjustable velcro bands on strapping

DETAIL AT BOARD ATTACHMENT TO STRAPPING
WATER

fifteen (15) pallets of water
438,048oz (3,422 gallons)
@ $389.99/each pallet

$5,849.85

THERMAL PALLET QUILTS

fifteen (15) metallic quilts
@ $150/each quilt

$2,250.00

STRAPPING

2,000'-0”
custom printed strapping
with QR code
@ $0.59/FT

$826.00

SUBTOTAL $8925.85
+10% contingency
+$150 delivery

TOTAL $9968.44

* any additional available funding will be dedicated towards the procurement of additional water for donation.
7/26/21    project kickoff!
• custom strapping designed, proofed, and ordered
• pallet quilts tested and ordered

september
• custom strapping received
• pallet quilts received
• preliminary site vetting

october
• final siting determined for exhibition locations
• water pallets ordered

• 11/1 (or before): water delivered
• 11/1-11/5: quilts, strapping and exhibition boards installed
• 11/6: 2x8 opens!

november
• exhibition boards demounted and returned to students
• water, pallets, strapping delivered to Water Drop LA for community distribution

post exhibition
• exhibition boards demounted and returned to students
• water, pallets, strapping delivered to Water Drop LA for community distribution