The Trajan Puzzle Project

An Exercise in Design Thinking

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Bass Connections

The Emperor Trajan and the Museums of Imperial Fora. The museum is situated in the heart of Rome and has an attendance of 650,000 visitors of all ages and nationalities per year.

1. Define & Empathize
2. Ideate & Collate
3. Build & Prototype
4. Iterate & Implement

(Re)iterate

2017 is the 1900th deathday anniversary of the Emperor Trajan. The Museums of Imperial Fora in Rome commissioned our Duke Dig@lab to produce a permanent exhibit for the general public around fragments from the Basilica Ulpia (the largest basilica of the ancient world.)

2. Our solution centers around a Legionnaire’s path through the museum space. It touches upon many of the 40,000 architectural fragments stored in the museum archives and involves digital techniques to produce analogue outcomes offering narrative, tangible, sustainable, multilayered individual and collective experiences.

3. The exhibits include a full room anamorphic installation based on the principle that different perspectives offer new viewpoints; an autostereoscopic holographic display providing context to frieze fragments throughout the basilica; and a tangible table by which users are encouraged to play with an archaeologist’s puzzle, which fragments belong where?

4. The Emperor Trajan had an immense and rich life, his conquests took Rome to its peak of expansion and his construction projects provided for infrastructure innovation and development which transcended time and place. Our exhibit draws on the rich story of his life and times to offer new perspectives, intimate and sociological, on history, culture, and our collective human experience.

(4) Throughout 2016 and 2017 our team designed and built multiple prototypes of different materials, sizes, even concepts to hone in on feasibility and sustainability of ideas and implementation.