

Furnishing the Cloud Exhibition

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Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center

66 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10003

Much of our common stock of knowledge -- from the inscriptions of early civilizations, the classic texts of the ancient world, the manuscripts of the Middle Ages, and the maps and scientific treatises of the Renaissance, to the tweets and open data sets of today -- now resides in The Cloud. That Cloud seems to have no boundaries, no place; it floats above us, bringing its intellectual riches to those of us who are connected to it, wherever we might be. Yet The Cloud isn't nearly as ubiquitous as the weather. Its accessibility is limited by protocols and cables, and its "content" has to be shaped, formalized through various interfaces, in order for us to perceive and process it. While artists, designers, and researchers have acknowledged that The Cloud has an architecture -- from the routers generating wisps of wifi in our homes, to the massive data centers storing that "rain of data," to the cables and satellites that function as the system's plumbing -- we've paid little attention to the places where The Cloud meets our individual bodies. Furnishing the Cloud considers both how we have historically imagined the architectures and containers of our common stock of knowledge -- the universal library, the endless bookshelf, the collective brain, among other structural/architectural metaphors -- and proposes new infrastructures for storing, accessing, and processing The Cloud. What are our new ergonomics of reading and viewing and auditing digital content, and how can we design to support those postures and modes of perception? How might we Furnish the Cloud?

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