

SOUVENIR HOUSE

We go up there to escape the city. The speed and noise of all those moving things feel diminished from this new perspective. From above, the city becomes a calm and soundless organism which we observe through the leaves and the fog. Our perception is altered by the strong scent of the herbs and scenery. Every year, there is another type of monoculture grown there by Botanical Garden and Agriculture department of the University of Oslo, Natural History Museum. This program will be an expansion to their research facilities and they will be managing the installation of the space every year. The new scenery will be set up in a short and intense period with a help from various professionals who are willing to be involved in the program.

The environment of the space is crafted to provide the ultimate growing conditions. It is the house of the plant and we are guests, who get a chance to experience the view of Oslo through climate. Sometimes it will be tropical and other times it can be misty and rainy or even desert-like. There is a small river that flows around the central core providing plants with the necessary nutrition and moisture while being a part of the soundscape. The watering system fills the space with mist to preserve a consistent level of humidity that will change depending on the plant that is being cultivated. In night time the space will be illuminated and the tallest species will be visible from many locations around the city.

Each of us, as visitors, will move in a different way in this space. Each of us is free to take a souvenir when we are up here. Sometimes it will be a rare flower that will travel to Paris as a gift to a lover, but, when returning it might be a leaf of a herb for a Thursday night dinner. The space will be an experimental growing house for Oslo, however, it will not resemble a typical botanical garden or a museum of plants, neither an exhibition. Instead, it will be one of the few public services within the city of Oslo that promotes "the right to harvest".

Obtaining a souvenir and choosing the right part of the plant, while leaving the minimal possible damage, will become an essential part of the visit. During harvest time, these souvenirs will flood the streets of Oslo and travel large distances by air, spreading the word about a place on the top of the city, where oranges grow and people are free to pluck them. Once people gather the courage to visit this place, they might be confronted with a steamy room filled with bamboos or sunflowers. There will be no trace of oranges once the harvest is over.



Emily Dickinson's herbarium, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts



Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities*
Exotic plants, corals and crocodiles, birds and butterflies. Albertus Seba's extraordinary catalog of natural specimens is not only one of the 18th century's greatest natural history achievements, but also one of the most prized natural history books of all time.

