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TINTAGEL FOOTBRIDGE

Void for imagination

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The site of the Tintagel Castle, in Cornwall, England, is an example of an extremely powerful context. The peninsula at Tintagel is loaded with history. It is inhabited since the late Roman period. In the 12th century it became famous in literature as the place where King Arthur was conceived. Inspired by the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, build a castle at Tintagel in the 1230s. After the 1300s the castle was in decay and erosion caused the thin strip connecting the Island with the Mainland to collapse. A void was left, successively growing during the following decades. Leaving Tintagel at the crossroad between real and unreal, between facts and legends, between existing and imaginary.

Except for the history context, the natural scenery and the coastline in Tintagel and its surroundings are exceptional. The turquoise green ocean beats here onto Devonian slate which was quarried extensively still the 20th century. The force of nature carved many dramatic rock formations with cliffs, caves and arches. Where once a castle stood, now an almost 70m poorly accessible void is yawning between the Mainland and the Island, separating the peninsula from the Cornish Mainland. The impressive and ongoing erosion of the cliffs makes the site even more vulnerable and incredible.

This magnificent spot attracts over 200.000 visitors every year, for its history, nature or both. To accommodate such numbers on the site the Tintagel footbridge was mandatory. The Tintagel footbridge is the result of a process driven by its extraordinary context. It reconnects the remains of the Tintagel Castle with the mainland. It relinks two worlds; mainland and island, the present and the past, the known and the unknown, reality and legend. The process which led to the two independent cantilevers reaching out and almost touching in the middle will be subject of the paper, firing the imagination.

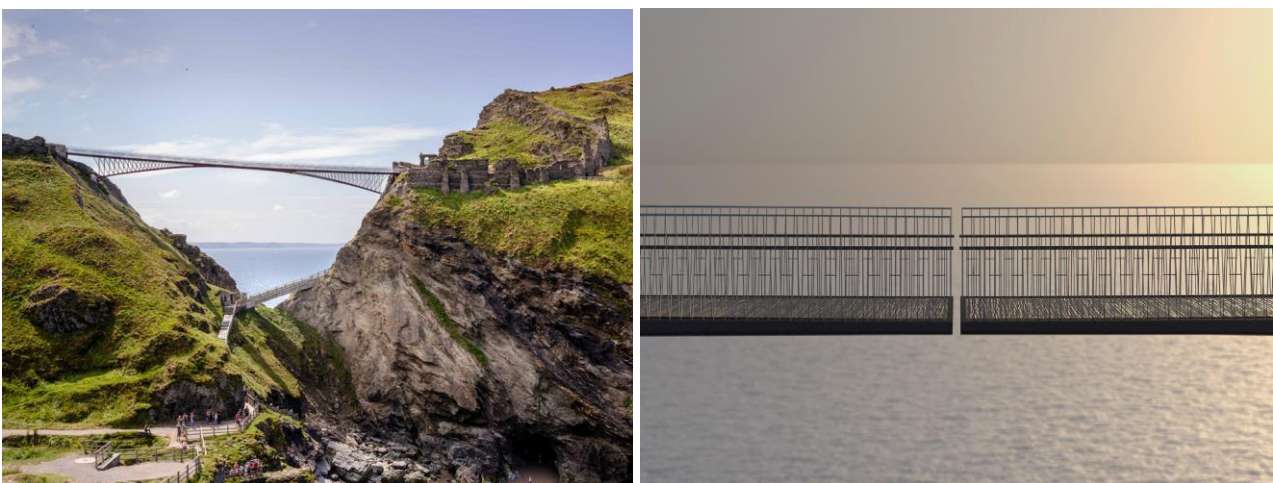


Fig. 1. Tintagel Footbridge in the dramatic landscape – The void, space for imagination