

Knowlton School of Architecture

ARCH 6420, Spring 2015 Advanced Architectural Design IV

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Office hours 9:30-11:30 Tuesdays

Class time: M, W, F 1:50-5:15 Location: Graduate Studio Floor

MONUMENTAL

Toward the Possibility of an (E)pocryphal Architecture:

or “The Oblique Function at the Dawn of the Anthropocene”



Epic Studio (Preamble):

Spring Semester Advanced Graduate Studio will center on the issue of a contemporary understanding of the Monumental. The idea of what constitutes a contemporary Monument will be considered within the context of a highly technologically mediated and globalized society. The studio will situate this disciplinary problem relative to the massive transformations occurring in the relationship between the man-made and the natural. Specifically the studio will look at the intersection of issues of global climate transformations that occur due to the continued modification of the Earth's climatic envelope through deforestation, industrialization and the urbanization of the world. The studio will seek to develop an understanding of the Monumental relative to the advent of what has been termed the *Anthropocene* – the moment in geological history in which the effects of man's habitation on the earth can be recognized as radically transforming the geological record.

The main purpose of this speculative study is neither to initiate an idea of remediation nor to seek an understanding of Architecture's direct role in these issues in a pragmatic sense (after all, the built environment contributes some 65% of all global carbon emissions). Instead, the studio will seek to understand the symbolic role of the Monumental as a reminder and warning to members of the societies in which they are engendered. Thus the main task will be strictly architectural in the classical sense. Our focus will be on the effects that can be achieved through acts of architectural representation and communication. The important issues of sustainability will be set aside and left to other studios to investigate (and no doubt they will form a major portion of your future practice.) One thesis that we will operate under is the idea that sustainability (per se) may reify an already outmoded understanding of the separation of the natural and artificial which may not be tenable given the radical transformations occurring in the world. It can also be assumed that the disciplinary question of whether sustainability is necessary within the techniques and processes of the practice has been answered. All future practice will certainly take into account sustainable issues as a central paradigm of building.

Our focus will be on the role that Architecture plays as a symbolic mediator in a culture's ideas of what is possible both for itself and for the effects it can produce within the world. To that end the issue of scale and its representation

within the discipline will be a distinct center of our investigation. As you are no doubt aware, Rem Koolhaas renewed the disciplinary interest in the notion of "bigness" during the mid-1990's. Now, given the massive transformations that have occurred in the intervening 20 years, we will be investigating the scale of the Mega- and the global. Students will be asked to speculate on very large (Monumental) architectural interventions into the otherwise 'natural' landscape.

Students will use the mediating device of globalized mapping systems such as Google Earth as the primary method of site identification, representation and speculation. The interventions you will be asked to consider will take two forms. The first project will be a memorial to the Holocene and a Monument to the advent of the Anthropocene. The second project will be a Mega Animal/Human Habitat that seeks to find ways to allow for multi-species inter-habitation at the vast scale. These two projects can be treated as one interrelated project divided into two parts or as two distinctly different design problems. Regardless, the two projects will bracket the Exit Review development period that will occur in the middle of the semester. Each project will be approximately five weeks.

The Oblique Function

Architectural fantasies such the Oblique Function of Claude Parent and Paul Virilio seem more important today given the ever-increasing realization that human actions and behaviors are degrading the human milieu. Though initiated in the period just prior to the political unrest surrounding the events in Europe of May 1968, the work of Architecture Principe points to a radical revision of the nature of ground for Architecture.

Given the many readings of the architecture-ground relationship and the biases and possibilities that any of these readings present, we should also see the Oblique Function (and the work of Parent and Virilio) as an avenue for discovering new solutions to the issues at hand. Each student in the studio is expected to consider the potential of the Oblique Function (and oblique plane/etc.) in project proposals.

The Monumental Revisited

The Monument is recognized as one of the discipline's earliest forms and yet due to specific cultural notions arising since the advent of Modernism it has been the center of a deep skepticism concerning the role of such memorializing devices within society. Louis Mumford for instance believed a monument's ancient and inherent association with tombs, death and the eternal made it anathema within a modern society that glorified the notion of scientific progress and a constantly updated idea of the new. This skepticism was revisited in the era of Architectural Post-Modernism. During this period a renewed interest in the symbolic regimes of memory and language of historic architecture allowed the discipline to reimagine a role for the monument within a coded and mediated consumer society. Given the controversies of the 911 Memorial site and the Eisenhower memorial designed by Frank Gehry, it is clear that the problem of what constitutes a monument today in a society that is now increasingly modulated through networked technologies of communication, representation and social media, is still very much in flux both in the discipline and within the understanding of society in general.

It is relatively clear that one sees a certain desire for abstraction and a removal of the figural within the discipline's sense of a monument that is not shared by the general public. The general public's idea of the monument as a figural object competes with the legacy of modernism's drive to spatialize and "de-figure" (disfigure) memorials by making them negative (or figural) voids or public spaces. The debate as it were is between notions of interiority and exteriority and subjects and objects. The implication of the advent of the Holocene (in which scientists have begun to believe that there may be no exterior natural outside condition) allows the renewed possibility of reentering this debate within the contemporary context of the Anthropocene. Additionally, the discipline is reengaging with the possibility of a renewed sense of figuration, iconicity and object-ness. This presents the opportunity of looking at the problem of the monumental by combining these two emerging concerns within the context of our studio problem.

There is a strong argument for the idea that the monument (in the form of the tomb) was one of the earliest architectural typologies. At the very least, the tomb competes with the early shelter or house of the god (temple) as the symbolic enclosure par excellence. In fact the conceptual separation between the two may, in the distant past, have been much less distinct. The boundary, as it were between the world of the living and the world of the dead may have been understood as a much more ambiguous condition: a veil in which the two worlds were seen as mirrored conditions within the larger symbolic construct of the world. Some archaeologists now argue for a radical vision of subjectivity amongst early modern humans in which the condition of individuality was not yet fully present. Some discoveries of the first urban societies (such as the one represented by the dwellers of Çatalhöyük) find that the dead were buried at the threshold to each individual dwelling unit. In these cases, entry was from above. After descending a ladder, one would find that the space first experienced at the entry floor contained a burial tomb. This tomb was directly adjacent to the dwelling space. The entry and exit into and out of the house recapitulated the cycle of life.

If (as some believe) architecture was born as the twin of agriculture, then it is clear that the fate of our discipline is mirrored and foreshadowed in the fate of the landscape. The first urban environments (including the one at Çatalhöyük) developed within those societies that first domesticated plants and animals and modified the land to husband these organisms. If we are now entering a period so distinct in the archeological record as to warrant a new epoch designation, it is perhaps time to revisit the complex and essential interrelationship between architecture, agriculture and the world. In the era of the post-human condition the distinction between nature and culture that characterized the relationship between humans and the world is no longer tenable. The world space is now completely impacted by human actions.

As has been convincingly shown by Jared Diamond (as well as other historians, archaeologists and environmentalists), the fertile crescent of the first civilizations was radically transformed and degraded by human action. Agriculture (and the food surplus it created) and the rise of the first urban environments initiated a process of ecological transformation and decline. Human habitation and the agricultural processes that occurred after the Neolithic revolution contributed to the loss of animal species and plant life. The studio's interest in the Anthropocene centers on the idea that the process initiated in the birth of the first civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Punjab Valley, has grown to affect the entire globe.

By coining the term "(E)pochryphal", the studio consciously seeks to return architecture to its visionary role of projecting fictitious future possibilities; the possibilities in this instance will center on the complex and world transforming conditions vis-à-vis the Architecture/Agriculture dyad. The motivations here ought to be less in the tradition of the utopic or the dystopic and should be, rather, in the vein of the fictitious. (E)pochryphal Architecture is a play on the notion of the fabricated nature of architectural fantasies, the ironically 'obscure', and the make-believe nature of visionary projection.

Artifacts/Output

Studio production will be centered on the making of large-scale disciplinary artifacts. By that is meant oversized drawings, maps, montages and models that test the boundaries of our usual production conventions. The projects will specifically focus on the production of renderings or hybrid visual mapping and drawing and modeling systems. Additionally, students are encouraged to produce large-scale computer-fabricated models that present the vision in detail at a scale approximating furniture.

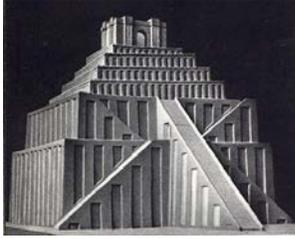
Projects

Each project will begin with approximately two weeks of research, information gathering, and schematic proposals followed by three weeks of dedicated production and refinement.

1: Memorial to the Holocene/Monument to the Advent of the Anthropocene

Using Google Earth software, work together as a class to devise a strategy for distributing the locations of individual students so as to take representative selections from the biomes of the earth's surface. Develop a photographic panorama of your site, then map and model the location. You can use a randomly selected longitude and latitude or distribute locations through a mapping system such as the Mercator grid. As is clear from the etymology of "monument," the idea of this architectural typology contains an inherent ambiguity: the role of the monument is both to remind oneself of a past condition or event and also to warn of future circumstances through mindful reflection on the past. Design a monument to the Holocene – the geological period we may be exiting. The monument needs to activate a symbolic field of understanding with regard to humankind's role in shaping the world. The monument does not necessarily need to be inhabitable, though it can be. It DOES need to contain some monitoring device which would register change over hundreds of years and which will be understandable to a future generation.

- Identify a series of projects (architectural precedents and/or built conditions, both deliberate 'memorials' and those constructions or proposals that were not intended as memorials).
- Develop a scale and scope at which your memorial will function as intended (per se).
- Identify some modes of modeling/representation that will best represent the ambitions of your proposal.
- Approximately two weeks will be spent collecting and developing ideas around your proposal. The latter three weeks will be spent on continued development and refinement of your proposal along with the production of studies (models/graphics) and refined final presentations.



2: Mega Animal/Human Habitat (Zoo)

Use the same process for distribution of sites across the studio, or retain your site from the previous project. This project will likely exist at a scale that is more vast than the previous project. What might a super-mega scale look like? The Zoo will do away with physical separation between animal and man.

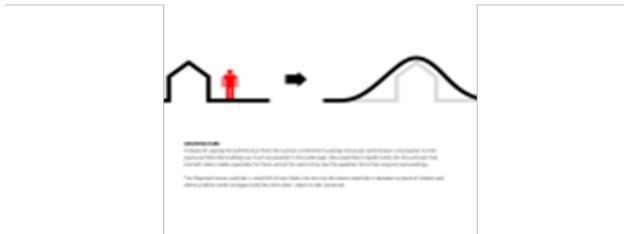
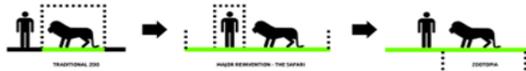
-Identify your 'site'/environment.

-Identify key issues/flora/fauna that must be considered within this biome or environment(s).

-Develop a strategy for the co-habitation of this environment for both humankind and plant/animal.

-Approximately two weeks will be spent collecting and developing ideas around your proposal. The latter three weeks will be spent on continued development and refinement of your proposal along with the production of studies (models/graphics) and refined final presentations.

HOW TO REIMAGINE THE ZOO GARDEN?



Terms

ep·och

ˈepæk/

noun

a period of time in history or a person's life, typically one marked by notable events or particular characteristics."

"The beginning of a distinctive period in the history of someone or something." synonyms:

era, age, period, time, span, stage; eon

a division of time that is a subdivision of a period and is itself subdivided into ages, corresponding to a series in chronostratigraphy.

"the Pliocene epoch" synonyms: era, age, period,

time, span, stage; eon

Origin: early 17th century (in the Latin form *epocha* ; originally in the general sense of a date from which succeeding years are numbered): from modern Latin *epocha*, from Greek *epokhē* 'stoppage, fixed point of time,' from *epekhein* 'stop, take up a position,'

from *epi* 'upon, near to' + *ekhein* 'stay, be in a certain state.'

a·poc·ry·phal

æp' pākɹəfəəl/

adjective

(of a story or statement) of doubtful authenticity, although widely circulated as being true.

synonyms: fictitious, made-up, untrue, fabricated, false, spurious; of or belonging to Apocrypha: Apocrypha are statements or claims that are of dubious authenticity. The word's origin is the Medieval Latin adjective apocryphus, "secret, or non-canonical", from the Greek adjective ἀπόκρυφος (apokryphos), "obscure", from the verb ἀποκρύπτειν (apokryptein), "to hide away"

monument (n.) late 13c., "a sepulchre," from Old French monument "grave, tomb, monument," and directly from Latin monumentum "a monument, memorial structure, statue; votive offering; tomb; memorial record," literally "something that reminds," from monere "to remind, warn" (see monitor (n.)). Sense of "structure or edifice to commemorate a notable person, action, or event" first attested c.1600.

monitor (n.)

1540s, "senior pupil at a school charged with keeping order, etc.," from Latin monitor "one who reminds, admonishes, or checks," also "an overseer, instructor, guide, teacher," agent noun from monere "to admonish, warn, advise," related to meminī "I remember, I am mindful of," and to mens "mind," from PIE root *men- "to think" (see mind (n.)).

money (n.)

mid-13c., "coinage, metal currency," from Old French monnaie "money, coin, currency; change" (Modern French monnaie), from Latin moneta "place for coining money, mint; coined money, money, coinage," from Moneta, a title or surname of the Roman goddess Juno, in or near whose temple money was coined; perhaps from monere "advise, warn" (see monitor (n.)), with the sense of "admonishing goddess," which is sensible, but the etymology is difficult. Extended early 19c. to include paper money.

The Holocene /ˈhɒləsiːn/ is a geological epoch which began at the end of the Pleistocene[1] (at 11,700 calendar years BP)[2] and continues to the present. The Holocene is part of the Quaternary period. Its name comes from the Greek words ὅλος (holos, whole or entire) and καινός (kainos, new), meaning "entirely recent".[3] It has been identified with the current warm period, known as MIS 1, and can be considered an interglacial in the current ice age based on that evidence.

Precedents

The Monuments of Passiac: Robert Smithson's seminal photo essay. Part pseudo-documentary, part science fiction, and part poetic musing, the work is centered around a bus trip to Passiac, New Jersey in which he records a series of "monuments" in the industrial and suburban landscape. The essay is one of the key works in what would be termed the "Earthworks" movement in contemporary art.

One City: Will Insley's 40-year project for an obscure imaginary monumental city. From the website Socks: "The architectural layout of OneCity consists of over 14000 square meters of nine-story buildings. Each building is 2.5 miles wide and is divided into an "Over-building" and an "Under-building", with nine underground floors. The overall system takes the shape of a labyrinthine, semi-buried complex, located between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, able to host the whole population of the United States at the time: 400 millions people"

Continuous Monument: Superstudio's seminal architectural vision.

No-Stop City: Archizoom's vision of an Architectural Ecumenopolis: a radical vision in which the logical conclusion of commercial modernism is literally taken to the extreme. Architecture's only possibility is to become a radical interiority, furnishing scenographic micro-environments amongst the infinite grid of an overarching system.

Salvages of Italian Historic Centers: Superstudio's 1972 critique framing Italian cities as "infected," and "submerged in a flood of history, a river contaminated and turned into a tide of sewage." Crafting a fierce critique of alarmist, overly-conservative historical preservation in Italy, Superstudio prompts a new discourse on preservation rooted not in conservation and maintenance, but instead in the radical liberation of cleansing destruction. Can be found in Log 22, July 2011.

Fairy Tales Competition (2014 and 2015): Can be found at blankspaceproject.com. The competition asked participants to come up with narrative-driven designs that would "rewrite the way architecture communicates itself to the world, and to do so in the most unconventional way." Relevant for the studio due to the fact that the competition entries and winners are each a fiction that uses architecture (and a wide array of architectural representation styles) to tell a focused story through very limited set of documentation.

Readings (Monumentality)

*Anthony Vidler, Monument, Memory and Modernism. Can be found on Cooper Union website.

*George Baird, "Instruments and Monuments", The Space of Appearance. Cambridge Mass 1995.

Alöis Riegl, K.-k. Zentral-Kommission für Kunst- und historische Denkmale, Oer moderne Oenkmalkultus. Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung (Vienna): Brau- mulier, [1900-]1903). Available in English as "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1982): 2051.

Lewis Mumford, "The Death of the Monument," in *The Culture of Cities*, vii, 6, 433-40 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938), 438.

O. L. Sert, F. Leger, S. Giedion, *Nine Points on Monumentality* [1943]; J. L. Sert, *Nine Points for a New Monumentality* [1944]

S. Giedion, *The Need for a New Monumentality* [1944].

Louis I. Kahn, «Monumentality,» in Paul Zucker, ed., *New Architecture and City Planning. A Symposium* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944): 577–588.

Robert Smithson, 1. Entropy and the New Monuments, *Art Forum?*, 1966, 2. Monuments of Passiac, *Art Forum*, 3. Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space, *Artsmagazine*, 41 no. 1 Nov. 1966.

Venturi, Scott-Brown, *Learning From Las Vegas*.

Rem Koolhaas, *Bigness, SMLXL*, 1996 Montacelli Press.

Andrew Butterfield, *Monuments and Memories*, *The New Republic*, Feb. 2003.

Stan Allen, *Landform Building: Architecture's New Terrain*, Lars Müller Publishers, 2011.

Mario Carpo, *Postmodern Cult of Monuments*.

Readings (Biology, Zoology, Architecture and the Environment)

*Charles Siebert, *The Dark Side of Zootopia*, *New York Times*, NOV. 18, 2014.

Etienne Turpin, Ed., *Architecture in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Design, Deep Time, Science and Philosophy*, University of Michigan, 2013.

Razib Khan, *Our Cats, Ourselves*, *New York Times*, November 25, 2014, on page A27 of the New York edition .

Readings (Fiction/Science)

Voltaire: *Micromegas* 1752, and *Plato's Dream* 1756.

Hieroglyph Project: Neil Stephenson

Liam Young: tomorrowsthoughtstoday.com

Policies and Requirements

GENERAL POLICIES: Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled class meetings including reading discussions, software training workshops and reviews. Three unexcused absences will result in dismissal. A student is considered present only if he or she presents sufficient work to the instructor. You are expected to be on time. For pin-ups and for reviews, you should be ready to pin up a few minutes before class. If you leave class early, you will be counted as absent. You are expected to participate for the entire class period and to work in studio during class on studio assignments only.

A design education requires intensive interaction with your studio critic and your peers. You are encouraged to share ideas with and offer assistance to your studio mates. Working at home during non-studio hours will cause your work

to suffer. You are strongly advised to discontinue use of ipods and mp3 players during studio hours so that you might listen to the criticism offered to your classmates. The student next to you is likely struggling with similar design issues.

You are REQUIRED to check your OSU email regularly. Mass mailings from the school may not forward to other accounts. Important information--for which you will be held responsible--will be disseminated via email.

All scheduled department lectures are required: Attendance will affect grades.

Students who miss deadlines for valid reasons may submit work on a date agreed upon with the instructor. University regulations limit such circumstances to serious personal illness and death in the immediate family.

EVALUATION AND GRADING: Grading is based on a comparison with current and previous student work, and with the instructors' expectations relative to the objectives of the course. Grades will be awarded in accordance with University Rule 35.07.

A cumulative assessment, agreed on by all critics, will be based upon the following criteria:

(1) strength of the concept (2) consistent and rigorous articulation and development of the concept (3) technical competency, clarity, precision, craft and timely completeness of the work submitted (4) verbal and graphic presentation, of the work during formal juries. (5) makeup (passion, commitment, dedication and intensity of work ethic, i.e. the intangible factors which go beyond talent or gifted physical/mental abilities)

Studio Conduct

Students are responsible for keeping their areas clean and complying with fire regulations. Liquor, smoking, spray painting, welding and bicycles are not permitted. Cell phones and amplified music are forbidden during studio hours. Cell phones must be turned off. Graffiti and vandalism of any kind will not be tolerated and is grounds for expulsion.

The intensive environment of a design studio requires that you develop respect for others: consciousness of and sensitivity to the rights of others in relation to belief, privacy, and property, and behavior consistent with that consciousness. Disregard of School and University rules and regulations concerning these issues will result in course failure.

"In accordance with the code of student conduct, 3335-23-04 sections B, D, E, G, I, J, and K, the studio laboratory classroom has restrictions on its use. Students are responsible for keeping their assigned equipment in proper condition, reporting any damage, spill, or mishap in the classroom immediately, and for maintaining a safe and secure environment. Weapons, hazardous materials, illegal drugs, and alcohol can not be used, stored, or possessed inside the building at any time. Access to the building outside of scheduled classroom hours is a privilege and not a right: Studios are to be considered as classroom spaces, for academic use only. a respectful environment befitting a classroom space shall be maintained at all times and no unauthorized persons are allowed in the studios at any time."

Documentation

Students must submit documentation of all materials presented at all reviews before grading each semester in the form of digital reproductions. Additional materials may be required at the instructor's discretion. Work must be submitted in both native file format and pdf on one CD/DVD per student. Files must be organized by project and clearly identified by file name. Students must submit their work by the final Thursday of the semester, or they will receive a grade of incomplete.