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"Road Mirage" Katie Maratta

DRAWING RELATIONSHIPS: CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEXT

"Instead of creating mere objects of visual seduction, architecture relates, mediates and projects meanings. The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and towards our own sense of self and being." - Juhani Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin

What does it mean for architecture to respond to place? *Place* is a human construct, a product of our understanding of the physical reality of a site, and the mental associations we bring to it. As mediators between humans and the environment, buildings can offer ways for us to relate to and begin to comprehend the complex forces that create a sense of place. Humans are armed primarily with our five senses as a toolkit for interfacing with and understanding what is around us. While the development of architecture often leans heavily on visual concerns, we experience the environment with our whole body (not just the eyes) using touch, sound, smell, even taste.

Collecting a breadth of sensory data, artists working across mediums often make work that is site-responsive - the work is somehow inspired by a particular place, either where they live now, where they grew up, or another location of significance. Thus, occupying and understanding the place becomes an important part of the generation of the artist's work. How can architecture engage the human senses in a way that connects artists and others - whether residents or visitors - with their environment, conveying a deeper understanding of place?

Architecture that seeks to be place-responsive must address the detail level of the human body while considering the building's immediate site (perhaps, but not always, delineated by property lines) and operating at the scale of the larger landscape. In this studio we will look at two sites of contrasting scale - one in west Texas and one in downtown Austin - interrogating in both how buildings can operate at multiple scales in their response to context. Our projects will provide places for artists to occupy and work in both landscapes, first with an artist-in-residence outpost in Marfa, and second with an arts complex in downtown Austin.

Throughout the semester, we will take on inquiry of architecture and site through the act of drawing. We will use drawing as a tool for investigation, research, and documentation. We will also use drawing to probe the space between the physical reality of place, and the less-tangible ideas about place that exist in the human mind. How can drawings help relate not just visual data, but also convey a multisensory understanding of the world?

THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL

This studio emphasizes architecture as a response to context: architecture and landscape architecture in the city and in nature, urban issues, housing, making place. This studio should take advantage that students are concurrently enrolled in or have already completed the course Site Design.

STUDIO STRUCTURE

Assignment #1: Research and Analysis - drawing to find out (2 weeks)

15% of final grade (team)

The first two weeks will focus on both traditional and hands-on research to develop a toolkit for the semester. Through a combination of team research and individual work, we will study images, narrative and drawings, creating a taxonomy of ways that buildings interface with landscape. We will reference this body of knowledge throughout the semester.

Assignment #2: Marfa Outpost (3.5 weeks)

20% of final grade (pairs)

** This project will involve a weekend field trip to Marfa, TX.*

We will begin by considering an artist-in-residence outpost sited in West Texas. How does one negotiate building on a large site with dramatic and beautiful landscape views? With such a contrast in scale between humans and the landscape, how can people start to occupy this type of space? With a relatively small building on a vast site, we will dive into how buildings operate at the scale of the landscape simultaneously with the scale of the human body.

Assignment #3: Austin Arts Complex (8 weeks)

65% of final grade (individual)

For the third project, we will imagine that a new center for the arts is going to be built in downtown Austin. Along with providing studio and gallery space, the building will offer a set number of affordable housing units for local artists. Compared to the West Texas site, what is the same or different about placing a building in an urban context? How do urban regulations, including site boundaries, begin to push on the project's development? With a closeness and density of buildings, pavement and noise, how can one negotiate a building that responds to the urban landscape, and offers a positive contribution to its site?

PREREQUISITES

ARC 320D, ARC/ARI 221K, and ARC 415K with a grade of at least C in each.

CURRICULUM FLAG

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage students in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing a student with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to the student's major. At least one-third of the grade will be based on independent investigation and presentation of one's own work.

INTERMEDIATE DESIGN STUDIO

Students pursuing the Bachelor of Architecture must complete four Intermediate Design Studios during their second and third years. Building on the Foundation Design Studios taken during the first year, the goal of the Intermediate Studios is to prepare students for Advanced Design Studios in their fourth and fifth years.

Each Intermediate Studio will be structured around one of four broad themes of inquiry (Operational, Environmental, Integration, and Speculation) and will offer a critical framework and vocabularies for design and development into key issues emphasized in the theme. Intermediate Studios will also serve as a platform to prepare students for the range of offerings of the Advanced Studios (e.g. Comprehensive, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture, etc.). Intermediate Studios will follow a similar structure, but each instructor will individually determine the scope and design problem for each studio.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be exposed to a series of learning goals several times and from different angles over the four Intermediate Studio sequence. The goal is that similar issues are repeated from studio to studio but from different angles, allowing students to find, within the diversity of the topics, a “common thread” as they go through the sequence of the four studios. The level of expectation will grow as students go from being introduced to an issue, to becoming competent at it. Some issues would be only mentioned in passing in one studio but will be studied in more depth in another.

- *Design Composition Skills:* Developed through three-dimensional architectural form and space, both exterior and interior; building envelope
- *Design Integration Skills:* Demonstrated through creative engagement with issues of materiality, structures, construction, and environmental system
- *Site Analysis and Design:* Developed through the creative engagement with relevant contextual; environmental and programmatic factors underlying the project
- *Critical Thinking:* Quality of conceptual and critical thought; learning from precedents; research skills
- *Graphic Skills:* Quality of presentation; clarity of communication; appropriateness of media strategy and level of skill displayed
- *Basic grasp of accessibility and egress*
- *Collaborative and Leadership Skills:* Demonstrated through the active engagement in all activities of the studio

STUDIO CULTURE

The School of Architecture believes in the value of the design studio model. Studio learning encourages dialogue, collaboration, risk-taking, innovation, and learning-by-doing. The studio offers an environment where students can come together to ask questions and make proposals, which are developed and discussed among classmates, faculty, visiting professionals, and the

public-at-large. Studio learning offers intensive one-on-one instruction from faculty members, and provides the opportunity for each student to develop his/her critical thinking skills and spatial and material sensibilities. The design studio offers a synthetic form of education, where project-based learning becomes the foundation for developing an understanding of and commitment to the school's core values — broadmindedness, interconnectivity, professionalism, exploration and activism — all in service of architecture's fundamental mission: to improve the quality of the built and natural environments.

<https://soa.utexas.edu/programs/architecture/architecture-studio-culture>

DESIGN CONVERSATIONS: JESSEN LECTURES

The School of Architecture offers a wide range of opportunities for students to extend the design conversations taken place in studios (Lecture Series, Goldsmith Talks, Exhibitions, etc). Students are encouraged to participate and be engaged. Specifically, all B.Arch and BSAS students in studio are expected to attend all the Jessen Lectures (three per semester by lead practitioners from around the world). The lectures and the group discussions in studio that follow are important for the holistic education of intellectually engaged students and participation will have an impact on students' grades (see below).

Please refer to the schedule and emails for specific lecture dates.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

While each project contains certain quantifiable elements for evaluation, a significant portion of each grade is derived from broader and more subjective criteria.

Student work will be evaluated according to its rigor and evolution over the semester. Grades are subject to deductions for late arrivals, absences, and late or incomplete work at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading for an assignment is broken into four components, each of which is given roughly equal weight:

Pursuit: the consistent and rigorous development and testing of ideas.

- The ability to formulate a query or thesis and pursue a self-determined concomitant method of inquiry
- The ability to identify and implement various processual mechanisms (software, sketch drawing and models, etc.) in the development of the design
- Initiative as demonstrated in work ethic – Does the student do what is asked; go beyond what is asked; direct their own efforts; eager to produce the next iteration of the design?

Grasp: the ideas and understanding of the project at hand and integration of knowledge introduced in companion courses.

- A strong and clearly stated design objective

- Spatial acuity as demonstrated in plan – including reasonable disposition of programmatic elements – and sectional development
- Synthetic and critical thinking; the ability to holistically organize a project as demonstrated through creative engagement with issues of materiality, structures and construction, structural and environmental system integration, building materials and assembly, sustainable practices, etc. in support of the design objective
- Structural competence and material sensitivity as demonstrated in wall thickness, floor plates, and assembly

Resolution: of the design objective; the demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse in the final design presentation.

- Quality of presentation; clarity of communication; appropriateness of media strategy and level of skill displayed through the work presented at all stages of the design process; technical documentation

Engagement: the active participation in studio activities, leadership, collaboration, group discussions and reviews.

A student must earn a letter grade of C or better in order for the course to count towards a degree in the School of Architecture and to progress in to the next studio. A letter grade of C- will not satisfy degree requirements.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A/A- Excellent

Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, visual language, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. Project is complete on all levels.

B+/B/B- Above Average

Project is thorough, well presented, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C Average

Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class and not pursued with dedication and rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

C-/D+/D/D- Poor

Project is incomplete. Basic grasp of skill is lacking, visual clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required competence and knowledge base.

F Fail

Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when students have excessive unexcused absences.

X Excused Incomplete

Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this evaluation. It may only be used after consultation with the Associate Deans' offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Work must be completed before the second week of the next semester in which the student is enrolling, according to the School of Architecture policy.

ATTENDANCE

Punctual and regular attendance is mandatory. Participation is expected. With three (3) unexcused absences, the student's final grade for the course will be lowered by a full letter grade. The final grade will be lowered by a full letter grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. Aside from religious observances, absences are only excused with written documentation of a medical issue or family emergency. The student is responsible for completing work missed due to excused absences and initiating communication with the instructor to determine due dates.

If a student is late (5 minutes after the start of class) three (3) times, it will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence. Students should notify the instructor prior to class if lateness or absence is known in advance. Students must notify instructors directly regarding lateness or absences; Asking a classmate to inform the instructor is not acceptable.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

A student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for the purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of the pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, an assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students who violate University policy on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Refer to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website for official University policies and procedures on academic

integrity: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>. University Code of Conduct: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/#universitycodeofconduct>

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated, or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for help:

- In-house CARE counselor (see below)
- For immediate support
 - Visit/call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC):
M-F 8am-5pm | SSB, 5th floor | 512-471-3515 | cmhc.utexas.edu
 - CMHC Crisis Line:
24/7 | 512-471-2255 | cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html
- Free services at CMHC:
 - Brief assessments and referral services: cmhc.utexas.edu/gettingstarted.html
 - Mental health & wellness articles: cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html
 - MindBody Lab: cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html
 - Classes, workshops, and groups: cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html

CARE PROGRAM

Counselors in Academic Residence (CARE) Program places licensed mental health professionals within the colleges or schools they serve in order to provide better access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically.

Abby Simpson (LCSW) is the assigned CARE counselor for the School of Architecture. Faculty and staff may refer students to the CARE counselor or students may directly reach out to her. Please leave a message if she is unavailable by phone.

Abby Simpson, LCSW | BTL 114B | 512-471-3115 (M-F 8am-5pm)
https://cmhc.utexas.edu/CARE_simpson.html

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time.
<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

SECURITY, SAFETY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

The studio is an exceptional learning environment. Since it is a place for all, it necessitates the careful attention to the needs of everyone. All spraying of fixative, spray paint, or any other

substance should be done in the shop. Security is a necessary component for a studio that is accessible to you and your colleagues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not leave your studio without your studio key and do not leave your studio unlocked. Hold yourself and your studiomates accountable for the security of your shared space.

The studio is an opportunity to apply sustainability principles, being mindful to recycle and reuse to reduce material consumption at UTSOA. Recyclable materials should be placed in blue bins or any other containers with white bags. The Material Exchange, a give-and-take system for students to donate materials and take what they need for studio and fabrication coursework, is available throughout the semester to all UT students in the UTSOA Technology Lab. All unwanted, reusable materials should be brought to the Material Exchange station in the Technology Lab at the end of the semester.

BCAL

Concerns regarding the safety or behavior of fellow students, Teaching Assistants (TA), or Professors can be reported to the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. Calls can be made anonymously. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the case of emergency evacuation:

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Students should familiarize themselves with all exit doors of each classroom and building they may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Reentry into a building is prohibited unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services offices.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency.