

GSAPP Fall 2014 - VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOPS

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Session B: A4808 – METATOOL II

Dan Taeyoung Thursday 5-7pm 300 Buell North

“The user of the electric light -- or a hammer, or a language, or a book -- is the content. As such, there is a total metamorphosis of the user by the interface. It is the metamorphosis that I consider the message.”

Marshall McLuhan

The architect encounters a site. Armed with an arsenal of tools, she undergoes processes of observation, research, and analysis. These operations unearth constraints and situations, which in turn define the field of possibilities in terms of space, event, and movement. Other tools allow her to sketch, improvise, represent, modify, analyze, critique, and explore this field. And over a long process of deliberation, introspection, and collaboration, she arrives at a singular decision that creates a new kind of site and a new context altogether, when set in motion.

It goes without saying that the architect's tools are her most prized possessions. They are akin to bodily prostheses: new augmentations that not only alter what can be done, but what can be represented and thus what can be conceptualized. It could even be said that the architect is indelibly influenced by the logic and agency of those tools.

This critical architect might ask: Where does the tool come from? What does the tool want to do? What new tools can be created? Should not every process of design be one that reinvents new methods of thinking, and new tools for creation? **In other words: Architects should not only be able to use tools, but should have the ability to create new critical / experimental design tools.**

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METATOOL is a course about designing experimental design tools, utilizing the Grasshopper software environment as a meta-tool: a tool that enables the creation of other tools.

The course is grounded in a solid technical understanding of Grasshopper and hovers around a set of critical history/theory texts and group discussions. Each new experimental tool will result from an examination of an existing design tool, and will be oriented towards the creation of a new design process within Grasshopper (with the optional integration of Python/C#/VB.net).

Knowledge of Rhino is assumed, and a basic knowledge of Grasshopper is recommended, but not necessary. A database of Grasshopper introduction videos, developed in conjunction with the ADR2 curriculum, will be available. A custom created Grasshopper component, Hairworm, will be used in conjunction with Github, a cloud-based platform for sharing code. The course will be the starting seed for the Grasshopper Exchange, a new online-based tool arsenal. Over the duration of the course, students will collectively amass this shared database or 'arsenal' of new Grasshopper-based tools into a suite of experimental design processes that will enable and augment new, experimental design possibilities.