

## Columbia University GSAPP

### ARCHA6827 Roma 20-25

Spring 2015: Thursdays, 11:00 – 1:00 PM - Room 504 Avery Hall

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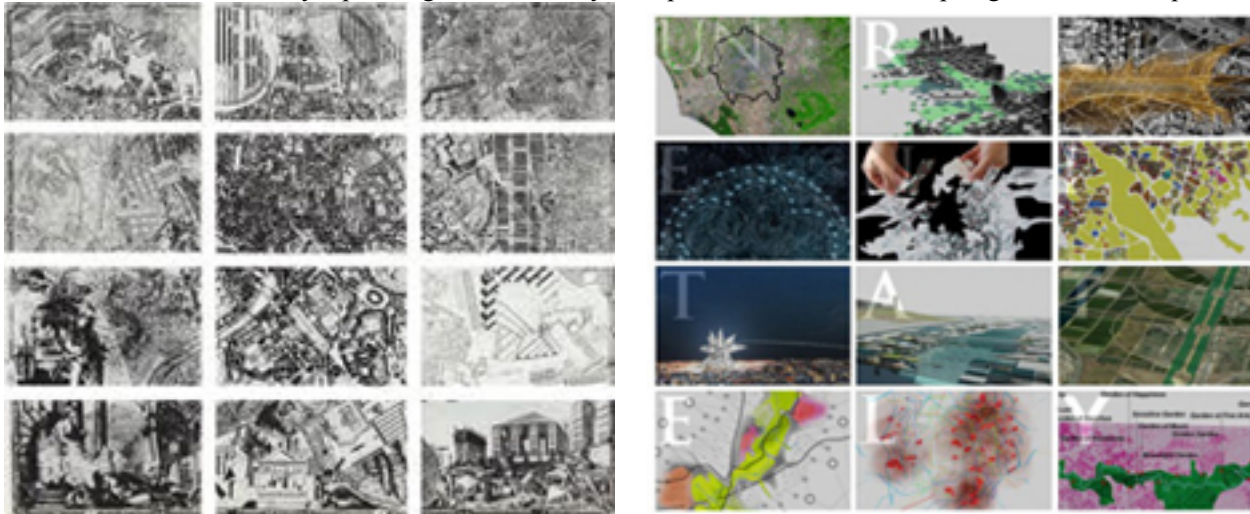
The National Museum of the Arts of 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Rome (MAXXI) is promoting a conversation about contemporary architecture and the city, by inviting 12 Italian universities and 12 foreign ones (including the AA, ETH, Guangzhou) to study different areas surrounding the city of Rome. The GSAPP has been invited to be part of the workshop **Roma 20-25**, as described on the initiative's website:

<http://www.roma20-25.it/en/workshop.html>

The seminar will contribute to this conversation, by revisiting techniques of representation in the development of urban projects. The goal is to produce a few hybrid artifacts that will be included in an international exhibition to be held at the MAXXI in the Fall of 2015. The material resulting from the seminar's work will be displayed on its own terms, also setting the conceptual framework and process documentation towards a design proposal.

The GSAPP team for the development of the design proposal will include interested participants from this seminar other students, and consultants, who will submit the project to the Roma 20-25 organizers by June 15. Logistical details for carrying out this work in May/June are being arranged, as they may include site visits.

This two-step setup offers an opportunity for this seminar to gain critical insights about divergent design representations about a city's physical characteristics and as source of new images. Two paradigmatic exhibitions on architecture and the city, spanning an arc of 35 years, provide the seminar's springboard for interpretation.



“Roma Interrotta” was a 1978 exhibition in which 12 architects were invited to produce individual narratives on 12 segments of the first survey map of the Baroque city (1748). Their emphasis on voids external and internal to the “urban fabric” affected urban design thinking throughout the 1990s. In 2008, thirty years after that exhibition, the Venice Architecture Biennale staged another exhibition about Rome, with the title “Un-Eternal City,” in which 12 contemporary architects and landscape architects made proposals for the future of Rome’s metropolitan area. They re-imagined the city’s periphery in experimental terms, portraying volatile urban relations.

#### Part One

In the first half of the semester, students will individually look at the visual manipulation done by participants in both exhibitions, by re-framing the notion of collage through surrealist techniques of invention. Focus on selected

projects produced in 1978 and 2008 will lead to the seminar's first moment of synthesis, to be presented through a physical model. This will be followed by further manipulations of those projects through moving images.

The seminar acknowledges that the use of moving images is becoming progressively current in design thinking. In fact, digital modeling, animation, and montage techniques play an important role in addressing the role of time as the fourth dimension of architecture and urban narratives. Since many films have taken Rome as their subject, relevant context and/or scenography, analysis of selected film sequences will be part of the seminar's process.

If required by participant students, special tutorial sessions will be coordinated in the first weeks of the seminar, towards sharpening their technical skills on rhino, maya, and after effects software.

## Part Two

The second half of the semester will assume one of the 25 areas of study mapped by the Roma 20- 25 organizers as territory of investigation. Individual work done in the first half will set the platform for discussing relevant techniques of urban representation, such as site mapping, systems networks, and conceptual narratives. At the same time, experimental manipulation of the cartography and photographs made available by the organizers will be conducted in small groups, to maximize integration of students' skills.

The challenge posited by the organizers of Roma 20–25 is to elaborate research topics that hold together the clarity of a manifesto and parameters for a design project at two different scales, engaging a territory that extends more than 25 km from the historical city center, also adopting a temporal projection of 10 years ahead.

The quadrant assigned to the GSAPP is located on the North-West of Rome, and includes the slopes of an inactive volcano's crater (now Lake of Bracciano), descending towards an area of swamps transformed during Fascism in agricultural settlements. This landscape, punctuated by medieval castles that used to sit amidst vineyards and farming estates, is now bound towards the sea by highways and rail lines.



The seminar will test the potential of six possible sites for design intervention, by experimenting with techniques for representing this quadrant's unique landscape. The main referent for these six sites is a unique topographical condition called "forre," tufa ravines with steep edges excavated by rivers along the old volcano's slopes.

Also, the work currently being done by students at the University of Venice (GSAPP's partner in this international conversation) will be made available to the seminar, allowing to further refine a critical stance towards modes of investigation and design approach.

## STRUCTURE

The course is scheduled from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Thursdays.

Class time will be structured in two halves as:

- collective discussion of required texts, introduced by the 2-3 students who have chosen that topic
- presentation of visual manipulations by the same students, and assignment of follow-ups on Blog.

Short presentations by the instructors may establish connection between current and upcoming topics.

The conversational nature of this seminar relies on the activation of a class Blog, on which to post the visual work produced for each session, short texts, and comments by peers. Instructors participate in these exchanges.

The three classes devoted to the notion of apparatus (with possible participation of guests) will include a review of material produced until then, which should have been adjusted in response to comments received on the Blog.

After Spring Break, the visual material to be manipulated relates to the site assigned to the GSAPP, with the goal of developing a conceptual approach to exhibiting the seminar's process and setting parameters for the design proposal that will follow it in the summer. Work will be done in small groups, each addressing one of the three topics leading to a short video (30 seconds max) as Apparatus #3. The last two classes will be dedicated to discussing and producing one or more hybrid artifacts, to be displayed at the MAXXI Exhibition.

## SCHEDULE

Jan 22	Introduction (Rome again?)
Jan 29	Collage (Max Ernst: Overpaint, Frottage, Collage Novels)
Feb 05	Roma Interrotta (Piranesi vs Portoghesi, Rowe, Stirling)
Feb 12	Un-Eternal City (West 8, BIG, MAD)
Feb 19	<i>Apparatus #1</i> (Physical Model)
Feb 26	Film (Eisenstein, Cinematics)
Mar 05	Digital Modeling (Rhino, Maya, After Effects)
Mar 12	<i>Apparatus #2</i> (Moving Image)
Mar 19	SPRING BREAK – No Class
Mar 26	Sites (Mapping, Ecologies)
Apr 02	Systems (Concepts, Diagrams)
Apr 09	Narratives (Protocols, Imaginary Landscapes)
Apr 16	<i>Apparatus #3</i> (Video)
Apr 23	Installations (Duchamp, Eliasson)
Apr 30	Artifact for Exhibition

## ASSIGNMENTS

Each student choosing a topic from one of the first five sessions will post on the Blog a 300 words statement (or bullet points) by the end of the Tuesday preceding that session, as starting point for class discussion. After each class, students will comment on the visual work presented, in a short text (or diagram) with suggestions for improvement. These comments will be posted by the end of the following Tuesday.

In the second half of the semester, a similar structure of presentations and comments will be applied to the group work developed for each session. The groups will be formed before Spring Break, to allow for preliminary coordination of tasks and responsibilities, in terms of texts' discussion and visual work's production.

## EVALUATION

Grades are based on a weighted average of the quality of the visual manipulations presented, the topic's introductory statement and the contribution to the three classes about apparatuses, leading to a final hybrid artifact. Attendance and active participation in class discussions, including active engagement with the life of the Blog, are also considered in the final grade.