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Advanced Studio

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Public and Private: The House of the Three Little Scripts

For Two or Three Things, Godard prepared a “commercial script,” summarizing in a dozen pages twenty-four hours in the life of Juliette, a married woman with two young children who lived in a grand ensemble at La Courneuve, outside of Paris. Juliette wishes to buy a pretty dress but prostitutes herself routinely in order to pay for it, dropping her kids off at daycare in the morning before returning every evening to her project-home, surrounded by the cranes of construction sites. Godard also prepared a “non-commercial script” (one that, as he wrote, should “not [be] show[n] to potential financial partners”), in which he explains the four elements of his cinema: 1) an objective description of objects and subjects, i.e. buildings and people, 2) a subjective description of objects and subjects, through feelings, 3) a reason for structure (“1+2=3”) , and 4) life, i.e. bringing all components together as 1+2+3=4 (“When one lifts the skirt of the city, one sees its sex”).

Architects often use double or triple scripts in order to develop and communicate their projects. They devise a commercial story for the developer, explaining how well their “iconic” building will sell. They tell a second story to the city authorities, suggesting that their building’s public spaces will enhance the quality of urban life. They finally tell a third story to other architects and architectural theorists, about figure-ground or parametric steps, depending on their inclination or their generation. Most good architects do it nearly unconsciously, as part of their skills and talent in communication. However, here is the question: what if this was done consciously, as a strategic device in order to arrive at a sophisticated solution that could break new grounds or generate new concepts in architecture? (Artists such as Matisse have also used doubles and series as a conscious means to develop their work).

This is the theme of our studio this semester. Entitled Public and Private: The House of the Three Little Scripts (after last year’s *House of the Three Little Pigs*), it aims at developing new architectural concepts potentially as radical as Kahn’s serving-served spaces or Le Corbusier’s Plan Libre were in their time.

A 200’x200’ site will be given, together with a generic program of rooms indifferently applicable to highly specific programs (see below). At stake will be the invention of new relations between public and private spaces. At a time when boundaries between the public and private realm have become increasingly ambiguous (Time Warner Center, High Line, Zuccotti Park, Disneyfied 42nd Street, etc.), we want to investigate the possibility of new architectural concepts about the public and private, using the forces of commercial script, social script and “architectural intent” (for lack of a better phrase) script.

As is often the case in our studio investigations, we will use other trilogies as instruments of analysis, including:

- Concept, percept and affect

- Concept, context and content

- Space, event and movement

The program(s) will be as follows and will be determined by lottery:

1. A Concept Library

2. A Concept Hotel

3. A Concept Clinic

4. A Concept Museum

5. A Concept Brothel

6. A Concept Cemetery

All concept submissions will be in black and white (a single additional strategic color possibly allowed).

Bernard Tschumi will be assisted by Christopher Lee, Jocelyn Froimovich, Bart-Jan Polman and Jake Matatyaou, who are all working in Bernard's office and are experienced in scripts, buildings, and imagination.