

arch. practice as a project 2

EMERGING PRACTICES

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ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IS BEING AFFECTED BY IMPORTANT CHANGES. OFFICES -ONE OF THE ARCHITECT'S CORE ACTIVITIES- ARE DIVERSIFYING FROM THE UNIPERSONAL ORTHODOX MODEL TO VERY OPEN KINDS OF FORMATS. AT THE SAME TIME, DIFFERENT EMERGING PRACTICES SHOW THAT THE COMMISSION-PROJECT-CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURE IS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF ARCHITECTS WORK. NOW IS THE MOMENT TO EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY NEW WAYS OF BEING AN ARCHITECT, WHERE THE ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE AND PRACTICE ARE THE "STARTING PROJECTS", THE ENGINES THAT DRIVE THEIR CREATIVITY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS A GROWING PHENOMENON OF ARCHITECTS WHO ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY OR EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED TO BUILDING PRACTICE, BUT THAT ARE PROPOSING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES THAT BROADEN THE CURRENT SCOPE WORKING AS NEGOTIATORS, ACTIVISTS, ANALYSTS, POLITICIANS, ADVISORS, STRATEGISTS, COMMUNICATORS, RESEARCHERS, ETC.

3 STARTING POINTS

- Most architecture offices resemble each other too much; they compete in the same field with the same instruments: we will be interested in those which link architectural strategies with other design processes and work methods.
- The creation of the personality of an office is a project in itself, it is not an isolated product created by the non-designer members of the staff, to be "sold" to the exterior world: our proposal is that in order to be competitive, one has to go beyond the worn-out routines and implement a new spirit linked to a deliberate work method.
- The importance of design protocols and their application to all moments of the architectural process -the attainment of commissions, the development of projects and their construction, the communication and public explanation of the work- is becoming a big topic in the pedagogical and professional conversation.

3 OBJECTIVES

- To change design protocols into more open strategies, codified, visible, and transmissible to others, involving the whole creative process, from the work search to the communication of results, understanding the relation between architectural production and methods of work and organization.
- To explore how to create a solid relationship between design concepts and business/intellectual activity, one that understands that "the project" is more than a process of transforming ideas into objects, buildings or urban developments. "The project" is way of thinking, an intellectual approach to every question, a universal tool that allows addressing many issues not necessarily related to the conventional architectural practice.
- To break the limits between "design tasks" and "service tasks"; poles between and architect's work usually sways. If creativity is the cornerstone of competitiveness, all levels are implicated: approach, process and outcome.

3 QUESTIONS

- What kind of architect do I want to be?
- Who are my natural or desired clients? What do I offer?
- What do I represent in other worldviews and in my own? Who are my competitors?

3 ROUTINES

- Work routines: portfolio, resumes and other self-descriptions; contests and assignment invention; exploration of the personal environment; collaborations, construction of individual thinking and office spirit, the offering of added value.
- Design routines: detection of hidden opportunities; organization of work teams and recruitment of collaborators; brain storming and internal competitions; graphic systems: diagrams, layers, file and re-use protocols; models; video.
- Communication routines: presentation skills, conversation, workshops, the architect as client, events, publications, inclusion of the work in a higher level, architectural world and parallel worlds.

3 INSTRUCTIONS

- Projects will be developed individually.
- There will be no papers, only self-produced graphic material.
- Assignment will consist in developing an in-depth research project about a real practice in NYC (architect, artist, entrepreneur, etc.) which will be presented in the manner of a TV show. The practice selected must be characterized by particularly innovative working methods. Main goal will be to critically determine the ways in which such working methods, and the productive structure that catalyzes them, have a impact on the idiosyncrasies of the practice's body of work. The content of the resulting TV show will include both video-related features (e.g. interviews, footage of buildings and/or artworks, voice-over commentaries and descriptions, etc.) and graphic documents produced by the student (analytical diagrams, photomontages, etc.). This material will be developed in accordance with the points outlined above. Sessions will be devoted to discussing work progress, and the seminar will provide the necessary contacts to arrange appointments. Students also taking the ChinaTown studio will be able to choose a practice based in Beijing as their case study.

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