

field operations:
static structural systems
sci-arc, fall 2006

instructors:
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Los Angeles Freeway System

AUTOPIA

"Machines have nothing to do with profit."

Lukacs quoting Marx

"We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing automobile with its bonnet adorned with great tubes like serpents with explosive breath ...

a roaring motor car which seems to run on machine-gun fire, is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace."

Filipo Tommaso Marinetti

Course Description

The objective of the first studio of the core sequence is to come to terms with a broader and more complex understanding of architecture and architecture culture. Site and program encounter structure not only as a way to solve a spatial problem but also, to generate meaning. This implies that architecture has physical and intangible functions, that it addresses need as much as it generates new ideas of what it represents. This course will explore the idiosyncrasy and ambiguity of structure and material as it encounters site, program and Los Angeles through the intention system of a synthesizing design process.

Studio Overview

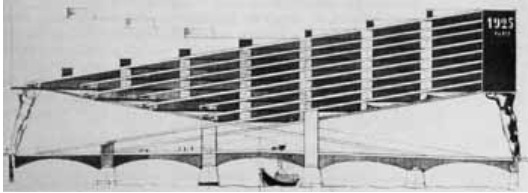
Introduction. The automobile is, according to many critics, one of the driving forces behind Los Angeles' urban morphology. Some argue that L.A. is a city designed around the connective possibilities that the car brings. Others argue that the automobile is also one of the emblematic products of capitalism and consumer culture. It has become to symbolize a broad range of issues, from social status to the achievements of engineering, from streamlined design to mass-production, from lifestyle to symbols of counter-culture to environmentalists.

As contemporary architects, we must juggle a number of contextual influences that are physical and immediate, like a site and neighborhood to more intangible ones, like advertising space and branding. We know that a building for selling, maintaining, parking and buying cars needs a certain type of space, circulation, ramping system, etc. but WHAT DOES IT MEAN to do it one way versus another, not simply for the sake of making it more efficient but towards positioning the design towards something that MEANS, that takes a stand, that engages or generates a polemic?

The structure is the skeletal system of a building, and it stands within a very specific relationship with the programs it houses, the materials it holds and the site it is situated in. This relationship, according to how it is

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modulated and managed, can have a range of meanings. While architecture must be synthetic in one way, i.e. ordering all systems according to a guiding logic, it must be able to multiply what it signifies to those who experience it.



Konstantin Melnikov. Moscow Garage.

Program. Students will design a car dealership and will be able to choose the brand/product offering. Students can customize the program through the *wildcard* component. The basic program students will design for reads as follows:

Total SF.? How many cars? How many customers?

Showroom.
Exterior Lot / Showroom.
Garage / Car Storage.
Sales cubicles.
Offices. (Financial, insurance, claims, boss)
Waiting Area.
Employee and customer parking.
Washing area.
Restrooms and lockers.
Employee lunchroom.

Wildcard: Students will be able to add functions to the program based on research and position, which they must argue for convincingly.

Site. TBD

Sporadic Notes on L.A.'s Car Culture. Low-riders, Von Dutch, CARMAX, used-or-pre-owned, BMW's and Benzes, Humvees and Hummers, Repo Man, Galpin Ford, MTV's Pimp my Ride, RV's, NASCAR, rim markets, after markets, Scion, Saturn, DeLorean, Ferraris, Lemon Law, Cadillac, Hybrids, Oil wars and gas guzzlers and alternative sources of energy, Hell's Angels and yuppies on Harleys, car salesmen of

doubtful intentions, car advertisements, taxis, car auctions and car auctioneers, commuters, road rage, high speed chases.

Precedents. BMW Headquarters (Zaha Hadid), VW building (Hadid), parking structures and systems (too many to cite), Peterson Automotive Museum (Morphosis), Caltrans (Morphosis), Yokohama Terminal (FOA).

Research and Field Trip. Research is an essential part of the spirit of this studio and SCI-Arc. Students must do it consciously and in a systematic way that reasonably support and polemize the design work. Thorough care of source materials will become invaluable and inseparable from the grade a student receives. The studio will go on a field trip to study a car dealership and how it functions. Additionally, students should take it upon themselves to study field conditions (buildings and context) as essential project information. Students will be expected to know what they are talking about.

Studio Sequence

Week 1. Introductions, Studio setup, Portfolio Review.

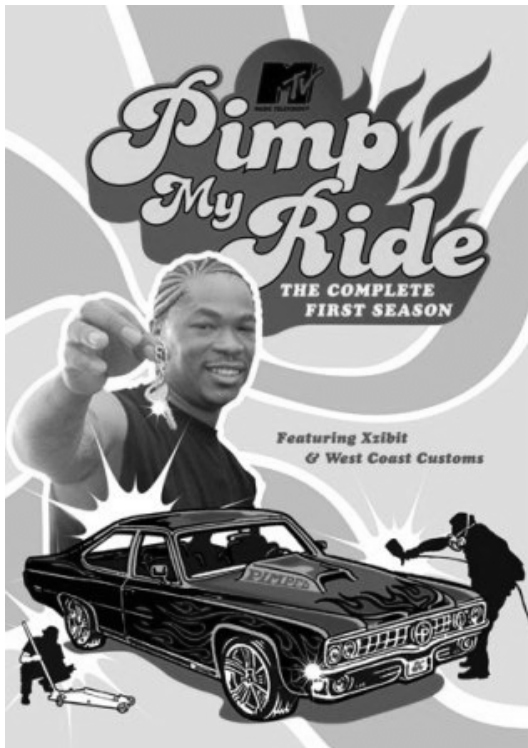
Week 2 through 4. Program and Site research, Field Trips, Documentation and Development.

Week 5 through 15. Building Design.

Studio Structure. There will be (3) three 3A studio sections: one headed by Bill Hogan (S1), one by Greg Walsh (S2) and another one headed by Juan Azulay (S3). These groups share general policies and structure, but each studio section will be customized by the instructor, and runs independently. There will be no general reviews but there will be shared events such as lectures and discussions when appointed. The three sections will be established by the instructors and are final. Students cannot choose their section. However, all three sections share the general terms of the brief, so cross-section discussion is intended and encouraged.

Studio Techniques

While operating under the general expectation that students will further their skills in architectural representation, or drawings (plans, section, elevations, axonometric drawings, perspectives), renderings, model making and diagramming, students are expected to push technique in their own way with whatever means they consider relevant and necessary. The techniques that students choose not only represent the project and its ideas but also invoke past discussions and architectural direction in general. The precise and crafted use of technique will be seen as one of the measures by which students are graded.



Pimp My Ride Poster. MTV

Skill Sets. Students will be expected to further the following: research skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, diagramming skills, methodological choice skills, architectural drawings (physical and digital, generative and representative), architectural modeling (physical and digital, generative and representative), architectural presentation, oral and physical (analog or digital), understanding of architectural

disciplines and their integration (structural, mechanical, civil)

Studio Culture. Studio Culture is one of the most important aspects of SCI-Arc and architecture. The culture of intensity helps the production of thought-provoking work and will help students question what they do and how they do it. It is essential to the spirit of invention that the profession is founded on. Working at home will not help, and it is essential that students work in studio, as they will learn from each other's work as much as they learn from any other source. This is an essential component of a student's final grade, under the category of participation. Architecture school has a participatory basis.



Zaha Hadid. BMW Headquarters

Reference

General.

Architecture Culture 1943-1968.

Joan Ockman. Rizzoli.

Architecture Theory 1968-Present.

Kevin Michael Hays.

Programs and Manifestoes of 20th Century Architecture. Ulrich Conrads.

Modern Architecture: A Critical History.

Kenneth Frampton.

Mechanisation Takes Command.

Sigfried Giedion.

Architectural Graphic Standards.

Ramsey/Sleeper

Building Construction Illustrated.

Francis Ching.

The Medium is the Message.

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Marshall McLuhan
Immaterial / Ultramaterial
Toshiko Mori.

Structures.

Why Buildings Stand Up Mario Salvadori.
Informal Cecil Balmond.

Los Angeles / Regional

The Architecture of Four Ecologies. Reyner Banham.

City of Quartz. Mike Davis.

Learning from Las Vegas. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown.

The Crying of Lot 49. Thomas Pynchon.

Topic Related.

The Machine that changed the World.
The Garden and the Machine.

Contacts

S1. Bill Hogan.
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S2. Greg Walsh.
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S3. Juan Azulay.
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Policies

Attendance and Participation. Attendance and participation are mandatory, as they constitute a core value of SCI-Arc. Any student missing (2) classes will receive a warning letter from the School Registrar. A third absence will result in the student being asked to withdraw from the studio or receive NC. Arriving late and or leaving early constitutes an absence. Recurring problems with attendance and/or performance will be referred to the Undergraduate Director and School Academic Counselor. Participation means actively taking part in studio dialogues at all levels, but most importantly by working in studio. Absences during reviews are inexcusable and they will compromise grades.

Plagiarism. SCI-Arc policies regarding plagiarism are in effect. Plagiarism (copying other students' work) will result in an immediate NC for the studio and potential

dismissal from the school.



Frei Otto. Timber Gridshell. Mahheim.

Time Management. It is crucial that students learn to manage time on a day-to-day basis. Students should not fall behind and should not rely on all-nighters. Students are a better asset to the studio if they can clearly present their projects and participate in the studio discussions.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the basis of in-studio participation, in all project situations, quality of work, improvement during the course of the semester and commitment to the goals of the studio and the school at large. A passing grade requires committed completion of all projects, including the portfolio. Incomplete work will not be evaluated. Late work will be downgraded at the discretion of the instructor. No grades will be issued without the submission of the portfolio.

Portfolio Review. Portfolios will be evaluated at the beginning and end of the semester. Your commitment to your portfolio is very important and crucial to advancing through the school sequence.

Grading Procedures. Available credits are CR+, CR, CR-. CC or NC / INC. The first three are passing grades. The last three are not. CC (Conditional Credit) means that the instructor, the Undergraduate Director and the School Counselor will let student/s know what they need to complete and by when to get a passing grade.