

First-Year Graduate Studio:

Ins & OUTSs

Arch 551, Fall 2018

Instructor: Kelly Bair

Ins & OUTSs

Geometry has an ambiguous reputation, associated as much with idiocy as with cleverness.

-The Projective Cast: Architecture and its Three Geometries (Introduction). Robin Evans

Historically, architecture as a disciplinary as well as a professional pursuit has been heavily invested in the spatial and descriptive principles of geometry. In Robin Evan's text "The Projective Cast", Evans ties the advancement of the discipline directly to the representational techniques of the time¹. Today, architecture finds itself buried within a literal grab bag of techniques as it has moved beyond the novelty of the digital and (at this point) well into the post-digital.

This introductory studio situates itself at the intersection of the digital and the post-digital and seeks to unpack their historical and future potentials in the form of projective geometry (drawing) and advanced computation (modeling). As a studio, we will approach this problem by isolating and then recomposing critical architectural mediums that at once constitute the material, the method and the media by which architecture is produced, represented and communicated.

In its simplest terms, architecture is about insides and outsides and the thresholds and boundaries that come between them. This studio will center around the ins and outs of architecture, building both a fundamental knowledge base as well as control over its visual representation. Each student will produce a series of artifacts in the form of drawings/images and models over the course of four exercises. Each exercise will find theoretical underpinning through the pairing of building precedents with written texts.

PROJECTS

- 01 *Ins: Plans*
- 02 *Outs: Stacks*
- 03 *Ins: Volumes*
- 04 *Outs: Profiles*

¹Robin Evans, *Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (The MIT Press, 2000)
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Second-Year Graduate Studio:

Two Home in One House V.2

Arch 553, Fall 2018

Instructors: Julia Capomaggi, Grant Gibson



The Cholmondeley Ladies (artist unknown)

The structure of the family has evolved into a model more complex and inclusive than the traditional nuclear ideal where new social structures inhabit and share the domestic space overlapping functions and segregating new levels of intimacy and uses.

In this context, it seems appropriate to question the core ideas of what a house should be. Moving beyond the promises of familial, economic, and social stability that the single family-house has long provided, this comprehensive studio will look at contemporary modes of inhabitation and will speculate on the possibilities of the single-family house as something slightly more than a shelter for related inhabitants. A house of multiple homes.

The studio's aim is positioned between the singularity of the single-family house, and the repetition of the multifamily house. The work will look beyond the singular and the collective. During the semester we will analyze examples that deal with the problem of the house that hosts more than one family usually named "double houses" or "twin houses", the studio will require in-depth research on these two-different types. Without reverting to known typologies like the tenement house or the townhouse, we will question the role of a home's internal parts to understand domesticity at a granular level. The demands for fragmentation, individualization, singularity and definitions of intimacy that develop within home life will be tested in ways that will reconfigure ideas of the family, the collective and the neighborhood. These considerations of order will begin with the Room. As the minimal indivisible unit of the domestic space, it will be at the core of the studio research, from questioning which are the elements that define it to speculations on its disaggregation and aggregation to construct larger inhabitable spaces.

The course will produce novel architecture by reconsidering the elements, surfaces and objects that could help to redefine the internal and external limits of each space, room, and home. We will closely look and design furniture, walls, carpets and curtains as architectural elements that through its qualities can redefine, and challenge known architectural typologies. To accomplish this, the work is to have a high resolution across a wide range of scales and concerns. From the curation, creation, and placement of finishes and furniture; to the detailing of millwork; to definition of a room; to the tectonic design of walls and roofs; to the collective articulation of a neighborhood, this studio process requires an intellectual nimbleness and a stubborn commitment to precision.

Structured in 4 parts, the studio will build on past work organized around the following assignments:

I - *ROOMNESS*: The Curation and Composition of Domestic Objects and Surfaces as Spaces

II - *COUPLING*: The Study of Separations and Connections

III - URBAN INTERIORS

IV - DOMESTIC DETAILS

The production methods for this studio will be standardized. At the beginning of each design phase, students will research and analyze aspects of a house through assigned topics and/or precedents. This work will include the production of new axonometric and/or orthographic drawings. While done individually, the work is meant to be collective, in that each student is to present and provide the work for the betterment of the entire class. A number of class trips are also expected. Studio production will predominantly be digital drawing and iterative creations of physical models. To which the following can be expected.

1. Room Models - Smaller in scale ($1/8'' = 1'$) than the primary model, these study models test possible spatial organizations of the project.
2. A single comprehensive model on the site - Continuously constructed, disassembled and rebuilt, this $1/2'' = 1'$ model is the dominant device in which design decisions will be evaluated and made of the course of the semester.
3. Building Massing Models - Also done at a scale of $1/8'' = 1'$, these study models test possible formal relationships of the project, site and neighborhood.
4. Wall/Ceiling Section Model - Constructed in the semester's final step, this model will identify construction and assembly methods for the project. It will also test modeling techniques and materials, before they are used on the final version of the comprehensive model.
5. Booklet - A compilation of construction details compiled and formatted in a comprehensive document that explains the construction system and structural logic of the house.

Third-Year Topic Studio:

Mismatched Buildings

Arch 565, Fall 2018

Instructor: Paul Andersen

Around 1850, Aaron Bird served the first cocktail in his New Orleans bar—a mix of Sazerac cognac, imported from France, and bitters made by the local apothecary. Legend has it that he served his drink in the large end of an eggcup, called a coquetier in French, which, when mispronounced, came to be known as a “cocktail”.

In some parts of the world, purity is king. In the U.S., we tend to prefer mixture. The cocktail is an example—in concept and in name—among many examples. Americans mix drinks and words, and in this studio, we’ll mix architecture.

The design process balances arbitrary juxtaposition with calculated imagination.

The first step, which we’ll do as a group, will be to build a list of buildings that are on the fringe of the canon. On one hand, they’ll need to have a strong architectural agenda—for instance, to make a clear case for a particular brand of repetition, composition, structure, idealism, scale, or other longstanding topic of interest to the field. But they’ll also need to have flown below the radar enough to be without an established history of interpretation.

Next, we’ll pair each building with a building type with a very different sensibility—with “sensibility” encompassing its logic and style. The mismatched type will be chosen for its potential to reframe the fundamental agenda of the original building. Ideally, the type will make a strong and contradictory statement on the issues that the almost canonical building foregrounds, regardless of how they align or differ in other respects. And the differences between a unique building and the broader category of a type will matter. For example, the quasi-canonical buildings will likely be refined, high architecture, while the types probably will be more ordinary.

The last step will be to combine each of the pairs to make a collection of mongrel buildings.

The point of all this is to design projects that are equally excellent and awesome—excellence being a function of our field’s intelligence and awesomeness being a kind of frisson, a gut feeling of exhilaration. Architecture needs both. The far ends of the spectrum offer overly specialized projects or hollow spectacle. Architecture’s recent reaction to a period of disproportional concern with being awesome has been to embrace history, the familiar, and even conventional work, often to the point of nostalgic or over intellectualized design. This studio is set up to use history promiscuously with the hope of making something new.

Third-Year Topic Studio:

Performing Architecture

Arch 565, Fall 2018

Instructor: Sam Jacob

This studio at UIC has been characterised over the years by interests in a number of different ideas. These, in brief (and to differing levels of resolution), have been:

Representation, Remakes, and Architectural Propositions.

Previously, we have looked at how hybridising forms of architectural drawing can develop new ways of making drawings: How digital culture and technology allow us to intervene in the pixelated genetic code of the architectural image, how the technology and technique of digital drawing allows us to interrogate and speculate on the possibility of the drawing as a site of architectural argument.

Remakes - well, not only have we drawn in the manner of all kinds of other architects, we have made copies, replicas, and cobbled together collages from fragments of 'found' things.

In terms of proposition, last year, we 'remade' the Cultural Center. What started off as simply a convenient and - given the Biennial - a topical brief became something more interesting: A chance to think about Chicago's urban form, about how design can be used to develop an understanding of our circumstances, and how pre-existing real-life urban / architectural conditions can be mobilised as manifestos.

This year, we'll continue: The same, but different.

A new cocktail, a fresh set of ingredients, and, hopefully, producing very different results.

We will make sets of studies of vernacular architectures of Chicago (at things both ordinary and extraordinary, domestic and civic, within and outside of the canon), while also looking at big minimalist paintings of people like Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Agnes Martin, Carmen Herrera, Hans Hofmann, Anne Truitt ... People who make work where over large surface areas very little happens to great effect.

We will think how these things work both as surface and as space - as elevation, as plan, as section for sure, but also how as artefacts they produce spatial conditions at a 1:1 scale.

We will look at Adler and Sullivan's Auditorium Building, thinking of it in a number of ways: As huge urban mass, As complex interior and section, a mix of programme that folds the city into itself.

We'll try to decode its languages, significances, subtexts, politics and economics.

First we'll appreciate it, then demolish it, then remake it in ways appropriate for now.

We will work at scale - BIG from the start - using boldness and directness as a tactic to develop nuance and control.

As ever, we won't be sure what this will look like, how we will get there, or what it's really about until we arrive. Design itself is the tool of thinking and speculating, as well as the means of making developed architectural propositions.

But here's a speculation on what we might be thinking about:

What does the idea of performance in architecture mean? How do we go beyond the technical building science definition of the performance of a building, and not only as a space programmed to host performances inside? Instead, we'll try to reclaim the idea of performance as a way in which architecture brings itself into the world.