

DRAFT 1.0

Columbia University, GSAPP

Advanced Studio V, Fall 2018

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Summary

This studio will look at the contemporary art institution and its role as a technology of civic enlightenment in the American city. Students will design a new contemporary art facility that re-defines the boundary of the institution relative to the city. Simultaneously, the studio will explore architecture as both an aesthetic practice and architecture as a social practice through research into contemporary art practices.

Reference artists include: Andrea Zittel, Hito Styrel, Josh Kline, Maggie Nelson, Arthur Jafa, Liam Gillick, Ian Cheng, Paul Chan, Rirkrit Tiravaniya, Jeremy Deller, Amir Nikravan, Pierre Huyghe, Olafur Eliasson, and others.

Questions

Throughout the United States, cultural institutions are re-evaluating their role as civic institutions. For many museums, the current social and political environment has reinforced a sense of civic responsibility while amplifying long-standing challenges related to accessibility and inclusivity. Words like “transparency” and “community” are prevalent in these narratives to create more democratic and representative institutions.

The place of the museum is not only Fifth Avenue or Wilshire Boulevard but also Crenshaw Boulevard. It's about democratizing our idea of a museum's mission. Darren Walker, Ford Foundation

At a quick glance, it appears that many cultural institutions in the United States accommodate a void in the public realm (and experience economy) as places of ritual, community, and social exchange. Whereas these activities were once accommodated by religious spaces (eg. churches, mosques, synagogues) and then by the consumer landscape of shopping (eg. shopping malls, main streets, markets), technology has gradually reshaped the role of these traditional institutions. Undoubtedly, technology will continue to transform how we

understand ourselves, our relation to others and the spaces in which we interact. This studio will look specifically at the role of the contemporary art institution and its potential as an aspirational technology of civic enlightenment in the American city.

The fundamental question is to explore the possibility for play. To discuss how to produce forms for the presentation of objects, for the organization of spaces that thwart expectations. The main enemy of artistic creativity and political creativity is consensus— that is, the inscription within given roles, possibilities, competencies. Jacques Ranciere

Through extensive readings and conversations with artists and curators, the studio will become familiar with the current discourses informing the role of contemporary art institutions in the US and internationally. As a point of departure, the studio will critically examine the contemporary art institution as a social infrastructure for community outreach (The Underground Museum) as well as a technology for aesthetic entertainment (PS1). Embedded within these narratives about the contemporary art institution, are discourses about the role of contemporary art as an activist social practice directly engaged in the transformation of the world or an aesthetic practice maintaining a critical autonomy from its immediate context. The studio will reflect on the relationship between aesthetic practice and social activism through close readings of contemporary artists with clearly defined social and aesthetic agendas. As a result students will develop their own position on contemporary art it's relationship to architecture informing their design methodology and conceptualization of a new institutional model.

From Rhetoric to Architecture

The studio will decipher the rhetorical language such as “permeability,” “accessibility,” “diversity,” “transparency,” etc. to identify design concepts and methodologies that operate as seductive narratives within public discourse while also providing opportunities for more subversive subtext that propose new social relations, uncanny architectural invention and new aesthetic experiences.

Dichotomies:

- Protection / Permeability
- Intimacy / Monumentality
- Encounter / Image
- Agility / Legacy
- Flow / Fixity
- Cheap / Expensive
- Impermanence / Permanence

- Field / Object
- Network / Node
- Fast / Slow
- IRL / URL
- Virtual Reality / Reality
- Art / Nature
- Difference / Consistency
- Context / Concept
- Contamination / Neutrality

Typological Speculations - From Protection to Permeability

The museum ceased to be a place for a permanent collection and became a stage for changing curatorial projects, guided tours, screenings, lectures, performances, etc. In our time, artworks permanently circulate from one exhibition to another, from one collection to another. And that means that they are getting more and more involved in the flow of time. Boris Groys, In the Flow.

The evolution of the art museum typology over the last few centuries elucidates transformations in the role of the institution and its architectural mutations. In Western culture, the first art museums were semi-public palatial villas of aristocratic families. Accessible by invitation only, the collection of objects functioned as displays of cultural prominence and diplomacy. In the 20th Century, the emergence of the modern art institution sought to “neutralize” the environment of art exhibition within a “white box.” The experience and production of art in the 21st century is intertwined in the proliferation of the art market and the increasing circulation of art objects within the global network of international biennales and art fairs. Curatorial trends point toward art experiences not contained within the protection of a neutral white box but within more permeable environments generating dialogue with the specificity of context, climate and nature.

Methodology

This studio will focus on the making of architecture through physical models and material experimentation. The seminar and studio will create a continuous non-stop feedback loop between cultural speculation and rigorous design production. Design and research will become interchangeable mediums of speculation.