

Course Syllabus

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Architecture:

The Contemporary (Ideas and concepts from 1968 to the present)

The “Architecture as Concept” seminar takes as its starting hypothesis that there is no architecture without a concept and that concepts are what differentiates architecture from mere building. It will attempt to demonstrate that the most important works of architecture in any given period are the ones with the strongest concept or idea rather than simply those with the most striking form or shape.

We will discuss one hundred projects or buildings and city plans from 1968 to the present, in terms of their ability to mark the history of ideas and concepts in architecture. It will also discuss differences between concepts, “partis”, diagrams and compositions as well as between concepts, percepts and affects.

For each historical moment in the past forty years, we also intend to identify one or several major concepts that have either become out of date (“against”) or are still relevant today (“for”), as measured in relation to today’s in moral, ideological, economic, or formal standards. We will question whether, after modernism and post-modernism, we are witnessing a phase of ‘hypermodernism’ or modern iconism.

Students will be required to make in-class presentations and write a final research paper. Class sessions will be focused around presentations and discussions of weekly readings and occasional contributions by invited guests.

Ideas and Concepts 1968 to present: sequence / superposition / juxtaposition / in between / activator / vector circuits / bands / fragments / deformed / double envelope / surface / old and new / transprogramming / crossprogramming / affect / tactical / indifference / reciprocity / conflict / contextualizing concept / conceptualizing context / diagram / difference / digital / experience / field / frame / real fake-fake real / hybrid / identity / branding / indeterminacy / local-global / manifesto / mapping / margin / memory / montage / multiple / mutation / non linear / normative / particles / pattern / performance / praxis / sampling / serial / surface / trace / type / urban / zero degree

Session Topics:

1. Concepts in Non-Plan and in Visionary Utopias
2. Typological Concepts (+ “What is a concept?” discussion) (Constants and Variables, Frozen Typologies: Neorationalism)
3. Concepts in Autonomy vs. Signs
(The Whites vs. The Grays)
4. Phenomenological Affects (Critical Regionalism, Phenomenology, Contextualism,

Realism)

5. Heterogeneity, Disjunctions, Fragmentation (From the Concept of Deconstruction to the Bilbao Effect)
6. Programmatic Concepts and Diagrams: A Search for Abstraction (Maximalism: Programmatic Dutchness)
7. Minimalism and the Art of Construction (From the “Dutch Corner” to the Swiss Baths to SANAA)
8. Ideological and Ecological Envelopes (Single and Double Conceptual Envelopes)
9. From post-critical blobs to the return to the autonomy discourse (From Blobs to Blogs)

STUDENT APPLICATION PROCEDURE

This seminar is intended for 18 students maximum. Students will be selected from an application process. Students interested in participating should submit the following by **Thursday, 16 January at 10 pm** to vpaezcala@tschumi.com:

- **PDF RESUME (two pages max)** outlining key aspects of your education/work experience
- **SHORT STATEMENT (250 words max)** describing which of the seminar session topics (excluding the first session, dated January 24) you would like to present on and why.

Selected students will be notified by email on **Monday, 20 January**.

The first session will be held on **Thursday, 23 January** (11 am – 1 pm, Avery Room 412).