Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Maste

Graduation Plan: All tracks

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Petar Kirilov
Student number	5857376

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Design Mentor	Mieke Vink	Architecture
Research Mentor	Stavros Kousoulas	Architecture
Building Tech. Mentor	Rufus van den Ban	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	What drew me is was Explore Lab's wide scope that allows for a personal fascination to grow into meaningful research. Confronting (or embracing) your own interests holds emancipatory potential and I found the intrinsic ambiguity and unpredictability utterly alluring. The studio provides potent ground for experimentation and is open to ideas that challenge and circumvent conventional educational practices.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	'Renderillas' and 'Oraxotans'
Goal	
Location:	Zona B-5, Sofia, Bulgaria

The posed problem,	The issue with architectural representation is that it is deeply rooted in the traditional understanding of signifying semiotics. Although architectural output is increasingly reduced solely to imagery, architects are unaware of the actual ontology of images and only partially aware of their capacity to produce affects which they abuse blindly to achieve their goals. Images, quite literally, become architecture, however, architects fail to comprehend what constitutes images, the networks in which they interfere, the technical substructures that govern their appearance, and, importantly, how they define what is perceptible and therefore comprehensible. Alienated from their work and output, architects remain oblivious to their surroundings, rendering them apolitical, and disconnected from reality.
research questions and	1. How can the notions of "hosting" and "performativity" help conceive of alternative modes of production and corresponding archival practices which are capable to expand beyond current conventions? 2. How can you shift attention away from representation and towards the presentation of potentialities of space? 3. How can you set up an archival practice that is capable of accommodating contingency and indeterminacy?

design assignment in which these result.	The assignment consists of the design and production of "sets" - spaces capable of hosting performative action - within the courtyard enclosed by blocks 2, 3, 5, and 6 in the residential complex "Zona B-5". The project will investigate the latent potentialities of the site by infusing life into the courtyard space through communal involvement, and inscribing a sense of ownership and responsibility in the residents as well as empowering them to take action. As an outcome, the intention is to foster space that is capable of incorporating change and various use and misuse which is in contrast with the reasoning behind the rigid modernist blocks in which the residents live. Ultimately this would inspire perpetual care and communal action, showing that this complex socialist heritage, rather than simply being a hotbed for social discontent, holds potential to affirm life.

Process

Method description

For my research I have relied on literary reviews (outlined in the next section) which shaped the basis of my knowledge regarding architectural representation, image theory, (a)signifying semiotics, non-representational theory, the networked image, archival practices, and digital and technical objects.

As a result the outcomes of my research have been heavily influenced by the methodologies that I have encountered during that process. The first outcome that takes the place of a "research paper" is a "digital garden" which explores the networks which are entangled in image production. I used a program called Obsidian to create the networked environment which I later on transferred online as a web page. In this digital garden I have placed emphasis on the unscripted interaction with the content that I offer, allowing for indeterminacy of action. The users can create their own path through the network and explore the topics that interest them in an oder that they control.

The second product of my research is the production of a booklet of exercises that is aimed at literacy in visual culture. It employs a non-representational and performative methodology which focuses on the production of tacit knowledge through doing.

The booklet also plays the role of a link between research and design. The exercises are divided into six main clusters, based on the topics which I have highlighted, the outcomes of which showcase the problematics which the design will have to address.

For my design as a starting point I intend to delve deeper into archival material of the site itself, as well as conduct initial contact with residents. I will start with documenting the dilapidated current state and identify possible openings for intervention based on the results from the exercises, archival information, observation, and ethnographic research.

Due to the fact that I am currently residing in the Netherlands I intend to make two strategic site visits during which I can firstly assess and secondly intervene. During the time in which I am not present I intend to rely on an architectural collective with which I have also worked previously to be my eyes, ears, and hands.

The implementation/construciton phase will be carried out during the second site visit, again with the help of the architectural collective, when it comes to constructing actual structures.

Literature and general practical references

My understanding of the issues with architectural representation is informed by the works of Robin Evans, - "The Projective Cast", "In Front of Lines That Leave Nothing Behind", "Translations from Drawing to Building"; John May, - "Everything is Already an Image", "Signal. Image. Architecture."; Hélène Frichot - "Creative Ecologies", "Gentri-Fiction and Our (E)States of Reality"; Kiel Moe - "Non-linear Perspective"; Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva - "Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move"; and Carson Fritz - "Alienation Beyond the Human", and others.

With regard to image ontology and epistemology, signifying and a-signifying semiotics, key texts have been "What Images Do" edited by Backlund, Oxvig, Renner, and Soberg; "What Do Pictures Want?" by William Mitchell; "After Art" by David Joselit; "Imagination and Invention" by Gilbert Simondon; and "Cinema 1: The Movement-Image" by Gilles Deleuze, and others.

In terms of understanding our contemporary condition and what is termed "the networked image", I have relied on the works of Hito Steyerl - "The Wretched of The Screen", "Too Much World: Is The Internet Dead?"; Yuk Hui - "For a Planetary Thinking", "One Hundred Years of Crisis"; and Center for the Study of the Networked Image and the output from its members - "The Contemporary Condition: Introductory Thoughts on Contemporaneity & Contemporary Art", "Affordances of the Networked Image", "The Networked Image in Post-Digital Culture", and others.

Lastly, my design approach has been influenced by the works of Stan Allen - "From Object to Field"; Felix Guattari - "Architectural Enunciation"; Chris Smith - "Bare Architecture"; Gundhild Borggreen and Rune Gade - "Performing Archives/Archives of Performance"; Brian Massumi - "Sensing the virtual, building the insensible"; Elma van Boxel & Kristian Koreman - "City of Permanent Temporality", and others.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The project "Renderillas and Oraxotans" dives into a critical exploration of representational thinking and methods in a contemporary setting and their complex implications. As such it is very much entwined in the processes of architectural production and how those preform in various settings not only within the professional or educational spheres, but also on a much broader scale which also includes the socio-political, economic, ethnic, environmental, and technological environments which constitute the basis for any architectural intervention.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

As architectural output has been increasingly relegated to the production of imagery, I find it extremely relevant to critically assess the processes and structures that shape our work, as well as the networks in which it is entangled. It is crucial to illuminate the shortcomings of representational thinking and investigate its complicated heritage. In order to prevent itself from becoming completely redundant in the face urban proliferation and maximisation of capital extraction, architectural practice has to find a way to urgently re-engage with real-life complexities and distance itself from normative representational practices which have been absorbed and utilised for the machinic production of space. Therefore, investing in practices that see more, and see differently is essential in producing any effective contribution.