Tropical*ity:*

An Architectural Association Visiting School

Unmasking new waves of colonization through soties of everyday life and domestic space

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

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SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
VISITING SCHOOL

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Tutors Andrew Houston
Agenda and Media Development Andreani Maria Stephanou

Contents

I. Summary

Tropicality is a new visiting school programme which seeks to exfoliate the seeming to expose possible new waves of colonization, and patterns of resistance in tropical dwellings through architectural stories about home, culture and place.

The programme will consider the self-builder, local artist and domestic architect as key sources of power, simultaneously generators and perpetuators of culture. Conceived from within the multi-scalar and often contradicting spheres of their political, cultural and climactic contexts, their works serve as manifestations of ever changing collective aspirations and identity.

Students will work alongside tutors to formulate interview questions and set out to rouse and record stories and experiences of those who live in the several dwellings we will visit. Based on drawn and filmed observations, insights and documented stories, you will then compose your own story about architecture, domesticity and place.

During the course of the two week workshop, students will observe and craft the story through three means, writing, drawing a short film, all looking to become a narrative composition of images (form, space, light, colour, materiality), geometry, colour and sound (voice, story, city, nature). Forming an architectural construct between reality and ficcion, between the dweller and the visitor.

The purpose of this workshop as an experiment is to cultivate extraordinary design insights, hone your compositional abilities as a designer and to refresh an architectural sensitivity and sensibility to the interrelationships of material organisations, space, and human perception and reaction.

II. Research Brief

Ask any Vietnamese person, however scientifically minded, about the origin of the Vietnamese people and they will tell you a story about having descended from a dragon and fairy ("con rong chau tien").
Despite a history of divisive conflicts, the belief that all Vietnamese are siblings ("dong-bao"), has formed a bond between a diverse people since the beginning of history.

Migrating 17,400 miles from Costa Rica to Vietnam for the second year of a four year trans-latitudinal journey, Tropicality will seek to 'lift the veil of innocence' surrounding narratives of the domestic space.

We will expose patterns, struggles and resistance through architectural stories about identity, place and home. Our immersion into Ho Chi Mihn City's (Saigon) multiverse of stories will begin on the first day with a family homestay.

Students will assume the role of forensic investigator, working alongside tutors to formulate interview questions and then set out to rouse personal stories of the home. Based on material and social observations, insights and recorded stories, you will then compose your own story about the connections between architecture, identity, and place.
You will devise a diagram and drawing as a plan of action to film images of people, houses, streets, neighbourhoods and the city.

Editing and composing the collected materials into a short film will evolve through conversation with tutors. The short film will be a narrative composition of images (form, space, light, colour, materiality) and sound (voice, story, city, nature). The form and space of your story will be described in an axonometric diagram, which collapses all film frames and their surrounding architectural space into a layered drawing.

The purpose of this workshop, as an experiment, is to cultivate extraordinary architectural insights through a creative study of the tropical domestic space; to hone your compositional abilities and to revaluate your definitions and understandings of what architecture is and does.

III. Programme Methodology

The workshop will develop exercises for exposing, stripping and decontextualizing architectural mechanisms to expose the nature of their sources and articulation and their role as mediators of the inter-relationships between the users, program, physical environment, societal context and architecture.

Interviews / Field Research

Students will work alongside tutors to formulate interview questions and set out to rouse and record the stories and experiences of those who live there, allowing us to explore the *character* of architecture and the singularities of inhabitation conditions, daily rituals, novel uses of space and function.

Story Boarding - Perceptual Diagram

Based on observations, insights and documented stories, you will then compose your own story about architecture, domesticity and place, devising a diagram and drawing as a spatial story board, mapping the relevant areas that will become the starting point for the film.

Film

Students will make a short film as a narrative composition of images (form, space, light, colour, materiality) and sound (voice, story, city, nature). This film intended to become a unique and perceptive form of architectural construct.

Post Story Boarding - Critical Mapping

We will map onto our original story board our progress, aesthetic decisions and relevant modifications done through the process as means of understanding the correlation between story, method and technical prowess.

IV. Programme

03.08.16_Part 01

Introduction
Lecture: Modernity and the Home by Brendon Carlin
Assignment 01: Field Work Interview Session

04.08.16_Part 02
Interview Module - Forensic Method

Lecture: Interview Methodology by Andrew Houston
Lecture: Space and Object as Evidence, the forensic reading of space by Maria Paez Gonzalez
Assignment 02: Interviews and House documentation
Group Pin Up / Tutorials

05-06.08.16_ Part 03
Crafting the Story, Thesis

Lecture: Cinematographic Language by Andrew Houston
Lecture: Architectural Thesis, Crafting the Story by Brendon Carlin
Group Pin Up / Tutorials

08-11.08.16_Part 04
Filming Module

Lecture: Filing Tecniques Andrew Houston
Storyboarding & Fieldwork Filming

12-14.08.16_Part 05
Diagram Module

Lecture / Content: The purpose of Diagrams by Anny Stepanou & Maria Paez Gonzalez
Diagram Workshops

15-17.08.16_Part 06
Editing

Workshop & Tutorials
Final Internal Jury

19.08.16 Final Jury

Keynote Speaker Lecture
Student Presentation to Public
Certificates and end of course gathering
Dinner and Drinks

V. The Team

Brendon Carlin - Course Director

Brendon is a Unit Master at the Architectural Association and partner and director at Urban Systems, responsible for management, research and design direction of the office.

Before founding Urban Systems Brendon practised in the United States, China, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. He collaborated on a diverse range of projects as a design architect including Raffles City Hangzhou with UN Studio in Amsterdam, first-prize winning competitions with Plasma Studio in London, urban proposals with Relational Urbanism in London and a range of projects in his native Colorado. Through research, mentoring and practice, Through research, mentoring and practice, Brendon continues a development of computational generative latticeworks which elicit networking, collision and isolation, exploring the potentials of architecture and the city to initiate progressive shifts within society. Brendon currently pursues this and other areas of research as a Unit Master of Intermediate Unit 6 at the Architectural Association, which he has mentored since 2011. He has been an instructor for six years with several courses at progressive institutions worldwide including the post-graduate course 'Territorialism' with the Berlage Institute and the Architectural Associations 'Design+Make' masters program. He has taught in various workshops at Harvard's GSD and the AA including AA visiting schools in Beijing, and MakeLab at Hooke Park.

Brendon received a masters degree in Architecture and Urbanism at the Architectural Association of London's Design Research Laboratory, and an undergraduate of Environmental Design in Architecture at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating first in class.

Maria Paez Gonzalez - Course Director

Maria graduated with honours from the Architecture program of the Universidad de Los Andes, in Merida, Venezuela. She has been practicing architecture and design in Venezuela and the UK since 2006.

In 2007 she joined Plasma Studio and Ground Lab in London, becoming a key designer in award winning projects like Deep Ground, Longgang, China. Link City Competition in Kufstein, Austria amongst many others.

She joined Foster and Partners in 2009, working in Urban and Architectural projects and competitions; she is currently a leading member of the Apple Campus 2 Project, in Cupertino California. The 176 acre project, which will be the new headquarters for Apple Corporation which broke ground in 2014 and will achieve completion in 2016.

Maria has taught in various institutions independently and in collaboration with Relational Urbanism, as a lead tutor in workshops in ULA, Venezuela and with the Veritas University in Costa Rica in 2012 and the Architectural Association.

She is also a founder of the design studio Built Operations.

Andrew Houston – Programme Tutor

Andrew is a film theory scholar and currently lectures on the development of film expression, contemporary global cinema, Italian Neo-Realism and French New Wave cinema in addition to tutoring post production studio at the Colorado Film School. Andrew has won several awards as a short filmmaker and is releasing his first feature length film this year.

Andreani Maria Stephanou – Agenda and Media Development

Anny graduated from the Architectural Association in 2015, where she developed a two-year thesis in Diploma Unit 9, exploring the use of the every-day to create context as architecture. She was awarded a week-long travel bursary to Rome and Nicosia for film research while working for 3DReid Architecture in 2013. Amongst mixed-use developments in Kuala Lumpur and residential schemes in London, she has also been involved in aviation projects, including the recently completed Terminal 3 Refurbishment in Heathrow. Her interest lies in the act of drawing as a process of discovery and collaboration.

VI. Reading List

Tropical Architecture

Jiat_Hwee Chang, A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonialism, Ecology and Technology (Chang, 2014)
Vandana Baweja, A Pre-history of Green Architecture: Otto Koenigsberger and Tropical Architecture, from
Princely Mysore to Post-colonial London (Baweja, 2008)
Rachael Lee, Searching for the Social in the Tropical (Lee, October 2013)
Aurthur M Foyle – Traditonal Materials and Construction advocate (Foyle, 1954)
Robert-Gardner Medwin – West Indies, social and climactic (Demissie, 2012)
Drew and Fry – Overlap Climactic and Social - Village Housing in the Tropics: With Special Reference to West (Fry, 2013)
PH Connell – incompatibility between western 'modern' technology and the local culture

Koeningsberger Scholars

Rachael Lee (Lee, October 2013)
Vandana Baweja, A Pre-history of Green Architecture: Otto Koenigsberger and Tropical Architecture, from
Princely Mysore to Post-colonial London (Baweja, 2008)

Critical Regionalism

Essays in Alexander Tzonis, Bruno Stagno, and Liane Lefaivre (eds), Tropical
Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization (Chichester: Wiley-Academic, 2001).
Frampton – Critical Regionalism (Frampton, 1998)
Paul Emmons, Jane Lomholt - The Cultural Role of Architecture (Frascari, 2012)
Architectural Regionalism – Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity and Tradition (Canizaro, 2012)
Tropical Architecture – Critical Regionalism in the age of Globalization (Alexander Tzonis, 2001)
Critiques of Critical Regionalism:
Placing Resistance: A critique of Critical Regionalism (Eggener, 2002)
William J.R. Curtis: Authentic Regionalism (Curtis, 1986)

Cultural Role of Architecture

Places for Thinking (Frascari, 2012)
Harry Charington – architecture to remain open to allow future shaping by citizens (Charington, 2012)
Nelson Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking (Goodman, 1978)

Intuition, Free Will

Henri Louis Bergson – understanding through first person intuition (Bergson, 2002)

Resistance

Globalisation and Contemporary Art (Harris, 2011)

VII. Candidates

The purpose of the workshop is for students to be exposed to an immersive experience of tropical domesticity, which will be surveyed and reconstructed through the different methods which will be taught in the workshop.
We encourage candidates of backgrounds related to media, filmmaking, architecture, technology, engineering, art and design.

VIII. Bibliography

Alexander Tzonis, L. L. (2001). Tropical Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalisation. University of Michigan: Wiley.

Baweja, V. (2008). A Pre-history of Green Architecture: Otto Koenigsberger and Tropical Architecture, from Princely Mysore to Post-colonial London. Ann-Arbor: Pro-Quest.

Bergson, H. L. (2002). Henry Hergson: Key Writings. New York: Continuum.

Canizaro, V. B. (2012). Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Chang, J. H. (2014). A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonialism, Ecology and Technology. London: Routledge.

Charington, H. (2012). An Agency of Endless Play: Alvar. Seinäjoki and Jyväskylä: Alvar Aalto Museum.

Curtis, W. J. (1986). Towards an Authentic Regionalism. Mimar, 19.

Eggener, K. L. (2002). Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism. Journal of Architectural Education, 228-37.

Foyle, A. M. (1954). Conference on tropical architecture 1953: a report on the proceedings of the conference held at University College, London, March, 1953. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Frampton, K. (1998). Towards a Critical Regionalism. In H. Foster, The Anit-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture (pp. 17-34). New York : The New Press.

Frascari, M. (2012). Places for Thinking. In J. L. Paul Emmons, The Cultural Role of Architecture. London: Routledge.

Fry, J. D. (2013). Village Housing in the Tropics: With Special Reference to West . London: Routledge.

Goodman, N. (1978). Ways of Worldmaking. Indianappolis: Hackett.

Harris, J. (2011). Globalisation and Contemporary Art. Chinchester: Wiley Blackwell.

Lee, R. (October 2013). Searching for the Social in the Tropical . University of Liverpool

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