

Architecture as Catalyst | March 9-13

Architecture as Catalyst Façade investigates the broad and nuanced concept of façade.

The workshops interrogate façade as an experiential, philosophical and technological construct, as situated in relation to its multitude of meanings: face, fascia, front, enclosure, envelope, skin, membrane, exterior, appearance, pretense, simulation, affectation, semblance, illusion, act masquerade, charade, mask, cloak, veil, veneer. Acknowledging at once the classical and contemporary issues of façade, questions within the workshops include themes such as relationships between interior and exterior, enclosure and environment, surface and structure, image and reading, ephemerality, and the body.

Monday, March 9, 2015 - 12 pm

Human-Machine Vision: A Post-Cinematic Approach

Speaker: Jentery Sayers - Assistant Professor, English and Social, Cultural, and Political Thought and Director, Maker Lab in the Humanities, University of Victoria

Computer vision is generally associated with instrumentalist applications: it is merely a tool meant to discover, recognize, and extract subjects and objects. Against the grain of instrumentalism, this talk surveys the various roles computer vision plays in arts and humanities research. It then suggests a post-cinematic approach to computer vision, with an emphasis on how human and machine perspectives are blended in algorithmic cultures. Example research is drawn from work conducted in the Maker Lab in the Humanities at the University of Victoria.

Monday, March 9, 2015 - 6 pm

Adaptation

Speaker: Omar Gandhi - Principal, Omar Gandhi Architect Inc. and Sessional Instructor, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

The work of our studio begins with a simple local precedent, often a hip roof or gable form. The form is then extruded up or across, bent or flattened, the roof planes folded and pleated. Sculpted by conditions and use, the reconstituted adaptation is receptive and responsive in its keeping with a modest, formal lineage. In the search for meaning through the medium of architecture, we strive to implant our structures deeply into the soil of context. The phenomenological qualities of the climate – the rain, sleet, hail and snow – provides depth to our architectural narrative. The elements that shape the landscape, shape our architecture in kind. Placed within the global context of a collective environmental awareness we believe that

the discourse of our regionalist-inspired architecture should evolve beyond the role as barriers against the elements, towards a more integrated model wherein the elements form part of the architecture itself. The talk will provide an overview of our initial regionalist inspired work and the recent move towards a generative design process.

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 - 12 pm

Architectural Filmmaking

Speaker: Ian Harris - Producer / Architectural Cinematographer

I work within the medium of film with a focus to use it as a tool to unlock the stories embedded within our built environment. By playing with time, light, and composition, the stories of the spaces architects and the building industry create can expand the reach, public engagement, and potential of the field and industry. My lecture will outline concepts and techniques used within the field by showing examples of work and lessons learned from producing everything from feature-length films to short online promotional spots for dozens of the world's leading and largest design firms through my New York-based production company, Arbuckle Industries.

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 - 6 pm

Taming Smart Materials to Behave

Speaker: Doris Kim Sung - Assistant Professor, USC Architecture and Principal, DOSU Studio Architecture

The firm DOSU is interested in bringing active systems to sustainable design far beyond the simple "greening" of a building. With the emergence of smart materials, elevated interest in utilizing unconventional building systems, and an urgent need to build sustainable structures, buildings can be more sensitive to the environment and the human body, raising the level of effectiveness while altering our perception of enclosure. Through grant-funded research, DOSU is developing smart materials such as thermobimetals as new breathable surfaces for buildings skins. As the outside temperature increases, pores will automatically open to self-ventilate the building. Other unusual materials and assemblies for sun-shading, ventilation and self-assembly structures are currently being developed for future public use.

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 - 12 pm

Light, Open, and Improvisational

Speaker: Diane Willow - Associate Professor, Department of Art, University of Minnesota
The use of any medium necessary is the constant in my approach. It requires me to learn to do things that I do not know how to do and to ask questions that I don't know how to answer. My work takes variable forms as public installations, interactive environments, and evocative objects. Each invites the participation of people to emerge as art. I consider my work to be most successful when there is an openness about it that enables people to access what has been imagined in the making and to generate experiences that have not yet been imagined. When thinking about our topic of ephemeral facades and the matter of resilience, I am interested in talking with you about the qualities of lightness and improvisation as modalities for engaging with material, structure, and interaction.

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 - 6 pm

Making Material Interactions

Speaker: Leah Buechley - Designer and Engineer
I delight in unexpected juxtapositions of materials, cultures, and making practices. My work explores intersections--of "high" and "low" technologies, new and ancient materials, masculine and feminine traditions, and improvisational and methodical processes. I strive to blur boundaries between engineering, design, craft, and art and to invite people to experiment with and appropriate tools and materials from other cultures. Collectively my investigations also constitute an ongoing exploration of technology, power, and the role of the (creative and embodied) individual in modern society. This talk will discuss recent projects, some developed as an independent designer and others in collaboration with my students at the MIT Media Lab.

Thursday, March 12, 2015 - 12 pm

Works I've Done

Speaker: Hideyuki Nakayama - Associate Professor, Graduate School of Architecture, Tokyo University of the Arts; Hideyuki Nakayama Architecture, Japan

Hideyuki Nakayama will talk about various projects, from recent competitions to his diploma project, to give an overview of his attitude towards the work.

Thursday, March 12, 2015, 6:00 pm

Possible Worlds: Architecture Between Speculation and Proposition

Speaker: John McMorrough - Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Michigan, Taubman College Architecture + Urban Planning

Whether the size of city or building, territory or interior, the plans of architecture and urbanism put in motion assertions, assumptions, and arguments about how the world is organized. Some of these propositions are not realized, some are not intended to be realized, and some, it could even be argued, would be impossible to realize. For architecture, as a discipline devoted at some level to the ideal of building, the relationship between the built, unbuilt, and unbuildable is an on-going question with its roots and foreshadowing found throughout architecture's history, but it comes more specifically to the fore in the contemporary moment over the last 50 years, as architecture is moving from professional, to disciplinary, to post-disciplinary frameworks. Alternately referred to as utopian, visionary, experimental, "paper", research, and most recently, speculative, these designs that tend toward implausibility are often seen as an escape from reality. The nature of the reality that such plans escape, as well as the reality that such plans make, is a question of critical importance for understanding the possibility of architectural work today.

Thursday, March 12, 2015, 7:00 pm

Architecture as Catalyst Panel Discussion

Featuring Catalyst 2015 Guest Instructors Omar Gandhi, Doris Kim Sung, Diane Willow, Leah Buechley, Hideyuki Nakayama, Jentery Sayers, Ian Harris, and Eric Stotts

Catalyst Panel: Emerging Questions in Education and Practice - The Catalyst 2015 guest instructors will open a conversation on current issues in education and practice today, and respond to student and guest questions.