

Capriccio

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DRAWING ON HISTORY – This undergraduate course challenged students to articulate a project using the representational genre of a capriccio, propagating a generative fiction. The deliverable asked for a representation of considerable virtuosity, one executed to a size that suggested the spatial inhabitation of a tragic, comedic, or satirical scene. Each student contemplated ideas about the design of history, the reciprocal exchange between received and speculative disciplinary and cultural narratives. Students were exposed to a variety of approaches and methods for interpreting, comparing, and translating historical references, infusing history and creative work as a discursive design project. The semester began with selecting an architect and studying the body of work. Each student then identified an issue to elaborate on and advance within a contemporary physical or intellectual context. The next six weeks was spent developing architectural ideas and concepts through design strategies. Beyond illustrating and documenting existing artifacts or retelling the story of a historical figure, the capriccio became a generative design medium. Students were encouraged to interact with physical and digital archives, ways of curating and assembling dense collections of material in different and unconventional ways. The creative re-organizing and re-invention of source material and the embrace of counterfactual histories encouraged denying definite conclusions about historical projects. Throughout the course we discussed ideas

about concurrently telling discrete micro histories and intentionally not confirming or validating dominant narratives; ways of rendering history active. Three selected projects are presented:

NOWHERE – Leonardo Da Vinci: The investigation pushes Da Vinci's work through the lens of defamiliarization. It does so by suppressing the foregrounded figures in his paintings and sketches in order to focus attention on the less discussed middle and background content. The project assumes that behind the figures is an unexplored territory where the unrealized architectural proposals and inventions exist. Through the specific proliferation and organization of Da Vinci's less familiar architectural sketches, new spatial orders and perspectives are produced.

DYMAXION 2.0 – Buckminster Fuller: Despite his failures, many continue to subscribe and have excessive faith in the unrealized potentials of Fuller's view of design at the scale of the world. Armed with the knowledge of successes and failures of the original Dymaxion system, Dymaxion 2.0 rethinks and re-tools the original, deploying it in the Amazon basin. Dymaxion 2.0 enters the world at a moment when the destructive effects of climate change seem irreversible. While utopian in scale, built into the design of each element is its imminent obsolescence.

RECASTING – Michael Graves: This project

constructs an argument about historicism – its pitfalls and productive possibilities. The participatory nature of an architectural language based on recognizable forms promotes ways design can enter every-day life, how design can be experienced and appreciated by both a broader public and learned architects. The proposal considers the design of architectural objects at a variety of scales, and across socio-economic strata. The work draws upon concepts of cultural reception, archetypal form, and the role that drawing lines can play in the articulation of volume and surface.

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