INSTRUCTORS
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LOCATION
M + W, 2-6, Wurster Hall – 9th Floor

DESCRIPTION
TIME-OUT
In this studio, a pathological architecture wanders away from its conventional responsibilities. Architecture has typically been understood as an exemplary model of cultural stability. The relentless contemporary production of new iconic imagery does little to disturb the discipline's deeper metaphorical grounding. Today, the shock of the new has long since given way to a feeling of same difference. Why is this? Our suspicion is that architecture remains as eager as ever to please, with the Vitruvian triad of 'firmness, commodity, and delight' endlessly reappearing in various protean guises. But what if architecture stops trying - becoming sullen, irresponsible, indifferent, or even lazy?

Through the dual conceits of a ‘time-out' from conventional production, and the enactment of various strategies of ‘indeterminacy', this studio will query the limits of architectural representation. Such conceits are necessary, because the conventions of architectural representation are so fundamental to the discourse as to be nearly invisible when operating smoothly. It is only by pushing these structures to the point of breakdown, that their mechanisms and pervasiveness become legible. When architectural representation no longer 'works' as expected, it reveals the uncertainty regarding form which everyday conventions serve to mask.

Specifically, the studio will research and enact aspects of the following strategies of architectural ‘indeterminacy': vagueness, latency, idleness, sickness, entropy, the unconscious, and the sublime. Taken to an extreme, any one of these strategies has the capacity to disturb the conventional mechanics of architectural representation – a disturbance which is always already concealed at the center of architectural discourse.

In addition, the studio will reflect on the nature of architectural production and the precise role of the architect in design ‘work'. What is the mental space of design, and how is it enabled, transformed or corrupted through the various stages of representation that constitute architectural production? The architectural unconscious regulates all of the stages of representation, but its messiness and impurity is typically sanitized from the final product. An idiopathic architecture is self-reflexive, manifesting the hazy mental space of production in the face of the cleansing impulses of the institutional discourse.

Program
The main studio project is a sanatorium for chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). The site is on a hilltop at the edge of the Ventana Wilderness, overlooking the Pacific Ocean just south of Big Sur, California. Remote and detached from the everyday economies of time and production, the culture of the sanatorium provokes questions of idleness, fitness, sickness, oblivion, free-time, and the body's architectural prosthetics.

The project involves the design of a site strategy and master plan as well as the development of the program as a code-compliant, technically feasible proposal. This is a comprehensive studio - the resolution of the project as a 'real' building will be another strand of our investigation into the operations of architectural production.

The design work will be extensively supplemented by a reader with texts from architecture, art, literature, and philosophy.


Burke, Edmund, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, Oxford World's Classics, 1998. (on reserve)


Hölderlin, Friedrich, "I Want to Build", from Hymns and Fragments, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 244-5.


Nietzsche, Friedrich, "The Birth of Tragedy", from The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner, Vintage, 1967, pp. 31-38.

Somol, Robert, "Green Dots 101", Hunch No.11: Rethinking Representation, pp. 28-37.


Tompkins, Calvin, Duchamp, Owl Books, 1996, pp. 226-7


