WHY WORKSHOP?
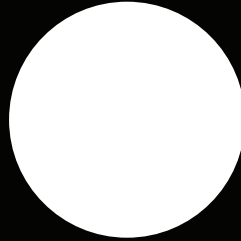
hayrettin günç

ezio blasetti

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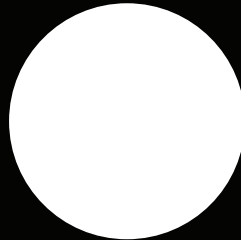
sylvia lavin

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To our readers,

: relies on preceding statements, but places importance on the remarks that follow it.

: is a critical process: it begins with a question, it prompts an investigation, it frames a conversation.

: is a student-run pedagogical forum that engages with discourses within GSAPP and beyond.

: is a record of our conversations, confrontations and confusions.

: distills these raw, unmediated exchanges into printed matter.

: is not .

: does not arrive at conclusions.

: began as a "talking group:" a series of reactions to the lectures, readings, and questions within GSAPP and beyond . As its grammatical role implies, : supposes a level of complexity between ideas. We found value in materializing these exchanges as a record to be contemplated, reframed, and built upon. The printed document serves as a biopsy of our accumulated material online: bibliographies, readings, images, and videos. The physical form is intended to disrupt conventional ways of reading. It is a stamped record of a specific moment in the discussion— a thing to be re-presented: read, hung, wrapped, seen, and used. It is the pin-up: the moment when we take a step back, assume a stance, and invite another level of judgment and criticism.

This issue is the first install-ment of a three-part series that aims to explore different engagements within the field of architecture: workshopping, writing and working. These issues should be read as a working document, a way for us to understand what : is and could be. The content consists solely of interviews and conversations in progress, each framed by a question. Hopefully the next three issues will begin to unveil the publication's own position within architectural discourse, as an experiment to test modes of critical research, to argue for a more discursive relationship between designing and writing, and to create a pedagogical space for architectural doubt.

Our first question: "why workshop?" According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a workshop is "a room or building in which goods are manufactured or repaired" and a "meeting in which a group of people engage in intensive discussion." As a verb, to workshop is to "present a performance of a dramatic work, using intensive group discussion and improvisation in order to explore aspects of the production before formal staging."

In order to consider our own role within an institution, in this case a university, we turned to its outermost edge— the international workshop. What does that edge look like? What does GSAPP look like from way out there? How does it function? The workshop exists within a liminal space between academia and practice. It is a dedicated space for work within an ulterior context. It includes and focuses; it puts things on the table and chooses to ignore many others. But in a way, it is the table, a portable conceptual framework through which we make connections.[1] Ideally, upon this table we gather evidence drawn from other cities alongside our prior knowledge and perform the required alchemy for a quick stroke of agile efficacy. The workshop is less a product of conclusive certainty than a negotiation of institutionalized uncertainty.

In Istanbul we witness the zeal of government sponsored development clash with activists in Taksim; in Chania we discuss the implications of working in a fantastical paradise, a workshop situated between fiction and reality, between Apollonian and Dionysian forces; in Johannesburg we see a group of architecture students attempting to understand a divided city sociologically and

anthropologically; in Los Angeles we try to tease apart the relationship between city and institution; in Rio we juxtapose contradictory perspectives from the same workshop.

This is not an academic journal. There are no answers here. Individual interests are articulated, new questions emerge, threads never resolve, misquotes occur and disagreements persist. Separately they are recorded moments, together they are issues and volumes, in sum they are… well, we're not quite sure yet.

Welcome to **:**

[1] As discussed by Reinhold Martin in his History of Architectural Representation lecture entitled "From Above, From Below: Power and Control" on March 26, 2013.
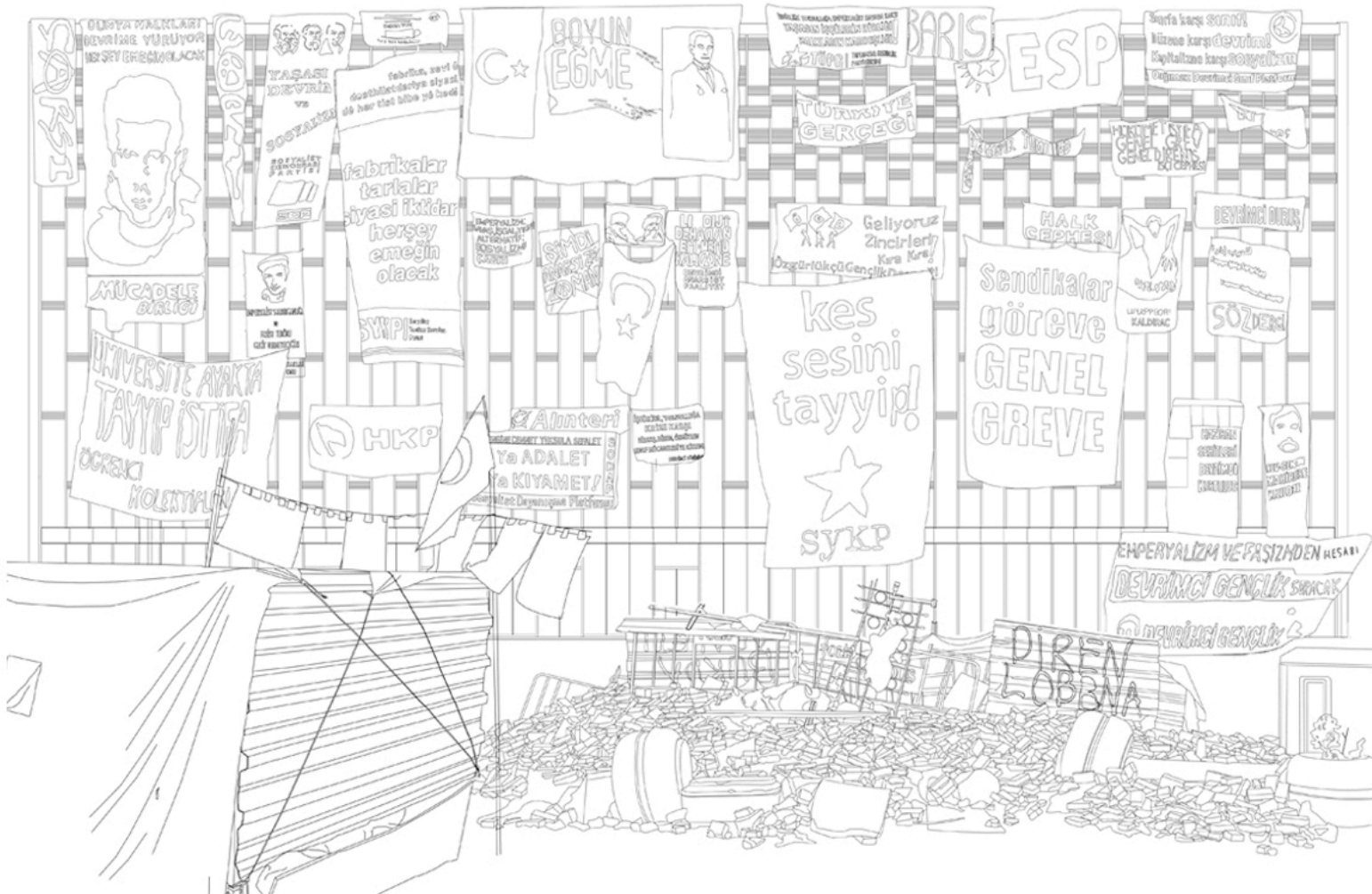
work from Herkes İçin Mimarlık

oxygen is being pumped to the brains of the people

Hayrettin Günç in conversation with C. Recorded on August 5th, 2013

C: You started a firm with your friend after graduating called Herkes İçin Mimarlık, Architecture for All. Why did you decide to start this firm? Or perhaps firm isn't the right word.

HG: Organization. It goes back to our college years when we were studying architecture, we had these questions, "Who are we working for? After school what will we do? Will we just go into a design office and go on designing all our lives? Or, is there an alternative way?" We said, we can do something outside the limits of the university, we can go out design something, find the funds for it, and build it. As a student we were not supposed to do that. We should first be an 'architect' in order to design something, that's what we were told.

C: How do you choose your projects and find work?

HG: When we first started we were thinking about a manifesto, how to define ourselves. You know, when a group of people come together there should be a manifesto. But after two months we couldn't come up with a sentence, so we said "let's do something and then our projects will define us later." Our members bring project ideas and now people who see our work come to us and offer ideas. Herkes İçin Mimarlık is a platform where they can turn their ideas into reality; it's kind of an umbrella to create many different projects.

C: Many of your projects are executed through workshops. What is the role of students in these? Are they designers or just builders and is it sustainable to use this as a means of production?

HG: Up to this stage, all of our projects have been led mostly by student volunteers. When we were in school we didn't have the chance to do these kinds of projects. So we believe it's important to raise awareness in this aspect of education, to think about and question what the students will do after graduation.

C: But a student is normally considered a transitional role, you are only a student for three, four years. Does this necessitate a constantly evolving organization?

HG: We are experimenting with that. People who started when they were students are now graduated and coordinating the projects. In a way, Herkes İçin Mimarlık is an alternative for graduates as well. We are trying to get a network of students, mostly through Facebook and also professors in the universities around Turkey, who can mobilize incoming students. We have not had difficulty attracting peers to attend the workshops. Facebook is really powerful. We make an open call and then it's ear to ear, people tell each other, it's a different kind of energy and its viral immediately.

C: Many of your projects can be considered to exist outside a narrow definition of architecture and are perhaps further on the side of activism. I strongly believe that architects need to be, at the very least, aware of the political situation involving public space, and better yet, actively involved. It is so important to our profession, our being – I mean, how can you not be? And Istanbul certainly is a hotbed on the front of these issues as a very quickly developing city. How have you responded in the face of these issues?

HG: It's crazy, Istanbul right now is developing at full pace. The construction industry is the locomotive of the economy, every day we have to build something, or so the government thinks. Taksim project was one of the biggest. We had discussions about whether we should be a part of it. We decided that what we had in common were our beliefs, and we could still keep practicing architecture but we shouldn't be afraid of being political, if what we believe is political, it doesn't matter. So

we started doing the workshop to raise awareness two months after the project was announced.

C: This project you're referring to is the proposal to build the replica neo-ottoman barracks that would be a shopping mall, new opera house and mosque in place of where Gezi Park is now, correct?

HG: Yes, Gezi Park is one of the last remaining parks in the city. When it was first planned it was like the central park of Istanbul. But many interventions have been made on it, big hotels were built and now it has been fragmented into many parks; on the last one of these spaces they are thinking of building the barracks. Of course Taksim needs an intervention. It has traffic problems and security problems, but nothing was discussed and they came up with this project that wasn't solving anything. We tried to open up a space for discussion. We were just 15 or 20 people, mostly new graduates and students, but still, we thought maybe we could enlarge this discussion space through more workshops. We came up with the idea of doing picnic festivals in the park. There were other people protesting the park development, but they were just going to Taksim Square holding signs and chanting slogans, the traditional way of protesting. We thought maybe we can do something else. The government was arguing that the park wasn't secure enough, and no one was using it.

C: So of course you had to use it.

HG: We had to build something by creating new uses. The festivals were an answer to that. We did maybe 10 festivals and 2000 people attended. Perhaps 2000 is not so many people in a city of 15 million, but maybe it could be one of the sparks that could turn into a huge demonstration.

C: So this was happening before the large-scale protests and crackdowns that have occurred over the past couple of months?

HG: Yea, maybe one and a half years before. And it was just one of the things that we did. While we were doing this we tried other ways to grab attention and create a dialogue. We also did an installation in which we envisioned a parallel world where the Taksim project was done in a collaborative way. We created a newspaper that brought news from this other world where the prime minister was saying "it's not my business you should talk with the mayor about this project, because it's not my field." We also had a fax machine so that people in the room could participate by tweeting with a special hashtag to say what you thought about the project. There is a misunderstanding about the role of architects and urban designers, that they are like gods; if they say so then it should be done like that because they are professionals, but it's not like that. If something is planned in your neighborhood you have a right to that process, you don't have to be an architect or designer to say what you think.

C: And it would feed out in the newsroom in real time. This parallel world you've created sounds utopic, but…

HG: We didn't want to portray this alternative as the way we should do it, it's just an alternative, it could be something else.

But what we needed to do was to discuss it, if you don't discuss there is no way you can come up with the right process.

C: Do you think things are actually moving in that direction? It seems that as a response to the protests the government has consolidated even more power. They absorbed the independent Chamber of Architects and Engineers, which used to have oversight on large urban development projects, into the Ministry of the Environment and Development, which is a larger state agency. So in a sense the power is becoming even more concentrated.

HG: Yes, but what the government is missing is that the power does not come from the organizations, but individually from the citizens themselves. When the citizens come together they are the power. The government thinks that the Chamber of Architects is responsible for mobilizing people to protest, but they're missing the essential point.

C: So you think the resistance will continue?

HG: Yes, the most important part is now oxygen is being pumped to the brains of the people. They have started thinking "maybe we don't need this many shopping malls in my neighborhood." This is the important thing, when people start questioning things in their environment, and they realize they have a right to say something about interventions. The union of architects didn't have power before the protests either.

C: It's the realization and awareness of what's happening that empowers people to affect their surroundings.

HG: If one and a half years ago someone came to us with the idea to protest by putting up tents and occupying a space, we wouldn't believe it, because we are not used to that, we would say "no that's the American way of protest it wouldn't work here." But it did work. Progress. So now people are discovering alternative ways of protesting.

C: Another neighborhood that has been subjugated to controversial development is Tarlabaşı.

HG: Yes, have you been there?

C: Yea, but I had been told it was not a good area. The part of the neighborhood that faces the street is all billboards of new development, all pretty mediocre, totally non-descript contemporary housing and retail glistening under an artificial sun.

HG: Even the renders of the projects, from the people they put in them you can see that they are trying to build a new lifestyle and community there, to just evict the people that own that place now and bring in another community. It's symbolic.

C: It's blatant, the use of the renderings to literally cover up what's existing behind it. And so you can only get glimpses of the neighborhood down these side alleys, and perhaps that's part of the development scheme, to hide what will be destroyed.

HG: Of course, it's a problematic issue. First they show that the neighborhood is not secure, illegal maybe because immigrants live there. They prepare the people of

Turkey that the neighborhood has to change because it's not safe.

C: It's not 'safe,' it's not 'good,' or whatever adjective they decide to throw in to build.

HG: Those renders are just tools to make people believe in their argument. And the worst part is that many people believe that those interventions are the only way to make it better.

C: It's hardly an intervention, it's an erasure.

HG: That's the biggest problem, the absence of a platform that could be something apart from the authoritarian system. The city municipality is the only authority that gives the decisions and most of the time they make the wrong decisions. Without independent spaces to discuss the interventions that are going on in the city most of the time you will be unsuccessful.

C: So it's a two-step process, first to develop an actively aware and motivated public, and then provide a political structure where exchanges between citizens and decision makers can occur.

HG: On twitter, the district representative of where I live is everyday posting photos of different buildings they are starting to work on. And every time he posts something, I challenge him "Who is the architect of the work? How did you decide? Do we need this?" I don't think he likes me, but maybe if I ask him a thousand times…

C: Then maybe he'll take the time to figure it out. Or maybe other people will start asking.

HG: Yes, you should do it. Poke him. I am not asking him to make him feel bad, but just to start a dialogue.

work from Terra Insola

a little beloved creature that shits everywhere

Ezio Blasetti, Lydia Kallipoliti, Camille Lacadee and François Roche in conversation with L, G and C. Recorded on June 6th and 7th, 2013

L: Name?

EB: Ezio Blasetti

LK: Lydia Kallipoliti

~~CL: Camille Lacadee~~

FR: I'm in Greece now, so its *personne.*[1] [P]

G: Where have you worked and why are you working where you are now?

EB: I have worked with many people. It is probably too many to list them all. I have worked for Vito Acconci for a couple years. I worked with Alisa Andrasek for a similar amount of time parallel to that. I have many collaborators starting from my best friends from undergrad, we started an office in Athens and in New York, more recently with Danielle Willems. I

am known as a prolific collaborator, where I find an interest in a particular project or in someone who does interesting work and I have something to contribute.

LK: I have worked as an educator at the Cooper Union and Columbia University in New York and as an architect in New York and Greece.

CL: I've worked in Europe, and Asia—mainly in Japan, India, and now I'm in Bangkok, since I started Muay Thai.

P: Where and why and what? That's the question? Ah! Mmmh, to verify the gender of Ariadne, supposed as potentially Lesbian in our story, lost in translation, abandoned by a macho (Theseus) and waiting an alcoholic (Dionysus).

L: What is the implication of the workshop being in Greece?

EB: Why is it here? I come from Greece. You could say this is coincidental but it is not. We are

coming from this region and we feel what the problems of this region are, academically, socially, and economically. I will always come back to a place like this, to contribute to a discourse that I came from.

Greece provides a unique background in terms of not only the economic crisis, but being at the center of a global experiment, and it was intriguing as a start of a particular narrative. At the same time, construction and architecture in Greece have been in a very difficult position the last few years, and because of the crisis, there has been a halt. We have a lot of Greek architects that have spread around the world, including myself, and it is hard for them to come back.

LK: There are several layers of implications. Obviously coming from Greece, at first I am motivated by a romantic idea to bring to my place of origin the foreign world that I infiltrated coming to the US east coast. Although after 1 years in the US, this encounter seems

naïve at best. Being a foreigner at whatever context, is part of who I am.

In any case, Greece is the birthplace of tragedy, so, every time people come here and congregate in a closed system a tragedy occurs. I do not know if the locale has an actual impact or if tragedy unfolds coincidentally in workshops, but it does; to such an extent that both the country –Greece- and the nature workshops have become suspicious in my mind. If you have read William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*, you quite lucidly see how a closed system -- whether it is a cybernetic system or an ecosystem or a social system composed of people-- at some point produces its own output and regenerates it as input, and starts to malfunction. In the book it happened to a group of young people cast away in an island, but the case of workshops is strikingly similar. So workshops are basically social experiments as well as educational experiments with a lot of people working together intensely, closely

and constantly; hating each other, loving each other, and so forth. This intensity is really productive as an experience and it is the reason I keep getting involved in organizing summer workshops. In Greece, it gets more dramatic because the weather is great, the attitude to life is looser and people start quickly to creatively misbehave. We somehow manage to reach another level of communication and experience each other's work, ideas and visions at a different layer more intrusive to one's aspirations.

CL: Last year we were in India, a place where I have lived and worked… I knew what you could and could not do there. It's a country where everything is about local negotiations… It is the same way in Bangkok or in Crete. When the plane was landing here, a Greek woman told me the Cretan slogan is "Freedom or Death."

P: To bring antidote economy into a Schengen gate community.

L: What, if any, are the political implications of the work?

EB: There are always political implications. What we started doing in the middle of the workshop with the general assemblies has been probably one of the more refreshing political statements we could do. It is not that it has been resolved, but a proper political statement is not about resolving something. It is about posing the right questions. Is there something outside of the group? Honestly, maybe there shouldn't be something outside of the group. We are trying to define a territory of production, which is the most difficult part of Europe today, to define a niche, to be able to use the funds to produce something new, that could intrigue other things to happen.

LK: We are within a city, within an island. Inside the island we are in a fortress. Inside the fortress we are creating a labyrinth. That kind of nested entrapment fascinated me throughout this workshop. At the beginning I was hoping that the workshop would interrogate this nested entrapment. You are in a country that is asphyxiating because of the financial crisis, which basically reflects a crisis of societal

values. A lot of contemporary critics argue that it is not a crisis that just happened, but the crisis had commenced many years ago as a disalienation from the roots. We are currently only experiencing the effects as shadows and echoes. This line of thinking aligns with Slavoj Žižek's three interpretations of the Greek crisis: the natural catastrophe, the lazy Greeks, and the trap of Brussels, that is the trap of technocratic liberalism.

The frustration here is so pervasive that people expect immediate and direct solutions to problems, which is convoluted if not futile. So, the immediate and easy assumption is that once you go to a country where there is a crisis, you have to propose solutions to this crisis. But, that is a very linear -cause and effect- response which is not always productive as one would expect. When a problem is so multi-dimensional and weaved in so many parameters of culture, it is not so easy to address it at face value. One might need first to invent novel ways to engage with the problem itself and understand the diversity of its facets. Our regression into mythology was the catalyst of this workshop to ap-

proach contemporary questions of the crisis. Going back, regressing into mythology and the examination of human nature through a kind of architectural experience brought to the forefront vital issues imbued in contemporary culture, but from a side road, a reroute into the unconscious of the crisis. This was probably the most significant contribution of this summer laboratory.

The role of the site was also significant, because it revealed different scales of entrapment that metaphorically spoke of a multi-scalar psycho-spatial realm of enclosure in a complex economical and socio-political territory. It would be extremely naïve if we would argue that by coming to Greece, we would use architectural solutions as a tool for societal reform, that is to solve aspects of the deeply rooted financial crisis. I think that by providing questions and not any answers or solutions to problems, just by forcing people to think and act in different ways and question their daily lives, is what constitutes change.

CL: I don't know yet…

P: To develop some narration, and then to be able to create an archeology of the futures.

C: How do you view the workshop format in comparison to academic studios and professional practice?

EB: Honestly, I've never worked on a competition in an office where thirty people are involved. It is a little bit insane. Usually there is one or two in charge, and then there is a bunch of other people that are working towards it. So I cannot really compare it to a competition. In a competition there is a brief. There is a client. There is a particular agenda. There is also the office organization, namely the hierarchy that drives the production. There is none of that here. There is a brief, but it is a very open ended brief.

Then academic studios, at least the ones we are used to in the US, have a different type of production. I would say it is much more about how to allow for an individual person, an individual talent to grow its own individuality, to find its own language. Not that, that isn't present here, but we are trying to test something more collective in the sense of a

production that we define as a group. It's very rare. It's not that you can't do it in an academic setting - and we are all academics - but it is a departure from that type of institution, where the critical discourse is particularly format-ted, the way it happens in studio meetings and final reviews. This workshop format aspires to afford us to be more playful and more open-ended on what is the final product of our work. The question of format came up in our discus-sions as well, so the very structure of the workshop is open-ended in this case.

For me what is happening here is asking how we can define a collective language as a series of groups and as a larger collec-tive. That's also reflected in the production. The production is individual groups and everyone together. The Siamese twins that Francois is talking about between the movie and the architecture are all parts of one experiment.

LK: Educational experience is very much related to the protocols set for production and guidance. In the setting of the GSAPP studio where you have one instructor, you basically steer minds and

ideas. We can use the metaphor of the midwife, the captain, or a general enabler who allows action to occur while not necessarily in-serting his/her own energy as part of this process. Studio is not about providing solutions, but a dialectic process of the distillation of val-ues, important to the individuality of each student while at the same time steered towards a mental framework set by the instructor.

This sounds fairly classical and platonic, but the workshop is totally different. The workshop is mostly about production, about collective production, about war, about struggle, about exhaustion, dealing with exhaustion, societal systems, how a small community forms and reforms. It is a con-densed time where a lot of things happen during the creative process and there is no sense of authorship or agency. The workshop is very much an experiment in living, as well as an experiment in produc-ing while living intensely. In many ways, it defies issues of agency and authorship within a collectivity where your ego is dissolved. It is a very hard and useful exercise, although sometimes intolerable.

CL: Well it's concise… it's very

concise… it has to be considered as very precious time…

P: Too much Cretan.

G: In comparison to an academic studio?

P: Too much Cretan.

C: Or professional practice?

P: Too much Cretan

L: Too much Cretan?

P: I should explain. In an island, there is a concentration of the same profiles, the same culture, the same ghetto of thinking and attitude. I like more the polyph-ony, the multitude, the multiple genders, in a sense of Edouard Glissant, on this notion of Creol-ity. Here in Crete, it seems exactly the opposite. Everybody is com-ing as Minos (step father of the Minotaur) from the same soup. I'm really not so surprised how Mediterranean islands are both a paradise and a penitentiary…in the pursuit of the Rossellini movie Stromboli. In a way we started the workshop with a Zorba dance, and viewing with the consciousness

of where we were supposed to be—in a testosterone island, in the tradition of the bull monster. But in fact, we were more interested by the sadness and solitude of Ariadne's animal brother.

Here, we are shooting a kind of movie, using the props the workshop realized, a kind of movie that could be viewed as a protest again the Schengen barrier, against its ideology of fortress, prison, jailing the European nation in the delusion of protection. So in a way, the workshop is done mainly to manipulate this contradiction by construction, by shooting, by meanings…

L: Can this be a new mode of experimental architectural production?

EB: If I understand your question correctly, the question is, "is this mode successful and could other people do it as well?" I'm not sure. For me the condensed time period of the workshop is a large factor in everything. Is our mode of production sustainable if it were to be continued over a longer period of time and turned into a working model?

I don't think that what we are doing here is so groundbreaking, other than it has a different scale. We are testing a different scale. Similarly, the Kickstarter for us was just a start. We did it towards the end of the preparation to test the format. What can we do? Let's figure out all the technical issues and prepare the next experiment. There is definitely more potential in what we have done here for crowd funding, but also in other types of funding, through sponsors.

When you are asking about architecture, I think we are heading in multiple directions here. For example, in Kickstarter, the most successful projects are movies that collect millions of dollars by selling tickets to the premiere all over the world. You have a premiere in Milan, Paris, New York, etc. Each ticket costs $2,000. Honestly, financially it is definitely sustainable at the current moment. If we look at this mode of production as a hybrid with an educational purpose, there are a lot of similar examples. Not so long ago, the education of architecture was taken care of within an office/studio. There is a long history of defining education through production.

LK: I have been for many years, allegedly, an expert in sustainability, because of my work on experimental ecologies, ecosystems, and cybernetic theories. But I hate the word "sustainable." The most sustainable form of production is one that makes you unsustainable; to evolve and change out of utter necessity for survival of the mind. Some use the world resilience but this is also an inadequate term as it becomes a direct natural metaphor and a remnant of Darwinism.

The format of the workshop is definitely neither new nor experimental. It is actually a very regressive educational format, hoping to reinvent the world and the tools with which we work; the way we think, analyze, inspire, design and act. It is close to the nineteenth century model of utopian communities which were resisting industrialization.
I think that if I were to set up a curriculum, I would institute a kind of limbo, like a perpetual lingering movement, between different modes of production, between the framework of the studio and the madness of the workshop.

Having small intermissions of a different rhythm, enabling different zones of production in different locations, is vital, but not by replacing the studio. Embedding workshops within the studio might be a start.

CL: I don't know…

G: Why in a DIY workshop have we been dependent on surrendering/fictitiously crediting so much of the actual physical creation to the machine?

EB: DIY is literally what we are doing. We have to perform every possible work. Effectively the robot is a character for the film. It is not an alibi. It is a fetish object that reflects the machine that we are as a group. It's interesting that in all the studios I've taught with Francois - I don't necessarily come from a background in robotics, I come from a background of design, computing and scripting - once you define the process as a robot, then computation becomes more direct in how you tell the story. The generative methods that we use in computing become more direct because you have to think

of a way to program something. It doesn't even matter if it's a robot, a person, or something else that produces. You have to find a very particular, and very well defined process that then produces a building or something as a result.

LK: Let's first separate the science fiction fear of a machine apocalypse controlling human will from the machine that we have at the workshop; let's also put aside the traditional hesitation that machines reduce or halter the agency of the architect. This machine that we have here is a very pathetic machine. It just poops merengue right? So in this sense, it is like a little beloved creature that shits everywhere; something that is totally useless. If I understand correctly, it is the first time that Stefan managed to build the machine. He was drawing it for years until he actually made it and just having it as a creature in space is a really psychotic experience. It is like Roger Callois' "legendary psychaesthenia", a creature that is completely lost in terms of its spatial coordinates and psychotically blends with space. It is not a machine that in any way raises our common sense fear of machines;

it is not a machines illustrating the potency of artificial intelligence, Marvin Minsky's theories of constructing minds and suppositions about the end of the world through its domination. On the contrary, this is a very needy machines that that needs the human subject more, even more so that that subject needs the machines. That is why we call it the pet. The machine cannot survive without humans. It fulfills an erotic desire of the character of Ariadne to compliment herself through the machine. She feeds the machine and so forth, in an endless cycle.

CL: I think in the film we rather show the failure of the robot than the actual performance. It will be very ambiguous suggesting that the robot built this structure…

P: I'm sorry I have to admit I don't understand the question. Could you repeat?

C: So the question is, why in a workshop that has been defined as a DIY workshop we are crediting through a fiction so much of the physical product that we have been producing to the machine?

P: Why was the workshop supposed to make a fiction which is at the same time trapped as a production of the machine which is not able to produce the work that it is pretending to do? Is this the question?

C: Yes.

P: Ok, you answer that question.

G: Is there a contradiction in using 3D printer in DIY workshop?

LK: The contradiction of low-tech DIY technology and machines is not viable in a world where 3d printing has already becomes a ubiquitous DIY culture. MoMA and so many other stores, sell 3d printers, not their products. The culture of DIY homemade electronics is rapidly rising. Right before I left NYC, I bought a little with instructions on how to build your own lying detector and your own radio and all the components in an IKEA format. Everything comes with a series of instructions where you can purchase and make things in a series of cooking steps, using high-tech parts with quite limited assembly skills. Therefore, we might need to look beyond the

low-tech/ high tech controversy as open source electronics have taken off.

CL: I love contradictions… and we are using a DIY 3d printer…

P: We cannot come naively from a supposed techno-elitist part of the world dominated by science and ignore intentionally that the major part of the work is hand-made. To be an architect today is to navigate in this ambivalence, which is sometimes a dilemma. Many times there is a potential of narration using the *malentendu* between science and craft, between the right and the false, the massive production and the uniqueness, the reason and the madness... Here the *malentendu* is becoming an incestuous wedding party…

L: How will the proliferation of 3d printers change the relationship of the layman and the designer?

EB: It's already changing the role of designers. We already have major companies in the game where you can buy 3d printed objects immediately. I hope that computation will be an important part of that. Computation will allow for,

not just customization, but enough diversity in the world of tomorrow where everything is accessed by downloading. It is already very easy to do that today.

CL: I don't really care about this…

P: A 3D printer is a tool, generating a vanity of controlling, justifying expertizing performance coming from computers, and very often drifting the students, architect, designer in a lazy absurdity of a design. 3D printing is nothing else but a pottery machine, but at the wrong scale. As an instrument, it has its own place in the chain of research and production, as a feticism, it produces very strange collateral effect…a loss of interpretation, of *gestalt*, of *gestaltung*.

Scale one 3D prints are at the opposite, they question the procedures and the knowledge of fabrication, and re-evaluate the transmission of data, from an intention to its transfer into a physical petrification — as the wife of Lot, in the Bible, became a salt statue after looking back to Sodom and Gomorrah. So it's seems that being able to play this tooling, being able to fulfill desires

and objectivize them, we should first face Sodom and Gomorrah. Are you ready to face the devil?

On the side, we could request not only the procedure of fabrication, but also the notion of series, of repetition, of massification of repetition (copy) that is coming intrinsically from the capitalism model. If you print one, you could print theoretically one million. At the contrary, the craftsman is always producing one, as a series of permanent anomaly, as a repetitive process which excludes the repetition of the output. What we call *malentendu*, above, is about this particular point. How could you define a position from this 3D print feticism, which is literally the pursuit of the Fordism, if you simultaneously don't re-question the process of repetition?

Uniqueness, nostalgia, melancholy, the dust of the stone of Venice, to quote Walter Benjamin, are potentially able to be manipulated with and within technologies. But I'm afraid that your vision is more attached to a brainwash of so many Anglo-Saxon schools of Architecture, where technologies are voluntary framed in cold, blind, mute and deaf…

strategies of ignorance.

C: 3D printing obviously has…

P: You're obsessed about 3D printing, so look at my back [P shows his back], 2D hand made prints…it's called a Tattoo, that I did for the cover of *Log #25* in NY. The machine, as a bachelor machine, has been used as a writer, a painful writer applied on the flesh of the architect, as a masochism process… just buy the *Log #25*… 10 boxes, to see how I articulate machines and meanings, sadism and masochism...

Nobody will see that the interview is in front, on my back, again, in front of a classical painting with three naked plumb girls, dancing and floating in the air in an ecstasy parable. What do you mean by doing such a scenography, such apparatus for this interview? Is it intentional? Or is it the counterpoint you need, as an oedipal fleshy erotic compensation to talk about cold technologies….?

C: The obsession with 3D printing...

P: your obsession!

C: my obsession...

P: The obsession okay. Your obsession, please go on your obsession.

C: My obsession with 3D printing is because I believe there is this false promise promoted, as a direct translation from a digital world to the physical world, which allows for manifestations previously impossible. Yet in my experience, it seems that many of these projects designed using parametrics with unique components end up actually being fabricated in a very fundam entally analog way. Such as bending each one of the pieces of steel by having to recalibrate the machine every time and having to build a custom clay extruder. It seems that in a way parametric and computation design has reverted fabrication back to something more manual.

P: I think my only interest is to define a trajectory about the *raison d'etre*, the reason of being which legitimates a process, an intention, a know-how. I'm listening to your argument, but you should go

further…Parametrics are not done to create anomaly, or to discover rarity or uniqueness. It's done to construct retro-future issues from Stanley's Odyssey. The success of Zaha and Patrick, it's mainly because they are constructing with computer a "back to the future ideology," as plugged into the heroic period of the sixties, but without any other heroism than to sell this period for Upper-middle class!… It is eviscerated of any questioning about the system at the origin of the modes of alien-ation. This is very reassuring for clients, industry, politics, academia to know what they are buying, a vintage picture given to the style of the day. It's not really iconoclast, at the contrary, it's more the sign of conservatism, a reactionary regression over design conser-vatism, refugees in a Beaux Art reproduction, to please to a world of cretinized petit-bourgeois.

Reducing computer logic to parametric is similar to believ-ing that the mathematic field is limited by trigonometry! I've to admit that I cannot entirely unre-spect this attitude. If it was limited to a solitary aesthetic practice, everyone could develop his or her own notion of arrows of time. The drama is the number of stupid epigones who infiltrate the Aca-demia to reproduce this attitude as the search for a holy grail!

L: What are your relationship, thoughts, and dreams with the robot?

EB: I am trying desperately to communicate with the robot. I am trying to write machine code. She only visits me in my dreams. Then suddenly I wake up and I don't remember.

LK: I am conflicted about this. I love it because it is cool. It is re-ally fun to see it and for it to exist among us mortals. It is part of the workshops fiction, though defi-nitely not a performing machine. Maybe, this is why I like it more. You don't know why it is there. Therefore, you cannot pursue it in any other way other than as part of a fiction. Is it necessary? Is it not necessary? In any plot, in any story, certain fictions are neces-sary. This is not a machine that makes bricks or ceramic tiles. It is ot producing a think. It is a charac-ter of the story.

CL: I don't think I've ever dreamt about the robot. If I did it was as another figure... Actually I dreamt about everybody here except the robot... the robot is the absence of my dreams.

P: Robots. The robot is a good worker, as you know it's a polish name to describe a good worker. The pathology of the supposing, the pretending dangerousness, the possibility of the real dan-gerousness, the possibility of the performance of the production, the possibility that we have to negotiate a kind of coexistence, coexistence as Ariadne here, co-existence with machinery process, the way also to re-fictionalize as Marcel Duchamp, as Picabia, as Edgar Allen Poe, re-describing, re-formalizing the relationship to the world through the machines which are normally supposed to indiscriminately release-slave us. It's the way to create new condi-tions of narrations, of infiltrating the abusement of the positivism of sciences… through machinism-scenario. It's a crime to implement multiple machinism disorder, at the center of the power, which

exclusively uses this code as an objectivism in a hoax of progress.

G: Is the robot a liberating high-technological aspiration, or a low-tech constraint that forces innovation to activate its believ-ability?

EB: The robot is a vector of materialization of something that can be utterly abstract. It comes from a dream, a computation, or a drawing, but even that has a link back to materiality. It is an anchor of physicality for computation.

LK: Just because it takes really advanced skills to make the robot, does not mean that the robot itself is high-tech as an object. The robot is not a tool. It does not perform any functions. If it is believable, it is as believable as the character of Ariadne is today: as a myth. It's not a tool..

CL: It is perhaps a potential for projection… In the film, an object of desire and agony… but what is it really for Ariadne…? a superego manifested… to satisfy her de-sires… to bring them life… that's a terrible puissance… And what is

it for us…

P: The robot is first a substitution of human forces and strengths. In our story, here in Crete, It's supposed to replace the machism of Theseus and help Ariadne to wait a bit more before being trapped again by the Dionysian alcoholic. So in a way, it is a robot helper or nurse for suspended time, where its power of fabrication is able to replace the needs of negotiation with masculine forces. So it releases her [Ariadne] from here dependences. She will discover also some kind of tenderness with the machine. She is sucking the machine, she is caressing the machine, she is discovering that she could survive without the testosterone by re-negotiating a kind of degree of appartenance and belonging with the newer/neuro machine.

But in fact, beyond this ideal story done for the fictional movie, creating a prop, becoming a building, the actress refused to be masturbated by the machine, for a rather human epilogue.

G: In what way does fiction play a role in your own work? Are we using fiction as a driving force to design an actual physical artifact, or in the creation of a film are we actually designing the fiction?

EB: If it wasn't for this question, I wouldn't describe my work as having a particular relationship with fiction. At the same time, in attempting to answer the question, it's not that my work has to do with reality either. It is always somewhere in between. I guess I am flirting with fiction, I am not all about fiction.

L: At what point is architecture fiction, and when is it non-fiction?

EB: Usually, architecture is more about the types of environments that it can produce and those always have a fictional part inside of them. There is an element of storytelling through creating an environment.

If I was to interpret the nonfiction part as truth, I will have to reverse it. Someone arrives at a particular truth by being very precise in their fiction. There is a collective moment of belief that defines a truth. It is more difficult to define what nonfiction is. If it is just flattening, oversimplifying, a particular behavior in terms of construction or production, I was never really interested in that. To make architecture you need to elevate the object or building into a different realm.

C: Looking at a lot of the work on your website, it appears that many of the projects seem to occupy a scale-less space. It appears as if they require a certain level of fiction or storytelling to explain their use to become architecture, or does it exist without explanation or an accompanying story?

EB: Does a drawing need a use to become architecture? No. The most influential architectural drawings for me have no specified use. They are languages in and of themselves. Does that expand too much the field of architecture? Probably. I wouldn't say that they are scale-less. Scale is much more important for me than use. In terms of my own work, I have been focusing a lot the last few years to keep the scale to a closer relationship to the human body. That has been a double-strategy. It is easier to find a common ground with clients and fabricators without sacrificing the abstraction. My work is deeply invested in abstraction but is also tied to the human body and how it can inhabit it.

LK: The fiction of this workshop or the plot of the movie?

G: In the projects you've done before. Do you use it as part of the design process as François does, or other architects. Or are you in the opposite camp where fiction/ narrative are not architecture?

LK: Between narrative being unrelated to architecture and narrative being architecture, I think an interval position might be constructed. Narrative does play an incredibly important role to the development and migration of ideas. But at the same time, it cannot replace architecture as a language, as a craft, as a skill, as a series of protocols and tools. I definitely believe in narrative in identifying the kind of agency of the architect, in redefining the use of the architect as a thinker, as a social innovator in society. Perhaps sometimes it goes too far into the realm of science fiction

and I do still believe there is a level where architecture operates as an extrusion of the existing reality, as a byproduct of the existing reality. It is at that level that I wish to operate. It is at that level that I am seeking my theoretical work to find the origins of these types of extrusions. I am not interested in projects that are completely formed to the way that we operate in the world but projects, thought systems, and processes that are extrusions of our own realms and operations, like a paraphrasing of the world.

CL: You know… what I find most interesting is when there is a confrontation… between what you imagined… and the fiction as the physics imagined it… as reality will imagine it… Loosing control is essential… in film you have the ability to do it, to let things happen and react with them… you enter a dance… It is easier in small independent productions like this one… In architecture I guess we should learn to loose control as well… to stop pretending that projects, designs are under control… it is becoming incredibly boring… Things only hap-

pen through misunderstandings, communication included… Fiction is not an ingredient you can add to your meringue recipe… it's not a plugin… you cannot escape it…

L: There is always a game that someone needs to play?

CL: Yes and what I like in film is that it keeps traces of this. Architecture can do it as well… We have seen it… sometimes it surrenders…

P: Is there fiction in my own work, and if there is why? Why fiction? Where is your reality? Mine is elsewhere? The narration-fiction I, we manipulate is embedded in a biographical dimension. Fiction as we talk is a structure of the real, and mine confuse intentionally illusions of perception, multiple paranoia, and… buying a cigarette at the tobacco shop, on the other side of the street. I'm not sure that you could see and touch what you seem to imply as being the opposite of fiction. There is no world outside the fictional one, no parallel universe where the truth could be adopted as a real state. You are students in architecture. All things

that describe the door to access to the real world have been condemned and hidden from you, to justify its existence, developing a frustration of an inaccessible zone. But imagine, just imagine that has been done as a strategy to let you believe that this area exists.

Please open your eyes: Fiction Versus Untruthfullnessssss…. That is the only choice, for tracking the intrinsic lie of the reality that keeps slipping as the illusion whenever we have the pretension to get closer. Doing the fiction fictionally functionally as a weapon, is like the sentence of Godard "doing political movie, it's to do political cinema politically", as a format which acts at the same time on the issues and on the mode of production.

G: So everything is fiction?

P: Capitalism is a tale for children that deeply affects-infects us. Financial capitalism is developing the ultimate degree of perversion, as a fiction of profit, which impoverishes the planet and the human condition of life. The virtual money has a deep impact on our daily life, on the value and impairment.

The potential of destabilization of the fiction, of the story telling, in all merchandising aspect is now arriving at a level of power, of perversion, which cannot anymore deflate. We are not any more citizens but actors of scenarios which are written without authors. It's for our needs, a necessity, to write as an author, to take the risk to infiltrate the mainstream of this story telling with and by the same substances it uses to maintain its position of power.

L: So, to you is fiction the story telling of a narration? Or a role game played by actors?

P: Where are the actors? Are you talking of the real actor of the movie? We are in Crete and the actors — we haven't talk about the actors yet, about the notion of mimesis. It means, by acting, how to reproduce something which could be similar to life without copying life. Without directly, and literally copying life's appearance. How can you transmit the emotion of something which is corresponding to the sensation of an emotion directly and literally doing a simulacrum of mimic, a mimicry of

life stereotypes.

So it means, how does it operate? How acting will operate? How fiction operates? How are we infiltrating desalienation and alienation simultaneously? How are we, through story telling able to recompose the multiple fragments of our "biotopes", to question, to denounce, to re-arrange, in the re-agencement notion of Deleuze to develop not a design as a statement but apparatuses of knowledge able to create a design process, as an artifact.

G: Is all architecture fiction?

P: As Lacan states, all theory is from a fictional structure, to quote exactly, "all truth has structure of fiction." Why architecture should be outside? Who said that?

C: What is the perception of the architect today covering authorship and how is it changing? Is it different form reality?

EB: I would like to think that our generation would lead to different types of organizations. I am very optimistic here, but hopefully our generation will lead to that because of the different means of communication we have with each other and with the tools of production. I think if you look a generation before us, the way they were personalizing a particular language, a particular office name, and how they were branding themselves was probably at the end of a time where you could do that. Everyone now changes jobs, changes environments, changes countries, and continents much faster.

What will that do to authorship? Personally I am much more keen and in support of an open source condition. Pretty much everything I have written the last ten years is up online. It is a vehicle for me to teach and test ideas, bringing it back to everyone else who is interested.

LK: The star architect is not dying now, in regards to authorship. He died a long time ago, perhaps along Ayn Rand's Howard Roark in The Fountainhead. In the film and the book, the architect was portrayed as a misunderstood hero, a tortured manly figured adverse to all external conditions, rising in the end at the top of a tower. He was fighting against his own sense of authorship. Perhaps with Howard Roark, authorship had already started to vanish. It was portrayed so clearly that the architect's identity was an artistic moment of genius, of inspiration, and creativity.

So then, everything happened; the sixties, the post-war period, experimental groups, the explosion and implosion of architecture as a discipline; its reconstitution as a language and so forth. There were architects thirty or forty years before Francois Roche, experimenting with organic materials, messing with biotechnology, experimenting with pneumatics, making political statements. All of that has already happened. Every political position has already been taken. There are so many ways with which the discipline has died, that the discipline has been erased. It is a very difficult way to find a position on what authorship means because it has meant everything in the last fifty years. How can you be revolutionary when Delirious New York was a retroactive manifesto of a found object, when there were architects that designed artificial islands through biopolymerization in 1968 ? Of course they didn't have the technology to carry through their assumptions to full development, but they were imagining what was plausible. It has already happened. What is the sense of authorship? I think it is a fractured sense of ego. New coalitions have to be formed. One has to discover a certain creative niche and what design agency means as a partial identity.

CL: What do you think our facebook generation will do? I have no clear vision… It seems that art and architecture so far kept a very traditional way of assigning authorship… It is more interesting in film… everyone has a precise job to do… the collaboration format is exemplary… why is it so? maybe because the cost of production depends on the time spent on it, you are paid by the hour… film is time and film in the making is also time… While in architecture we are generally so detached from immediate physical graspable world and action… Besides it is much more difficult to change role, to move, be versatile… while in film it seems easier… why? maybe architecture takes itself too seriously…

G: Do you think it's giving more value to the name or to the work? Or in other words…

CL: Well… Who is taking the risk…? I guess I'm not answering your question…I don't know I mean at some point there is someone taking a risk… And the person who is taking a risk naturally has authorship, carries it with him/her… but what does it bring? how to use it as a vector… to continue, to go further…

P: Wow, wow, … if we talk about authorship with the authors—who is talking? Who has the right to talk at my place, at your place? Or do you have the right yourself to talk and take a position? Who gives you the territories from where you have the right to emit your position and from where you get this authority? From where and how? And to whom? You are producing this kind of authoritarianism or this kind of this promotion of your authorship. And from this position to whom or where is the economy coming back? What is this economy? How and what is the service you exchange against this economical feedback. Authorship is a transaction. What is the

transaction architects are doing now? It seems very weak, in a way; we are floating in a void. Learning how to copy in academia, even with the latest technology (see the public letter I wrote on Sci-Arc)[2], doesn't give you the authority to negotiate your authorship as a value in the post-capitalism system… Capitalism pays traditionally very poorly whoever is servile and would pay generously who even is able to destabilize its foundations.

There is an integral resignation of the architecture critic. I speak about criticism as Baudelaire made the criticism in an existential report. The only position of a creator today is to develop an operative strategy of resistance (see *Log # 25*, I edited on Reclaim Resistance-Resilience), a renegotiation with industrial and academic forces, to re-evaluate the needs of media and their format... I do not deny that I feel more and more disappointed, but it is a feeling with which I continue to produce with, even becoming the substance of our production, as the ambiguity of a Charming Distress. But I must admit that for our projects and scenario, the feelings of disappointment had to be constitutive

of our aesthetic, and that since our first step. So it is not so new. I sometimes think it was possible for me to give up ... but at the same time giving up needs courage. Let's finish by a Jean Eustache sentence "not worth it to make the effort."

[1] personne, from French, nobody… and it is Odysseus' answer to escape from the giant Polyphemus!

[2] http://www.new-territories.com/sci%20arc%20cancel.htm

work from Megan Murdock

to understand the scape

Mabel Wilson and Mario Gooden in converstaion with Megan Murdock, Rashad Palmer and Sabrina Barker. Recorded on July 12th, 2013

MW: How's your stomach?

MG: Not sure if it is the soup or the fried calamari. I shouldn't have fried food.

MM: It's probably the fried calamari.

MW: How is your digestive track? Speaking of colon…

[laughter]

MM: How did you become interested in Johannesburg and what were your prior experiences doing research in the city?

MG: This studio started four years ago. The last two studios in Johannesburg looked at the kinds of leaps that have been made in terms of technology. We talked about inadequate infrastructure, the fact that there were very few landlines, and yet now everyone has a cell phone. We were interested in the topology or topography that is created when this kind of sudden change occurs.

MW: My studio last fall was looking at different forms of media and connectivity. Johannesburg as a city is a fortified enclave. How do you deal with cities that are literally designed to be that way? How do you break that segregation down? It clearly didn't break down after apartheid. In some respects it got more fortified. So, do these new technologies actually move across space and connect people in ways that may change how people understand the physical landscape of the city?

MG: What both studios have in common is the research component. The use of data to analyze the city, to understand the "scape," if you will, the mediascape. Johannesburg is a city that was designed to separate groups of people, as a mechanism for extracting natural resources. And it has only been a short period of time since apartheid, a little over 20 years. How does a city develop after that? And then I think, in terms of architecture, it's really interesting that a lot of buildings are all covered up. The city still has quite a legacy of modern architecture that not many people know about because they were built in the apartheid era. You can't really divorce politics from the architecture.

MM: What do you think the benefit is in trying to do research in such a complicated area?

RP: It depends on who you are. There are people who came here with a lot of reservations in terms of what the area would be, that it's going to be dangerous; while others are more relaxed without a lot of expectations. For me, not knowing much about Bree Street beforehand allows me to dive in and let things happen.

SB: Sometimes it is hard to know whether people are telling you the answers they think you want, versus what they really think. Especially being a foreigner and being an American, and all the assumptions that go along with that.

MW: Right, one problem in anthropology, for example, has been the reliability of the informer. People don't necessarily tell you what's going on.

MG: Another question the students posed to the traders along Bree Street was "do you feel that you belong to Johannesburg or Johannesburg belongs to you?" We had this discussion about the traders who are, for the most part, migrants. Since they do not necessarily feel it is their home, do they have a sense of responsibility for Bree Street? For them Johannesburg is a place for work. The city becomes a kind of mechanism for producing other things, but what about the production of the city itself? I guess this is the question that I have been thinking about: the contrast between the city as a place for work versus the city as

infrastructure for community, for people who actually live here.

MM: Mpho Matsipa made the argument that Johannesburg, being an African city, is often seen as very different from other cities. But it is actually a typical city and has similar problems as other cities around the world. Have you seen things in other cities that play out differently in Johannesburg?

RP: I think getting out of this area, Maboneng, is the most difficult. We do want to get out and see the rest of Johannesburg, but that requires scheduling a taxi. Socially, I haven't really witnessed this, but I am trying to be aware of xenophobia. Supposedly it is an issue in South Africa.

MW: You didn't get "Yankee go home"?

RP: No, but I was called a coconut.

SB: I have to agree with Rashad in terms of transportation. What surprises me is also security. Some neighborhoods look like fortresses. They had cameras outside, their own security guards and barbed wire.

MM: The city is divided into privately managed districts. Around the inner city different developers own certain areas. Policing on the street is done by private security. As a result, there is this weird condition where arbitrary rules govern how one behaves on the street. Even through there is no physical boundary, the experience on the street can be totally opposite between different districts. The unusual thing about the city for me is the contrast, where within blocks you have people in poverty and people who are very wealthy. I think there is a bit more of a gradient in the United States, but here the contrast is in your face.

MW: Yes, I agree, the contrast is there. There isn't a gradient; it's a wall between the have's and the have-not's. And the wall has barbed wire. I wonder what percentage of the labor force is actually guard labor. What would happen if the walls were to come down and everybody could move freely? Would it change people dramatically?

MM: Interviewing people who have real struggles in their lives is difficult because when people are willing to speak with us they think that we have the ability to help them. Do you think that Columbia can give back by being an agent to them or is it even important for Columbia to try to give back in a way?

MG: The short term answer is no. We don't have a resolution for immediate issues but I think we are bringing another level of awareness beyond, let's say, the boundaries of Johannesburg and even South Africa.

MW: Knowledge is power. It can always be productive, change happens when people know about things.

work from Jon Jackson

attached to the idea of situated difference

Sylvia Lavin in conversation with C. Recorded on August 14th, 2013

C: I am going to start with a statement: where we live and work defines us, at least in some regards. And I think it is apparent in our constant need to ask, "where are you from?", "what neighborhood do you live in?" as if this would give us some insight into their personality or the way they think according to their geographic location. So I guess this discussion is bigger than New York and LA, but I think those are two good cities to start with because they both have strong characters, if we can talk about cities as having characters, and that very much affects the architects working in them. The lecture that you moderated between Thom Mayne and Bernard Tschumi brought up recurring stereotypes that have been applied before; that perhaps people in New York are more concerned with the conceptual or theoretical aspect of an artwork , whereas people in Los Angeles are more focused on the making and feeling of a work. Would you agree with this generalization? I understand that as a generalization it can't be applied to everyone, but I find it apparent in the way that architects from both cities speak about and emphasize aspects of their work.

SL: I agree that there are different habits: habits of mind, habits of practice, habits of production, habits of speech, just as there are different dialects from one region to another, even if the base language stays the same. But I think I don't fundamentally agree with what you are saying, although I recognize the symptoms that you're reading -- mainly that there seem to be these different habits in New York and LA if we take those two as examples. But the discourses that emphasize those differences tend to in the end get down to geographical essentialism, which is really not a premise with which I would agree. So would I say that the kind of distinctions that you are making, say the conceptual versus the…

C: … the building, or fabrication. I think that there is more of an emphasis on material in Los Angeles than there is in New York.

SL: See, I think you're actually talking about institutions and not about cities. I think if you look at Pratt or Parsons you'll find plenty of fabrication going on there. If you look at the office of Jeff Koons you'll see an unbelievable expertise in systems of fabrication that employ exactly the same tools that architects use: Catia, 3D modeling, etcetera. But other institutions choose to foreground other issues. I think it has nothing to do with New York. I think it has to do with the institutional practices and habits. I do think that an aspect of these institutions has to do with the way modernization unfolded. So, modernization came later to Los Angeles than it came to New York because LA is a newer place and rapid modernization has different kinds of effects. For example, in Los Angeles, the primary art and architectural institutions were in effect put in place in the 1960s. Which is not to say that they have no historical trajectory, but they came into being and were populated in a certain kind of way with certain kinds of ideas already in place. There are few enough of them that they don't produce as much power in their interrelations as the institutions in New York do – which have been there longer, and have built up longer term associations with certain stakeholders. So those institutional differences are very significant, and those differences absolutely have an effect on practice and the way things unfold. But do I think that has anything to do with New York and Los Angeles as places, in the way that that word is normally used in a phenomenological sense? No, I don't. And I think that's what you were driving at in the beginning, which is why I would say I recognize the symptoms, but my diagnosis of them would be very different.

C: And how about the way we move around the city? For example the car culture in Los

Angeles, does that influence the way architects think about how to build there versus the importance of subway lines and high-rise buildings in New York?

SL: Gee, well, I don't know. It's ironic to point out to you a fact that you know perfectly well which is, at least in terms of architectural theory, the earliest people who most elaborately theorized on the impact of car culture on architecture, among them Reyner Banham, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, were not from Los Angeles. They have absolutely nothing to do with LA from any essential point of view. So no, I don't think car culture is a prerogative of LA.

C: So, you would say it is more about the moment in time when an institution emerges in the city rather than the physical attributes of the city itself? I still can't help but feel that there are these marked distinctions, even if they are institutional. Will cities converge as Los Angeles becomes as old as New York and as New York becomes as old as London? There still seems to be this separa-

tion between different places of production.

SL: If you are going to use a conversation between Bernard and Thom as your point of departure, those two in their everyday being could almost be used to stereotype the East Coast and West Coast. In other words, if what you want to find are these stereotypical differences then those would be people to look towards. On the other hand, Thom now lives in New York and he was trained at Harvard. I don't know what that makes him. One of Bernard's first important conceptual statements, his theorizations on the relationship between urbanity and architecture, took place because of a trip to LA, and was written about LA. So really the differences are not etched in stone. Also, emphasizing the differences has precluded the opportunity to understand the complex dynamic relationship between not just those two cities, but across the differences in place. So I guess I'm responding very strongly to what I feel is a sense in your questions to want to preserve the sanctity of place and its local identity. And I

would say that I don't particularly see the value of that

C: Right, I am not trying to draw hard lines and classify. I guess I am trying to use these distinctions as a way to get to something else. I really do feel that there are these ineffable differences between the East and West Coast that I have been thinking about since I moved from California to New York - and I guess I am just trying to wrap my head around it. Maybe these differences are just romantic, and as we streamline into a more globalized place the differences become smaller and smaller as you're suggesting.

SL: I think I would put it in a different way. What does it mean that somebody like you remains attached to the idea of situated difference despite all of the evidence, inescapable pressures that are tending towards the production of a homogeneous global culture? So what's important is that you want there to be differences, despite the fact that all indications are diminishing. So difference holds some value. That is worth reflecting on because the value is real even if

the differences are not. That is what I would say to you, in terms of your own speculation, why are you interested in this subject? The second thing that I would say is, releasing the notion of place from this essentializing geographical phenomenology, makes available a different set of tools for analysis, and for analyzing a new set of objects. What happens to that question when you shift the object from the city of Los Angeles and the city of New York to lets say Sci-Arc and Columbia? What kind of new questions does that shift make available?

C: Ok, um…

SL: I would say they are pretty significant.

C: Well the stated agenda of a school is to teach, influence and project a voice while a city is a passive entity.

SL: If you shift from long-standing cities and their inalienable, geographic, infrastructural conditions that intrinsically make the city almost beyond critique, because it's like a mountain— how the hell

do you critique a mountain? It is what it is… whereas the minute you start putting it in institutional terms it becomes not only subject to analysis but also susceptible to transformation. And I think that's very significant. I'm not sure that I satisfied what you wanted from me but I hope that the conversation was useful.

a city under the knife

AdCM: Is it necessary to be in Rio to conduct this workshop?

LG: This is not an easy question to answer. I think in order to run any GSAPP workshops the location is essential in motivating the passion that drives brainstorming. When Alejandro and Francisco chose Rio, I think they were looking at the current cultural shift in Brazil in general, and Rio is just where Studio X is located. If either of them had their way, however, I think we would have been in São Paulo (neither of them bothered to hide their adoration of the never-ending city). I personally prefer Rio, and I am also of the opinion that the results of this project were more interesting than if they had been located in the economically driven São Paulo.

MS: At this particular historical moment, yes. And at any point, it's good to throw yourself into an unfamiliar environment to work. You can do all the research you want from a computer, but the effect of moving through the very environment under consideration colors the entire approach to the project. It gets you closer to the work – you can't make too many assumptions about the nature of your site when it is right in front of you and you have to walk through it to get back to your bed at the end of the day.

AdCM: What does Rio add to the workshop?

AS: Rio is in a unique moment of development due to two major events coming in the near future: The 2014 FIFA World Cup (in multiple Brazilian cities) and the Rio 2016 Olympics. This abnormal situation allows for speculative proposals that can take advantage of the investment going into different areas of development.

LG: Rio added a lot of playfulness. It is a laidback city that knows how to work hard, but party harder. Cariocas have a reputation for this in all of Brazil. In 2013 Rio is in a position where it might actually be taken seriously internationally, and I´m not entirely sure if it wants to be. This crisis of identity is what made Rio really interesting to explore. Our project intended to explore three states of capital: physical, economic and social. Given the identity crisis, Rio is really at odds with itself about which of these is the most important, and therefore the balance is all out of whack.

MS: Rio is a particularly pertinent site for an inquiry into capital and development. The coming of the World Cup next year and the Olympics in 2016 is fueling a fury of development in the city. The history of "Mega Games" development and its impact on cities, particularly the already marginalized populations, is sordid at best. The Rio municipal government is forcibly relocating sectors of the population and seizing property using eminent domain. A city under the knife is a pretty great place to look at how cities are made, and to try and sort out a better possible method for their evolution. On top of this, the topography of the city, among other things, has helped to create and maintain a close spatial proximity between dramatically separated economic classes. There is a palpable intensity in the city that seems to arise from this. I did not sense this as clearly in São Paulo, where the favelas are pushed far to the periphery, leaving a much wealthier core.

AdCM: Would you say that you performed research during the workshop?

ZZ: Yes, but not deeply because of the time limit, language barrier and unreliable Internet access.

AS: Yes, but this may have been a mistake.

LG: Depends what you mean by

research.

MS: Yes.

AdCM: If so, what kind of research would you say you did?

AS: I tried to inform myself about the current situation and development of a specific favela (Rocinha) that was in close proximity to my site. I found it to be impossible to get a decent grasp of the complexity of their situation in two weeks and with only "Internet based" research. Any actual proposal based on that would have been very uninformative and top-down. In my particular case, the specificities of the research only led to dead ends, so I could only use them as background information for a broader speculation.

LG: Informal and non-intentional research.

MS: Some of your standard, first-pass Googling, of course. But living for two weeks in the place you are "researching" is its own form of research. You can't look it up. I fell in love with an architect that I had only recently discovered in history shortly before the workshop began. I went back to visit some of her buildings three times. I also worked on my grasp of Portuguese.

AdCM: How did the readings add value (if they did) to the design process?

ZZ: They definitely added a lot of value. Our workshop is based on the theory put forth by the readings. They acted as the rules of a game and we played our design/planning within the rules.

LG: The readings added value to the design process by forcing us to continue to pull all-nighters like usual. But actually, they were a really great way of regrouping every day and having new experiences from a common perspective, since we were a mixed group of planners and architects. I actually wish this would be more common in our semester-long studios. The readings were not only contained within the discussions we had each morning; the content would frequently come up in conversations even after we had a few beers. These conversations definitely permeated my design process in unexpected ways.

MS: The readings were exquisitely curated. They introduced to us the basics of "zero-sum" economic theory in history and the subsequent expansion of economic modeling and its application to critical social theory, energy and resource politics, and urbanism. The game that was proposed for play was complicated. I think it took a long time for everybody to wrap their heads around the implications bound up in the rules of the game. The readings provided a really great road map. The daily discussions were always interesting and took place at remarkable architectural sites. This created an inevitable relationship between the spaces and history of the city and the theory being discussed.

AdCM: Would you say that the workshop questioned the "business as usual" way to do architecture/planning? If so, in what sense/how? If not, what is the "business as usual" way of proceeding in architecture/planning projects?

AS: Playing the game in which there had to be a clear loser forced us to consider things or make decisions that we wouldn't think of under "normal" conditions. We usually work under some loose conception of an "everyone wins" ideal outcome. In this case, making sure someone is really loosing helps in making more drastic or "out of the box" decisions. I'm not sure if this is necessarily different from the professional "business as usual" way to do a project, but I noticed some of us struggled with having a real loser in the game.

MS: Yes, absolutely. I think the implicit argument of the Capital game we were presented was that somebody always has to lose, that the accumulation of capital is not cyclical, but historically unidirectional. If you broaden your view of the making of architecture and the planning of cities to accept the limits of a finite playing field, i.e. a finite resource pool, then you start identifying the hidden losers in glossy advertisements for "socially responsible" mega developments and hyper-paced urban makeovers. The workshop asked us to interrogate the processes of urban development in terms of capital and then try to discern what unintended consequences might be integral to those processes.

AdCM: What type of architecture/planning profession is the workshop advocating for? Does such profession exist? If so, where? Do you like that profession?

ZZ: From my perspective, the workshop advocates for the concept of zero-sum development. There must be losers and winners. The question is then how to measure transformation. There is no universally acknowledged way to measure social and cultural capitals. I like the idea and believe this is a critical issue.

AS: It is advocating for a broader profession that doesn't deal solely with specificities of the built environment, one that can formulate strategies and interventions that aren't necessarily physical in nature. The profession must become more versatile and expand into other fields. Side note: In several universities in South America, students go through a six-year program and graduate with a title of "Architect and Urbanist." It is not a coincidence to find programs like these in areas of the world that have some of the largest projected urban growth in the next 50 years. It is not necessarily the solution, but perhaps a step towards a more versatile profession.

LG: This workshop definitely advocates that the two professions consider each other, that it is impossible to separate the two. Interestingly, in Brazil these professions are taught in the same program.

MS: While critical of the system in play, the workshop advocated pragmatism by acknowledging the crucial functionality of capitalism in the day-to-day operation of the world. You can't just pull the plug, but you have to be critical of the given rules of operation. I like this as a profession very much; it is critical while optimistic. This sort of profession exists in universities, but we need to find a way to pull it deeper into the practice of architecture.

AdCM: How do you see the difference between quantitative and qualitative ways to measure social and natural facts?

ZZ: Qualitative ways are ideas or arguments. Qualitative ways are tangible and easy to communicate with other fields.

LG: In general, people are more likely to accept quantitative measurements than qualitative.

MS: The former relies on the unassailability of scientific methods and standards in our culture to produce truths while the latter engages the world on more nuanced terms to produce understanding. I'm pretty sure that's not the answer you're looking for.

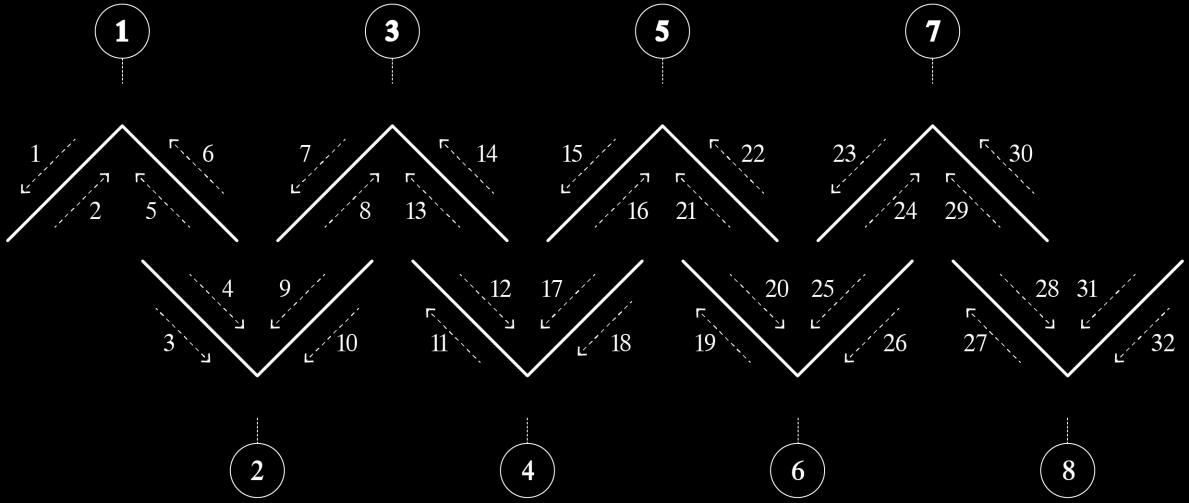**AdCM: What would you say the workshop was about?**

ZZ: The workshop is about doing site planning based on the French Socialist Pierre Buordieu's theory on social capital, economic capital, physical capital, and the zero-sum development.

AS: The workshop was about not being architects or planners as we are used to, but applying the systematic thinking that we learn in school elsewhere. It was interesting to design a strategy rather than an object.

LG: Overall, I think this workshop was an experiment in teaching.

But for me specifically, an excuse to move to Rio.

MS: The city.

flip up

fold back

rotate

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