



Lebbeus Woods, Book cover illustration for Roger Zelazny, the
isle of the dead eye of cat

Verner Panton Chair, 1970

SCI-Arc Spring 2007
Studio 4A

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miLAn^xchanges

Cross Cultural Exchanges in Architecture & Design

Studio Project:

The studio addresses the development of architectural design through the engagement with identified cultural differentials of new urban cultures emergent in Los Angeles and Milan. This near historic Cross-Atlantic link is part of a long spanned history of exchanges between the two continents and is intersected and extended by the phenomena of growing global networks of trade and communication.

Within this context of global markets and global cultures, questions of new affiliations, specialty, particularity and identity, – however transitory and temporal - require continues repositioning of the notions defining the new, origin, place and value. The consequential dynamic and receptive cultural climate of this accelerated world of exchanges and communications provide the fertile grounds for the specialized fields of production of ideas and designs. Resultant in opportunities for new collaborations and new products, these geographies of a temporal cross-cultural fertilization and affinities transcend and challenge geopolitical limitations and outline the site and scope for our studio work.

Los Angeles and Milan are places of highly differentiated cultural values fostering energized intersections in the area of fashion and design. This studio engages with the particularities and potentials of these force fields determining differentials of socio-cultural values as a basis for our architectural investigations.

This virtual bridge is defined by a number of correlations i.e. the advanced researches in material technologies pro prior to the west coast with the distinguished material-body-cult originating through Milan's fashion consciousness.

"Dal cucchiaino alla citta' " ("From the spoon to the city", Ernesto Rogers 1952 Charta of Athens) defines an attitude architects developed and sustained in Italy in since the 50's which explore the idea of the architect as someone who could and would design a building as well as an object with the same involvement. In our studio we want to review this proposition and push the interpretation of this historic sentence even further. We like to think that we can, starting from the design of an object, arrive to the design of a building and its insert in the city fabric.

The city at this point becomes the center of our attention, which areas develops in which ways, is a bottom up organization? Which one are the reasons beyond the development of certain neighborhood?

Studio structure:

It is imperative that you feel comfortable in your work environment. As your instructors, we will promote an open environment where everyone's ideas, concerns, critiques, and feedback welcome to be expressed and discussed. As we proceed through the semester, it is important that everyone operate under the same commonly agreed rules and guidelines to ensure an equal and inspiring working and learning environment. Your presence in the studio is mandatory in your own interest.

A major part of cultivating an energetic and conducive environment is that every member of the class works in the studio. You will realize, that much of your growth and expanding awareness, as designers, will come from the personal daily (& hourly) interaction between you and your colleagues. Working outside of studio not only takes away from your learning potential, it also takes you away from others to learn from you and with you.

The studio meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2:00p – 7:00p. Studio will begin promptly and attendance is mandatory. Arriving late and/or leaving early will constitute an absence. Three absences with or without a legitimate excuse will result in the student being dropped from the studio. Attendance is mandatory at critiques, pin-ups, and reviews. Errands, trips for supplies, copies, outside research, etc. should be taken care of during non-studio time. During studio hours no cell phones and instant messaging are allowed.

If absence from studio is unavoidable, notify your studio instructor 2 days prior either in person or via e-mail.

Studio time is set aside for studio projects. You are not to work on other class work during studio hours.

Schedule:

Readings and discussions of readings, talks concerning the history and theory of production, field trips to visit places of production in action and other buildings in the city and elsewhere and guest lecturers will accompany the studio and provide the source material for the program development.

4A explores the city of Milan based on its international recognized role in the world of industrial design. Reading the past, but especially the future development of the city based on its economy and strategic thinking connected to perhaps the second most important industry, after the fashion. Making assumptions about the urban future of a city that after many year of decline due to deindustrialization starts only now to see the reborn of many ex-industrial areas dedicated to residential but also productive and creative uses.

The semester is structured in three interlinked project phases to allow for a progressively structured exploration and development of evolving cultural values as informant for our architectural designs.

The initial phase is dedicated to identifying the prevailing cultural contexts of new fashion and furniture design in Milan and Los Angeles, leading to the conception and fabrication of a full scale FURNITURE object. The furniture objects are designed and discussed in relation to their intended socio-cultural environments (*use*). Emphasis is on fostering *INVENTIVNESS* informing the design process. and on the precise positioning of the work within an intended context set by the semester program and sites addressing the particularities of emergent cultures and affiliated criteria.

The second phase extends the first project by investigating and designing the virtual and physical environments of the produced furniture objects. The discourse focuses on questions of the object ENVIRONMENT, virtual and physical, and object-related life form and cultural cohesion versus the ephemeral and eclectic.

The third and main project phase takes on the conception and design of a furniture company's HEADQUARTER and showroom-building in an industrial brown-field area of Milan. Much like the furniture object that is discussed in relation to its immediate environment, the architectural designs are to be conceived responsive to their urban integration and impact, synthesizing the cross-cultural informants defining form, material, structures and program.

The semester culminates in the presentation and discussion of all three project phases ranging from the furniture piece, to environment/interior to the furniture company's headquarter building proposal and its urban position.

Portfolio:

Concurrently, throughout the course of the semester you'll be asked to develop your portfolio. The instructors will set up review times for working with you on the design and conception of the portfolio. This document is seen as an important aspect of your professional life as a designer and architect operating in a public domain. It records your development, your tendencies, and your particular skills and accomplishments. The portfolio is valuable to you as an individual in the same way a journal is to a writer, and it is also the primary means for sharing your work with a larger audience.