

BAS Autumn 2020 Master Course Brief

2020.08.22 - 2020.12.18

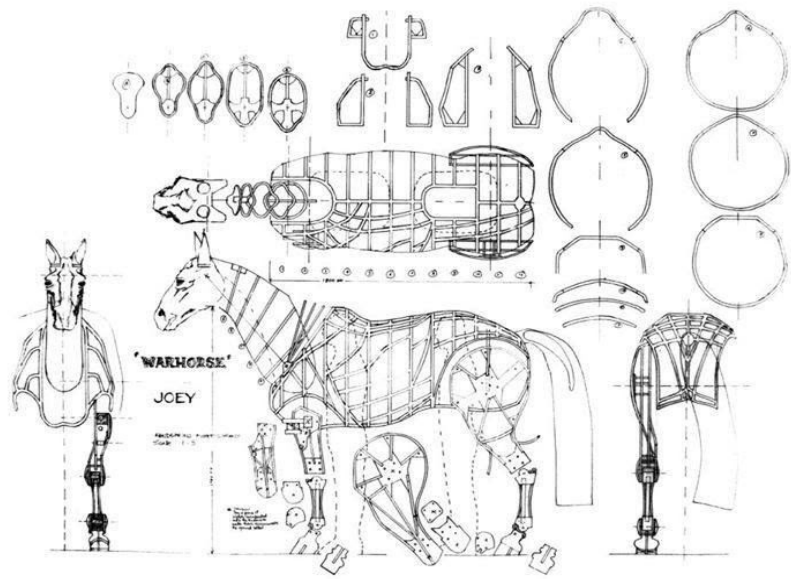
MASQUERADES



The Meat Stall, Pieter Aertsen, 1551

There's a strong argument, probably even a historical one, that architecture – as distinct from building – is always that which is represented, and particularly that which is represented in the media aimed at architects.

Kester Rattenbury



Left: The Garden of Earthly Delights (detail), Hieronymus Bosch, 1490 - 1510. Right: Construction drawing for the play War Horse.

Interplays

Masquerades is an exploration into the interplay of the represented and the realised. Through the construction of masks, costumes, and scenographic setups we will develop devices and spaces that embrace architecture's figurative, playful, and expressive dimensions.

The course offers an expedition into the realm of representational practices and mimicry, this uncertain territory between fiction and reality, where things that are made to look like the real thing suddenly contribute to, influence, and even supersede the things they were thought only to refer to.

Carnival - 'Flesh, farewell!'

The studiowork takes its outset in the carnival parade with its predilection for the absurd and the surreal. Its many opportunities for disguise and taking on personas, its figurative and sometimes subversive expression, become our opportunity to invent architectures that are multilayered, enigmatic, adhere to the body, and play with the correspondence between outwards appearance and internal actuality.

Influenced by the cultures and practices surrounding mimicry, mask making, and masquerades we will take apart and invent new methods and techniques of representation. We will infuse our work with studies of the technical and pictorial devices in geometry and linear perspective. We will examine the social mechanisms of self-representation and look at the cultural manifestations of mimicry in popular culture and public events. We will question the construction and careful curation of the self and the public, as a parallel to the assumed correspondence between the building's façade and its interior. In this sense, the unit work is about the construction of reality as a simultaneously physical and mental act.

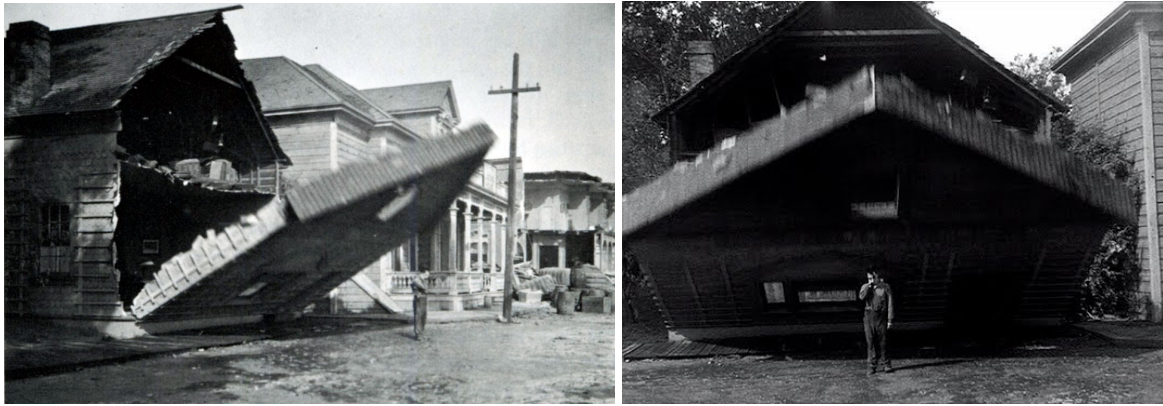


The Fight Between Carnival and Lent, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1559

Manifestations

We pursue a wide range of projects and expressions situated within architecture's experimental and propositional regions. The studio sets up a shared site, strategies of engagement, and events such as the communal parade as fertile grounds of discovery. One-on-one discussions, film nights, and lectures that cover technical and artistic topics, are a central part of the unit's teaching.

With outset in the mask and the wearable projects develop in scale to their final resolution in the small building scale. Proposals are resolved with a high degree of detailing influenced by a deep understanding of the building's ability to manifest narratives for and about its occupants, and explorations into architecture's capacity to form new ways of living. The course work manifests itself according to the approaches and interests in participants' individual projects.



Stills from the falling facade scene in *Steam Boat Bill, Jr.* (Dirs. Reisner & Keaton), 1928.

Ethos

We are a speculative unit that values risk taking and open-ended work methods taught in a reflective framework. In the unit, production and making act as vehicles for discovery and invention. We try not to prescribe what architecture is or can be. Instead we aim to supply the practical and theoretical foundation that allow an equally critical and poetic engagement with architecture.

Developing familiarity with workshop practices and making skills are central to the unit's work, where projects are driven by discoveries made through the construction of work pieces that merge functionality with the ability to trigger the individual's reflective practice.

We are interested in the physical construction of ideas and the invention of work methods that are tuned to individual projects and fascinations. We approach this territory of the new and unknown by embodying ideas, fascinations, and sensibilities in drawings, models, and apparatuses that we can interrogate and learn from through iterations of refinement.

Our pursuit of experimentation and open-ended approaches is accompanied by the integration of strategies used by artists to engage with phenomena and ideas that cannot easily be put into words. We believe that experimental approaches forged under the influx of skill-based practices combined with critical methods from the humanities are central to developing autonomous practitioners. We are interested in forming the capacity to engage in the hybridized nature of our practice's shared practical and intellectual pursuits. We work to combine these traditional aspects of design and architecture with reflective methods from research and narrative approaches in art.

The term's work focuses on the territory between apparatus, installation, performance, and building where we allow the spatial implications to arise as a consequence of our engagement with materials, structures, and processes that have a one-to-one relationship with the built environment. Our focus on production as a process of discovery is accompanied by a fascination with representational practices: its history, concepts, and techniques, ranging from their application in the natural sciences over architectural media to their manifestation in popular culture and everyday life.



Left: Notting Hill Carnival, London, England. Right: Carnivale de Viareggio, Viareggio, Italy

Field trip (2020.08.29 - 09.02) *Dates and destination to be confirmed with respect to travel restrictions

The semester commences with an introductory making workshop followed by a field trip to London where we will participate in the Notting Hill Carnival and observe the intermingling of English culture with the diaspora of the Caribbean and West Indian carnival tradition known as Mas. The carnival is loud so earplugs are essential and so are the first iteration of your work that you will test during the parade, which also serves as the site for the course work.

The excursion to London allows us to become acquainted with works by uniquely driven, often curious and uncompromising practitioners such as Sir John Soane's densely populated house and museum, the performative house of Denis Severs, and the last residence and office of Dr. Sigmund Freud - a space carefully curated with objects that supported Freud's patients in developing free associations. We will also see contemporary work such as Peter Salter's recently completed Walmer Yard. Additionally we will visit London's museums to observe collections that range from medical models of the human body over anthropological artifacts to exceptional works of art such as Rebecca Horn's Body Extensions at the Tate.

Theory

Architects are familiar with representational media such as drawings and models. We habitually use them as propositional tools or as analytical instruments to make sense of the world and phenomena around us. The approach to and reliance on representation is an identifying attribute of architecture, perhaps even the thing that sets architecture apart from other fields. For a long time, architects have been inscribed in the gap between representation and realisation. Robin Evans noticed this and wrote, that «[...] architects labour under a peculiar disadvantage, never working directly with the object of their thoughts, always through some intervening medium instead of on the thing itself which, naturally, absorbs most of their attention and effort.» In his book on drawing Peter Cook speaks of «[...] this suspicion, that the drawing can possibly be better than the realized building it proposes.» For Evans, and particularly Cook, it comes as an unpleasant realization that the drawing is more true to the ideas, experiences, and ideals he breathes into his work, than the building itself. For us, the precarious and ambiguous nature of drawing's stature in relation to the thing it proposes exemplifies why the field of representation is a fertile territory for invention.

People

Course Lead: Frederik Petersen (DK, 1979) is an architect, PhD, and educator. He is a Researcher in Residence at C.A.S.T., a Senior Maker at the Bartlett, an associate in Store Projects. He has taught at the Bartlett, Oxford Brookes, Aarhus School of Architecture, and the KADK. His practice spans sculpture, furniture, and photography. His work is driven by an interest in naturalistic representation and its influence on the construction and perception of reality. Through the documentation of representational cracks in nearly perfect illusory landscapes his research attempts to uncover moments of authenticity within artificiality.

Course tutor: Anne Friis (DK, 1974) is an architect, artist, and curator. Her work is concerned with rethinking the tools of architecture. She explores the intermediate forms of analog and digital drawing, often incorporating animation and photography. She also curates exhibitions of art, architecture, and her particular interest, experimental drawing. She is currently working on a series of montages leading up to an exhibition inspired by Gottfried Semper's theories on walls and ornamentation. In her practice she has completed many works and assignments bridging art and architecture, notably for the sculptor Martin Erik Andersen.

Visiting Artist: Karen Gamborg Knudsen (DK, 1978) is an artist and architect. As one half of the artist duo Gamborg/Magnussen (www.gamborgmagnussen.com) her work has been exhibited in Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States. Her proposal for a cabbage field consisting of 10,000 cabbage heads surrounding a quirky communal outdoor kitchen is the official Danish contribution to the Chicago Architecture Biennial 2019. It is currently on display in Garfield Park. Her individual practice combines digital and analogue approaches to drawing to produce work that hover between image, space, and landscape (www.theblackbeargroup.org).

*Frederik Petersen, Anne Friis, and Karen Gamborg Knudsen trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Architecture. Together they are the founding editors of the online art and architecture platform *Entreentre – On Architecture and Image*. *Entreentre* curates exhibitions, publishes montages, criticism, and interviews with artists and architects whose work embrace experimental spatial practices.*

Addendum

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic our societies are undergoing profound changes. The social distancing measures we uphold will have a profound impact on architectural education, that traditionally relies on access to workshop facilities, shared work spaces, face-to-face tutorials, field trips, and a tightly knit unit structure. We are aware of challenges and concerns that follow from physical distancing regulations and will continue to adapt our teaching to the ongoing changes. We will of course, to the widest possible extent, conduct lectures, workshops, film nights, social events, and work in our studio at the school as usual.

To mitigate the negative effects of the social distancing measures we will conduct more of our sessions as online tutorials. We will establish a virtual classroom where unit members can interact and follow each other's work in periods where they are not able to work at the school. In the periods where work must be conducted from home we recognise the need to maintain a consistent schedule and work routine that allow us to be productive and motivated while clearly separating study and leisure time.

Drawing, model making, and construction remain central to the course program. We recognise that the varying access to tools and a space to work in will have implications for your work. As a response to this we will engage with your work conditions as an active and productive aspect of your project. We will mitigate the potentially limited access to shared studio spaces by supporting you in setting up your residence as a place for work, whether this is by building a drawing table, or by finding ways in which you can explore your ideas in a scale, material, or computer application that is accessible to you and make sense for the ideas in your work. To support you in this we have allocated additional teaching hours and will acquire materials and toolsets for the unit, which can be used to work safely and efficiently from home.

Another way in which we will address the challenges of working and communicating at a distance in case of a lockdown is to implement video, stop motion animation, and photography as instruments through which you can interrogate, stage, and disseminate your work. This fits well with our program's focus on narrative and fascination with media that can be used to simultaneously document and reconsider your work.