

# AGENCY REDIRECTED

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## ABSTRACT

In response to changes in both the practice of architecture and changes in terms of architecture's field of operation: the global economic, political and cultural context of its production, the following paper proposes to re-examine the inherited unit system of the graduate educational M.Arch design studio. Contrary to 'alternate modes of practice' that propose in critiquing the profession, an abandonment of the discipline of architecture, this paper instead calls for a clarified return in the educational context to architecture's core material and spatial skill set redirected relative to the animating diagrammatic condition that since the 19th century has relied on architecture's capacities in material and organizational experimentation to build cities.

This paper has emerged from our increasing sense of frustration at the diminishing capacity of architecture to effect transformation on itself and on the things around it. We are asking ourselves continuously, in a field that insists on so often defining itself in terms of novelty, where does our agency lie such that we might effect real change, both internally and externally to the field? In the educational context this becomes a question of how most effectively can we deploy the M.Arch design studio as both a teaching and a research environment tasked with arming graduates with the tools to positively intervene in practice conditions.

Recent changes to a global political and economic landscape have altered the field within which architecture is made and deployed. Alejandro Zaera-Polo has observed a kind of acceleration of conditions where

*“the increasing complexity of global developments – the distribution of power within the world economy, the transnational competition between cities, the development of world-wide environmental policies, the growing importance of media as a political force, the increasing number of private agents in the provision of services and infrastructures – all are redefining the politics of architecture and urbanism.”<sup>1</sup>*

And yet at the same time as the context of the operation of architecture in a broader sense is being challenged, the profession has also faced marginalization in its direct field of action – the design and management of the production of buildings. The environment in which architects must now practice contains a new level of complexity. Increasing specialization and expanded consultation teams within each project must be negotiated in the context of managerial approaches to public procurement external to the project. Global opportunities amplify these issues given different cultural and economic environments.

The importance of the graduate Masters of Architecture (M.Arch) design studio in this context is that it is both the site of the education of each new generation of architects, but equally it (or its equivalent) has since the second half of the 19th century been a powerful site of disciplinary experimentation, feeding new knowledge into practice in a conditional and reciprocal relationship. The M.Arch design studio is one of the key disciplinary sites that allows us to ask anew with each generation and within the context of architecture, ‘What is the city?’ - a question that contains

within its diagnostic and propositional gesture, an explicit demand each time that we also define who we are in response.

At various times since the late 1960’s one response to the changing demands of practice has been a series of propositions for ‘alternative forms of practice’<sup>2</sup>. This idea of ‘alternate practice’ most often involves the re-assertion of the relevance of architecture in fields where acceptance has been greater and impacts more easily measured – such as engagement in social projects, arts based projects or in aid and humanitarian work. In all cases the architect will create positive outcomes through means other than conventional built work. Contained within this work is an implicit critique of the profession of architecture as it is currently constructed.

## PROFESSION V DISCIPLINE AND ALTERNATE FORMS OF PRACTICE

It’s useful here to clarify the difference between notions of ‘profession’ and that of ‘discipline’. In the context of this paper, when we refer to the term ‘*profession*,’ we are referring to the historic organisation of experts that emerged in the 19th century and equally to those aspects of the institution that make it possible for individuals to participate in architecture as a recognizable and legitimate social practice. Hyungmin Pai reminds us that,

*“as much as architects are enabled by their participation within a larger social construct [the profession] they are also constrained by these same external conditions.”<sup>3</sup>*

‘*Discipline*’ on the other hand, while also being formed within the same social boundaries and resources as the profession, sustains a relatively autonomous field of practice. Importantly, the discipline ‘can be known without tracing every work realized by the profession’ suggesting why ‘paper architecture’ and unbuilt work carries as much influence in the discipline as does built work. ‘Discipline’ refers to the body of knowledge - and particularly it refers to a set of material and formal skills – “that cannot be reduced to the constructs of other fields.”<sup>4</sup> It can be seen that the discipline in this definition is simultaneously an open and a closed system. It is open in as much as it can be taught, learned and transmitted, while it is closed in the sense that it requires commitment to a conventional system of knowledge and practices in order that one might engage in it and be engaged by it;<sup>5</sup> a fact that led

Jeffrey Kipnis to notice while writing about the diagram and on consideration of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye that

*"It works for me and on me, but I can understand why others just see a nice looking house."*<sup>6</sup>

When we step into the speaking position of architect, we both assume a professional posture in terms of legal responsibilities and framings and as a community of interest, but Kipnis also noticed that as an architect the diagrammatic content of the house, the domestic, of which the Villa Savoye is an exemplar, worked on him and through him – suggesting, as others have pointed out many times – that our agency in terms of architecture's capacity to affect change is conditional, not total – and that critical to it is that moment of exchange cultivated via disciplinary engagement.

Though the history of the profession and the discipline are irrevocably intertwined in the construction of the architectural institution, they do not run parallel.<sup>7</sup> In returning then to that category of architects working in non-conventional practice, in government, or in arts based collectives or aid agencies, there is a claim made to validate the relevance of the discipline but contained within the work is usually a critique of the profession as it is currently constituted. While such forms of practice provide significant lessons to be absorbed by all architects, these lessons have been lost in the implicit critique of the profession suggested by alternate practice – so rather than the reinvigoration of the discipline in all of its finely calibrated and conditional agency we instead witness its abandonment.

## DESIGN STUDIO: THE UNIT SYSTEM

It is to these conditions and to this context then that this paper is directed: in response to changes in the practice of architecture and its field of operation, how can we better formulate the conditional relationship between the experimental conditions of the Masters of Architecture design studio and practice itself, such that we begin to cultivate a terrain of judgment that allows us to better distinguish novel churn from real transformation.

The architectural design studio has historically since the early 19th century and the transformations from the apprentice system toward the Beaux Arts, been the core of

both an architect's education, but equally, it has been where each generation of architects cultivates and experiments with the discipline's conventions and material and formal skill sets. While many things have changed in the profession and discipline of architecture over the past few decades – as Zaera-Polo and others have pointed out – many things have fundamentally remained the same in terms of *design studio* structure since the last major review of design studio teaching in the early 1970's. Here there emerged via Alvin Boyarsky at the Architectural Association the 'well-laid' pedagogic table<sup>8</sup> of the unit system – the year long, elective, vertically integrated, experimental design studio. Competitive between both tutors on single year contracts, and competitive between students, the unit system was unique in the expectation of a consolidating and rolling design research agenda year on year. Out of this came the stellar studio leadership alumni: Rem, Zaha, Bernard, Zenghelis, Libeskind. Beginning in 1968 with the International Institute of Design, a summer school initially housed at the Bartlett, by the time Boyarsky took on leadership of the AA in 1971 the basic structure of the unit system that he inherited was turned into a machine for producing sedimented intergenerational trajectories of research and experimentation.

At the time of Boyarsky's initial tenure, the field was captured by a sense of the Modern Movement's failure in terms of the existing and traditional city, and a searching around for solutions to the question of architecture's relationship to its outside. The iconography of Archigram, and in Archizoom their critical parody; the search for architecture's signifying capacity in work like Venturi Scott Browns *Learning from Las Vegas*; the urban ramblings of the psycho-geographers and their search for an urban architectural subject. The unit system was able to accommodate all of this diversity on its 'well laid table' of numerous alternate forms of practice. By the 1980's this was coupled with the searching by architecture into parallel fields: cultural theory, literature, philosophy and others. Stan Allen has written in *The Future that is Now, from Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America* (2011)<sup>9</sup> that by the 1980's, decoupled from the pace of making buildings, the rapid proliferation of new theories about what architecture might be or can do soon outpaced material production. Zaera-Polo claims that education programs began producing 'legions of bad novels, bad sociology, bad psychology, bad philosophy and bad movies being presented at juries as advanced architectural "research"'.<sup>10</sup> This tendency still exists in a generation of students poorly acculturated

in the discipline – a situation we place at the feet of those who are a product of this period and are now charged with the education of the next generation.

## PRESSURES POST BOLOGNA

At UTS, like many Schools of Architecture in Australia, we've inherited a kind of unit system "lite": the same aspiration for a well laid pedagogic table, the same ambition for broad experimentation, competitive in proposition to students as elective options, broadly diverse in content and pedagogy offered across a number of elective studios - but only fifteen weeks long, less than half the weekly contact hours and sometimes double the student numbers.

Since the late 1990's and the Bologna agreement, the consequential shift in Australian Universities from undergraduate to graduate design studios has seen an increasing expectation from Universities of traditionally recognized and weighted research outputs from graduate programs. That is, at some level, *a graduate research program is expected to make a contribution to the production of disciplinary knowledge*.

Post Bologna, the question of who develops this research and at whom it is directed toward is of increasing importance. One problem that we can see is that, increasingly, there is an amplifying academic research culture that focuses less on problems faced by the profession where it overlaps with the disciplinary-specific conventions and systems of knowledge and practices of architecture, and more on a self-referential field of judgment internal to the academy itself. This is not to say that research work should be in the service of the profession, but rather that with often limited ambition to engage the disciplinary specificity of architecture at any level, the danger is that we are witness to an academy which robs both the profession and the discipline of architecture of what Pai observed as being the irrevocably intertwined architectural institution - where the profession and the discipline co-exist but do not run parallel<sup>11</sup>.

One way in which this new research regime has failed to deliver benefits for this profession and discipline is that often there is a limited or unclear relationship between research outputs from faculty and the studios they teach. In addition, the

unit system depends on sessional studio tutors, drawn from outside the full time staff of the school, to carry the full responsibility for a studio and all that it entails (research agenda, theoretical and historical contexts and pedagogic structure or method). A problem here is that studio leaders (whether from the academy or practice) cannot be expected to possess full command of an issue across the breadth required to inform this intertwined institution of profession and discipline.

The historic dependence of schools of architecture on small and/or newly established practitioners as teaching staff running independent design studio 'units' is particularly problematic in this regard. The demands of new practice, the minimal preparation and research time allocated to a studio contract and the immersion of the practitioner often in problems at a scale of detail that would not necessarily support larger agendas, particularly regarding urbanism and architecture's relationship to it. The core critique here is not of the capacity or quality of tutors. Rather it is that they are forced to operate in an environment thin with research direction or other teaching or intellectual support. It is for these reasons that studios struggle to move beyond the most superficial account of architecture's relationship to the problems it encounters in the field, failing to fully engage with and fulfil the studios' role in cultivating disciplinary experimentation and contributing to disciplinary knowledge. Instead the M.Arch design studio constituted like this almost actively participates in the erosion of the potential of the discipline through the production of students both unable to think and act architecturally – that is spatially and materially – and, alarmingly, with only the most superficial sense of the depth of understanding required to meet the problems architecture is called in to work on.

## CULTIVATING A TERRAIN OF COMPARATIVE JUDGEMENT

At UTS we've made a move to respond to some of these concerns regarding the relationship of architecture to what it is called to work on with the introduction of studio streams into the M.Arch design studios. These organizing themes include materials and technology, computation, urbanism, sustainability and activism. This categorization into a thematic grouping has been a way of organizing the breadth of elective studios offered, galvanizing and focusing their energy in simplified directions for a semester. However, this still has had a limited effect on how we're able to accurately measure success beyond the 'student experience' as recorded in Student



Feedback Surveys, a category of judgment removed from any actual value to the field.

If we look at the activism stream for example, in its first iteration we might see it as the 'Live' studio. The live studio is the one where we congratulate ourselves on having moved out of the realm of theory and into the domain of practice: the 'real world' with a 'real client' - as if this were the problem - a client somehow lending us greater credibility in the pursuit of a relationship between discipline and practice. The next reactive and critical iteration of this might be seen in something like the Sydney South Central model run by Tarsha Finney in 2012, deliberately working to constitute 'the client'. Unlike the live studio, Sydney South Central proposed a problem and sought, on the occasion of the student work, to actively constitute a community of interest and action around an urban issue into which the studio then inserted itself. By identifying stakeholders, neighbourhoods or collectives of interest, media support, political support and engagement – and professional investment through the production of drawings, seminars, symposia and publications – this studio's ambition beyond education was to contribute to a projective process of clarifying dispute, and a clarification of what might be possible, of what the Ultimo Precinct might become.<sup>12</sup>

Another iteration of the activism studio can be seen in a studio such as that run by Gerard Reinmuth over two years looking at the issue of the detention of refugees in Sydney specifically at the Villawood Detention Centre. Here the focus of the project was around a particular political and social issue, the aim being to shift student's perspectives on what sort of effect they might be able to have via their spatial interventions. This studio was played out against a backdrop of political debates about refugees and detention and increasing dissent, riots and fires at Villawood. The studio was organized around two key phases of exploration: firstly the exposure of students to the complexity of issues surrounding the "problem" itself, contextualizing the condition via international comparison across many aspects of the refugee issue, from numbers, origins, alternate conditions in other countries and so on. The second phase of exploration was in the design of a perimeter fence, which offered students the opportunity of asking questions of both the organization of the facilities behind the fence but equally allowed an exploration of organization, thresholds, limits and transparency, both literal and phenomenal, asking questions of

architectural representation in the process and then asking students to engage with spatial issues at the perimeter of the facility where it intersected with mainstream Australian suburbia.

Despite the success of both of these studios in terms of student experience, ultimately all of this work left us dissatisfied. In a sense, if the first iteration of the activism stream relied on the sheer force of personality of those leading the studio to cultivate communities of interest, in the second instance, the deploying of a disciplinary skill set in the direction of a 'political' misunderstands the nature architecture's political agency. While the students had a rich social and cultural experience and in the terms of the academy the work was a success, neither studio did much to contribute to any understandings of where architecture's material and formal agency is. As Kipnis has argued

*"it is possible that speculative architecture produces something like a directed politics, but not as an instantiation of an ideal concept of the political"*

as we were doing here. Instead, he argues architecture's capacity resides in something more like

*"an original political effect specific to architecture, irreproducible by any other medium and irreducible to any other terms."*<sup>13 14</sup>

Such 'an original political effect' is fundamentally material. Our conclusion following this work is that we need to exercise a different kind of disciplinary focus on process as a political act where the 'building' or studio output becomes known not as the normative outcome of architectural processes, but as a consequence of having built sound political relationships<sup>15</sup>. The studio outputs become material evidence of a process involving transformations in prevailing ideological positions, that is, transformations in the condition or problem toward which architecture's unique disciplinary skill set is deployed, both internal and external to the field. It is this as a framing of the work in the design studio that we need to clarify.

## DESIGN PROCESS: ARCHITECTURE'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS OUTSIDE<sup>16</sup>

We understand that unique to architecture's disciplinary practice is a design process predicated on type.<sup>17</sup> Type here is not understood as belonging to the object of architecture,<sup>18</sup> but rather type is a process of reasoning that is fundamentally predicated on a reference to precedent and past solutions. The diagram calls to it, this unique disciplinary capacity: "Diagrams underwrite all typological theories."<sup>19</sup> In this sense, the diagram isn't understood as a simple graphic annotation system, but rather following Foucault<sup>20</sup> it is a complex spatial socio-political arrangement of knowledge that in certain conditions relies on architecture's capacity for organizational experimentation and materialization.<sup>21</sup> The diagram doesn't belong to architecture. It

*"doesn't point toward architecture's internal history as a discipline, but rather turns outward, signalling possible relations of matter and information".<sup>22</sup>*

It is the animating diagrammatic condition, and architecture's unique city building relationship to it since the 19th century that we are interested in here.

There are two things to notice regarding how type and diagram function together: The first is the critical role of architecture's graphic realm in which reasoning occurs:

*"since nothing can enter architecture without having been first converted into graphic form, the actual mechanism of graphic conversion is fundamental."<sup>23</sup>*

That is, the drawing in architecture is critical – which is simply to reference central writing in architecture, from Colin Rowe through to Stan Allen and Robin Evans.<sup>24</sup>

The second thing to notice is that the diagram relies on a condition of dispute where dispute is generative of material possibility. *It is these disputes that we need to make evident and clarify in the M.Arch design studio such that we can see where and how architecture's capacity to conditionally act with autonomy is.*<sup>2</sup>

## RETURNING TO UTS

The general condition of a School of Architecture in Australia is that it has a single professional practice subject or stream, the role of which is to impart the knowledge required to pass a professional practice exam – which is about the role of the architect as a member of a profession as it is currently constituted.

However reasonably unique at UTS is practice teaching built on a suite of subjects that are far more projective in nature than the core architectural practice subject itself – the role of the architect in the city; the role of the architect as advocate; and the future constitution of the profession itself as a reflective event. What this allows us to do is to imagine the profession not purely in vocational terms, but as a far broader set of understandings. It continually demands that we ask how we conceive of the field, what, as we stated at the outset, is always being presented as an open question 'what is the city' and who are we to ask. What this condition does is allows us to imagine a far thicker mode of enquiry around specific diagrammatic conditions and their formations of dispute.

In the last year we have gone some way to experimenting with this in two ways. The first was to organize one of the practice subjects (The City) around the complexity of problem presented by Sydney's Barangaroo redevelopment: guest lectures, seminar discussions and Assessment tasks then involved exploring different aspects of the political, legislative, procurement, financial, development pressures and community engagement processes of bringing about a project such as this. The result for the students of this multi-perspectival approach to Barangaroo was a significant depth of knowledge about the types of problems that come to bear on a project such as this that would rarely be possible in the "unit" studio format. In fact, a small esquisse aimed with reorganising the site which formed one of the assessment tasks was attacked with a sophistication that we had rarely witnessed in semester long explorations of this site in the studio format.

This year we are experimenting with the Metropolis Project, a whole school thematic that was set up around the idea of the city. Involving to various degrees the M.Arch design studios, this has provided content direction for the lunchtime and public lecture series, public debates, bolt on elective programs and a final publication of research into the subject, all of which has contributed obvious gains for the school in terms of an enlivened school culture and engagement - and for students involved in a cross section of these different activities who can start to enter into a sophisticated dialogue about the topic - even when it can be seen that the concept of 'Metropolis' is too broad as it stands to achieve what we are proposing here. However this experiment has indicated to us where a productive vein of organization may lie.

So some examples of what we mean when we speak about a diagrammatic

condition as meta-category organizing the M.Arch program: we might speak of a general condition of dispute around education: urban distribution versus concentration versus a campus model; relationships to housing and transport; the type and form of the classroom. Domesticity: disputes around the relationship of work home leisure and transport; the scale and density of development; disputes around light, air, access to views; disputes around the collective versus the individual. Others might be the workplace neighbourhood; bio-medical research; innovation environments; health.

Once this is understood, one can then also equally imagine a new and far more focused role for the teaching of history and theory, the public lecture series in the school, theory and computational elective subjects, to feed into this complex environment of dispute that we set up each semester specific to a diagrammatic condition. The result would be a deep cross sectional exploration of sites where architecture acts such that the depth of understanding required for architecture to genuinely innovate in these domains would start to be apparent.

## CONCLUSION

Returning then to our opening and original question, it is the Masters of Architecture design studios or their equivalent that have in recent history provided a key site for experimentation in the field of architecture, feeding back to the discipline and the profession new insights. In response to ongoing changes in both the practice of architecture, and changes in terms of architecture's field of operation - the global economic, political and cultural context of its production - this insight and clarification in terms of disciplinary agency is acutely required as is a refined cultivation of a terrain of judgment such that we can see where real transformation occurs, as opposed to the churn of novelty. Contrary to 'alternate modes of practice' that, in critiquing the profession hold an implicit call to abandon the discipline of architecture, we believe instead that there is needed a return to architecture's core material and spatial skill set redirected relative to the animating diagrammatic conditions of urbanism: domesticity; the neighbourhood; health; research; the workplace; education, the cultural building and so on. For urbanism has relied on architecture's organisational and material experimentation, via the institutional materialisation of these conditions, to build the city since the late 19th century. It is via a deep engagement with these conditions that we can start to understand both

where the agency of architecture lies and how that form of agency works.

Such a call is not a return to the functionalist diagram of the mid 20th century. Nor is it about functionalist notions of program. We are not calling for a pedagogic adjustment of individual studios; this is not about homogenizing the design studio pedagogy and its diversity of approach. It is instead about consolidating an understanding of architecture's field of effect and the problem fields that it is called to work on. Our thesis is that a meta-framing of all curricula in the graduate school in terms of a single diagrammatic condition will bring us faster to an evaluative terrain that will refine a capacity to distinguish novelty from real change, allowing us to clarify our contribution to disciplinary specific knowledge, and to the discipline and profession of architecture with all of the attendant contemporary complexities that it faces.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Alejandro Zaera-Polo, "The Politics of the Envelope: A Political Critique of Materialism," *Volume* 17(2009).
- 2 See Anthony Burke and Gerard Reinmuth, eds., *Formations* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Architects., 2012). This publication was released on the occasion of the 2012 Australian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture biennale, curated by Reinmuth and Burke.
- 3 Hyungmin Pai, *The Portfolio and the Diagram: Architecture, Discourse and Modernity in America* (London: The MIT Press, 2002).
- 4 Stanford Anderson, "On Criticism," *Places* 4, no. 1 (1987).
- 5 (ibid. And S Anderson, "The Profession and Discipline of Architecture: Practice and Education," in *The Discipline of Architecture*, ed. Adrezei Piotrowski and Julia W Robinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). In Pai)
- 6 Our Italics. The full quote reads "the five points collaborate..... to erase the privileged status of the ground that architecture before it so strived to reinforce, transforming it into but one datum among many, including roof-top and floor plan..... *It works for me and on me, but I can understand why others just see a nice looking house*" Jeffrey Kipnis, "Re-Originating Diagrams," in Peter Eisenman: Feints, ed. Silvio Cassara (Milan: Skira Editore S.p.A, 2006). p194

- 7 Pai, *The Portfolio and the Diagram: Architecture, Discourse and Modernity in America*.
- 8 Irene Sunwoo, "From the 'Well-Laid Table' to the 'Market Place:' The Architectural Association Unit System," *Journal of Architectural Education* 65, no. 2 (2012).
- 9 Stan Allen, "The Future That Is Now " in *Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America*, ed. J Ockman and Rebecca Williamson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).
- 10 Alejandro Zaera-Polo, "A Scientific Autobiography," in *The New Architectural Pragmatism* ed. William S Saunders (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007). P6
- 11 Pai, *The Portfolio and the Diagram: Architecture, Discourse and Modernity in America*.
- 12 Sydney South Central was co-funded by UTS FMU and UTS DVC (Resources) Patrick Wood in partnership with the Sydney Harbor Foreshore Authority. It involved a number of additional tutors: David Neustein, Prof. Richard Goodwin, Billy Feuerman and Matt Chan. In addition, there were contributions from The Committee for Sydney, UTS, Sydney Harbor Foreshore Authority, TAFE, the Powerhouse Museum, Events NSW, Infrastructure NSW, the City of Sydney and Frasers Property. The studio ran for 4 weeks as a 12cpt winter intensive in 2012.
- 13 Kipnis, "Re-Originating Diagrams." p194
- 14 To clarify definitions of political: There are several ways that we're using this term 'political' here and in the context of these questions. One definition is political understood as action in the realm of decision making within democratic governance where to speak of the political is to indicate participation in a realm of decision-making, a process that exists as part of a constellation of mechanisms of democratic government within liberal democracy and which the profession of architecture has a unique relationship. These are the formal planning processes, legislative and regulatory framings, legal and organizational systems in addition to the informal consultation processes, media broadcasts and public opinion forming responsibilities that we understand we must engage with in the production and procurement of both architecture and education.

The other definition of the political is quite different. Here 'political' is understood as 'an operation in a domain in which action places the subject itself in question' (Lawrence Barth, "The Complication of Type," in *Typological Formations: Renewable Building Types and the City*, ed. Christopher C.M Lee, Sam Jacoby, and AA Diploma 6, Aa Agendas

(London: Architectural Association, 2007).) – and here, in the context of this paper we will say that such a domain of action and experimentation are those discursive formations toward which architecture's skill set is called: urbanism, education, medical research or domesticity for example. To use the term 'political' here, is to speak about architecture's relationship to knowledge, or put another way, architecture's relationship to its outside. See M Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, ed. R.D Laing, trans. A.M Sheridan Smith, *World of Man: A Library of Theory and Research in the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1972).

- 15 We are grateful for insights into this given to us by Ingo Kumic in a series of email conversations in early 2013.
- 16 This argument forms the basis of Tarsha Finney's doctoral work, *Repetition and Transformation: the Housing Project and the City of New York 1934-1973*. The development of these ideas was made possible through participation in a series of graduate doctoral seminars at the Architectural Association, London from 2004 - 2007 led by Professor Lawrence Barth, with Dr Katharina Borsi and Dr Pavlos Philippou.
- 17 To make this claim is to reference architectural writers and thinkers as diverse as: Colquhoun, ""Typology and Design Method"," *Arena* vol.33, no. June 1967 (1967); G.C. Argan, "On the Typology of Architecture," *Architectural Design* 33, no. December 1963 (1963); Werner Oechslin, "Premises for the Resumption of the Discussion of Typology," *Assemblage* no.1(1986); Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," *Oppositions* 7, no. Winter (1977); Kenneth Frampton, "Twin Parks as Typology," *Architectural Forum*, no. June 1973 (1973); Chris Lee and Sam Jacoby, eds., *Typological Formations: Renewable Building Types and the City*, vol. No. 5, *Aa Agendas* (London: Architectural Association, London, 2007); Raphael Moneo, "On Typology," *Oppositions* 13 (1978); Barth, "The Complication of Type; Christopher C.M Lee, "The Fourth Typology: Dominant Type and the Idea of the City" (TU Delft, 2012).
- 18 One might see this as the failing of notions of type belonging to some of the output of the Italian Tendenza in the 1960s, and later in the work of New Urbanism, what Vidler refers to as the Third Typology. Here type becomes an image of the city. See Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1976).

Another trajectory of work on type (Barth, Moneo, Colquhoun) situates it as an instrumentality that resides in a process of reasoning.



19 Kipnis, "Re-Originating Diagrams."

20 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Also see S Allen, "Diagrams Matter," *Any: Diagram Work* 23(1998); Lawrence Barth, "Diagram, Dispersal, Region," in *Landscape Urbanism: A Manual for the Machinic Landscape*, ed. Mohsen Mostafavi and Ciro Najle (London: AA Publications, 2003); G. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon, the Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Kipnis, "Re-Originating Diagrams; Barth, "The Complication of Type; Lawrence Barth, "Michel Foucault," in *Key Sociological Thinkers*, ed. Rob Stone (London: Macmillan Press, 1998); Katharina Borsi, "Drawing and Dispute: The Strategies of the Berlin Block," in *The Intimate Metropolis*, ed. Lathouri, Periton, and Di Palma (London: 2008); *ibid*.

21 Barth, "Diagram, Dispersal, Region."

22 Allen, "Diagrams Matter." P17

23 Barth, "The Complication of Type."

24 Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, *Transparency* (Berlin: Birkhauser Verlag, 1964); Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association Publications, 1997); S Allen, *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation* (Amsterdam: G+B arts international, 2000). In Barth, "The Complication of Type."

25 In making these definitional moves between architecture as disciplinary skill set distinct from the knowledge or discursive formations to which it is called to materialize, it may sound like we are diminishing architecture's capacity to effect change by reducing its claim to knowledge. This may be so, however we will stand with Kwinter and in response to Colquhoun, with the justification that for us here, definitions such as this act as "synthetic explanatory device(s) (though no less real for that) that opens up a space through which a perceptible reality may be related to the formal system that organizes it." Sanford Kwinter, "The Genealogy of Models: The Hammer and the Song," *Any: Diagram Work* 23(1998). Whether that 'synthetic explanatory device' sits a priori or a posteriori to events is irrelevant, its role is instead instrumental for us here in terms of its ability to generate insight into the contemporary practice of architecture and the design process such that we can refine the contemporary design studio

Architecture has a specific relationship to knowledge. That might sound like an obvious statement but it's not. One of the key debates within architectural discourse over the last 60 years has been concerned with the nature of this relationship, or what we might,

following Eisenman and the post-critical writers that followed him, Somol, Whitting, Allen, refer to as Autonomy. Unlike Eisenman, or Pai, we are not arguing here for a notion of full autonomy: that is, architecture is a discursive formation. Rather we're going to base the arguments in this paper on an idea of partial or conditional-autonomy where architecture isn't the keeper of epistemological knowledge. Instead we will argue that architecture is made up of a disciplinary specific set of formal and material skills that are called in to various Discursive formations, with all of its organizational and experimental capacities, to work to materialize problems that reside external to architecture. What selects architecture in each instance is its capacity for organizational experimentation (Barth, "The Complication of Type.")— It is this capacity that we need to hone.

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## Biography

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# DESIGN- ING/EDU- -CATION

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