



ioud - Institute of Urban Design

## EM2 825155: >>Non-places<<

Artificial, Virtual, Digital: Architecture in hypermodern times

UIBK Winter Semester 23-24

Instructors: José Carlos López Cervantes/ Cynthia Sánchez Morales

Course meetings: Wednesdays 9:00 am



©Studio Soqotra

Video presentation: <https://youtu.be/itKg6Z4v4pc>

This video has been made using artificial intelligence based on the narration from the book *No Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* by Marc Augé.

**CONTENT:**

**Course abstract:**

*This studio will explore the possibility of using Artificial intelligent as a design tool to explore the formal conditions of the Non-place. Non-place is a neologism coined by the French anthropologist Marc Augé to refer to anthropological spaces of transience where human beings remain anonymous, and that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as "places" in their anthropological definition.*



©Studio Soqotra

*"AI" is becoming a prominent premise on the current architectural debate. The aim is to explore the possibilities of implementing AI as a valid tool to produce disciplinary knowledge, in this case in a design methodology in an academic environment. There were some initial statements that we wanted to develop:*

**>AI as a tool:** AI is becoming a relevant topic in the current architectural debate. It appeared as a powerful tool to test arguments on a quick visual manner. Most of the platforms at our disposal are image generation tools that takes inputs through text prompts and parameters, and uses a Machine Learning (ML) algorithm trained on a large amount of image data to produce unique images. Thus, in the “creativity/production” equation, quantity and computational speed are becoming important factors. Even further, assuming the fact that our imagination is 95% built out of the images we have archived in our memory, one could argue that counting with an immense archive or endless amount of images would be a beneficial scenario in a creative environment. The challenge here is how to navigate between “algorithm driven mash-up images” and “unconscious design knowledge”, which requires certain training.

**>AI-loose authorship:** There is a historical position in which a suspended consciousness state of mind has been seen as a fertile condition for creativity.



*The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters (Spanish: El sueño de la razón produce monstruos) is an aquatint by the Spanish painter and printmaker Francisco Goya.*

*"The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters", can be viewed as Goya's personal manifesto; many observers believe that Goya intended to depict himself asleep amidst his drawing tools, his reason dulled by slumber, bedeviled by creatures that prowl in the dark. Such creatures that appear in this work are often associated in Spanish folk tradition with mystery and evil; the owls surrounding Goya may be symbols of folly, and the swarming bats may symbolize ignorance.*

There have been many examples in design history where control was given away looking for novelty. From painting to writing, from conceptual art to architecture, there have been many successful examples where authorship was kept in hold for a while, avoiding linear thinking and aiming for non-expected original outputs.

### Surrealist automatism

Surrealist automatism is a method of art-making in which the artist suppresses conscious control over the making process, allowing the unconscious mind to have great sway.

Using AI one has the feeling of partial loss of control over the process and results. It's a kind of coauthoring that we would like to explore.

>**AI Irrational Knowledge.** Dali's paintings title looks like the perfect prompt for AI but that's only evidence of the methodology that he is implementing.



*Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee Around a Pomegranate a Second Before Awakening.*  
Salvador Dalí 1944

The virtue of that design approach lies in the capability of articulating a disciplinary methodology and the critical understanding of the results. Therefore, the **Paranoid Critical Method** of Salvador Dalí began by the simple act of placing incongruent objects of characters in a composition, but only that is irrelevant. It became interesting and we asked 2 questions: What's the idea behind that unconscious design driven state? And How do we evaluate de result?

Regarding the first question Salvador Dalí defines as "irrational knowledge" based on a "delirium of interpretation". The technique consists of the artist invoking a paranoid state (fear that the self is

*being manipulated, targeted or controlled by others). The result is a deconstruction of the psychological concept of identity, such that subjectivity becomes the primary aspect of the artwork.*

*Dalí was interested in the ability of the brain to perceive links between things which rationally are not linked. And that speculative moment can be induced in AI easily.*

**>AI Architectural post-production:** *AI doesn't necessarily need to have architectural knowledge, indeed it doesn't. There will be a "post-production" work where we have to be curators and even editors of the results. This kind of evaluation of the results might be something that usually doesn't get evaluated among artists but it's something demanded to architects.*



*Open house, Malibu, USA, 1983, author: Coop Himmelblau.*

*In the example above we could see the translation of preliminary sketch for Open House, Coop Himmelblau, into an architectural logic, where disciplinary attributes such as tectonics, room program or aesthetics were being deployed.*

*Students will be immersed into digital design techniques and formal architectural discourse with the aim of articulating a compelling project with a relevant disciplinary result.*

**Course methodology:**

*This course will be an Advanced Architectural Design studio which examines the connection between conceptual understanding of design and form generation through digital design techniques. Essential knowledge will be acquired by software modeling and critical current discourse on the discipline. Students will be instructed in theory and simultaneously they will be equipped with digital techniques of design and representation.*

*Our premise is that Architecture is a formal discipline and based on that statement the course will be divide in three blocks. Each of them will last four weeks and it will contain theory and a design tasks. These three design tasks will reflect over three main levels of understanding: conceptual, procedural and practical; each of them connected to a canonical concept of our discipline.*

*During the semester, the students will be working on these three design tasks.*

*- BLOCK 1. CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE. ABSTRACTING LOCAL MORPHOLOGIES. A TOPOLOGICAL PROBLEM*

*Students will formulate associative arguments using Artificial intelligent as a design tool. A critical analysis of the result is expected because this transdisciplinary approach will have to formulate new formal conditions, new coherencies and new formal aesthetics in architecture.*

*- BLOCK 2. PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE. CREATING A NEW URBAN TISSUE. AI as a speculative tool.*

*Students will have to do research to identify and model architectural conditions. There will be a problem of abstraction vs literality; how much abstraction is needed in order to read the different morphologies as geometries without reducing too much their specific qualities.*

*- BLOCK 3. PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE. THE DEFINITION OF SEMANTICS.*

*From conceptual to disciplinary objects. Students will investigate on the qualities that give meaning to the diagrammatic design such as materiality and contextual conditions. The implementation of a urban model into a segment of The Line project in Saudi Arabia will be the final task.*



©Studio Soqotra

*The design task will be to create a segment of The Line, Saudi Arabia. In a project of 170 Km long and 500 m height, students will have to develop a portion of 200 m long by 50 m height.*

### **Course Structure & Organization**

*Students will work individually. Each session will contain a theoretical lesson, deskcrits and specific software tutorials needed for developing the project. Progress will be reviewed weekly at the studio.*

### **NEEDS:**

#### **Material Requirements:**

*Students need to bring their own laptops. Software will be accessible through educational licenses.*

#### **Tools and Techniques:**

*In order to apply this specific methodology, students will be instructed in specific software. No previous experience on the software will be required.*

### **Final Deliverables & Requirements & Assessment (OLAT):**

*Complete graphic description of the project is expected, including visualizations, drawings, diagrams, research material, and any kind of visual information that support the entire comprehension of it.*

## **SUBMISSION**

### **Grading Procedures:**

*Grades are determined based on the quality of work produced, progress and improvement over the course of the semester, completion of project requirements, quality of participation, attendance, attitude, and ethical conduct. Grading policies will be discussed during the first weeks of the studio, and any questions regarding grades or policies should be directed to the instructors. A passing grade in the course requires committed completion of all projects, including the institute archive in proper formats. Incomplete work will not be evaluated until the submission is completed. A failing grade is given whenever cumulative work, final work, and/or attendance are unsatisfactory. It is also given when a student fails to submit a final project or fails to take a final examination without prior approval from the instructor.*

### **Academic Integrity:**

*The integrity of the work of individuals is first and foremost a grading milestone. Student work that delivers the ideas or words of others as the student's own adversely impacts the whole faculty. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, commissioning academic work by others, or performing academic work on behalf of another student, is strictly prohibited and would result in a negative grade.*

### **Plagiarism:**

*This includes but is not limited to; copying words, images, or other material from a source without using appropriate citation rules such as quotation marks, footnotes, references, or other indications of the original source, paraphrasing another person's ideas in your own words without crediting the original source, taking sole credit for assignments without giving credit to those who worked with you, submitting work for a course that has already/also been submitted for another course or internet plagiarism, such as submitting work either found or paid for online, failing to cite any internet sources used, or cutting and pasting sentences from various websites to create a collage of uncited words.*

### **Incomplete Work & Extension of time:**

*A student may receive a negative grade or no grade when the work is incomplete at the evaluation date by the end of the semester. By requesting permission from the instructor in good time prior to the date of the final examination or presentation, this can be avoided. Permission will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances and usually for medical reasons, requiring a medical document proving the situation. Incompleteness must be fulfilled to the instructor's satisfaction no later than two weeks after the end of the term.*



**Archiving:**

*Students are required to submit physical examples of their work or digital examples no later than one week after the end of the term to their instructors or administration for archiving. This is a chance for students to have their work displayed or exhibited online and potentially featured in future institute publications or research projects. The instructors will provide a document titled the Einwilligungsformular that allows the institute to keep track of the agreement; if you wish not to permit this archival material to be published, please contact the institute secretary in good time.*

**Learning Policy (Studios and Seminars):**

*Attendance is mandatory at critiques, pin-ups, and reviews. If you do not present your work regularly, you will not receive a passing grade for the course. Students must have all required work related to the course during course hours (not at another location or other time). Students should not use course time to leave school to procure materials, run errands, etc. All activities that require one to be away should be scheduled to occur outside of course hours. Leaving in the middle of or before the end of regularly scheduled course times will result in an absence unless discussed with the instructors. Grades will be determined by the quality of work produced, an improvement over the course of the semester, completion of project requirements, quality of participation, and attendance.*

*All electronic recordings, image captures/screenshots (during zoom meetings), or audio recordings are strictly prohibited unless agreed upon or discussed beforehand with the instructors and participants.*