



CAMPAINING!! A DESIGN BASED INQUIRY INTO THE CAPACITY OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE TO PROMOTE EMERGING IDEOLOGIES, SOCIAL RIGHTS OR POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL PROPAGANDA. UNIT 22. Carlos Jimenez Cenamor and Izaskun Chinchilla.

"The fact is too many architects are seriously marginalized, and I would go so far as to say, intentionally isolated, from the political process that determines the zoning, funding and the complex social and legal regulations that control the building of our shared environment. This subject needs to be confronted, debated and discussed in detail." Swett (2005)

"Architecture is never isolated but its necessity political. What counts in a building is not so much the looks but how it comes to life for people and forges lasting connections." Klingmann (2007)

When Le Corbusier defined architecture in 1932 as *‘the masterly, correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light’* was probably trying to provide the profession, as he did, with the most famous and recognized definition of practice in the recent history. It is less probable that he could envision that what he was also accurately defining were the reasons for architects’ disconnection from society. Because architects tend to think that a good project might not take economy, ecology, social issues, political clues, regulations and rigorous material investigation into account, because they tend to think that what is important is what they have modeled in Rhino or put together in a model, the academic hierarchies of the profession find it really hard to actually influence more than a very, very, small proportion of the real buildings that are done around the world. Massively, cities develop without the influence of the top debates of the profession. We have lost the track: masses and light are a very small part of the problem and we have been too long thinking just about them. Unit 22 has worked eight years at the Bartlett to encourage students understand the varied -social, political, urban, financial, cultural, technical and ecological- implications of architectural design, promoting their capacity to actively engage with more citizens, with more projects in more places.

The political dimension of architecture will be this year our main concern, and this will constitute a strong statement. If politics is about the allocation and advancement of resources and powers in society, then political architecture begins with an awareness of architecture being complicit with politics, with financial and industrial interests, with big and small corporations, administration and public and private companies (Latour, 2005). We will start recognizing architecture's more or less directly designated role in political regulations of society and social

life. Yet what architecture *can do* reaches beyond deliberate politics, we expect much more from our students. Specifically, we will ask our students what architecture can do for smaller social initiatives that are trying to change things and how their design capacity can help augmenting societal resilience and find alternative paths for development. We will ask our students to find NGO's, social initiatives, bottom up propositions around the world and to help them campaign, providing them with architectural spaces to run their activities. The first exercise of the year will be designing the **HEADQUARTERS!!** for the selected group of activist.

Students will reflectively applied propaganda techniques as part of their clients overall marketing and branding campaigns, when they come to constructing a central office or corporate headquarters. The headquarters will need to be the ultimate expression or symbol of that emerging company. The building has to make a statement to potential sympathetic citizens, customers, clients, employees, rivals or authorities. The architecture utilized in the student's design should indicate general philosophies held by the corporation or principles it wishes to espouse. The design of the activist headquarters must provide citizens with a full-service experience. This will require students to expand their repertoire past the built environment, developing innovative ways to create a branded and driven by ideology experiences: we will use graphics, illustration, sound, applied video, applied video. Further development within the world of brand recognition not only extends list of objective programmatic necessities, but is also a vital factor in augmenting the impact of the supported ideology.

Unit 22 has establish a professional contact with the NGO Southall Sisters, who are in the need to renovate their own headquarters, to be able to offer a real case study for those students wanting to work with clients face to face.

In the second part of the year, we will also look at how ideologies affect **LIFESTYLE!!**. Buildings, just like generic products, fulfil needs, but architecture fulfils desires. Just as branded products provide representational or aspirational value, architecture provides an environment that people can relate to emotionally and make a part of their lifestyles. Architecture can also be seen as a catalyst that brands its user. It supports and boosts identity and aspirations of clients and fulfils their economic and social ambitions through new structures, interfaces and networks that facilitate growth and transformation. Architecture is in a sense a promotional medium and an identity definer. It is a medium that promotes social relationships as well as individual enterprises, and can be used as a symbol of territorial identity. That is why architecture must be understood in both its symbolic and its operational dimensions (Muratovski, 2017).

The fieldtrip will be especially important to develop this second design task. We will be traveling through Malaysia visiting places that offer meditation, vegan diets, detox experiences or yoga for western citizens. Students will be asked to investigate and observe their surrounding space during the trip with the aim to summarize, through the symbolism of form, the expression of their own distinctive content.

As a summary, we will be looking at the ability of architecture to persuade people in a plan, control and intentional way, an essentially contested concept that has many labels, such as cultural diplomacy, political communication, democracy building, propaganda, or branding.

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Photo. *Lounge Presentation Space for Red.es, a public company in Spain, intended to help the digitalization of public administrations designed by Izaskun Chinchilla Architects. The branding policy of this space combines CNC produced furniture with cozy cushions and natural materials transmitting the values of the company: they want to present digitalization as an easy, user-friendly, close and simple process.*