



Felice Varini, *Twenty-three Discs, Twelve Hollowed Halves and Four Quarters*

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STRATEGIES AGAINST ARCHITECTURE

Unit 26 is the film unit. This year we will choose to define architecture as “the underlying structure of anything and everything”. Architecture is everywhere and Unit 26 is against it.

We inhabit times of tumultuous transition. Energy companies are valued in the trillions, but to mobilise more than a fraction of their resources would make life on our planet impossible. An elusive cartel of internet companies hoards assets of fabulous value - data, information and intellectual property alongside cash reserves too large to spend; value and power have evolved.

We freely exchange our personal data for services, and our loosely anonymized user profiles for access to emerging means of communication - all the while we are bombarded by subversive and sophisticated modes of advertising and manipulation.

However, outside the cartel, the information age has disrupted the traditional monopolies of power - information is free, the truth is uncertain, the transfer of knowledge and opinion has been open-sourced and democratised. Traditional power structures struggle to maintain control and new economies based on barter and exchange are beginning to thrive. Is this how architecture of the next age will be procured?

This year Unit 26 will regard existing structures, hierarchies and systems as redundant, tabula rasa, ripe for replacement or reinvention. Nothing is safe. Unit 26 will tear down crumbling edifices, invert creaking bureaucracies and liberate the cities of London, Los Angeles and/or Seville.

Strategies Against Architectural Representation

The definition of architecture is frequently manipulated and reframed. The depiction of unbuilt architecture is dependent on metaphor and convention. The structures that surround us embody ideas translated from social, historical contexts. But nothing is static, everything is volatile and dynamic, subject to reinvention of both meaning and function. Time based media offer essential, revolutionary tools to the designer, to both develop and communicate ideas.

Unit 26 will seek to expand the modes of the cinematic medium, incorporating non-linearity and interactivity into designed spatial experiences.

Los Angeles/Seville

The unit will adopt a democratic approach to choosing between two possible field trips: Los Angeles offers the potential for seminars at UCLA SUPRASTUDIO at IDEAS campus in Culver City courtesy of former U26 tutor Gabby Shawcross, a bespoke tour including a compositing lesson at Sony Pictures, visits to and workshops from Flame artists, the LA River as a site for speculation, Hollywood, Case Study Houses, Universal Studios, nearby Las Vegas, and a wealth of filmic, hyper-real architectural manifestations.

As well as a selection of spectacular Moorish palaces, Seville offers the Metropol Parasol, both a vast urban intervention and the largest wooden structure in the world. Seville has been the site of two world expositions - in 1929 and 1992. Within their own context, each was rich with heroic architectural pavilions which sought to embody an optimistic world future. We will visit the remnants of these visions, complete with rusting monorail stations and abandoned futurist sculptures.

New Forms of Practice

As the film unit, our aim is to explore the potential of moving image to develop new forms of architectural practice. We create filmic architectures and architectural films that explore animated and augmented relationships between people and place. Architecture is experiential and time-based, so we believe experiential and time-based media should be used to design architecture.

Our techniques include script writing, hand-drawing, storyboards, stop-motion, four-dimensional drawing, hyper-lapse, motion-matching, models and interactive mock ups. Our remit:

- To simulate moving and mediated experiences, spatial sequences and hybrid spaces that merge virtual and real.
- To explore animated relationships between architecture and occupants, multi-sensory interactive environments
- To investigate methods of blurring film and space, recognising that the moving image can depict space, behaviour, interaction, time and change - qualities which exist in the present whilst a film is viewed.
- To develop ways in which narrative can respond to being viewed in real-time - what can non-linear narratives allow us to explore? Can films about interaction themselves be interactive?
- To speculate on future architectures and realities over and above the present.
- To apply cinematic devices directly to making spaces; composition, illusion, genre, projection, etc.
- Can the above be integrated with spatial interaction; non-linear, mixed reality, interactive, viewer participation incidental or intentional?

Workshops, Talks, Visits

There is no requirement for previous experience in filmmaking.

Workshops introduce students to filmmaking principles and innovative animation and compositing techniques. Studio visits will connect students to inspiring practitioners in the worlds of interactive art, architecture, film and gaming. Unit 26 benefits from a broad network of associated professionals, whose contributions serve as a counterpoint to the conceptual and theoretical discourse within the unit, as well as providing inspiration and practical guidance.