

VISUAL DESIGN THEORY SPACE

ARCHITECTURE 102 /// PROFESSOR BRIAN AMBROZIAK

TEACHING ASSISTANTS /// DANIEL, DAVIS, RICE, WALLACE, & WARD



One rainy day in 1919, finding myself in a village on the Rhine, I was struck by the obsession which held under my gaze the pages of an illustrated catalogue showing objects designed for anthropologic, microscopic, psychologic, mineralogic, and paleontologic demonstration. There I found brought-together elements of figuration so remote that the sheer absurdity of that collection provoked a sudden intensification of the visionary faculties in me and brought forth an illusive succession of contradictory images, double, triple, and multiple images, piling up on each other with the persistence and rapidity which are peculiar to love memories and visions of half-sleep.

These visions called themselves new planes, because of their meeting in a new unknown (the plane of non-agreement). It was enough at that time to embellish these catalogue pages, in painting or drawing, and thereby in gently reproducing only that which saw itself in me, a color, a pencil mark, a landscape foreign to the represented objects, the desert, a tempest, a geological cross-section, a floor, a single straight line signifying the horizon...thus I obtained a faithful fixed image of my hallucination and transformed into revealing dramas my most secret desires - from what had been before only some banal pages of advertising.¹

STATEMENT

In architectural drawing, one typically begins with free-hand notation that evolves into precise and constructed orthographic projection - plan, section, or elevation. This methodology describes a linear, more localized, process used in the creation of a single design. *So from where do these first marks originate?* The Italian word for design - *disegno* - does not differentiate between drawing and design and implies that perhaps mark-making is synonymous with the creative act - a speech act. On a broader level, one might think about the process of design in relation to the brain, the hand, and the eye; a system of thinking, making, consuming. For this particular assignment, you are asked to generate brought-together elements and place them into a plane of non-agreement thereby challenging more traditional methods. The source of these original words will be the most recent issue of *Vogue* magazine.* You are asked to scour the pages for language that strikes you as having a strong visual and auditory component. As such, your starting point is not drawn from memory but is external. This of course does not mean we are dealing with a random process as you are choosing specific words for a reason. One could see precedent or a site's context as providing a similar kit of parts with which to begin a conceptual process; a kind of jump start to the creation of a truly original idea. Attached is description of Dalí's Paranoid-Critical Method (PCM) which will serve as a valuable guide for this assignment and the desire to make a fresh start.

*** Because of current circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus, an online version of the March issue of Vogue is being posted online for public use. Please be aware that this content is copyrighted and that you are advised to obtain a physical copy when possible.**

MATERIALS

vogue, pen, pencil, paper, typewriter or laptop, printer

FINAL PRODUCT

You are asked to construct a 150 - 200 word piece of prose from the word fragments you have identified. The process should be as fluid and as inventive as possible. Evaluation will be based on the precision of your language and the depth of worlds created. The presentation of your final text must identify in some form the specific words used from *Vogue* and be properly attributed.

1. Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting," trans. Dorothea Tanning, in *Max Ernst: Beyond Painting*, p.14.

DELIRIOUS NEW YORK: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan

Rem Koolhaas

1978

TOE

Facts wear, reality is consumed.

The Acropolis disintegrates, the Parthenon is collapsing due to the ever escalating frequency of tourists' visits.

As the big toe of a saint's statue gradually disappears under the onslaught of his devotees' kisses, so the Big Toe of reality dissolves slowly but inexorably under perpetual exposure to the continuous Kiss of mankind.

The higher the density of a civilization – the more metropolitan it is – the higher the frequency of the Kiss, the faster the process of consumption of the reality of nature and artifacts. They are worn out so rapidly that the supply is depleted.

That is the cause of the Reality Shortage.

This process intensifies in the 20th century and it is accompanied by a parallel mal-aise:

The facts that all facts, ingredients, phenomena, etc., of the world have been categorized and catalogued, that the definitive stock of the world has been taken. Everything is known, including that which is still unknown.

The PCM is both the product and the remedy against that anxiety: it promises that, through conceptual recycling, the worn, consumed contents of the world can be recharged or enriched like uranium, and that ever-new generations of false facts and fabricated evidences can be generated simply through the act of interpretation.

The PCM proposes to destroy, or at least upset, the definitive catalogue, to short-circuit all existing categorizations, to make a fresh start as if the world can be reshuffled like a pack of cards whose original sequence is a disappointment.

PC activity is like cheating with the last moves of a game of solitaire that refuses to come out, or like banging a piece into a jigsaw puzzle so that it sticks, if not fits.

PC activity ties the loose ends left by the rationalism of the Enlightenment finally together.