ARCH 6050 : Advanced Arch Communications (3 credits). Instructor: J. Bermudez

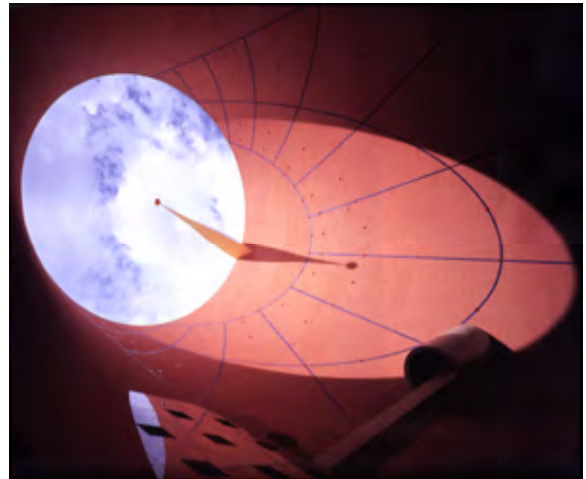### Part I: Receiving Architecture (Openly)

Architectural education functions under the assumption that students develop by themselves the ability to **experience** buildings. Hence, much effort is devoted to teaching design, technology, history, and theory but little goes to cultivate the skills necessary to *appreciate* architecture. Favoring production over reception generates an aggressive, close and non-empathic attitude towards the built environment. Its negative impacts are clear: how are we to learn from the past, generate moving experiences, consider the user, respect the environment, or be fully responsible for what we build if we don't really know how to experience architecture?! And, how are we going to enjoy architecture if we cannot appreciate it? When was the last time you had a great architectural experience?

During the first part, the class will put all its energy in studying **architectural experience**. It will guide students in developing phenomenological awareness, skills to apprehend a building's presence, and communication tools (digital, analog and hybrid) to facilitate the true encounter between building and individual. The course will make use of lectures, exercises, reflection, special media, and field studies. The ultimate goal is nothing less than pacifying our ageless desire to uncover the very nature of architecture.

Part II: Communicating Architecture

The first-hand experience/reflection of the first part will be the foundation from where to build a deeper and better visual communication of architectural phenomenologies. First, the class will study *existing conceptual and representation methods* enabling the simulation of experiences of yet-to-be built architectures. By researching, documenting, and critiquing such methods *in the context of their own experiences*, students will learn important lessons as to how to convey character, 'style', perspective, and value in their graphic depictions.
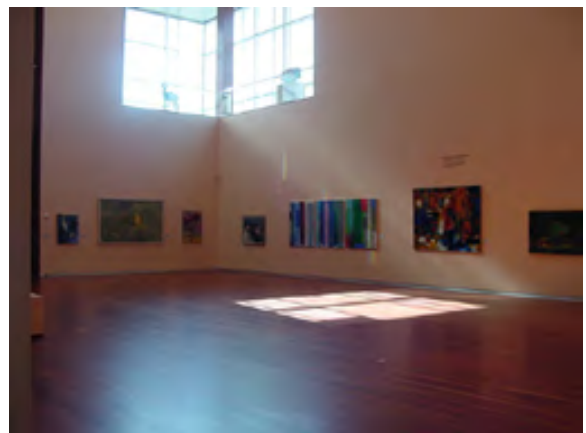
Finally, each student will select a personal finished studio project with strong experiential qualities and proceed to develop a compelling phenomenological narrative. This will provide the best evidence of the insights gained throughout the semester.

Team Disney, Orlando Florida (Isosaki)

Casa Jax, Arizona (Rick Joy)

UMFA, Salt Lake City (Machado-Silvetti)

Communication of phenomenological data

ARCH 6050 : *Advanced Arch Communications*
First Part: Experiencing/Receiving Architecture
Instructor: Julio Bermúdez

"When one actually sees the solidity of a mountain or the vastness of the sea, when one comes upon it suddenly, there it is in its monolithic presence. Everything, including one's own ego, has been pushed aside, except the majesty of that mountain or that sea. Such a sight absorbs you completely —it is beauty itself. If you are fortunate enough, think of a building that absorbs you with the same intensity —that building I call architecture: the others are nothing but edifices."
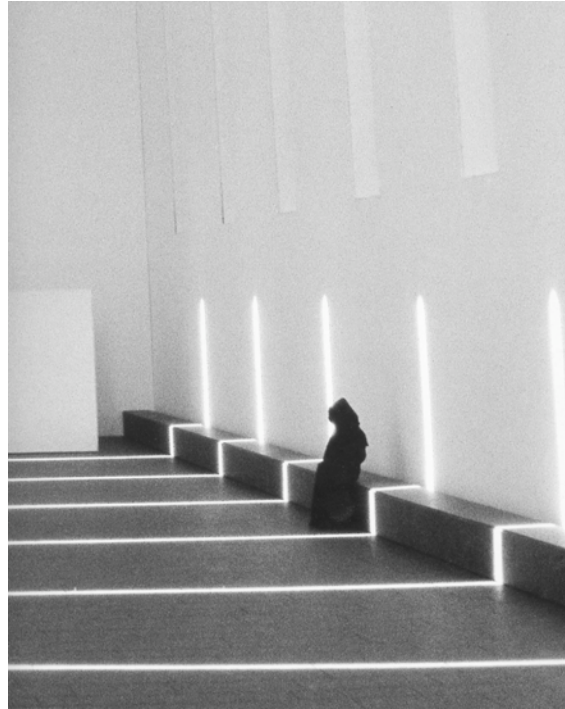Claudio Silvestrin, 1999

Monastery (Claudio Silvestrin)

Inquiry

What constitutes great architecture? This is a question as old as architecture and perhaps mankind itself. It is a question that deserves particular attention from those of us who profess architecture, since it is us who are in charge of, hopefully, make it happen. As is often the case with these types of simple but profound questions, there are no easy answers. And yet, the response(s) may be closer than we think. This class proposes that the answer is not hidden away from us but rather quite accessible: we only need to become conscious of our experience of architecture first and then, later on, probe deep within us to see how our being has been touched by it. In other words, the answer lies in uncovering the nature of our own and direct experience of architecture.

This course also puts forward the hypothesis that great architectural experiences (i.e., aesthetic phenomenology) are ultimately nonintellectual events. This may appear regressive and anti-intellectual, particularly when considering that such proposition is aired within Academia. However, this reaction may be a result of our discipline and world suffering from a serious hypertrophy of the intellect. In today's society, what cannot be rationally articulated is given little or no value. Actually, even the most obviously irrational proposals are presented with logical justifications. Somehow, we have come to believe that by rationalizing things we will establish a higher level of meaning in architecture or elsewhere. This class chooses to use experience as an antidote to this tendency to over intellectualize. One of the essential techniques we are to learn is about letting go of thought and its desire to 'explain out'. Instead, we will chose to immerse ourselves in intuitive, sensorial, unmediated (i.e., direct), non-thinking experiences. It is important to clarify that *non*-thinking is not *not*-thinking. Non-thinking means to include thought as just one more (not higher or better) component of our experiences.

Accomplishing this will demand that we work in a different fashion than we are used to. We will have to tap into relatively unknown areas of ourselves to investigate the matter of great architectural experiences. This in no way means

Gaspar House, Spain (Campo Baeza)

Nun Monastery, Mexico (Luis Barragan)

that this methodology does not demand discipline, practice, awareness, and recording. In fact, the opposite is true. Given the undeveloped nature of our faculty of conscious yet non-analytical experience, we will have to exercise maximum effort to avoid sloppiness or, worse still, falling back into easy intellectual criticism.

Communicating Architectural Experiences

The class engages the old pursuit of depicting the architectural moment. How do you represent an architectural experience? Is there any way to capture in paper or even on film the quality of the here-and-now? Can you do any better with the new media and technologies? How do you capture the incantation of the real into some recording? How do you preserve and communicate *such* architectural reality without falling trapped in distractions? How do you recognize emotion, sensation, and intuition in the markings? Does our 21st century mind provide some new light into this old quest? Since we cannot communicate something that we don't know, we must first have a full architectural experience. Only then, we may be able to attempt to capture in some media the phenomenology of such encounter. In other words, representing architectural experiences starts with experiencing architecture. So, the class will first request your full experiential engagement of buildings and then to experiment with ways in which you can communicate it.

Operation

The class will function as a research seminar with regular faculty lectures, open discussions, field studies, independent student inquiry, working session, student presentations, and visual and written communication assignments. Production from the class may be used to support Professor Bermúdez's ongoing 'research in architectural phenomenology, and voluntary architectural simplicity

Class Schedule (See attached)

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King's Chapel (Cambridge, England)

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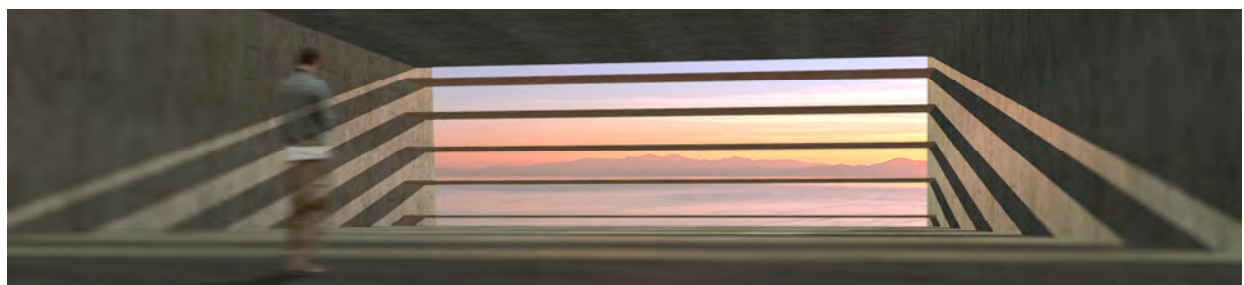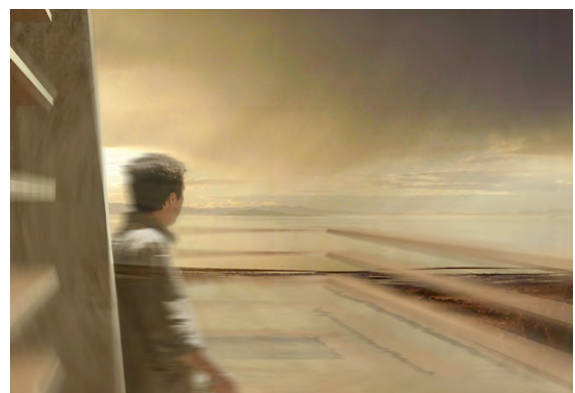
Ethan Bedingfield (Student project for class, Fall 2006)