

Title: Rendering the Social in the Architectural Scene: Digital Representation and Social Inclusion on Architectural Design, Thinking and Education

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Abstract:

The digital production of hyper-rendered scenes has come to dominate architectural practice. Jean Baudrillard's warning that simulation will replace the real is now obvious and ubiquitous in our wirelessly networked mediated lives. CAD monkeys, rendering farms, and out-sourcers form the cabal behind the global production of seductive computer generated imagery detached from real people and places. This paper builds on the premise that physical places, designed and marketed through digital imagery, set the stage for the social scenes of tourism, leisure and consumption, and that privatized public spaces become 'images' in themselves. Providing a setting for ways of people seeing, and being seen by others, these images encourage us to mimic the poses and gestures of architectural renderings.

Standing against our growing obsession with rendered architectural scenes suggests that as digital modes of creation and representation increasingly become objectives in and of themselves architectural practice becomes prone to blindness in the face of social developments which exist independently of architecture's digital turn. The paper highlights the possible integration of the social and the technological through documenting a series of design, professional and pedagogical projects which have, during the 30 year period of architecture's 'digital turn', increasingly incorporated 'the digital', but which have persistently continued to foreground the social.