Education, Design and Practice – Understanding skills in a Complex World

• Paper / Proposal Title:

How to teach architecture as a perfect crime strategy...?

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• Abstract (300 words):

Since the year 2010 I have been teaching the subject of Ethics for architecture students of the 3rd year at the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture. My methodological hypothesis is that every good architectural project can work with the narrative scheme of suspense as it is understood by Alfred Hitchcock in his films between 1940 (Rebecca) and 1964 (Marnie).

The main literary basis for my lectures is Thomas de Quincey’s Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts (1827), Edgar Allan Poe’s Tales of Raciocination (1841), and Charles Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil (1857). I also take in consideration the more classical sources of the Pseudolonginus (On the Sublime, 1st century AD), John Milton (Paradise Lost, 1667), William Shakespeare’s works (1590-1613), Edmund Burke (A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, 1757), Immanuel Kant (Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, 1764) and Karl Rosenkranz (Ästhetik des Hässlichen, 1853).

My pedagogic scheme is to combine theoretical lectures commenting a selection of literary texts, images and cinema fragments with a series of exercises on different topics concerning architecture and urban design like Magnetic field, Geography, Voyeurism, Sense of gravity, Otherness, Mass culture, etc. In a course of 15 weeks every students
has to solve a project design exercise in relation with Alfred Hitchcock’s suspense films and the different aesthetic and formal categories provided in the theoretical discourse.

Apart from explaining the students’ skills taught considered in theory, I will show in this paper the amazing drawings they deliver as a proof of the efficiency when considering the act of architectural project as a “dangerous” narrative in which, like in a perfect crime, the space can twist and turn in mysterious, functional and beautiful new project solutions.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Alfons Puigarnau (Barcelona, 1968) has a degree in Art History and Philosophy (University of Barcelona, 1992) and a PhD in Aesthetics and Arts Theory (Pompeu Fabra University, 1999). He has lectured at the School of Theory and Criticism of the Cornell University (Ithaca), The Warburg Institute (London), The Harvard University School of Law (Massachusetts), the Art Institute of Chicago and other relevant academic institutions.

He is an Associate Professor at the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture since 2001 and is in charge of the Department of Critical Thinking where he teaches Aesthetics and Ethics for architecture students.