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

• Paper / Proposal Title:
A Research-based Design Studio approach.
*Information + Physical Space: From Form-Giving to Conversation-Managing*

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• Abstract (300 words):
The presentation and consequent paper will present the methods employed and the experience gained as part of a research-based, advanced architecture design studio developed and taught during Spring 2018 at City College in New York. The studio is a manifestation of the current pedagogical shift from individual design theses towards faculty-led research-based design studios. Being part of this new generation of studios, the syllabus addressed experimental processes of making and testing propositions via an architectural combination of creative design and research.

The studio titled “Informational Systems & Conversational Machines”, investigated physical space as an informational environment and as a system of interactive parts. The paper will refer to the studio’s developed strategies as a response to social, experiential and environmental considerations. Through the design of reciprocal systems, the studio provided alternative ways for addressing every day, context-based issues that are less dependent on the global information industry, data power structures
and monopolies. Can interactive urban landscapes elucidate natural processes that are invisible but present in cities? Can technology built into urban form become a medium for translation, allowing information imperceptible by our own sensory apparatus to be rendered legible? What are the relationships between information, visualization and inhabitable space? These are some of the questions the studio addressed. Issues of temporality and space adaptation were investigated.

The paper is concerned with an interdisciplinary inquiry and addresses a wide range of designers and stakeholders involved in the theories, practices, and pedagogies of analyzing and communicating information, as a way to rethink disciplinary boundaries and to identify radical tools that respond to contemporary understandings of interactivity of space. Furthermore, it investigates how the research-based design studios address experimental pedagogies that engage with the production of knowledge, the expertise of other specialties and the logistics of project performance in new and productive ways.

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

Loukia Tsafouliia is a registered architect TEE-TCG, educator and researcher. She received her Post Professional MS in Advanced Architectural Design from Columbia University in New York with a fellowship from the Gerondelis Foundation and she is currently a PhD candidate at NTU Athens, researching on responsive environments and constructing a hand in hand history of performance and cybernetics to a history of design. She is the cofounder of PLB studio and faculty at Pratt Institute, Parsons The New School, CCNY, the Spitzer School of Architecture, and NYCC of Technology. She has collaborated professionally with Studio Dror, LEESER Architecture and Jorge Otero Pailos in NY, and K+T Architecture as well as the NTU Urban Environment Lab in Athens. Her work has been published and exhibited in international design fairs, the London 3d print show and ICFF in New York amongst others. She has lectured in academic institutions in New York, Athens and various cities of China. She is currently working on the book publication ‘Transient Spaces’, exploring the concept of impermanence in its various social and formal manifestations and focusing on questions of belonging and displacement.