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

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The End of Design: Rethink Presentation Skills Training in Design Studios

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• Abstract (300 words):
Presentation skills training is important in architecture schools. Every design project ends with the exhibition of students’ work, where the design ideas are presented in the form of drawings, diagrams, models, films and other artistic medias. The preference of immaterial ideas of architecture is associated with the development of the modern system of fine arts and the idea of artist-as-genius, where immaterial ideas are considered to be higher than material, as the intellectual is superior to manual labour, so that Intellectual thinking and training in drawing skills is essential for designers.

However, this might convey a sense to students that architectural design is about finding concepts and that it ends as these design concepts are presented in exhibitions, and the architect can be arrogant, working on concepts that are fixed and dominant, but may omit a fact that events take place in actual spaces are more meaningful and unpredictable. There is at times a gap between written concepts and actual uses of a building. The actual meaning that gained through real practice cannot be controlled
by the architect but by the users. In this sense, it is necessary to convey an idea to students that the presentation is not the end of design, and the future user’s dynamic practice ought to be conceptualized into the architect’s intention.

The architecture of flexibility and polyvalence works on foreseen future uses, while deconstruction offers an open end for the user’s experience. There is another way where the user’s agency is positively engaged in the architect’s intention, that the user helps to fulfil the architect’s concept: the architect envisions a final image, but merely offers an incomplete building, and the image will be worked out by the user’s construction in the future use. The design of West Village (Chengdu, China) is an example of this type.

In conclusion, the purpose of this article lies in rethinking the skill training in design studios, attempting to offer suggestions for a more comprehensive way of studio teaching.

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

Dr. Xi Ye is a researcher in architecture with a strong interest in aesthetics, semiotics, architectural theories and criticisms. Throughout the initial years of research, she has sought to understand the meanings of architecture across intervals time and culture, particularly she often works with traditional sinological thoughts in thinking contemporary architectural discourses. Xi was awarded a PhD degree at Newcastle University in 2018 and she currently works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Arts, Macau University of Science and Technology.