TEACHING-LEARNING-RESEARCH: DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTS

Paper / Proposal Title:
Global Approaches to Local Issues: A Trans-scalar Approach to Interdisciplinary Design

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Abstract:
The Global Studio at the University of [withheld] College of [withheld] offers a platform of design practices—architecture, interiors, historic preservation, urban environmental design, and product design—that engage cross-cultural issues impacting the built environment. Operating in comparative global contexts, the studio invests students and faculty in interdisciplinary design thinking and making activities that confront diversity, inclusion, social justice, and sustainability. Global Studio supports cross-pollination of design practices that enhance student understandings of how diverse voices contribute to more inclusive design methodologies with global impact.
The pedagogical framework of Global Studio leverages the unfamiliarity of foreign places to inform design decision-making. This act of transference within a global context allows students to view design beyond their own cultural biases while gaining competency in new creative practices. The studio employs a series of multimodal exercises that challenge the initial—often intuitive—assumptions of “otherness” through a diverse range of activities. Critical readings, research, fieldwork, and making exercises are structured to intentionally enhance variant making and visualization activities. Students address social, political, and environmental issues that are increasingly overlooked. An iterative design approach enhances learning outcomes through greater criticality. Fieldwork exercises in both international and domestic
contexts allow students to revisit their initial assumptions of *place*, and thus, to contemplate design solutions responding to hybridized global influences. In this presentation, authors will chronicle the efforts over the past two years creating comparative studies from China to the US, with a focus of multi-scalar, multidisciplinary endeavors that allows us to expand the boundaries of knowledge in this professional academic and research issues around an integrated multi-disciplinary and systematic vision.

- **Author(s) Biography:**
  Rebekah Radtke is the Director of International Programs, Director of Graduate Studies, and an assistant professor in the College of Design at the University of Kentucky. Her research investigates how interior design enables social change by applying boundary-spanning pedagogical approaches rather than discipline-specific processes. Since 2011 her transdisciplinary multi-scalar projects produced better living and learning environments and healthy communities in national and international venues. Her collaborative work, all funded by national entities, include preservation projects in rural China, design-build projects in Brazil, community-activated art interventions in Appalachia, and education-based design initiatives in Lexington, KY.

Dr. Gregory Luhan is the John Russell Groves Endowed Professor of Architecture in the UK College of Design and an affiliate professor with UK’s Lewis Honors College and the College of Engineering Center for Visualization and Virtual Environments. Luhan holds a University Research Professorship and is a nationally recognized architect, scholar, author, professor and academic leader whose work investigates how design, emerging digital technologies, critical theory, pedagogy, practice, and academic-industry partnerships intersect. Dr. Luhan teaches Architecture and Historic Preservation digital studios and seminars on design theory, systems thinking, and design computing. Dr. Luhan earned his Bachelor of Architecture from Virginia Tech, Master of Architecture from Princeton University, and doctorate at Texas A&M University. His professional practice includes award-winning, research-driven projects that enabled him to forge collaborative relationships with disciplines outside architecture, most notably engineering, education, business, physics, arts & sciences, and the fine arts. In 2019, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture appointed Dr. Luhan to the Editorial Board of Technology | Architecture + Design (T|A+D) to help advance and transform current discourse on building-based technologies and its role for architecture and design.