ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Discussing “within” the project: Increasing realism through the virtual

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• Abstract (300 words):
This paper proposes a critical analysis of the role of detailed three-dimensional models in the design and implementation of the virtual year-end event with studio reviews, INDA Parade 2020 (Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok), which has been shifted, due to COVID-19 lockdown, to a mixed remote platform, including online virtual reality, video-conference, multi-channel forum, and streaming, under the motto “Keep School Real”.

Particular importance was given to the quality of the virtual spaces and models, but also to the type of interaction that participants (students, instructors, and guests from all over the world) could have with them through sophisticated avatars, to challenge the dichotomy between representative and performative models.

The introduction of detailed virtual spaces made many project presentations much more tangible because of the absence of abstraction in the models, which involved many details in scale 1:1, actually making the proposals themselves more “real”.
Therefore, despite the more stringent hardware requirements, the design and organising team has counterintuitively opted to adopt a hi-resolution VR platform, complementing it with a series of other digital tools to ensure accessibility.

This demonstrated to be an effective choice, retrospectively, as it determined seemingly boundless possibilities of model crafting, except for the limitation of a maximum number of polygons, which required students to acquire skills for strategic allocation of computational resources, performing in three-dimensions an exercise of progressive concentration of detail, typical of bidimensional documents. At the same time, all the increased possibilities also encouraged a spontaneous process to reinvent ways of breaking away from conventional formats, in a constant redefinition of the state of exception.

These aspects constitute just part of a broader renegotiation of norms and conventions that might have a profound impact on design pedagogy in the near future and wouldn’t have been embraced in such a compressed timeframe without unavoidable constraints.

Event summary video: https://tinyurl.com/hcf4ufh4

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

Antonio Bernacchi and Alicia Lazzaroni are Assistant Professors (Teaching) at Aarhus Architecture School in Aarhus, Denmark. They hold a postgraduate Master degree in Advanced Architectural Design from ETSAM Polytechnic University of Madrid, subsequent to graduate studies in Italy and Spain.

After practicing for several years in Singapore, they became adjunct professors of architectural design and, from 2016 to 2020, year and course coordinator in the International Program in Design and Architecture (INDA - www.cuinda.com) of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. They are constantly engaged in investigating and evolving design pedagogy, in their experimental teaching activities and through dedicated conferences and publications.

They are co-founders of Animali Domestici (www.animalidomestici.eu), a design practice based in Aarhus and Bangkok with an active interest in ecology in its wider sense, that has been investigating alternative inclusive assemblages of users and materialities, proposing multi-species explorations with an empirical and hands-on approach.

This is focused on the development of speculative design projects, products, and processes, at the intersection between ecological and economic systems. Their work has been featured at Beijing Design Week, Milan Triennale, Bangkok Biennial, Seoul Biennale, CCA Singapore, and Oslo Triennale, among others.