ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Architecture Making Trivia: learning from the precedents and explicating their narratives.

• Author(s) Name:

Bihter Almaç

• University or Company Affiliation:

ITU Istanbul Technical University

• Abstract (300 words):

This paper takes on long been used design education approach, learning from the precedents, to tackle the earlier uncertainty of Covid19 lockdowns. Architecture Making Trivia is a four-session online workshop with first-year design students. It was when the lockdown measures were just introduced, universities closed doors and most of the students went back to their family homes. This was a limbo moment for our design studio. The Faculty asked us to refrain from any sort of design-related activities. And the resume date was unsettled.

Picture John Hejduk’s Wall House on your mind and re-imagine it with these features; slightly off proportioned, colours somehow matching, one room has letters from a famous cologne brand and another room has a telephone number printed on. Or, remember Terunobi Fujimori’s Takasugi-An, raised fairly above wooden pillars, now re-imagine it with a folded, bent Birkenstock box on uneven wooden brushes. Or Steven Holl and Vito Acconci’s Storefront with a magenta pink potato sack bursting out from the rotating surfaces towards the front street. In Architecture Making Trivia, the brief was
to find drawing sets of a project from the list of architectures and make models. The workshop was not about making the exact model, but to follow their interest in these projects and reflect it to the making. The only rule was to model by reclaiming the materials of commonly used things during the lockdown. In the first two sessions, we have talked about the projects in general and their plans for model making. On the third session, I introduced a reading set for each project and asked students to think of their projects by them. The aim was for them to develop a critical approach to the project rather than referring to the projects with generic information. There were twenty-three voluntary students and thirteen projects.

Initially, this workshop aimed to keep the students engaged with the design studio during all the turmoil. The unexpected twist of the process was about the lockdown materials. This approach glitched the realm of the precedents with the new-normal everyday and added another narrative. At the last session, I asked them to write the story of each material they have used. Then, the precedents became mementoes of their lockdown days. This was the very reason that students thought of these projects as their own. The solid gap between these architectures and the first-year design students crumpled. Using the precedents as a conversation starter (or here as the means of making) elevated the variety of architectural design explorations. In this paper, I aim to rethink learning from the precedents as an anchor to explore the probabilities of an online first-year design studio, and, Architecture Making Trivia is the research of this attempt.

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

Bihter Almaç is a designer/researcher of architecture in the other and of the weird. Her research mainly focuses on tactics for peculiar creativities to trespass to the architectural unconscious. She is a design tutor in Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Department of Architecture, Istanbul, Turkey. She received her PhD degree in Architectural Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London, UK. Her PhD thesis is titled: Designing in a State of Distraction: The Wild Fields of Architecture. She holds Msci from ITU in Architectural Design, her thesis is titled: Folding of Places. She is a BArch graduate from ITU. www.thebidon.org – ig: @thisisbidon

Recently published: