ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Disembodiment in Digital Architectural Education: Lessons from Bauhaus

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• Abstract (300 words):
Architecture has long been about an attempt to create a balance between theory and the technical means of production involved with practice. A new interest in this balance emerged in post-war Germany at Bauhaus, which was eventually interwoven into North American architectural education.1 The Bauhaus was one of the first schools that attempted to rectify past imbalances through its curriculum, educating students in both the theoretical nature of design and the technical practical nature of craft.2 The Bauhaus stringently rejected the industrial revolution mentality of machines replacing age-old trades.3 Rather, they sought an education that encouraged students to use technology to craft their design projects, without becoming disembodied from their work. This proved to be fertile ground as the students could design anew. Bauhaus inspired many of the architectural curriculums across North America to modernize their programs.4 The question is, does this Bauhaus mentality remain relevant in today’s education? Architectural education today is faced with change; many past skills of architecture are becoming digitally automated, and the traditional balance between theory and practice is becoming increasingly unbalanced. For example, today there is a large focus on students to be technically inclined to work within a digitally reliant architectural
workforce. Yet, there is a price for this; students are becoming disembodied from the work they create, a particularly relevant topic to consider in today’s pandemic situation. This paper will examine the lessons of Bauhaus to determine if it may offer us any solutions to our present dilemma of disembodiment in architectural education.

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

Danika Chesney

Danika Chesney is an undergraduate student studying Architectural Science at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. Her interests in the field of architecture originated in the ability of architecture to influence and provide for people, and thus the ability of architects to shape societies. Throughout her architectural education, she has experienced a strong digital presence in both the design and the production of architectural projects. She has also worked as a Research Assistant under Dr. Kendra Schank Smith and Dr. Albert C. Smith on a book entitled The Architect as Magician. Through co-operative education, she has also had the experience of working at architectural offices in Toronto. During the current pandemic situation, she is completing her final semester of her degree digitally via online education.

Albert C. Smith, Ph.D., R.A.

Dr. Albert C Smith is a tenured Associate Professor in the Architecture Department at Ryerson University. His PhD from the Georgia Institute of Technology is in Architecture with a subject area of History, Theory and Criticism and has a main interest in Representation. During the past thirty years he has taught architecture full-time at Ryerson University, the University of Hartford, the University of Utah, University of Minnesota, Georgia Tech and Texas A&M University. He has successful experience developing and teaching graduate and undergraduate architecture design studio and elective courses.

With a rich and diverse background in both practice and teaching, Albert C Smith has published numerous articles and been the keynote speaker at various international conferences on architecture and representation. He is the author of several books and the newest titled, The Architect as Magician, is in publication. He is a registered architect in New York State and his professional experience includes four years in the design section of the office of Kevin Roche.

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1 Kathleen James-Chakraborty, “Bauhaus in America,” Grove Art Online.