ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Online Studio-Culture: Unmasking the Pandemic Design Studio

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• Abstract (300 words):
During the recent pandemic, architectural education, as many other human activities switched to take place remotely, through the use of digital technologies. Of course this was a positive fact, since the other major alternative would be to seize teaching and learning.

The paper will attempt a reflection of this positive event, by reviewing the problems that occurred during the educational activities, as they were specialized in architectural design education, through the author’s experience of teaching at the school of architecture of Athens, Greece.

The physical place for teaching and learning design is the design studio that usually is the ‘core’ around which all other modules and subjects are building the knowledge of architectural design. The design studio today is the dominant in the education of architecture. As such, every architect is accustomed to some of the variations of styles that exist around the world. The studio forms the locus where tutorials, crits, reviews and discussions about to-be-designed projects take place. Despite various local differences, it seems that a certain uniform ‘studio culture’ has been formed. This culture, according
to the 2002 Studio Culture Task Force Report was described, through a set of experiences, habits and patterns, that included, not only “late nights, exciting projects, extreme dedication, lasting friendships, long hours,” but also through “unpredictable events, a sense of community, and personal sacrifice”. The question of that this paper address is how much of this studio-culture was lost during the remote educational activity?

In order to answer to this question the paper will focus on a set of five themes that make architectural education in the design studio unique in its experience: sense of community, embodied communication, skill transmission, methods of representation and the intertwining between theory and practice. Through the change of studio-culture between these five themes the paper will attempt to map the territory of what happened during the pandemic closure and speculate on what extend will these changes will affect the future of the design studio education.

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

Leonidas Koutsoumpos is assistant professor of Theory in Architectural Design at the School of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, Greece, teaching design studio and theoretical courses. He has also taught in Patras, Greece and Edinburgh, Scotland. He graduated in Athens, where he also accomplished a postgraduate degree in theory and philosophy of architecture. Being awarded a fellowship by the Greek State Scholarships Foundation he accomplished his Doctoral Degree in Architecture at the University of Edinburgh. His PhD was awarded the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Presidents’ Award for Research, Outstanding PhD Thesis 2009. His research has been exploring theoretical and practical aspects of architectural design through philosophical and ethnomethodological studies.