

**Arch 605a – Shanghai Workshop**  
**Emergent Urbanism**  
**Momentary Urbanism of Spectacle and Speculation**  
6 units

Coordinator: Paul Tang  
Instructors: Roland Snooks  
Stefano de Martino (tentative)  
Laurence Liauw (tentative)  
Anne Balsamo

This summer Shanghai will host the 2010 International Exposition and offers a rare opportunity to observe Shanghai through a hybrid condition of artificially produced momentary urbanism. In this, the principle pedagogical thrust of AAC's summer 2010 design workshop is to investigate the momentary urbanism as generator of emergent urban growth that could singularly manifest its own urban paradigm.

The workshop will start with the rigorous study of the Shanghai Expo site and master plan to understand its intended and post Expo use as well as mapping of its entire perimeter. The intent is to examine the Expo as incubator of urban renewal and its perimeter as conditions of urban interface to comprehend the larger mechanisms of urban production. The studio will challenge the notion of "better city better life" in contemporary Chinese city and look at the various specificities that mark the spatial production and its produced urbanism. The scope of design research will range from ideological to emblematic, typological to infrastructural, real to virtual, and urban to nature. The design engagement will explore and find strands of definitions that expose possible alternate readings, interpretations and hybrid conditions as basis for alternate urban speculation.

### **The Urban**

Aldo Rossi has asserted that works of architecture are creations that are inseparable from civilized life and the society in which it is manifested. While architecture references singular creations, architectures, as a collective, are the constituents of the urban. At a fundamental level, urban morphology speaks of the physical existence of cities as overlays of urban syntax of which architecture is a layer. However, morphological studies of the urban constitute the exploration and analysis of all the possible facets and solutions to a multidimensional, non-quantified, constantly evolving complex equation. As such, in order to fully comprehend urban form, we must not stop at learning its physical qualities, but we must also engage in understanding the mental and social complexities as experiential narratives. While the traditional notion of city historically had its roots in Western civilizations, the current trajectory of evolution and formation of the city is in Asian countries, particularly in China. As the new frontier of city making and proliferation, China offers great opportunity for a cross sectional understanding of city genealogies and mutations from their Western counterparts.

Recognizing the above, the workshop will provide a vehicle to explore the new urban paradigm in China. Participating students will engage in the transformative working forces of urbanism and built environments to mediate the spectrum between universal civilization and the indigenous particularities of place and culture. The objective will be to delaminate the above rationale of cities as complex systems into discreet syntactical layers for analysis and synthesis.

### **Emergent and Tactical**

Urban design proposals are at best understood as urban models projected as a possible urban scenario based on fixed parameters. In this regard, urban conditions in Shanghai during the Expo will engender a hybrid condition with multiple and complex

## AAC usc

circumstances that will alter the growth of the city. Notions of fixity based on urban norms that define the parameters for urban engagement will become suspect and seemingly indeterminate. In this condition that transcends traditional urban models and defies urban design norms the workshops will investigate alternate approach to urban design in the tactical rather than strategic.

It is the premise of the workshops that urban growth and progress are inevitably emergent and occur in the emergent dimension that defies traditional linear centrally planned strategies. In philosophy, systems theory, and science, emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions. Within this definition, the intent of the workshop is to identify urban metrics that frame the urban condition and explore possible combinations as metrical composition that define its urbanism through small tactical design interventions.

As such, the workshop will employ a tactical design approach that is not rooted in the traditional translation of fixed strategic physical master plan by a singular author but the design of a dynamic tactical urban system capable of addressing multiple and changing urban variables. An open ended interrogative approach not necessarily aimed at solving problems but exposing inherent contradictions, vacillations, and constant transformations. A design of system of metrics coded as processes that require trans-cultural, trans-subjective operativity.

The design investigation will attempt to examine complex systems at multiple scales to achieve highly integrated, coherent urban readings within complex and differentiated fields. This is inherently a process based approach to urban design. The rigor of field research in the selection of data as urban metric and value systems to guide the design engagement will be continuously and critically examined. The workshop will focus in the process of design and translative definitions as domains of design research rather than language, image, character, or subjectivity characterized by the romantic, the expressionistic, the picturesque, and vernacular.

### **Process**

The workshops will introduce algorithmic applications to document and critically examine existing conditions to guide the urban engagement. The intent is not in the formal generative properties in the current discourse to test advanced computational design approach. All computational and digital applications have to be in the service to examine China and China's contemporary urbanism as design research and not the other way around.

International faculty led student groups are invited to join USC AAC in the workshop. Students will be divided into mixed groups of 3 to 4 persons from different institutions to explore algorithmic application in urban research. The intention of applying algorithmic methodologies to our workshop is twofold. Firstly it allows us to breakdown the city's complexity into parameters as metrics for analysis and associative controlled mapping. Secondly it allows urban strategies to be generated from these metrics as emergent models, a process of non-linear engagement that is necessarily operational and projective.

Each group will develop a series of critical readings of the Expo site as speculative proposals for urban transformation with intentional impacts and effects. In this regard, it is important to understand that this process does not mean loss of control and autonomous digital processes – critical and productive urban intentions remain core to the workshop.



Shanghai Expo

### Schedule

Based on the above description of investigative process the design workshop will be preceded by one week of literary research on campus at USC. Once in Shanghai, the 6 weeks of instruction will be divided into 3 intervals of investigative course work (please see attached detailed schedule):

#### **Pre-Departure Research** (1 week) – May 31 to June 4

Registered USC students only – not applicable to Continuing Education Scholars or other faculty led student groups

#### **Urban Research** (2 weeks) – July 5 to 18

#### **Urban Proposal** (2 weeks) – July 19 to August 1

#### **Urban Speculation** (2 weeks) – August 2 to 13

### Reading Assignments:

Li, Xiaodong; Yeo, Kang Shua. *Chinese Conception of Space*. Beijing, China: China Building Industry Press, 2007. Pages 1-47, 102-145. ISBN: 9787112091928.

Venturi, Robert; Brown, Denise Scott. "Shanghai", in *Shanghai Transforming*. Edited by Iker Gil. European Union: Actar, 2008. Pages 66-71. ISBN: 9788496954663.

Haar, Sharon. "Shanghai's Spectacles", in *Shanghai Transforming*. Edited by Iker Gil. European Union: Actar, 2008. Pages 72-75. ISBN: 9788496954663.

**AAC usc**

Rowe, Peter G. "Urbanizing China", in *Shanghai Transforming*. Edited by Iker Gil. European Union: Actar, 2008. Pages 76-79. ISBN: 9788496954663.  
Sassen, Saskia. "Disaggregating the Global Economy: Shanghai", in *Shanghai Transforming*. Edited by Iker Gil. European Union: Actar, 2008. Pages 80-85. ISBN: 9788496954663.

Li, Xiangning; Zhang, Xiaochun. "From Lilong to International Community", in *Shanghai Transforming*. Edited by Iker Gil. European Union: Actar, 2008. Pages 204-211. ISBN: 9788496954663.

Aranda, Benjamin; Lasch, Chris. Pamphlet Architecture 27, *Tooling*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-1-56898-547-3.

Volume, "Ubiquitous China", Archis 2006 #2

Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1983. ISBN: 094192002X.

**Grading** Grades will be calculated based on the following distribution:

Urban Research	30%
Urban Proposal	30%
Urban Speculation	30%
Discussion Participation	10%
	<hr/>
	100%

**Attendance**

This course adheres to the School of Architecture attendance policies. Because of the concentrated nature of foreign studies course offerings, consistent attendance is a critical aspect of the course. Absence from class can not easily be "made up" when the class experience involves unique exposure to resources not otherwise available to the students. As such absence from field studies activities can have significant impact on the evaluation of student and may result in an unsatisfactory grade.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>

**AAC** usc

**Accreditation Statement**

The USC School of Architecture's Master of Architecture degree is an accredited professional architectural degree program. All students can access and review the NAAB Conditions of Accreditation (including the Student Performance Criteria) on the NAAB Website:

[http://www.naab.org/accreditation/2009\\_Conditions.aspx](http://www.naab.org/accreditation/2009_Conditions.aspx)