



George Coles, Odeon Cinema

Brentwood, UK, 1933

Odeon

While the movie theater might be obsolete typology, the enduring lure of imagining a space for collective event based cinematic experiences is difficult to give up. For me it's hard not to think of Greece, when designing a cinema, in part because of the word, kinematographos = kinema (movement) and graphos (writing), but also because of my personal experience of cinema and memories of summer. Interestingly the first outdoor cinema, built in 1900, was also in Greece. Today Greek cinemas are renowned for being places to experience film *al fresco*, perhaps not with the same views of the Hellenic amphitheaters, but non the less a place to experience the cool summer breeze and city lights. In this studio we will design an indoor and outdoor theater for the Ann Arbor Film Festival called Odeon (small-roofed theater in Greek) on a wedge site of Ann Arbor's Kerrytown.

This studio will focus on designing context. Context in Athens is generated by the numerous factors that influence architecture; topography, regional building materials, cultural expression and a long political history. In globalized regions like the US, context no longer comes naturally. It has to be created, designed. In this studio we will use "translation" as an operative design tool, where students analyze a cinema from another country and through numerous material studies translate it into a cinema for Kerry Town. Much of my research revolves around what I call "material practice", using material fabrication methods and iterative processes to get design feedback. This studio will focus on plaster relief casting to develop a contextual material pallet. Using this method cinemas from Russia, Korea, Spain, Austria, Denmark, England, Thailand, France and Indonesia will be contextually transformed to fit into the cozy material palette of a small midwestern college town. To better understand what that might be, the studio will visit Eliel Saarinen's Cranbrook Educational Campus as a precedent for context creation.

ARCH 552: INSTITUTIONS STUDIO
FL2024_M & TH_1pm-6pm_3rd Floor Studio

Neal Robinson
Instructor

MOVIE THEATER
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

CONCESSIONS

RE-UP!

A CULINARY CINÉPOLIS
2024 edition

"We build theatres to sell food."

Luis Olloqui - CEO of Cinépolis


Between the diminishing returns of calculating experience economies and the ever more niche Eras of [personal] Empathy sits Cinema and its beleaguered spatial witness, the Movie Palace. Declared "dead" upon the arrival of 16mm, VHS tape, Netflix, and then Labor negotiations, the art form, and its situational projection spaces have managed to hang on (?) by flexing mutable operational muscle. While technology and social changes press hard on current operations, ticket-price economics most undermine the agency and sustainability of cinema space. Up to 75% of the ticket purchase price is returned to the film studio. This leaves little profit for local theatre owners, employees and renewed spatial investment. Hence, high-dollar snacks are pressed to cover the social and ethical expectations of both space and civility. That's a lot to ask of a Jujifruit.

If movie cinemas are to thrive, Major Concessions are in order.

This studio looks to champion architectures of "popcorn economics" by interrogating concessions' material and economic potentials (edible and phenomenal) as design drivers for resuscitating a proposed Cinépolis in Ann Arbor, MI. In addition to historical cinema types and their varying forms of staging encounters and projective consumption, we will attempt a radical culinary reprioritization of the cinema experience/space. We will track both celluloid [film] and cellulose [foodstuff] and the integration of palm oils, milk chocolates, gelatins, and real/fake sugars into the figural/literal concrete and economic mix. The studio will be both tasty and tasteless, but not without intention. Your efforts constitute Part II of a sustained engagement with CONCESSIONS as a shape-shifting effort to syncopate with new models of cinematic re-presentation and its literal site and phenomenal situation.

M TAUBMAN COLLEGE

Infrastructures of Imagination



Arch 552 Institution Studio
Tuesday and Thursday, 1–6pm, ARR
Associate Professor McLain Clutter
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What does it mean to call a movie theater an institution? Institutions are both material and conceptual; physical and abstract. Institutions emerge from the collective beliefs of a society and endure to steward the continuity of those beliefs. The movie theater? Movies are media, and our society's contemporary media consumption habits trend anything but collective. Today, most of us engage media in echo chambers. We consume alone, in the basement, or nestled behind the digital veil of iPhone's privacy mode. There, we seek out digital communities of consensus, reinforcing our political and social ideologies, and trolling those who do not share our views. But the movie theater was once the dominant spatial format for media consumption, and one in which media was consumed collectively, in a single space, while contending with one-another. Movie theaters were public media infrastructures – infrastructures of imagination.

This studio section will recover the history of movie theater as an institution. We will look back at visionary early theaters, proposals for experimental cinemas, and several pre-cinematic precedents for collective media consumption. Critically mining these precedents, we will propose contemporary movie theaters that disrupt current trends toward atomized media consumption, reasserting movie theaters as instruments of collective life.

trilogy

trios,
trptychs,
and
the rule of 3s

The first time is novel. It does not necessarily follow any pattern or predict any future behavior. The second time is a deliberate callback, establishing a certain behavior in a certain situation. We see the pattern and project that it will happen again. When it does, the pattern is confirmed and we are rewarded with that recognition.

[adapted from Ben Bowman's Rule of Threes in improv comedy]

past, present, future
commodity, firmness, delight
breakfast, lunch, dinner
Angelica, Eliza, Peggy
shot, scene, sequence
red, green, blue
S, M, L
circle, square, triangle
Larry, Moe, Curly
sex, drugs, rock'n'roll
point, line, plane
color, camera, character
fork, knife, spoon
1D, 2D, 3D
life, liberty, pursuit of happiness
morning, noon, night
Tony! Toni! Toné!
mama bear, papa bear, baby bear
veni, vidi, vici,
good, bad, ugly
x, y, z
red light, yellow light, green light
stop, drop, roll
bacon, lettuce, tomato
snap, crackle, pop
Huey, Dewey, Louie
this, that, the other
lights, camera, action

In understanding the multitudes contained within cinema, architecture, and the design process, the TRILOGY studio will explore the explicit and implicit possibilities of threeness. We will find ourselves simultaneously at the beginning, middle, and end; we will ask: *what came before? where are we now? and what will happen next?* The third time will always be a charm. Through three we get expansion or constraint, sequence or set, similarity or difference; with three we get more than the sum of the parts.

In architecture, we swim in the waters of what has already been (of the homage, the tribute, the style...). We never start from zero, and one thing always leads to another.

The TRILOGY studio will look to architectural and cinematic precedents, not only for what they can teach us about narrative, sound, and sight, or of the exigencies of program, site, and codes, but as the inspirations for a series of vibrant and cinematic architectural TRILOGIES that make thoughtful, bold, and novel proposals for movie theater designs.

As in any good film, our protagonists (i.e., architecture) will undergo dramatic journeys of self-discovery, and before the credits roll, will be re-defined through engaging with new characters (form, program, pattern), new ideas (color, access, drama), and the vanquishing of foes (imposters, defaults, and design villainy).

TRILOGY is the successor to SEQUELS (Fall 2023), and is coming soon to a studio near you!



The Royal Tenenbaums, 2001 (dir. Wes Anderson)

UNPLUGGED STUDIO

Arch 552 | Architectural Design V (2G1/3G4)
Instructor: Ana Morcillo Pallares

Fall 2024 | Mon-Thu 1-6 pm
anmorcil@umich.edu

The rising awareness of the effects of climate change calls for a response to a condition in which designers are increasingly compelled to transform built contexts and to address problems that had been confined to the domains of engineering, ecology, or city planning. A renewable energy agenda embodies the concomitant acts of representation and re-conceptualizing —and which, by making the need of a clean source visible and formal, seek to bring it back into public debate. As an example of this, **Ann Arbor's A2Zero plan** to achieve carbon-neutrality by 2030 clashes with the agenda of Detroit based energy provider, DTE. Repeated failures of the DTE power grid and high rates have instigated a petition by residents and grassroots organizers for the city to explore alternatives to DTE service. The company, being the largest electric utility in Michigan, uses mainly coal, nuclear fuel, natural gas, hydroelectric pumped storage and only a small amount of renewable sources to generate its electrical output.

Building on the urgent need to contest today's energy politics of containment by reconfiguring outdated aesthetic assumptions, the **'Unplugged Studio'** invites students to reflect on an environmental awareness of a new clean-energy institution. Drawing on a hypothetical future when DTE will leave Ann Arbor, the studio will take advantage of the privileged location of the DTE's historic property of Argo Substation next to the Argo Cascades - today a major recreational green area but a relic of an industrial past for the production of hydroelectric power on the Huron River. The studio will stimulate the persistence of the site's past, through its electricity legacy to envision a typology intimately related to lighting performance such as a movie theater. An opportunity that will stress the physical, symbolic and environmental importance of using the existing. A framework, in which the students will design a movie theater that doesn't follow a trend of superfluous new construction but considers the uniqueness of reused materials and energy in a more economic way, extending the life of the structures, at the same time advocating for a climate justice future. In a capitalist-driven society, is there still room for the environment? Can we revert the legacy of the opulent movie palaces towards a more ambivalent and playful institution? Can we change our myopic vision of inclusion and sustainability?

another world



The title and author of this image are unknown. The car is owned and driven by Jack Brabham and is likely part of the filming of the 1966 movie *Grand Prix*. Sourced from kottke.org

ARCH552: Fall 2024
University of Michigan
Taubman College of Architecture

Institutions Studio
Mon. / Thurs. 1-6pm
6 Credit Hours

Instructor: Charlie O'Geen
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Office hours by appointment

Filmmakers go through extraordinary lengths to transport their audience to a different world. They create elaborate sets, build models and miniatures, consider timing and lighting, creatively think about camera placement and focal length, and employ actors and actresses at the top of their game to convince the consumer that they are in a (sometimes radically) different place. Wherever we watch a film – in a theater with sticky floors, on a couch watching a tv with a loud neighbor, or on a small phone on a busy subway commute – we are inside a story which is carefully crafted to make us sweat in the desert, sense the cold snowy wind on our face, or feel the pressure of being underwater.

This studio will take on the high level of craft and consideration of spaces that movies do. How can spaces be created that transport us to a different place? How can these spaces be grounded in real-world necessities such as code yet heighten our senses with material articulations? This studio will look at the movie theater from a variety of scales and perspectives – from an individual doorknob to the overall massing of the structure – and will stitch together the many architectural layers to offer occupants and onlookers a radically different immersion into spatial assemblies.



FR

Frame
Rate

Jonathan Rule
M + TH
1:00-6:00

In cinema a frame is one of the many still images that compose a complete motion picture. The speed at which these images are played back to us is measured by the frame rate. Humans can process images at a rate of 10 to 12 frames per second. Anything above that becomes interpreted as motion. Frame rates have an impact on style and how one experiences a motion picture. In cinema the typical frame rate is 24 frames per second since it is closer to how we see the world and creates a more cinematic experience. On the other hand, a sporting event with a lot of motion will opt for a higher frame rate to capture all the detail.

In architecture, a frame can be thought of in several different ways. Tectonically a building uses a structural frame as the underlying bones to define space. According to Colin Rowe, contemporary architecture is almost inconceivable in its absence.¹ The use of the frame has transformed how we build taller and more complex structures since the construction of the first American skyscraper in Chicago in the late 1800's and continues to allow us to push the limits of how we imagine space.

Architecture like cinemas can also frame space visually. Using different architecture elements: windows, corridors, apertures, etc. an architect has control over what views are framed through the design of these elements as interface. This use of the frame enhances the choreography of the space affecting how people move through it as well as blur boundaries between spaces on the interior as well as between interior and exterior.

Understanding frames as being temporal and static, the studio will explore the expression of a frame to define and structure an architectural proposal for a cinema in Ann Arbor.

¹ Rowe, Colin. *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa, and Other Essays*. MIT Press, 1976.

Photo: 3D Cinema, J.R. Eyerman/Life Pictures/Shutterstock

Outside-In

The Movie House in an Interstitial Age

University of Michigan

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

ARCH 552 — Institutions Studio, Fall 2024

Christian Unverzagt, Associate Professor of Practice in Architecture, crumich@umich.edu

The past two centuries have been marked by rapid change not within a fixed and stable world, but within a world transformable, and transformed. From industrialization to the information age, regional conflicts to world-wars, global trade to global warming, the world has been re-shaped in ways both deliberate and unintentional.

The studio will design a center for experimental and arthouse films on the edge of Ann Arbor's Kerrytown. We'll work to understand the circumstances which have led us to and created the time we are in, and speculate on the role of architecture to engage these conditions in a confined, semi-urban site. To do so will require optimism, imagination, pragmatism, and diligence.

The studio will explore the relationship between interiority, exteriority, and interstitiality through verbal declarations and visual delineations. What has become of the movie theatre experience in an age when one can watch a movie anywhere? What exactly is the role of a building designed to separate us from daily life when our devices can instantly distract us — daily? We can perceive the sudden shifts, but what about the subtle ones? How might we heighten our sensitivity to them. Let's work on that.

But first, as an exercise in translation, we will start by utilizing the book as an analogue vessel by which to study precedent in cinema and cinema architecture.

SOME MEANS & METHODS:

- Sometimes work fast; and sometimes work slow.
- Usually favor the quick over the labored; sometimes labor over the quick.
- Plan & Experiment. Edit over reshoot. Script or outline? Storyboard or improvise? Both!
- Almost always favor the effective over the tedious, (unless the tedious proves effective!)

Revel in this moment. Be engaged. Challenge yourself. Minimize distraction. Pry open the in-between. The work, practices, and effort you forge now will chart a trajectory not yet seen.

And.....ACTION!