

# Mediating Spaces

Architecture as Media, Media Shaping Architecture  
Spring 2003

ARTH 100: Freshman Seminar

History of Art Department  
University of Pennsylvania

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The digital vanguard's much touted campaign to "dematerialize" our physical bodies and environments wasn't nearly as extensive as many early cyberculture theorists had predicted. We have not traded in our corporeality for virtuality—nor have we exchanged all of our brick-and-mortar schools, churches, and communities for virtual versions. In fact, many architectural theorists, sociologists, psychologists, geographers, and scholars in related disciplines argue that as our media have become ever more virtual, the design and development of our physical spaces—through architecture, landscape design, and urban and regional planning—have become even more important. If our media and our built spaces do not follow parallel evolutionary patterns, what is the relationship between these two human productions? This course examines the dynamic and complex relationship between media and architecture. We will look at architecture as media, symbols and embodiments of particular ideas and values—and at the impact that communication media have had on the practice of architecture and the way we experience our environments. In laying the groundwork for the course, we will first address theories of architecture as text, as language or semiotic system, and architecture as mass media. We will then turn our attention to models of production and consumption that apply to both architecture and media. After equipping ourselves with a vocabulary and a theoretical framework, we will trace the contemporaneous development of media and architecture from the scribal era in the Middle Ages to the digital era of today and tomorrow.

In addition to introducing a comparative method of studying history, this course is designed to foster an appreciation of media and architecture as embodiments of cultural values and as records of social history. Furthermore, we will find that underlying and inspiring these two systems of cultural production throughout history are certain foundational elements—particular value systems and stages of consciousness, epistemologies and ontologies, cultural perspectives and worldviews.

## OUR TOOLS

A course reader is available on reserve in the Fisher Fine Arts Library. The reader contains excerpts from the following works:

- Albrecht, Donald, et al., *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997.
- Barth, Gunther. *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. (Trans., Edmund Jephcott) New York: Schocken Books, 1978.
- Carey, James W. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Carpo, Mario. *Architecture in the Age of Printing: Orality, Writing, Typography, and Printed Images in the History of Architectural Theory*. (Trans., Sarah Benson) Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001.
- Colomina, Beatriz. *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994.
- Crowley, David & Paul Heyer. *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Longman, 1995.
- de Sola Pool, Ethiel, Ed., *The Social Impact of the Telephone*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn. *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.
- Ewen, Stuart. *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*. New York: Basic Books, 1988.
- Forty, Adrian. *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000.
- Giedion, Siegfried. *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- Giedion, Siegfried. *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Gottdiener, Mark. *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions, and Commercial Spaces*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001.
- Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. (Trans., Thomas Burger) Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.
- Hale, Jonathan A. *Building Ideas: An Introduction to Architectural Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.
- Hall, Sir Peter. *Cities in Civilization*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- Innis, Harold. *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1978.
- Koolhaas, Rem, et al., *Mutations*. Bordeaux: Arc en Reve Centre d'Architecture, 2001.

- Kracauer, Siegfried. The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Leach, Neil, Ed., The Anaesthetics of Architecture. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1999.
- Leach, Neil, Ed., The Hieroglyphics of Space: Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Leach, Neil, Ed. Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Lupton, Ellen. Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1983.
- Mattern, Shannon. Building Ideologies: A Case Study of the Seattle Public Library and its Embodied Ideas, Ideals, and Values. Dissertation. New York University, 2002. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 2002.
- McCarthy, Anna. Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.
- Meyrowitz, Joshua. No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Ragheb, J. Fiona, Ed. Frank Gehry, Architect. New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2001.
- Rasmussen, Steen Eiler. Experiencing Architecture. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1962.
- Rice, Shelley. Parisian Views. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997.
- Sennett, Richard. Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969.
- Spigel, Lynn. Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Wheller, James O. Yuko Aoyama, and Barney Warf, Eds. Cities in the Telecommunications Age: The Fracturing of Geographies. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Wright, Gwendolyn. Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983.
- Wright, Gwendolyn. Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1973-1913. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

If you prefer to purchase your own copy of the reader, we can make arrangements to have a copy made at Campus Copy.

You will also find on reserve at the Fine Arts Library copies of the following books:

- Mitchell, William J. e-topia: "Urban Life, Jim—But Not as We Know It". Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999
- Rattenbury, Kester, Ed. This Is Not Architecture: Media Constructions. New York: Routledge, 2002.

I also recommend that you review the New York Times' "Circuits" section, which appears in each Thursday's paper. This section features new electronic and digital technologies—most of which impact the way we design and construct, perceive and experience space. We will most likely discuss some of the technologies featured in each Thursday's paper in the following Monday's class.

## YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Reading Log.** Anyone can skim through a book and highlight key words; only a careful reader completes a text with a firm grasp of its primary argument(s), significance, and applications. Each week, as you complete your readings, you should keep *informal* notes on each text in a reading log. Identify the text's title, author, and its major arguments; and list and briefly define its key terms. Discuss what these texts mean to you and how they contribute to your understanding of the relationship between media and architecture. You could also write about any articles or product reviews from the previous week's NYT "Circuits" section. Although I don't require a particular number of pages or paragraphs for each week's log, I do recommend that you write a total of two pages. Please email me each week's entry by noon on Monday.

These logs are designed not only to allow you to reflect critically on the texts, to improve your reading comprehension, and to prepare you for the class discussion—but also to enable me to verify that you are carefully, thoroughly reading each week's assigned texts. The reading log is worth **15%** of your final grade.

**Attendance.** It's a small class; we'll miss you when you're gone! Besides, showing up—and staying awake and engaged—are the very *least* you can do. You will be permitted two excused absences during the semester. Subsequent absences will impact your grade, and more than four absences may prevent you from passing the course. Attendance is worth **10%** of your final grade.

**Participation.** Because this class is a seminar, your thoughtful participation is essential to its success. You are encouraged to contribute—courteously and meaningfully—to class discussions; your reading log will help you to prepare. However, if you are uncomfortable speaking in class, we can discuss other ways for you to contribute. Participation is worth **10%** of your final grade.

**First Writing Assignment/Revision.** This first paper, a 2-3-page essay, will address pre-electronic age spaces. A more detailed description of the assignment will be provided at least two weeks before the due date, on February 17, 2003. Please **email** me your papers in two formats: (1) as a Word/Word Perfect attachment to the email message, and (2) cut-and-pasted into the body of the message. During the following two weeks, I will assist you in revising the

paper, and you will submit your revised version on February 24. The original draft is worth **10%** of your final grade, and the revision, **10%**.

**Second Writing Assignment.** The second paper, a 3-4-page essay, will address imaging spaces. As with the first paper, a more detailed description of the assignment will be provided at least two weeks before the due date, on March 24. Because you will not have the opportunity to revise and resubmit this paper, it is your responsibility to seek assistance in writing the paper before the March 24 deadline. Again, I ask that you please *email* the paper as an attachment to an email message, and cut-and-pasted into the body of the email. This second paper is worth **20%** of your final grade.

**Final Project.** Throughout the semester, you will most likely come across several ideas, arenas, individuals, etc., about which or whom you would like to know more. This final project will give you the opportunity to delve deeply into a research area of personal interest. You should begin thinking about potential topics immediately—but you must make sure to email me a one-paragraph proposal before April 14. This research project, which should be presented in a 8-10-page paper, is worth **25%** of your final grade.

## OUR SCHEDULE

- January 13                    So...What Do Architecture and Media Have to Do with One Another?  
Innis,Giedeon, McLuhan, Carey, Eco, Lefebvre
- Readings:                  Harold Innis, "The Problem of Space" In The Bias of Communication (8 pp.)  
James Carey, Section V of "Space, Time, and Communication" In Communication as Culture (4 pp.)  
Adrian Forty, "Language Metaphors" In Words and Buildings (~21 pp.)  
Jonathan Hale, "Systems of Communication" In Building Ideas (~26 pp.)  
Umberto Eco, "Function and Sign: The Semiotics of Architecture" In Neil Leach, Ed., Rethinking Architecture  
(~19 pp.)  
Marshall McLuhan, "Housing" In Understanding Media (8 pp.)  
Horace M. Newcomb, "Media as Environment." Center 4 (1988): 10-17 (8 pp.)  
Steven Heller, "Making Buildings Talk." Metropolis (July 2002): 104-7, 165.  
Sam Lubell, "Virtually Rebuilt, a Ruin Yields Secrets." The New York Times (2 May 2002)
- January 20                    Martin Luther King Day—NO CLASS
- January 27                    Inscribing Space: Architecture in the Scribal Era, Architecture as Inscription
- Readings:                  James Burke, "Communication in the Middle Ages" In Crowley & Heyer, Eds., Communication in History  
(10 pp.)  
Umberto Eco, excerpts from The Name of the Rose (~14 pp.)  
Steen Eiler Rasmussen, "Hearing Architecture" In Experiencing Architecture (~11 pp.)  
Siegfried Giedion, excerpt from Mechanization Takes Command (~17 pp.)  
Robin Evans, "Translations from Drawing to Building" In Translations from Drawing to Building (~24 pp.)  
Adrian Forty, "Language and Drawing" In Words and Buildings (~12 pp.)
- Excursion:                  **Penn Architectural Archives, Lower Level of Fisher Fine Arts Library**
- Film:                            excerpts from The Name of the Rose
- February 3                    Talking Points: The Stage and The Public Sphere
- Readings:                  Sir Peter Hall, "The World as Stage" In Cities in Civilization (~45 pp.)  
Jurgen Habermas, "Institutions of the Public Sphere" and "The Bourgeois Family and the  
Institutionalization of a Privatness Oriented to an Audience" In The Structural Transformation of  
the Public Sphere (21 pp.)  
Jane Jacobs, "The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact" In The Death and Life of Great American Cities (~19 pp.)  
George Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" In Richard Sennet, Ed., Classic Essays on the Culture of  
Cities (14 pp.)

Karl W. Deutsch, "On Social Communication and the Metropolis." Daedalus (Winter 1961): 99-110 (~11 pp.)

\*Recommended: Rosalyn Deutsche, "Agoraphobia" In Evictions

Films: Excerpts from Ridicule and The Social Life of Urban Spaces

February 10 "This Will Kill That": Print and Place

Readings: Walter Ong, "Print, Space, and Closure" In Crowley & Heyer, Eds., Communication in History (10 pp.)  
Mario Carpo, excerpts from Architecture in the Age of Printing (~48 pp.)  
Gunther Barth, "The Metropolitan Press" In City People (~27 pp.)  
Michael Schudson, "The New Journalism" In Crowley & Heyer, Eds., Communication in History (~6 pp.)

Films: excerpts from The Day the Universe Changed (Program 4: "Printing Transforms Knowledge"), The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Ric Burns' New York: A Documentary Film (Disc 2: "Order and Disorder"), and Fahrenheit 451

February 17 Radio City: Wireless Technologies, Untethered Spaces

Readings: James W. Carey, "Technology and Ideology: The Case of the Telegraph" In Communication as Culture (~22 pp.)  
Stephen Kern, "Wireless World" In Crowley & Heyer, Eds., Communication in History (4 pp.)  
Susan Douglas, "Broadcasting Begins" In Crowley & Heyer, Eds., Communication in History (8 pp.)  
Colin Cherry, "The Telephone System: Creator of Mobility and Social Change" In Ithiel de Sola Pool, Ed., The Social Impact of the Telephone (14 pp.)  
Ellen Lupton, "The Voice with a Smile" In Mechanical Brides (~10 pp.)  
Sandeep Junnarkar, "Designing the Century's First Digital City." CNET News.com (18 September 2002):  
Joel Garreau, "Home Is Where the Phone Is." Washington Post (17 October 2000): A1  
Andrew Blum, "Cell Theory." Metropolis (October 2001): 52.

Film: excerpts from New York: A Documentary Film (Disc 4: "Cosmopolis")

#### **FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

February 24 Manufacturing Desires: Plan Books, Packaged Design

Readings: Alan Powers, "The Architectural Book: Image and Accident" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 157-173 (~13 pp.)  
Gwendolyn Wright, "Populist Visions" In Moralism and the Model Home (~30 pp.)  
Gwendolyn Wright, "The New Suburban Expansion and the American Dream" In Building the Dream (~19 pp.)  
Beatriz Colomina, "Reflections on the Eames House" In The Work of Charles and Ray Eames (~12 pp.)  
Beatriz Colomina, "The Media House" In Assemblage 27 (August 1995): 55-66 (~7 pp.)  
Paul Finch, "Architectural Publishing: An Alphabetical Guide" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 198-203 (~5 pp.)  
Neil Leach, "Wallpaper Person: Notes on the Behaviour of New Species" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 231-243 (~11 pp.)  
Bernstein, Fred. "Uninspired? A Blue-Chip Architecture Firm Looks Inward." The New York Times (29 September 2002)

Excursion: **Philadelphia Athenaeum, 219 S. Sixth St.—Please arrive by 2:30pm!!**

Film: The Films of Charles and Ray Eames

#### **REVISION OF FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE**

March 3 Collapsing Dimensions: Photography and Space

Readings: James S. Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 26-35 (10 pp.)  
Shelley Rice, "Introduction: Times Zones" and "Parisian Views" In Parisian Views (~47 pp.)  
Beatriz Colomina, "Archive" In Privacy and Publicity (15 pp.)

Pierluigi Serraino, "Framing Icons: Two Girls, Two Audiences / The Photographing of Case Study House #22" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 127-135 (7 pp.)  
Kester Rattenbury, "Iconic Pictures" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 57-90 (18 pp.)  
David Greene, "Foto-graph, Foto-shop" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 121-124 (4 pp.)

March 10 Spring Break—NO CLASS

March 17 Mise-en-Scene: Cinematic Spaces

Readings: Patrick Keiller, "Architectural Cinematography" In This Is Not Architecture, pp. 37-44 (7 pp.)  
Sir Peter Hall, "The Dream Factory: Los Angeles, 1910-1945" In Cities in Civilization (33 pp.)  
Sir Peter Hall, "Cinema," "Graphic Art," and "Critics, Media, Patrons, Public" In "the Invention of the Twentieth Century: Berlin, 1918-1933" In Cities in Civilization (~10 pp.)  
Douglas Gomery, "Nickelodeons to Movie Palaces" In Communication In History (6 pp.)  
Siegfried Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces" In The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays (6 pp.)  
Peter Wollen, "Blade Runner: 'Ridleyville' and Los Angeles" In The Hieroglyphics of Space (8 pp.)  
Phillip Lopate, "Movies and the Metropolis." Metropolis (April 2002): 118, 136.

Films: excerpts from Metropolis, Welcome to the Dollhouse

March 24 Boxed In: Televisual Spaces

Readings: **SKIM** Joshua Meyrowitz, "The Merging of Public Spheres" and "The Separation of Social Place from Physical Place" In No Sense of Place (31 pp.)  
Lynn Spigel, "The Home Theater" In Make Room for TV (~34 pp.)  
Allison Arieff, "Well, Not Quite." Dwell (October 2000): 44.  
Katie Hafner, "Comforts of Home Yield to Tyranny of Digital Gismos." The New York Times (28 April 2002)  
David Brooks, "Oversimulated Suburbia." The New York Times Magazine (24 November 2000): 56-9.  
A. O. Scott, "The Medium Is the Mind-Set." The New York Times Magazine (9 April 2000): 29-30.  
Terence Riley, "The Un-Private House" In The Un-Private House (~29 pp.)  
Sanford Kwinter & Daniela Fabricus, "Television: The Infrastructural Revolution" In Mutations (4 pp.)  
Lisa Guernsey, "The Future is Here, and It's Ugly." The New York Times (7 September 2000)

\*STRONGLY Recommended: Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown & Steven Izenour,  
Learning from Las Vegas, Rev. Ed., Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977.

Films: excerpts from Brazil and The Truman Show

### **SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

March 31 Spaces for Books and Barter:  
Libraries and Commercial Space Through the Media Ages

Readings: Siegfried Giedion, "Henri Labrouste, Architect-Constructor, 1801-1875" In Space, Time and Architecture (~7 pp.)  
Shannon Mattern, excerpts from "A History of Library: Its Values and Physical Forms" In Building Ideologies (11 pp.)  
William Leiss, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally. "Advertising, Consumers, and Culture" In Communication in History (5 pp.)  
Rosalynd Williams, "Dream Worlds of Consumption" In Communication in History (6 pp.)  
Walter Benjamin, "Fourier, of the Arcades," "Granville, or the World Exhibitions," and "Baudelaire, or the Streets of Paris" In Reflections (9 pp.)  
Gunther Barth, "Department Store" In City People (~37 pp.)  
Project on the City, "Evolution of Retail Types" In Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping (22 pp.)  
Herbert Muschamp, "In Its New House, Apple Goes Bauhaus." The New York Times (18 July 2002): F9

\*Recommended: Mark Gottdiener, "The Themed Culture and Themed Environments" In [The Theming of America](#)

\*Recommended: Stuart Ewen, "Vanished Barbarism," "Mechanical Sentiments," and "Form Follows Value" In [All Consuming Images](#)

April 7

## Folds, Weaves, & Layers: Spaces of and for Today's Sciences and Technologies

By today you should have visited the **Intricacy** exhibit, curated by architect Greg Lynn, at the Institute of Contemporary Art, 118 South 36th Street at Sansom

### [ICA's Hours](#)

Wednesday through Friday, 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Free with PENNCard

### Readings:

Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, "Diagrams: Interactive Instruments in Operation" In [This Is Not Architecture](#), pp. 99-109 (~8 pp.)

Eric Taub, "Architects Grow Reliant on the 40-Pound Pencil: The Computer." [The New York Times](#) (10 August 2000)

Herbert Muschamp, "Architecture's Claim on the Future: The Blob." [The New York Times](#) (23 July 2000)

Mark Dery, "Curvature of the Spline." [I.D. Magazine](#) (April 2002): 54-9.

Philip Campbell, "The Height of the Kick" In [This Is Not Architecture](#), pp. 110-120 (~9 pp.)

FAT, "Everything Counts in Large Amounts (The Sound of Geography Collapsing)" In [This Is Not Architecture](#), pp. 244-251 (~7 pp.)

Beatriz Colomina, "The House That Built Gehry" In [Frank Gehry, Architect](#) (~17 pp.)

Julie V. Iovine, "An Avant-Garde Design for a New-Media Center." [The New York Times](#) (21 March 2002)

Alan G. Brake, "On the Boards: Diller + Scofidio: Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston, Massachusetts." [Architecture](#) (October 2002): 30-1

Ned Cramer, "Diller + Scofidio's Blur Building for the Swiss Expo 02 in Yverdon-les-Bains." [Architecture](#) (July 2002): 53-9.

### Films:

excerpts from [Frank Gehry: Bilbao and Before](#) or [Frank Gehry: Architecture in Motion](#)

April 14

NO CLASS

April 18 (Friday)

Off to New York for **Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio** at the Whitney Museum of American Art

From the Whitney's website:

For the past two decades, the New York architects and artists Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio have drawn on installation art, time-based media, and architecture to redefine attitudes toward the body, the city, and everyday spaces. This exhibition presents an astonishing range of their site-specific installations, video works, performance pieces, and buildings. Diller + Scofidio's work crosses all media boundaries to explore how technology defines identity, how rituals can offer either imprisonment or liberation, and how we can build devices that allow us to be at home in an ever more artificial and confusing world.

April 21

## Physical Space in a Virtual World

### Readings:

Neil Leach, "Saturation of the Image" and "Architecture of the Catwalk" In [The Anaesthetics of Architecture](#) (~27 pp.)

Eric A. Taub, "Small Worlds to Create Bold, New Ones." [The New York Times](#) (1 March 2001)

Constantin Petcon, "Media-polis / Media-city" In Neil Leach, Ed., [The Hieroglyphics of Space](#) (7 pp.)

William J. Mitchell, "The Revenge of Place" In [This Is Not Architecture](#), pp. 45-53 (9 pp.)

Mitchell L. Moss and Anthony M. Townsend, "How Telecommunications Systems are Transforming Urban Spaces" In [Cities in the Telecommunications Age](#) (10 pp.)

Visit and skim William Mitchell's [City of Bits](#): [http://mitpress2.mit.edu/e-books/City\\_of\\_Bits](http://mitpress2.mit.edu/e-books/City_of_Bits)

\*\*STRONGLY Recommended: William J. Mitchell, [e-topia: "Urban Life, Jim—But Not as We Know It"](#) Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999.

Films: excerpts from The Matrix, Minority Report

April 30

**FINAL PAPER DUE**