



Daniel Glick-Unterman, March '17

about representation as discourse;

Pierre Thach, Daniel Fetcho,

architects should be loud or quiet;

the pages of Paprika! to explore its

potential as a unique medium for

productive discussion.

Besides the email chains, facebook

comment threads, and conversation

transcripts interspersed with

at the first kind of discourse; we

are being trained to one day speak,

write, and design as authorites

on Architecture. But by this narrow

definition, who is really qualified

to engage in discourse here, now?

And how often are these authoritative

'discourses' stuck in an echo chamber?

As Yale students, we are expected

to learn from those who are good

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write, and design as authorites

Letter From the Editors

Note: more than half of this issues

content is online at yalepaprika.com

The verb Discourse, Latin in origin,

can have two slightly different

meanings:

1. speak or write authoritatively

about a topic

2. engage in conversation

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definition, who is really qualified

to engage in discourse here, now?

And how often are these authoritative

'discourses' stuck in an echo chamber?

How often do we ourselves, as

students, really engage in the second

definition of discourse? In light of

On the Ground

Happenings

Third Year Dan Marry played hero by wrangling

a broken air hose in the shop.

The 6 on 7 crowd migrated to the Queering Space

closing reception at the School of Art Architecture

students devoured apps while watching performances

involving bondage, warm soup, and sex.

10/28 First years did yooman's work visiting Bushwick for

studio and racing back to don costumes and co-host

the annual halloween party. Conclusion: YSoA does

drag well.

11/02 Reservation Matters, but why? Max Page answered

the question during his insightful talk. Rainfall sites

need to be preserved just as much as beautiful ones.

11/03 Professor Kaiher Esterling delivered the Thursday

lecture coinciding with YSoA's Open House for

prospective students. "Things That Don't Happen

and Shouldn't Always Work" featured porn,

helicopters, and diamonds. And it really worked.

At the end of open house, Dean Berke dotted out

flowers to current students wearing nametags

about online

platforms for

discourse, with

Paul Petrunia

Founder of Archinect

M.Arch '18

about generating

friction over dinner,

with Julie Turgeon

and Jack Lipson

M.Arch '18

about healthy

criticism, with

Azza Abou Alam,

Amanda Iglesias

and Wilson Carroll

M.Arch '17

& M.Arch '18

about honest lies,

with Matthew Bohne

M.Arch '17

about neoliberal

discourse,

with Martin Man

M.Arch '19

about required

readings, with

Francesca Xavier

M.Arch '18

about shots fired

by homie schumie,

with Mark Gage,

Patrik Schumacher,

and the Yale SoA

Class of 2018

about why 'that's

so cliché' is a cliché

phrase, with Alex

Karlsson-Napp

M.Arch '18

about roots, with

Nicolas Kemper

M.Arch '16

about thorny topics

and safe spaces,

with Julie Turgeon

M.Arch '18

about loud and

quiet architecture,

with Pierre Thach,

Kevin Huang and

Dylan Weiser

email back and forth

as possible. Isabelle Song and

venues

in as many formats and venues

conversations about conversation,

This issue aimed to generate

is YSoA a safe space for discourse?

of disagreement? Or being wrong?

Are we impeded by a need to conform,

to be politically correct? Are we afraid

in online forums, at dinner tables?

Are we impeded by a need to conform,

In classrooms, at our studio desks,

discourse? Where does it occur?

What makes for a productive

to learn from fiction and difference.

it takes to respectfully disagree and

social media, it is worth asking what

perhaps today's most universal and

problematic venue for discourse,

thought, only fueled by what is

the views expressed in Paprika do not represent

those of the Yale School of Architecture. Please send

comments to paprika.ysoa@gmail.com.

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Daphne Agostin & David Tururo

Channel of Finance: Caroline Achbarat

Content Manager: Francesa Carrey

your tips: oig.paprika@gmail.com

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# representation

*Over Email*  
JEONGYOON SONG  
yeah let’s get on this...  
HI MARK.  
10.27

DYLAN WEISER  
Peter, *(insert bad MFG joke here)*

But seriously, I think it’s funny that those undertones of us acting on behalf of MFG and PE exist in this conversation.

PdB said in the concluding remarks of the 2nd year reviews, and I’m paraphrasing loosely: “It’s very peculiar that with the invention of tools like rhino students have fallen into the ‘retro’ look of representation from when hand drafting was the state of the art.”

I think the graphic nature of these kinds of drawings is actually pretty boring and I’m exhausted, not to mention the (dots, dashes, plus signs), so what is it that attracts students to this style?

I get there are certain conventions within the discipline, but seriously, is the axonometric the best that we can do with the tools at our disposal?

As a student, you need to have a point of view of the discipline which includes representation and if we just keep grinding away at Architecture in the same way the PE did before the turn of the century we effectively are wasting our education.

10.27  
JS  
I guess I will just go into commenting on the PdB quote. I think there’s reason to contest what defines ‘retro’/old vs. ‘modern’/new. In my opinion, the two terms are constantly in a state of interchangeability; the old becomes the new and the new becomes the old. Just look at fashion—one moment something was in, the next something’s out and what was originally a fashion no-no becomes a revamped ‘it’ thing of the now.

I don’t know about the specific use of ‘dots, dashes, plus signs’ but perhaps as a generation that’s been inundated with flashy architectural imagery and renderings, we collectively feel numb toward them; that despite their vibrancy and vividness, they are the ones that have actually become boring and have been exhausted; the novelty and the craziness of the forms and the representation of forms through these new digital media have worn out.

And I think that’s what makes people turn toward these ‘boring’ and ‘old’ things. Maybe we feel too overwhelmed—and perhaps, also underwhelmed—by all that we see being produced nowadays...

But at the same time, maybe representation isn’t the problem. Sometimes I find myself going back and forth between how representation should be used or what role it should play in the effectiveness of the project. For instance, what happens when everyone has the same representation method? If we took all of our second year projects and used a singular representation, maybe the things that appeared crazy aren’t so crazy after all and those that seemed boring aren’t actually boring.

Also—then it makes me wonder—do you mean experimentation just in representation or in our actual interpretation of the brief of the building that needs to be built? Because if you mean the latter as well, I think I both agree and disagree in that there needs to be more experimentation. Well, more accurately, less unbridled experimentation but more intentional experimentation.

Do you feel like you’re being experimental with your architecture and representation and that because of the general vibe or tone of YSOA that it’s being excluded or not accepted?

DW  
Regarding your last question, it’s not about being accepted or included. There should always be people who don’t agree with things that you are interested in. If not, you should go to a different school.

But to go back, I’m currently interested in having one image that represents the project, something that can hold the wall it’s pinned up on and the room it’s in.

Something that you can see and understand from 30 feet away. That’s the kind of graphic bold quality that I think is interesting in a presentation and trying to move away from a series of medium scale drawings.

I agree renderings are out but it’s no question they are very real in the ‘real world.’ But I think the flashy renderings you speak of are the ones that architects outsource to professionals.

As rendering technology becomes more advanced, I become more wary of the photo-real and context in general weighing so heavily on architecture. So yes, renderings without specific intention are bad.

JS  
In advanced studios, in most cases students take on the aesthetic and architectural approach of their critic. Why can’t or don’t people feel free to explore themselves regardless of whether they match or don’t match the critic?

# discourse as learning to see

*Snowy October Morning*  
GENTLEY SMITH & MISHA SEMENOV  
From your first speech, you have encouraged us to foster and embrace discourses outside of our studio spaces. We want to know where this desire stems from. What would you say is a productive discourse? How do we learn to have beneficial conversations as architects?

DEBORAH BERKE  
I would say my interest in discourse comes naturally out of my whole life story and experience, both the house I grew up in—my mom was a fashion designer and my dad ran a small business but he was an amateur historian, so there were already two different ways of seeing the world. This wasn’t about disagreeing on, say, local politics, but much more about how you see the world, how you understand, how your mind is wired. Every dinner table conversation was a revelation for me as a kid.

When I went to RISD, we all had to take Freshman Foundation—no matter what you were going to study, everybody took the same classes: life drawing, nature drawing, graphic design. You had a sense that when you were with your classmates, they were seeing the assignment and interpreting the assignment and making their work in different ways, and that exchange of ideas seemed so valuable to me.

As you may know, my husband is a surgeon, so he jokes sometimes that he’s on the structural engineering side of medicine as an orthopedic surgeon. So we can actually talk about moment diagrams and stress ratios! So part of the value of discourse is where there’s overlap and then you can perceive somebody else’s...I don’t want to say point of view, because that makes it sound like politics: left, right, liberal, conservative. I mean seeing, understanding, perceiving, absorbing things differently and how you learn another way to see something from the other person’s articulation of how they think about it. I think it’s important for us because we are only an architecture school. That’s a good thing—we are small and really focused on what we do and doing it as well as we possibly can, but we only talk to each other. You are going to learn from talking to each other, yes, because you think differently and you work differently, but outside of this building are artists, scientists, doctors, sociologists, psychologists. Talking to them broadens the conversation in a way that I think the conversation needs to be broadened and it’s a balance to the fact that we are only architects in this building.

G & M  
If we do embrace diverse discourses, especially those from other disciplines, how do you think that will change our culture, especially given that we are a freestanding architecture school, not attached to a planning or landscape department? Will it dilute it?

D  
My sense is, absolutely not, or I wouldn’t suggest it. I think it will enrich our culture. These resources, these other people we can have discourse with, are here. We are at Yale. Having people here from outside the discipline come here is fantastic, and they like it too. Discourse is exchange, so we’re not just receivers and we’re not the only beneficiaries. Over the next couple of years you’ll see the type of studio critics change a little bit, especially when it comes to upper level studios.

G  
It’s true, we had a painter on our review. It was such a different point of view. I feel like we are in an echo chamber. We know each other’s voices, and there’s nothing new to be said.

M  
I think often as soon as someone outside the discipline starts talking about architecture, we tend to say “oh, you don’t know, you just don’t understand.” isn’t that a major problem?

D  
Well, I think that’s true in every discipline and what I think is important is to still recognize how you can benefit from a discourse even with someone who doesn’t know your discipline. This is now ancient history, but I remember when Tom Wolfe the writer was very popular, and I was getting all these social and political insights from his work, and then I read *From Bauhaus to Our House*, and I thought “What? This guy doesn’t know anything!” And then he wrote *The Right Stuff*, and I realized he didn’t know much about the space program, and he probably didn’t know much about New York City hierarchies, either. But that didn’t mean I didn’t get anything out of it. So Elaine Scarry is one of the leading thinkers of her generation. She doesn’t know about architecture, and that’s ok. It was wonderful to listen to her, and even if you hated her commentary on beauty or think of beauty as a completely different thing, the way she shaped a sentence, the way she shaped a paragraph, the way she used adjectives and verbs, there’s benefit there.

M  
Beyond simply saying we should listen to people from other schools and disciplines talk, what are some ways we can create events and formats for discourse?

D  
Well, I’ve been to two events at the art school and both were interesting. One was this film screening about race in the big gallery in the sculpture building. One interesting thing was who was in the room: it was the most ethnically and racially diverse room I’ve been in at Yale. And the other was that there were no chairs...

*To read the rest of the interview, and to comment online, please visit the web version of Paprika!*

# why ‘that’s so cliché’ is a cliché phrase

*Saying What We Mean*  
ALEX KARLSSON-NAPP  
Empty phrases, banalities put on pedestals, and generalities taking precedence. The point is missed, washed over by a sheet of lovely, true and tried words. From your classmates to starchitects, everyone is guilty. Diffuse or sharp, meaningful or meaningless, it’s difficult to judge what qualifies as substance and legitimacy. When did modernity’s standardization of language become a suffocating, cling-wrapped homogenization of thought and why do we decorate our ideas with clichés? Maybe because we’re tired, or we’re lost in a swarm of phrases that easily stick, or we need to make this half-baked idea seem fully thought through. Sticking to what is pertinent or admitting the truth would be, well, unheard of.

Here is a list of complaints/thoughts/suggestions to point you in the direction of speech that is insightful and meaningful, or at least not boring:

Saying is not doing. Many of the twentieth century’s political tragedies have flown under the rhetorical banner of progress, emancipation and reform. Recognizing the possibility of failure from the very beginning may reduce false promises. Instead of wholeheartedly grasping to the supposed dream your project is destined to create, ask yourself: what kind of person does this architecture foster?

Know where your habits come from. Many of our default phrases were conceived of as aids to an exploding culture of management and consultancy, resulting in generalized concepts and presentations with easily graspable formats. (This article’s list format is one example.) You are a product of your environment unless awareness can instill in you something truly unique.

Something generally considered bad is likely worth looking into. Blips in thought or speech may be significant. Non-conforming practice is indispensable to formal order.

‘Activating the public.’ What does this even mean? Every time someone says this I imagine batteries being forced into the backs of a crowd of pedestrians who then proceed to move like ants whose stack has been trampled on, generating directionless movement and shrieking with delight at the sight of your architecture.

The way out of generality probably doesn’t come out of neglecting your theory readings. We have a low theoretical understanding of many of the concepts we pick up in class. The vast variety of topics covered doesn’t help. Stubbornly ask what is meant, don’t skim, re-read, and bask in the rare moments of harmony of thought. Then move on and try to enjoy living with your grappling mind.

How much longer do we need to talk about Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, and Mies Van der Rohe? 100 years? 200? Though their work and ideas may have been brilliant, their wide appeal often results in a lack of specificity. Obscure references may yield more interesting results.

What you choose to focus on has significance. Try putting a quota on yourself. For instance, during a project try to reference as many female as male protagonists. This has proven effective in changing the ratio of representation in many governments and may prove fruitful in architecture.

Don’t disregard the age you live in. The present is worth just as much as any previous state of affairs. Make full use of the means of expression of your own age and recognize that this time too will become a source for the future.

Try going up to present without using any of these words and see what happens: expand/contract, activate, engage, public, private, mixing, strategy, site, diverse. Reflect and try new words and ways of speech. Let language be a generative medium, not a stifling necessity.

Talk about what you are interested in, not what you think you should be talking about.

Did you really mean it or were you just trying to look smart? There is a certain vanity in letting yourself ramble producing words and not conversation. Don’t participate in empty discourse. Redirect it. Don’t work around what you’re trying to say. Cut the fluff. Be direct, not vague, about what you believe in.

Ideas that need to be simplified and sold perhaps can never hope to be worth anything. This is not to say that an idea can’t be beautifully unassuming in its simplicity.

# roots

*Let’s talk radically*  
NICOLAS KEMPER

In order to argue, you have to agree on something. Without a shared set of facts, a common story, a common root, there can be no opinions. Without the cardinal course, a ship’s crew cannot very well discuss the wisdom of their direction. Without the objective, there can be nothing subjective. Without ground, there can be no figure.

Today’s architecture publications—student publications in particular—suffer from a dearth of ground.

A few years ago, I helped to edit *Paprika*, the student art and architecture weekly you are reading right now. My fellow editors wanted a platform where students could express their opinions. I suffer from a chronic case of fomo (fear of missing out), and wanted a pithy ongoing record of everything that was happening. They were really into the subjective, and I was really into the objective.

After arguing over the matter for some time, we agreed to disagree: we called the subjective ‘figure,’ the objective ‘ground,’ and in our first issue, tried to build that metaphor into the DNA of *Paprika*! We wrote an elaborate explanation, promising readers that there would be ground articles, which would be reported objective accounts, and figure articles, where people expressed their opinions, ‘raw and radical.’

A faint remnant of that metaphor persists in *Paprika*: the column On the Ground, which still delivers a—mostly—objective account of the week’s happenings; but we quickly found our application of the dichotomy to be a little too literal. There is no such thing as an article that is purely figure, or ground. No opinion is particularly powerful unless rooted in an objective account, and On the Ground often delivers the most biting and potent judgments.

Nevertheless, the dichotomy can still be used to organize publications—there are publications we go to for facts (i.e. *Bloomberg News*) and ones we go to for polemics, (i.e. *The New Yorker*). Some—like *Archinect*, *Archdaily*, and *Dezeen*, throw polemics on top of job offerings and project libraries, like toppings on a salad. More subtly, through her editorial and ‘observation’ pieces, Cynthia Davidson places the polemics of Log in the context of current affairs. Indeed, even *The New Yorker* still takes the time to write up every play and event happening in New York any given weekend. Its editors understand that great polemics are subtle and begin with the objective facts and happenings that situate readers in a story.

A story defines and binds a community of writers and readers. When readers see a publication engaged with a story—not necessarily even their own story—they, in turn, engage with the publication. Most stories are spatial—they happen somewhere. It is no coincidence that of the top five newspapers in the United States, four are named after somewhere (*USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *New York Post*). Frank Lloyd Wright goes to the heart of the matter in ‘Why I love Wisconsin,’ a 1932 essay: “Radical is a fine word too, meaning ‘roots.’ Being radical I must strike root somewhere. Wisconsin is my somewhere.”

There is no shortage of polemical—often self-declared radical—writing in student architectural publishing today—the best is probably the GSD’s *Open Letters*—but they lack a somewhere—they lack roots. Student, writers, and editors want to make the brave pronouncement or—equally problematic—the very esoteric point, and do not bother with the less glamorous work of collating, reporting, fact-finding, and explaining. Their emphasis is on the single statement, disruption, and starting from zero.

Many establishment forces encourage this solipsism. In their heroic book *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, and accompanying exhibition and website, *Archizines*, Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley canonize hundreds of architecture student zines from the ‘60s, ‘70s and today. The interviews revel in the fleeting nature of these projects and elevate the act of founding, the onset, and the manifesto. The book’s obsession comes from the formative environment of today’s establishment figures: the previously hegemonic and oppressive authority of Modernism, and the need to fight back and innovate by whatever means. In that environment, the ur-zine, *Archigram*, opaque and abstract as it may be, was nevertheless self-evidently brilliant. It needed little more than its striking cover image.

In today’s architecture world, where everything goes and striking images abound on Instagram (c.f. @superarchitects), we no longer need still more shots in the dark—we need impassioned writers and editors to unite and establish an authority we can trust and respect. We need a platform that can look beyond itself to put the pieces together and work to establish what is, and what is not, so that we can discuss what should be.

For students especially, there is a great deal at stake here. Lacking publications with substantial readership, students are exploited by paid employees at profitable publications to write and provide content for free. Without authoritative publications, students cannot laud their own work, instead grasping for external affirmations (indeed, even *Archigram* owes much to the promotion of Theo Crosby in Architectural Design). Finally, most importantly, lacking publications of record leaves students with no ability to do just that: record—to tell the world their story.

They need a platform, one that does not seek to recreate the bullying edifices of modernism or the beaux-arts, and steers clear of the tenure politics that muddy the origins and objectives of today’s academic journals. They need one run by students elected by their peers and bound by an amendable constitution, whose funding—that subtle yoke—remains independent. They need one unabashedly of a somewhere, that, while its interests will be many and its contacts and investigations wide ranging, is not shy about the roots from which it works.

Such a platform—well, it would be radical.

# required readings

*Back to Basics: The Importance of Reading*  
FRANCESCA XAVIER

We like to think there is a lack of authority in our school as architectural education evolves, but whatever polemic you resonate with in this changing climate, you will find authority in the readings mindfully curated for us each year. The readings are salvaged artifacts of history that have and will continue to frame our pedagogy. However, like all assignments from our core classes, reading consumes precious hours preferably spent creating in the studio. The readings can be dense, tough to understand, and often require multiple passes. This results in reading online synopses and posting responses on class forums that are equally generalized. Rarely do we discuss theoretical topics outside of a mandated setting, perhaps because we don’t feel versed enough to have an opinion. Rather, we speak within the safety zone of our beloved studio projects. Reading reveals a wealth of knowledge and ideas that propel a more diverse discussion amongst students. The fear of expression and the worry of sounding incorrect is easily tempered by engaging with a reading.

Discourse is defined as the ability to speak or write authoritatively about a topic or to engage in conversation. With that in mind, reading provides us, as graduate students, with the skills of comprehension, vocabulary, and verbal skills, and in turn raises the quality of our own writing. If we want to embrace our education and increase discourse in the school, it is important to challenge our ability to comprehend assigned readings by the likes of Botticher, Rousseau and Pesvner. These theorists, historians, philosophers, and architects are our shared inheritance. And yet, we are more willing to sacrifice nights of sleep and sanity to complete a studio project than to devote an hour to learning from those who have struggled before us. If we don’t appropriate time in our lives now to exercising our minds by reading great works, how does this translate to our future in the profession? Reading is an exercise of lasting effects that bears more weight than any other activity we set aside time for. It is urgent that we encourage each other to have a larger literary voracity.

If we cease to see the benefits of reading as contouring imagination, as an escape from the everyday, as a pause, then how much longer can architecture itself survive?

# thorny topics and safe spaces

*The Dirty War*  
JULIE TURGEON  
I was told not to speak of the Dirty War.

Unless the topic was broached by someone else, that is. Seven years of state-sponsored terrorism under an oppressive military dictatorship left deep wounds in the minds and on the bodies of the Argentine people. The country, too, was marred, its landscape punctured by the carcasses of detention centers used for torture and interrogation during the peak of the violence, between 1976 and 1983. Though estimates vary (widely), most sources proffer that 13,000 Argentines were ‘disappeared’ throughout the course of the Dirty War, a population colloquially referred to as *los desaparecidos*.

Even thirty years after the re-establishment of a democratic government, the memory of the Dirty War is still a source of pain in the national psyche. The absence of a generation of disappeared citizens has affected families almost ubiquitously, a fact I became acutely aware of while there. My time in Argentina was largely spent in a northwestern province due north of one of the most important epicenters of resistance to, and retaliation from, the dictatorship. I lived with a single mother and her two teenage daughters. Much of our daily rapport was built upon a routine of munching on crackers with jam and coffee for breakfast. Conversation was pleasant and polite.

I was told not to speak of the Dirty War, so I didn’t.

Though well-intentioned, I wonder now whether that advice was misplaced. Is this seemingly innocuous suggestion of avoidance and retreat cut from the same cloth as the greater rhetoric dominated by phrases like ‘safe spaces,’ ‘trigger warnings,’ and ‘microaggressions’ proliferating on college campuses today? Instead of succumbing to escapism, how do we shift gears to focus our efforts on teaching one another how better to foster sensible, sensitive conversation amongst our indisputably different selves?

We share a supposed understanding that we comprise a pluralistic society, marked by an infinite variety of worldviews, backgrounds, and experiences. Yet how frighteningly easy it is to place ourselves into frictionless environments, surrounded by likeminded peers, even in a university setting. We must learn to better navigate a reality defined by difference, to open productive avenues of dialogue (even, or rather especially, surrounding difficult topics) and learn from our dissimilarities rather than evade them.

I was told not to speak of the Dirty War, but we did. Because silence sometimes stifles and conversation is worthwhile.

# loud and quiet architecture

*Boba Talks*  
PIERRE THACH

Do we need to be ideological to do architecture? Practitioners and academics alike are driven by the desire to constantly reinvent the wheel. What does the profession think of those countless architects who are never published in magazines, or those countless others who never speak out on social issues? Are they to be ostracized for not speaking up?

DANIEL XU FETCHO  
The direct answer to your question is that architects have to be provocative these days in order to appeal to people with short attention spans. Developers don’t have time to attend to long meetings. They demand synthesis. We live in an age of expediency, where that one ‘money-shot’ or the 140 characters of Twitter captivate people’s attention far more than rigorous projects.

KEVIN HUANG  
This is a very ‘Trumpian’ view of things. You may capture people’s attention with those 140 characters, but only momentarily, for they rarely have a lasting impact. Because of the fast-paced nature of social media, people receive news faster than they can recall.

D  
That said, as long as people have the ability to create a strong narrative for a project, others will buy into it. Yet if you look at the actual architecture, it doesn’t reflect anything that the person talks about. Good idea, but bad execution.

P  
On top of that, there is a hyper-tendency in architectural academia to over-intellectualize architecture. On the flip side, some enjoy the fact that their work is intellectualized, allowing them to gain appreciation in academia and, through that, to further promote their brand.

D  
They buy into a narrative that was crafted externally and then internalize it. It seems that there are two ways to craft a successful narrative. One is that the narrative is predetermined and the other is that the narrative is formed by the project itself. You can craft a storyline that you keep repeating over and over again à la Eisenman or you have good work like that of Peter Zumthor who doesn’t necessarily seek to broadcast it. People then interpret this work and form their own narratives around it.

K  
That seems to be the trend with several Japanese architects. Tadao Ando was initially only known in Japan. After Kenneth Frampton grouped him under the ‘Critical Regionalist’ label, his fame spread internationally. Yet he does not even feel the need to have a website.

P  
So they are in essence very quiet.

D  
But in many ways being quiet is just another way of being loud—a form of counter-signalling. It may not be deliberate, but being quiet can add to one’s mystique, and I think a number of architects take advantage of this, including the aforementioned ones like Zumthor and Ando. I don’t think Zumthor has a website either.

K  
It seems that in order to be loud, one is expected to criticize other people’s work. But I believe that in being quiet, you can be autonomously productive without being overtly polemical.

P  
Which is why there are architects that simply avoid academia like the plague, because they believe it’s a rabbit hole. Although enriching, the chatter of architectural criticism can be overbearing. Many think it is simply a waste of time.

K  
There is also a duration for loudness. Some architects ‘make it’ with one project and we never hear from them again. That’s why loud architects change their discourse all the time. They want to be constantly relevant. They want to be avant-garde. You have to be a politician to win at this game. You have to change your story to stay relevant.

P  
Right. Certain architects ‘make it’ by wrapping a very eloquent discourse around their work. People love attaching syllables to their narrative as a mean of becoming loud. In doing so, they form cliques in which only a particular in-group understands this coded language. And the end result is that it precludes the audience from the discourse.

D  
Rather than an academic loudness, there are loud buildings that appeal to people outside the discipline. In the case of the Olympics, for example, buildings are loud for a few weeks, only to be forgotten once the media circus is gone. Regardless of the lasting impact of their buildings, those architects enter the architectural canon with a ‘pop’ of loudness.

P  
Ultimately, being loud or quiet doesn’t determine whether you make it into the larger architectural discourse. I think there is room for both the loud and the quiet architects, but you have to be one or the other. If you’re in the middle ground, that’s when you lose out. Don’t be wishy-washy, take it all the way.

All  
[Sips boba all the way]

# online platforms for discourse

*Interview*  
MISHA SEMENOV

I’m wondering if you could begin by talking about the kinds of discourse that the *Archinect* platform enables. Who participates in them, and how are these conversations different from those found in other places?

PAUL PETRUNIA  
At *Archinect* we facilitate a variety of different platforms for discussion. Our discussion forum is the most open and accessible platform, allowing anyone with an *Archinect* account to participate. While the platform is open to anybody, the type of conversations that emerge tend to attract mostly practicing architects, architecture students, and prospective students.

Due to the nature of this online environment, discussions can be wide-ranging, covering a vast variety of issues of architecture and related fields. There are also many discussions revolving around issues completely unrelated to architecture. Since *Archinect* caters specifically to an architectural audience, these unrelated discussions can be quite fascinating, as they offer an architect’s perspective on topics that are in the news or generally discussed among a more diverse community. While there are often brilliant conversations that emerge from our discussion forum, it takes some patience and an open mind to find them as many of the participants like to troll others and hide behind an anonymous screen name while expressing opinions they wouldn’t dare in real life.

When we want to have serious conversations, we present them in the form of interviews with individuals who are experts, or experienced, on the topic of the conversation. Interviews are conducted in person, over the telephone or via email, and presented either in text format, on our website, or in audio format, for our podcasts.

M  
One of the things about the *Archinect* platform that differentiates it from, say, *Dezeen*, *ArchDaily*, *Architect’s Newspaper*, and other such blogs/ news sites is that you run substantial stories that encourage conversation—and in order to comment, you must be registered with the *Archinect* system, which allows people to easily see your comment history and engage with you, but also means it requires a certain commitment to join the conversation. *Archinect* also does a great job of giving a bio and contact info for authors. Do you think that this enables a higher-quality online conversation? Are there things you might change to encourage the discussion to continue and grow off of each article?

PP  
We have made the intentional decision to power our own commenting system on *Archinect*. We want to provide the opportunity for our members to associate their commenting history to their *Archinect* profiles and publishing history, to provide a more holistic record of each person’s contributions. For our members that have published articles and/or spent time crafting their individual or firm profile, this association absolutely encourages a more responsible self-moderation and thoughtfulness.

There are a number of changes we’re planning on making to our discussion forum and comment portion of our editorial, to encourage more productive and intelligent discourse. We will be incorporating a level of curation to discussion threads and individual comments to make the experience of reading our forum more valuable and less frustrating. We will also offer more moderation tools for our users to help each person define what and who they would like to follow (or unfollow).

*Archinect* has been around for a long time, before *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and most other social media. We’ve watched the discussion on our site evolve tremendously as social media entered the landscape. Social media offers the ability to carefully manage your social circle, to the individual level, but *Archinect* continues to offer the ability to start a conversation with an entire industry, regardless of your social, geographic, or class affiliation.

M  
One of the things that our peers complain about, perhaps because of a climate of pluralism or political correctness, is that we are not disagreeing enough with each other. Many architects work with ‘safe’ ideas like ‘placemaking,’ ‘contextualism,’ ‘environmental design’ etc that are hard to argue with. A good example of this I personally visited, is the Chicago Biennial, where the projects didn’t really seem to conflict with each other or suggest a discourse or argument within the discipline so much as announce that Architecture would save the world. Do you think it’s true that we are more afraid of offending each other, and that the field has become much more bland, practical perhaps, and much less polemical? Who are the provocateurs today and how can their voices get heard?

PP  
Considering how quickly the world is changing...

*To read the rest of the interview, and to comment online, please visit the web version of Paprika!*