

Authenticity John Ronan Studio

This studio will explore the concept of *authenticity* and culminate in a design proposal for a small furniture museum which reflects the student's personal understanding of authenticity and how architecture might embody it.

Methodology

The initial period (2-3 weeks) of the studio will operate like a seminar. As a group, the studio will investigate the studio topic and discuss questions related to authenticity, including:

- What is authenticity? How is it defined?
- What constitutes authenticity in the realm of architecture
- How is authenticity achieved?
- Is there such a thing as a *real*/fake? The fake real?

There will be readings on the topic of authenticity that the studio will discuss in class, and we will look at examples of atmosphere in realms outside of the architecture (objects, places, film, literature, fine art, photography, culinary arts, landscape, etc.). Introductory exercises will be conducted whereby the student will attempt to identify authenticity. As an introductory design exercise students will be asked to identify something (an object, place, space, experience, etc.) which they feel has authenticity, analyze its defining attributes and present it to the class as a means of acquiring a personal understanding of the topic.

This exercise will be followed by group research on the site, program, history, climate and demographics, etc. Students will also be asked to identify a furniture piece that they deem "authentic" and analyze its qualities, how it was made, etc. This period of research and analysis will lead into the semester's design project, the design of a small furniture museum.

Design Project

The bulk of the studio will be spent applying the knowledge gained in the introductory research and investigation portion of the semester in the design of a small furniture museum in Grand Rapids. Students will analyze different sites for the project and select a site together. There will be a programming session where students will discuss the appropriate program for the building, which will then be documented and used by all students for the project. The program will likely include exhibition, education, outdoor relaxation, dining, office and support spaces.

The second half of the studio will be a rigorous investigation of a critical part of the design proposal. Students will explore how building elements are made, and develop a preliminary understanding of building enclosure assemblies, systems integration, and material detailing.

Course Format

Course time will be divided between group discussion, desk crits, pin-ups, group and individual research, and field trips. There will be two reviews with guest critics during the semester.

Information on the work of John Ronan can be found on the John Ronan Architects website at www.jrarch.com. For further information on the studio students can email ronan@jrarch.com

