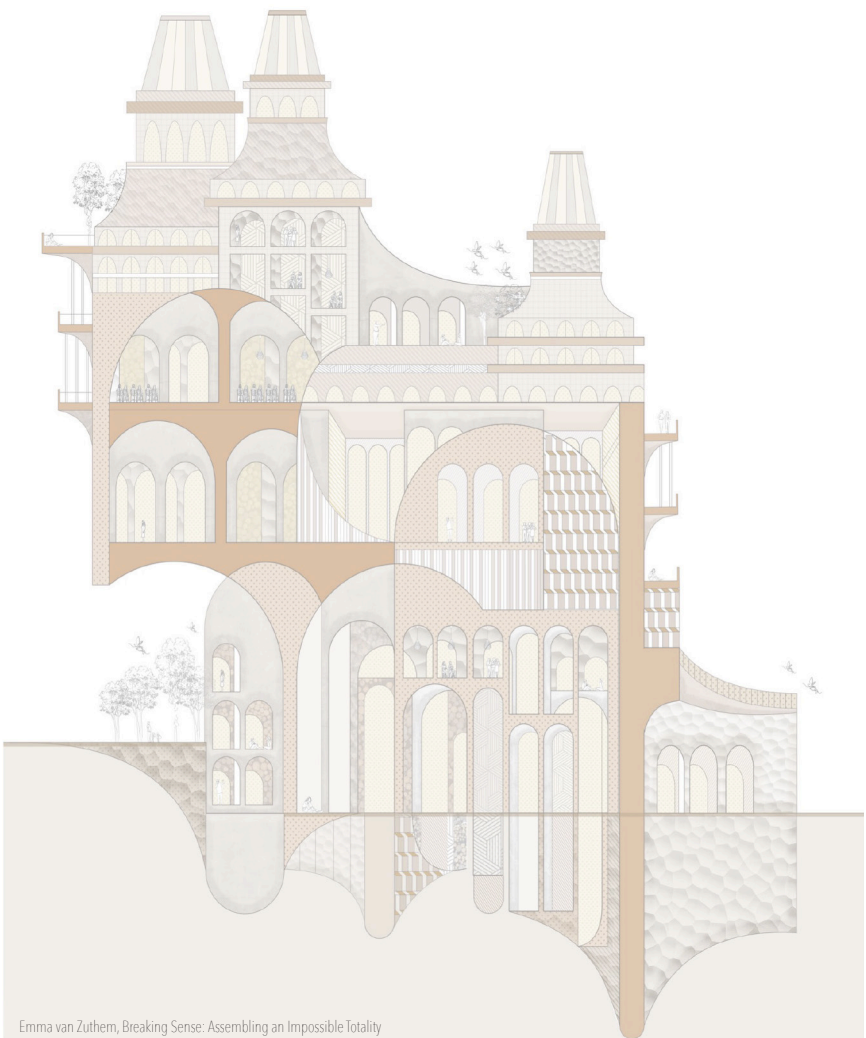


Emily White
Studio Prospectus 2025
ARCH 481 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:10-2 :00
ARCH 492 Friday 2:10-5:00

Thesis is situated in between an end and a beginning. It is the end of your undergraduate education and the beginning of whatever you do next. It provides an opportunity to reflect critically on what you have learned, consider which ideas resonate with you, and launch yourself into the future. This position concerns not only your personal trajectory, but that of your project(s.) This studio maintains that a thesis project should relate as much to histories as it does to futures.

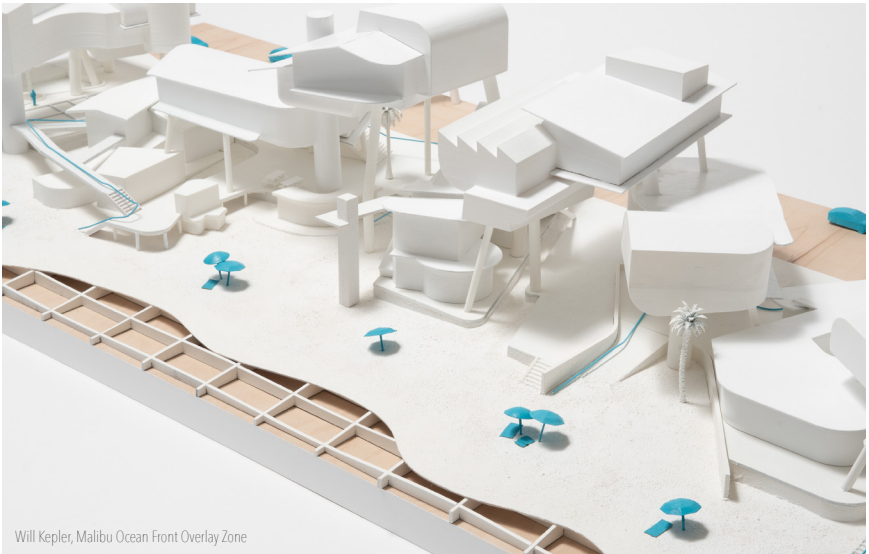
While the priorities and methods of architecture are always evolving, the work we do- especially telling stories- remains deeply rooted in visual communication including drawing, model building, image making, and time-based media. Questions related to representation will underpin this studio, namely the related questions of 1) How is an architectural argument made visual? and 2) How is a story, which necessarily conveys the passage of time, told through architectural representation?

Architectural representation is uniquely positioned to relate elements of material culture to human experience. Compared to a building, a drawing or model has special superpowers- it can make invisible social or cultural relationships visible, it can combine different time scales, it can chronicle an event through inclusion of people and other transient elements, it can provide reference data and indexical information, and so forth.



Emma van Zutphen, *Breaking Sense: Assembling an Impossible Totality*

There are 2 primary pedagogical goals in this studio. First, we will begin to unpack the many and nuanced ways representational mediums, formats, and techniques intersect with history and its narratives. We will work together to develop- and share- 2 and 3 dimensional strategies of projection, construction, and assembly.



Will Kepler, Malibu Ocean Front Overlay Zone

Our second goal is to develop individual, personal, and tightly focused questions to frame the thesis argument and design proposal, which, together, form the thesis project. This will involve reading, writing, reflection, collection, discussion, debate, drawing, and modeling.

We will participate in periodic cohort-wide shows (eg. Abstract, Statement, Section, Detail) and two major reviews- Qualifying Review at the end of Winter Quarter and a public final review at the end of Spring Quarter. The arc of projects and activities in this studio is as follows:

Fall Quarter

Types, a collection of collections of visual material
All Possible Combinations, a collaborative drawing
Small Object
Large Object
Vellum

Before and After, a drawing that explicitly invokes the passage of time
Thesis Statement

At the end of Fall, students will have arguments, sites, and operating strategies.

Winter Quarter

Site Section, a drawing that describes two or more strands of historical narrative
WWWWWH (Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How)
Trip

Visual Argument, a presentation of an argument in visual terms, aka Qualifying Review

At the end of Winter, students will have research collected in a book, site and floor plans, images, and a massing model.

Spring Quarter

Revised Thesis Statement, a return to the text-based argument to see if it still holds true

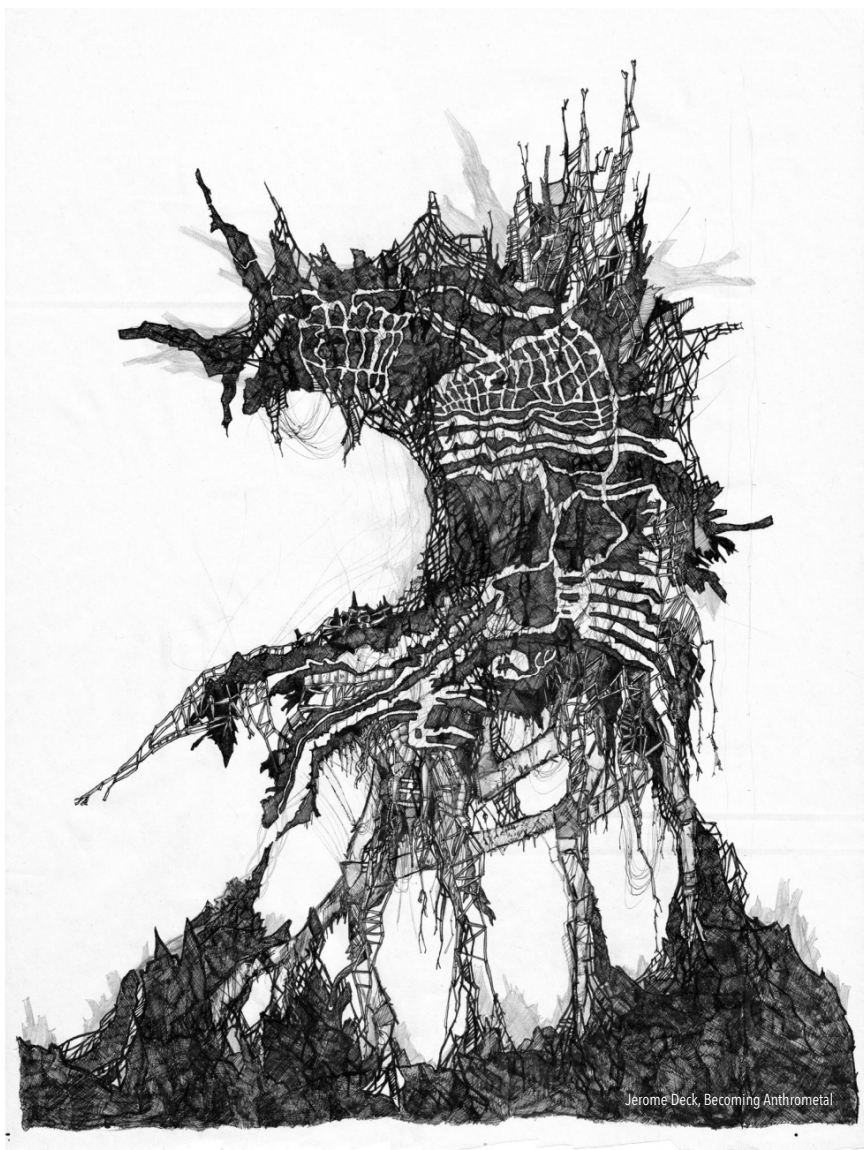
Project Detail, a description of the material and tectonic systems at work in the project

Final Model

Studio show, exhibit, or installation (see previous examples Fowl Play and Wet Paint)

Final Review

At the final review, students will present well-reasoned architectural arguments, supported by contextual material, and a comprehensive design proposal.



Jerome Deck, *Becoming Anthrometal*

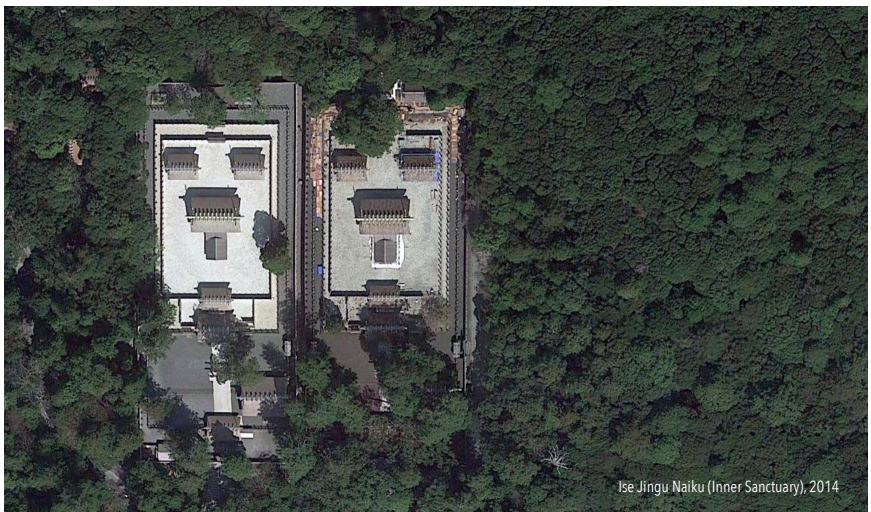
Alongside studio, ARCH 492 seminar will establish a framework for thinking about architecture's past, present and future in relation to visual culture and empower students to position a thesis argument within this framework. Specifically, the seminar will engage with architecture's historical narratives through conversations about authorship, and relatedly, changing ideas about the use of copies, precedents, and references.

Narratives about architectural production in the 20th and early 21st centuries have often described the work of a singular creative genius, who might have used precedent in clever and original ways, with results that are surprising, novel, exciting. Other narratives about architectural production- some of which we will become familiar with in this seminar- prioritize collective authorship, celebrate direct and explicit copies of buildings, and assume the use of precedent to link work unequivocally to the past. Understanding these varied and sometimes conflicting narratives will help each student position their argument. For example, a thesis might argue for non-human authorship (see *Becoming Anthrometal*, above), or argue against new construction in favor of re-use, or contest building information modeling's primacy in contemporary practice, or posit a radically new timescale for archives and museums.

Please note, while it is assumed that thinking about authorship, originality, references, and the use of precedent can help you form a general position on artificial intelligence, AI will be neither subject nor means for any projects in this studio or seminar.

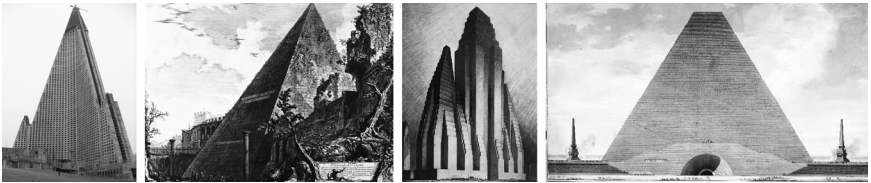
As our ideas about architectural authorship evolve, so do our ideas about the use of precedent. One of our first activities in the seminar is to identify instances of architectural copies, precedents, and references that interest us and trace their lineages.

An example of an architectural copy can be found at Ise Shrine. Each of the main shrine structures in this complex is an identical copy of its predecessor, reconstructed every 20 years since the 7th century, alternating between two adjacent sites. The most recent two manifestations are shown below- the current situation (top), the situation immediately after the most recent reconstruction but before deconstruction of the previous structure (middle), and the previous structure alone (bottom.)



If a copy confers importance or legitimacy to a building through identity, a precedent does so by association. An architectural precedent is a building that supplies formal or structural or other strategies used wholly or in part by another building. The Pantheon, for example, is a direct precedent for the University of Virginia Rotunda, which uses its form and axial organization to link the newly founded American university to Roman antiquity, and therefore to associate it with a democratic society that privileged intellectual activity. Compared to a copy, a precedent is more open to interpretation.

A reference, when used in architecture, is an element or aspect of something else that makes its way into a building. A reference may come from architecture or from some other discipline. A reference is not usually a whole building, but sometimes it is.



Some contemporary thinkers argue that architecture as a discipline is no longer willing or able to distinguish between copy and original, or between drawing and image. How does this influence our approach to history?

The work of the seminar is both collaborative and individual. As a group, we will unpack readings, debate ideas, suggest affinities, and critique each other's written work. The written thesis is an individual endeavor, but one that links a personal position to existing conversations in architecture and culture; it is an argument. Each student's argument will be developed through formulating questions, testing working methods, and producing visual and text-based artifacts. And, because a thesis is an argument, each student will also be responsible for understanding and articulating the positions of their intellectual antagonists.

Over the course of this year-long studio and seminar adventure, you will encounter dense readings, journeys into history, plastic-free modelmaking strategies, architectural improv, sites with complicated stories, picture books, debates about architectural projection, games, robust peer critique, and occasional collaborative drawing projects.

An example of a collaborative drawing is *All Possible Combinations* (below), which was drawn by Rachel Leong, Anita Shanbhogue, Radhika Mehta, Will McCullough, Saddha Zaw, Victor Cheung, Graci Lusk, Caswell Espinoza, Emma van Zutem, Gaby Guevara, Alex Johnson, and Adam Simpson.



About me

Before joining the faculty of Cal Poly in 2015, I practiced and taught architecture in Los Angeles. I was a principal and co-founder of the architecture firm, Layer, run with partner Lisa Little. Our work included commissioned projects and research-based installations that have been published and exhibited nationally. Some recent projects are Birds in Buildings, a conversation between architectural representation and industrial agriculture; House of Highs and Lows, a series of documentary drawings about seasonal domestic maintenance; and 3-4-6 House, a nail-laminated timber cabin in San Luis Obispo, built with Casey Benito, Elliot Robinson and Erica David (both Cal Poly class of 2022.)



I have taught design studios at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), USC, Woodbury University, and the University of California, Berkeley. My professional experience prior to forming Layer includes work as a project designer for Testa + Weiser and other architectural practices based in Los Angeles, New York and Dubai. I have a B.A. with a major in Architecture from Barnard College, Columbia University and an M.Arch. from the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc).

Before teaching thesis, I taught and coordinated the first-year design studio sequence at Cal Poly. My favorite thing about teaching first year is working through super basic but wide-reaching questions with students, for example: What is a section for? Should the poché be black? Is symmetry ok? When is it done?

These kinds of questions make their way into my teaching, creative practice, and scholarship, which is focused on relationships between architectural representation and material research. I am interested in how material properties emerge in drawings and digital models, and whether, in design, we are fundamentally thinking in 2 or 3 dimensions. One of my priorities, related to both practice and teaching, is maintaining an international perspective on design while working and teaching in a small city.

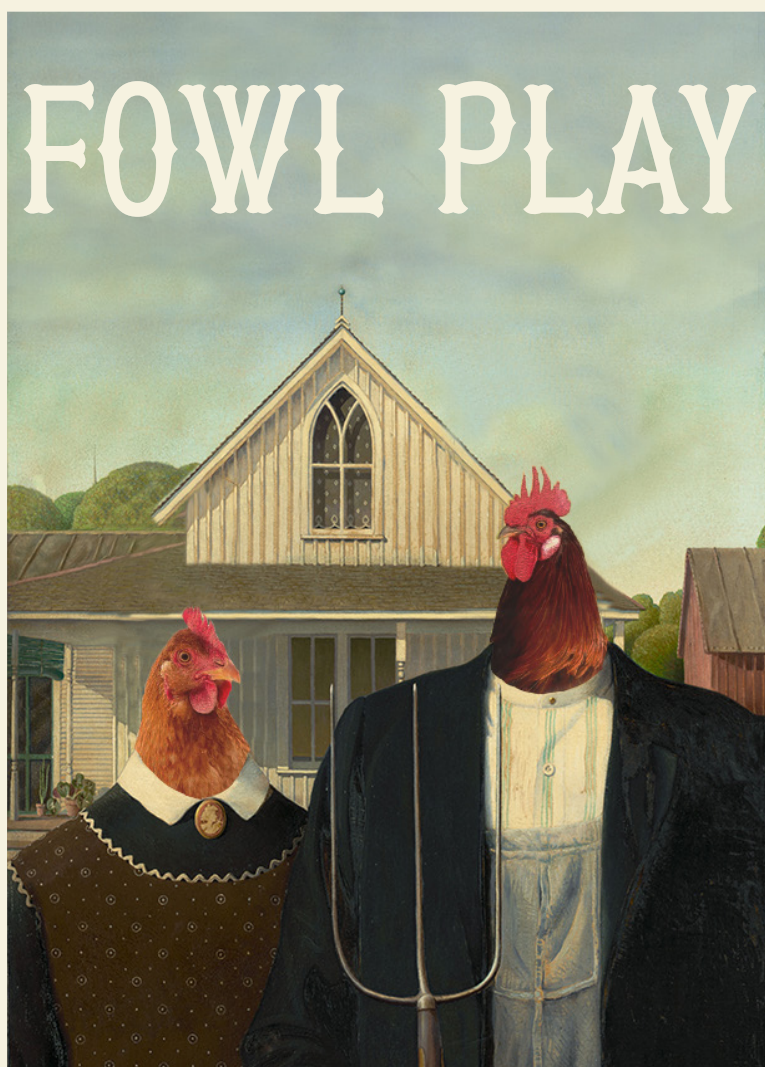
I look forward to working with you!

In the meantime, if you have any questions, I am happy to answer them.

Emily

ewhite14@calpoly.edu

www.emilywhiteprojects.com



A FREE RANGE INSTALLATION

MAY 19TH
HIGH NOON
DEXTER LAWN
@STUDIOWHITE400

OLIVER CAZDEN
BELLA CHE
AMEYA DALAL
CONNELL DEMMOND
OLIVIA DU
EMILIE ERICKSON
ALEJO FAVERO
WILLISTON KEPLER
SAM LANG
HALEY LIM

AIDAN MAHONY
ASHLEY PANG
JARED PATTERSON
DIANE POON
KYLEE RIND
WENDY SU
JESS VANNI
HANNAH YARON
CATHERINE ZADOROZHNA
& EMILY WHITE



Wet Paint, 2022