Representational versus Nonrepresentational [aka Architectural Visualization & Realization]

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Spring 2016
ARCH 576-CRW Graduate Seminar
Professor Aaron P. Brakke
Credits: 3 hours
Schedule: Wednesday 9:00-11:50 AM
Location: TBD

This graduate seminar seeks to examine the peculiar relationship between architectural drawing, new forms of visualization and fabrication and explore the generative possibilities found in computational design thinking. Representation has been considered intrinsically linked with making throughout the history of the architectural discipline. In This is Not Architecture, Kester Rattenbury remarked, “Architecture’s relationship with its representations is peculiar, powerful and absolutely critical. Architecture is driven by belief in the nature of the real and physical: the specific qualities of one thing… Yet it is discussed, illustrated, explained – even defined – almost entirely through its representations.” We will critically think about this statement and speculate on new possibilities for practice. There will be an explicit focus on the impact that recent technological advancements have had: Digital tools collapse the gap between design, representation and fabrication.

A survey of contemporary digital practice will be conducted with special attention placed on the use of physical prototyping. In addition to the analysis of precedents, students will actively engage in digital drawing, modeling and fabrication. This work will be considered through the lens of Non-representational theory (borrowed from human geography) which has been developed as a mechanism to focus on how visualizing, modeling, simulating and physical prototyping serve not only as design tools but as vehicles of embodied experience that may produce knowledge.