Overview

The expression, artifacts of architectural production, refers to the objects (drawings, models, diagrams, hybrids, art works, etc) that an architect makes. This seminar examines a selection of artifacts that demonstrate diverse strategies in spatial, formal, and material experimentation by focusing on the representational practices of four architects and educators—John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, Coy Howard, and Thom Mayne. These architects’ representational work between the 1960s and 1980s serve as the primary focus of the seminar. We will study the intellectual foundations, methods of investigation, and visual outcomes of these architectural pursuits. Discussions will also include more recent projects related to this topic.

A broader interest of the seminar questions artifacts of production relative to their proximity to architectural experience, i.e., is the artifact a conceptual tool to analyze and describe qualities of a non-existent architectural space, or does the drawing itself provide an opportunity to engage architecture directly? Can the product of an architect’s labor exceed what it represents? Exploring these conditions examines the capacity for representation to participate in the aesthetic nature of architectural experiences.

The ambition of this course is twofold: to develop skills in the critical analysis of architectural work that expands students’ vocabulary of visual description and to situate the work of these architects through speculation and discussion of inherent differences, nuanced distinctions, and common grounds. This study relies on writings from the architects, texts focused on architectural representation, and readings dedicated to aesthetic analysis and interpretation. Students are required to attend all classes, to submit weekly assignments, and to produce a final project focused by a topic covered in the course.