

Course Syllabus

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GSAPP | Fall Term 2018 Cultural Strategies + Production NOW

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Our immersive cultural experiences have often been framed as part of a recent phenomenon catalyzed by the advent of technology. And yet, the use of space to inspire transcendence is a centuries-old formula. One need only to time travel to the early sixteenth century at the height of the Renaissance. Patrons and worshippers sought to absolve their sins in the naves of soaring Gothic cathedrals whose flying buttresses reached for the heavens, while the light of God ^[L]_[SEP] passed through intricately designed stained glass windows that induced biblical wonder. Subsequently satisfied and forgiven, they filled their churches' coffers and thus provided us with the original blueprint for the experience economy.

Five hundred years on, religion and its fraught relationship to nationalism remain more politicized than ever. Cultural spaces have supplanted the church as the “go-to” for enlightenment. Museums in the United States alone generate more than \$13 billion annually, and the global industry for live performance made an impressive \$26 billion in 2016. The production of immersive cultural experiences has never been more varied, engendering a dynamic ecosystem where museums and malls, theaters and train stations, cinemas and consoles, and augmented, mixed, and virtual realities are just a few of the physical and digital “contemporary cathedrals” beckoning us to enter.

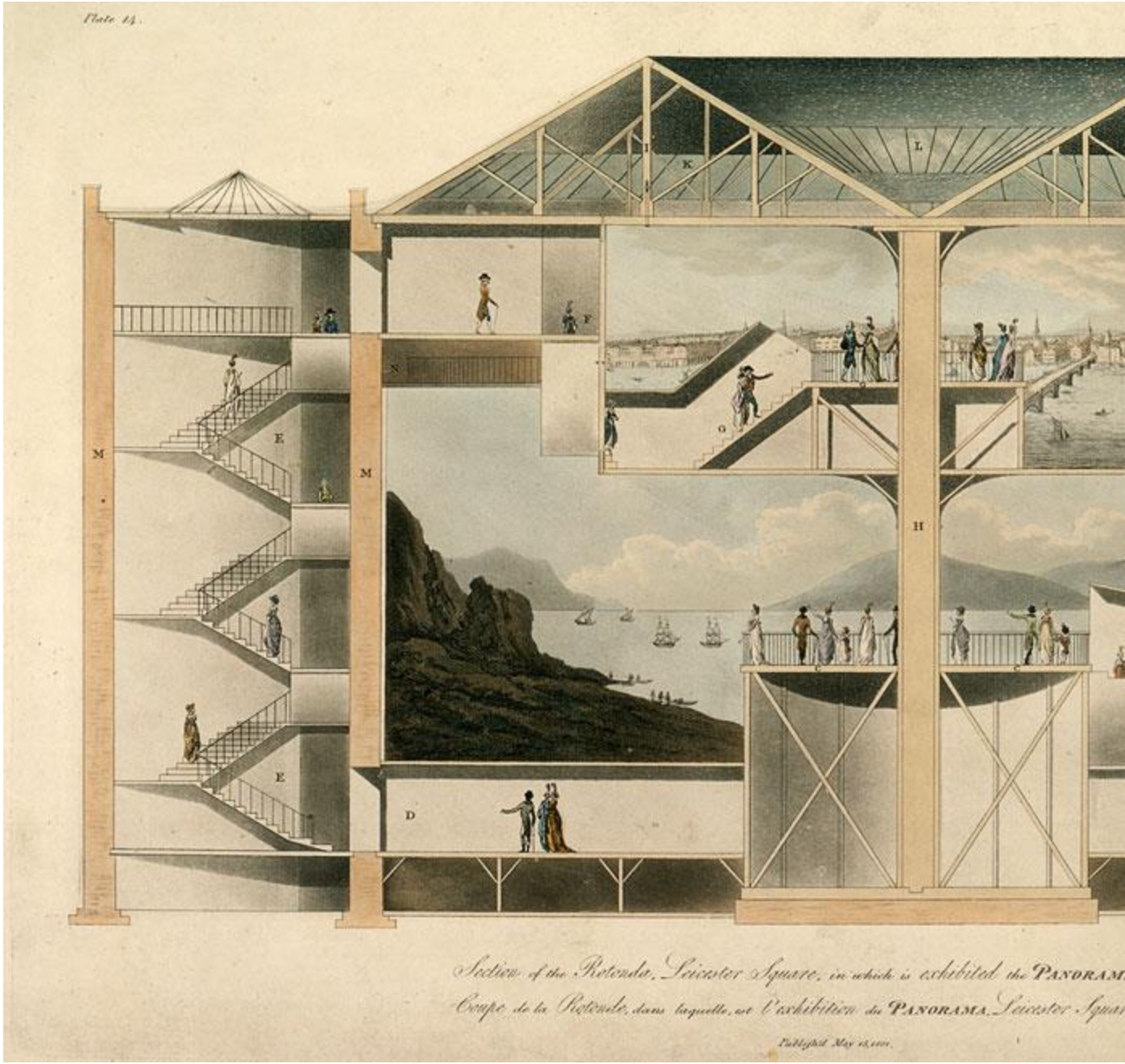
In economic terms, the desire to experience is outpacing the desire to consume. 75 percent of millennials (this demographic of eighteen- to thirty-four-year-olds makes up one third of the US population) value experiences over things. This shift in value ^[L]_[SEP] has mirrored a set of new players in the last decade who are distributing (market term) and commissioning (art world term) cultural entertainment (mash-up of both). Tech conglomerates (Google, Amazon), media companies (Refinery29, the New York Times Company), heritage brands (Coca-Cola, Levi's), household brands (Glade of SC Johnson, Unilever), and independent collectives (the Museum of Ice Cream, Meow Wolf) are all producing experiences whose brief is to generate something that is memorable and impactful (generic marketing terms).

As boundaries are blurred and even eradicated, we are in an era of endless experimentation that has resulted in a wider spectrum of what constitutes content. This expanded field of experiential design has resulted in a kind of schizophrenic hyper- acceleration of cultural content. And if content is king, how can architectural language organize and shape content? **The architect's tool kit of space, circulation, form, materiality and light/shadow are increasingly essential elements of storytelling in emergent culture. This seminar**

explores the various canvases (built and virtual) in which storytelling and architecture are inextricable linked. Each class will focus on a topic area (such as museums, monuments, clubs/concerts, pop-up cultural spaces, screens, augmented reality and virtual reality) and there will be a number of high profile guest speakers. Case studies will be the primary vehicle for research and dialogue.

Confirmed Speakers: Michael Murphy (Cofounder/CEO of MASS Design), Piera Gelardi (Cofounder of Refinery29), Annie-B Parsons (choreographer/director, collaborates with St. Vincent and David Byrne), Serge Becker (club designer and artistic director, Museum of Sex) and Sensorium (experiential studio, VR/AR).

Immersive storytelling: 1800



Immersive storytelling: 2016

