GRT
ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK · CONNECTICUT

History in the Making
Avery Room #504
Tuesdays 9am – 11am
Spring 2019; 3-Credit Tech Elective (A4867)
Instructors: GRT Architects Tal Schori & Rustam Mehta
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Course Summary:
The goal of this project-based course is to engage with historical approaches to surface embellishment to design new *architectural elements* suitable for mass production. For the sake of this course, *architectural elements* imply versatile, non–structural, low–relief three dimensional modules suitable to series production as castings, extrusions or other techniques.

Equal time and emphasis will be placed on:
Strategy: creating a legible and intentional relationship of new to old
Prototype Design: developing a module design that relates to its intended means of mass production
Fabrication: making and displaying enough units to evaluate as an assembly

Assignments
Each assignment will be preceded by an instructor and/or guest lecture to introduce the subject matter and provide case studies relevant to the upcoming work.

1.1 Historical Inventories
In groups of 2–3, students will investigate and analyze a historical surface embellishment. All systems which clad, color, incise or otherwise act on elements of buildings will be eligible for study. Groups will be divided such that equal emphasis is placed on achieving a deeper understanding of familiar motifs such as fluting of the classical orders and expanding visual literacy of elements which have fallen from common use including those that pre-date the Greeks and those from non-western cultures such as Ottoman muqarnas or Meso-American step-fret patterns. Analyses will result in a team visual and verbal presentation that addresses:

History: A concise historical summary of the element

Operation: Diagrams of the element, its part-to-whole relationships, its underlying geometric structure or pattern, and its various modifications as it reconciles generic ('field') and unique conditions of an architecture

Effects: A cultural and visual analysis including iconographic and formal qualities

1.2 Historical Translations

During this phase the historical inventory will be temporarily set aside to investigate means by which historical motifs have been modified, intentionally or otherwise, to create new visual languages. The goal of this phase is to develop a play-book that looks past simply riffing on history and provides a more robust inventory of strategies. Groups will again be divided to place equal emphasis on:

Evolutionary: the gradual evolution, adaptation or modification of familiar historical motifs – i.e, the intentional and accidental changes to the use and appearance of the classical orders.

Revisionist: approaches which intend to be legible and use motifs as language/text to make meaning – i.e. mannerism, post-modernism

Technological/Material: technological, material, or process-based translations of elements.

1.3 Strategy

Prior to prototyping, groups will set the terms by which their designs will be evaluated. This will be done in an open forum whereby elements from the *Inventory* will be married to those from *Translations*. For instance, a team may build the case for designing a unit using Mayan motifs viewed through the lens of Art-Deco's geometricizing narratives. Group critique and ideation will be encouraged. Teams will be expected to summarize their approach succinctly in a statement and diagram that will be used to evaluate progress during subsequent phases.

1.4 Prototyping & Fabrication

Each group will spend the last half of the semester developing a 1:1 scale prototype of their design and fabricating it in multiple so that it can be installed to exhibit its intended effect. The beginning weeks will focus on making form explicitly based on the methodology agreed to in phase 1.3. Acknowledging the realities of serial production, there will be a hard deadline past which prototype drawings will be turned in and manufacture of multiples will begin.

Final designs will conform to dimensional requirements based on display at end-of-year show.

1.5 Installation

All student work will be combined to create a unique end of semester installation. The exact venue is TBD in consultation with faculty, staff and exhibitions team but the goal is to have an installation that is visually legible as the product of a seminar concerning the creation of repetitive elements with a clear attitude towards history.

GRADING:

Grades will be based on the successful completion of all phases of the course as outlined above. Grades will be administered in accordance with GSAPP policy:
https://www.arch.columbia.edu/grades

Course Calendar

Mtg	Phase	Date	Class Format	Due/Detail
1	1.1	22 January	Intro lecture	Methodology & Case Studies
2	1.1	29 January	Pin-up	**1.1 Historical Inventories**
3	1.2	05 February	Pin-up	**1.2 Translations**
4	1.3	12 February	Pin-up & Teaming	**1.3 Strategy**
5	1.4	19 February	Group desk crit	Design
6	1.4	26 February	Museum Visit	Presentation of Artifact
7	1.4	05 March	Pinup	**1.4 Final Design**
8	1.4	12 March	**KINNE WEEK**	Prototyping
-		19 March	**SPRING BREAK**	
9	1.4	26 March	Group desk crit	Prototyping
10	1.4	02 April	Guest Lecture & Pin-Up	**1.4 Prototype Production**
11	1.5	09 April	Crit/Shop Skill	Fabrication
12	1.5	16 April	Firing/Finishing	Fabrication
13	1.5	23 April	Firing/Finishing	Fabrication
14		07 April	**FINAL REVIEW**	**1.5 Installation Final Review**
		18 May		End of Year Show