

Studio Professor

**Henri T. de HAHN**

Studio: Cowgill Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
MWF 1:00 – 4:50pm

Seminars: TBD

Office hours: MWF 11:00 – 12:00 or by appointment

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Francois Boucher, *Madame Boucher* (1734) detail  
Norman Rockwell, untitled (1946) detail  
Loft detail:

<http://www.home-designing.com/2015/12/a-kid-friendly-apartment-renovation-by-ruetemple-architects>

*“The house is perhaps the single most important design problem for an architect. It is the one building type that inspires the greatest variety of expressions responding to one of the most basic human needs: home. In the house, the architect expresses his or her idea of how we should live. From Palladio’s ideal villas to Frank Lloyd Wright’s prairie houses and Le Corbusier’s machines for living, the house, more than any other building type, has been an important repository of our traditional way of life and the primary conveyer of new ideas in architecture.”*

ROBERTO DE ALBA, Architectural journalist and designer

### INTRODUCTION:

This semester’s projects (Spring 2020) will be split into two research agendas following the Fall 2019 topic surrounding the idea of rural domesticity (Wall House). Project 1 – **urban loft** in Lexington, KY – speaks about a way of living. Project 2 – **café** on VT’s campus is about a place to congregate. These projects reflect the inherent need for humans to call a house/apartment a home and how a café may be seen as a public extension of domestic spaces. Between visionary speculation and a desire for healthy pragmatism, these two research projects emphasize the faculty’s interest expressed in the following paragraph drawn from The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (I.A.U.S) – founded by Peter Eisenman in 1967 (the Institute closed 1984):

*“The Institute [for Architecture and Urban Studies] believes that there is a critical link between architecture as a humanist discipline and professional practice. In all of its activities, the Institute tries to relate its research and educational role to its involvement in practice and in this respect it seeks to sustain both education and practice as a natural continuity.”*

Open Plan brochure, I.A.U.S., p.8, 1977

While architecture and the *Education of an Architect* (title of the seminal 1985 Cooper Union publication), reflect both teaching and learning, a balanced approach to design issues will remain key to the rest of this year's studio preoccupations. There is great need to speculate, and indeed there is great beauty in this activity; however, without grounding those ideals within the measures of our profession, any architectural gesture, regardless of its richness, will fail to provide a model of life that legitimizes the achievements and responsibilities of each new generation.

### **PROJECT 1:**

Issues of historic preservation are more than ever an important topic for the built environment. Ironically, many of today's star architects launched their careers with architecture centered around issues of renovation and adaptive re-use: Frank Gehry's Rebecca's restaurant (1985); Morphosis' (Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi) 72<sup>nd</sup> Street restaurant (1983), both located in Venice Beach, CA; or Steven Holl and Vito Acconci's Storefront for Art and Architecture (1993) in New York City, to name a few.

These projects demonstrate that issues of scale, functional constraint, and the establishment of an intellectual position between the old and the new deserve as much attention and ingenuity as those projects that set in place something new. Given the growing interest in issues of sustainability, it seems appropriate that the idea of *the new* focuses on reinvesting within *the old* (*renovation, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use*). As such, the *tradition* of tackling a renovation project within an urban context will be the focus of this semester's first project.

Agnes and Roger Lüthi were impressed with your conceptual design, and despite that the building remains cold in the winter (incorrect specs for the heating system), the foundations are already cracking, the roof constantly leaking and the facades rotting because of the lack of appropriate insulation, they would like to offer you the opportunity to tackle the renovation of their urban loft in Lexington, Kentucky. Their sons, Tristan and Vincent are attending university and will be visiting occasionally, thus the need to think of the Lüthi's as almost empty nesters. Each student is to provide individually a design proposal. However, if students wish to work together, please let me know ASAP.

The Lüthi's prompt is self-evident: create within an existing building confine (apartment located on the top floor of a former industrial building) living quarters for the Lüthi family that encompasses the following functions (alphabetically and not sequentially!).

- Bathroom –bathtub, shower, commode and two sinks (master)
- Bathroom – bathtub, commode and one sink (guest room)
- Bathroom – shower, commode and sink (public)
- Bedroom (master) with walk-in closet
- Bedroom (guest) with built-in closet space
- Dining room/area
- Entrance foyer
- Kitchen
- Library that provides a place for TV and study/work area
- Living room
- Storage area(s)
- Washer and dryer area

It should be self evident, that for an architect what is at stake is not simply the appropriate location of functions within an existing space, but the creation of an idea – a model of life – for how this couple will live within your design. For example, a living room is not simply a place to set a sofa and a couple of well-designed nesting tables. It is a place where social interaction unfolds and where the representational identity of the owners is typically showcased. A kitchen is not simply a place to cook. It was initially the place solely for cooks and servants before becoming a

space utilized by the owner, and eventually a multifunctional room that may serve as a dedicated area within other room(s). A foyer is not simply an entrance. It is a zone that negotiates an appropriate transition/threshold/limit from public to the first semi-public areas. In short, while functions are important, there remains always and unequivocally the need to provide a thesis, a program for your design. Your apprenticeship in this matter – through last semester's projects (case study analysis and wall house) – should allow you to provide a thoughtful and inspirational program for your design strategy. The final presentation will require similar final presentation drawings of the highest quality (more digital than analog this time), along with suggested furnishings, all presented in a unified composition based on 24x36 panels.

**SITE: Lexington Kentucky**



**APARTMENT SITE: 38°02'43. 80"N, 84°29'40. 98"W, elev. 966**



Located at 121 North Martin Luther King Boulevard, the site of your intervention is in downtown Lexington, Kentucky. In short walking distance from the historic Gratz Park district and a vibrant downtown city life (yes, Lexington does have one now!), the apartment could not be better situated to be considered urban. As with the fall project, there is a little twist.

The loft exists, and the list of functions correspond to those of the current owner: Dr. Dan and Wendy Rowland, friends from my time at the University of Kentucky. We will visit their loft, which was completed in 2008. Your task is to design an apartment in that same space! So how shall we proceed to launch this fascinating topic?

The shell of the apartment will be provided to you on the first day of class –after the one-week second year student competition (**Wednesday, January 29**). Class discussions will take place each studio session prior to our departure to Lexington on Wednesday, February 12. Per the semester's schedule for the agenda the Lexington field trip (see Canvas site), we will discover the actual apartment project as-built.

At the time of the field trip, you MUST have your ideas in place, which means a solid concept in terms of the overall organization of the loft based on ALL required functions, but the site visit can provide you with some slight adjustments, and most importantly a sense of scale that is so difficult to judge in the early stage of your architectural careers.

Seeing and experiencing the existing apartment may seem tricky, especially as you will continue to design your project knowing now how the “real” apartment layout looks and feels. Also, hearing comments from the current owners during our field trip visit will offer you a wonderful critique from their perspective. I personally like a sense of reality in design projects as they give a certain restraint to some of your crazy ideas!

These are some of the challenges in the project, but given your ideas, creativity and maturity, I can see many projects outperforming what was built, and solutions that will be fascinating to see. Finally, your site is restricted in its volumetric dimension. This is both a constraint and richness for you, and no intervention outside the existing shell will be allowed, which includes removing and/or changing the existing window configurations. There will be NO exceptions in expanding outside of the existing footprint and NO two story intervention. Please do not ask, you know my answer.

**PROPOSED SCHEDULE:**

Last semester a single design project was offered. The intention was to have students be introduced to fundamental architectural themes (site, program, function, circulation, structure, light, construction and detailing to name a few). This was accomplished through a simple prompt that included a complex series of functions. This semester will be different.

Two (2) projects will run respectively nine (9) and four (4) weeks per project with a week allocated for Spring Break and a 3-day field trip during the first project. While the timing for the first project seems long, your faculty will accelerate the pace of the studio and require students to conceptualize their ideas quickly, get a programmatic strategy in place (the big idea behind the project), find the stability of the project (functional, formal and tectonic), and refine its spatial qualities within the allotted time.

Three 48 hours charettes will be introduced during Project 1:

- The first one will focus on the actual design of the kitchen, where more refinement will be required from each of you, thus touching upon issues of interior design and ergonomics. Please find a digital planner on IKEA’s web page that will assist you as a guide to create and refine your kitchen layout such as appropriate work triangle, work zones (cooking, washing and storage zones), layout (single-line, single-line with island, L-shaped, and parallel). (<https://kitchenplanner.ikea.com/GB/UI/Pages/VPUI.htm>)
- The second one will be to judiciously choose furniture for two (2) rooms, only one can be a bedroom. While your personal taste will be critical, you are designing for the Lüthi family! A brief description of who the Lüthi’s are (create a narrative) is necessary to contextualize this exercise and the following one.
- Third, you will propose art for the living room with a brief description of the basis of your choices

Dates	Suggested tasks
01.29.20	Project starts with research into the layout of apartments and what functions and programs may inspire your design strategy. Provided studio literature (see below bibliography). Think about what a model of life means in terms of this project.
01.29.20 – 02.12.20	Work iteratively and diagrammatically at min. ¼=1’-0” scale (plan provided) by using bubble diagrams and adjacency matrix –primary and secondary adjacencies (space planning strategies) to clarify your parti as it relates to possible floor plan organizations and sectional intentions. Class discussion sessions.

02.12.20 – 02.15.20	Field trip to Lexington, KY (Proposal uploaded on Canvas site)
02.17.20. – 04.03.20	Maturation of the project with intermediate internal reviews (02.10; 03.04). Introduction of kitchen focus after review.
03.06.20	No class: Henri en route to Hong Kong
03.09.20- 03.15.20	Well-deserved Spring Break
04.03.20	Final review, RM 300

**MINIMUM REQUIRED STUDIO MATERIALS:**

As a reminder, for an appropriate studio culture, each student must have the following materials (borrowing is no longer acceptable):

- Drafting board or white paper on desk with appropriate parallel bar or T square
- Computer
- Sketch paper (white or yellow –preferably large)
- Appropriate pencils or lead holders with various leads (2H, F, and HB)
- Pencil and lead sharpener
- Masking tape
- Set of color pencils and/or prismacolor/sharpiers
- Architectural scale
- 45 degree and 30/60-degree triangles
- Cutting mat (12x18 min) and appropriate tools to make models (X-Acto and Retractable Utility knives, blades, and glue)
- Sketch book (11x14)
- Measuring tape (25 foot)
- Anything else that will enhance your design process –watercolors, etc.

**REQUIRED READINGS: for the entire semester**

Rybczynski, Witold. Home: A short History of an Idea. New York, Penguin Books, 1987.

**SUGGESTED READINGS: that will be available in the studio during the entire semester. Henri's collection of books.**

Alpern, Andrew. New York's Fabulous Luxury Apartments. New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1975.

Conran, Terence. The Essential House Book: Getting Back to Basics. New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1994.

Lynch, Geoffrey. Manhattan Classic: New York's Finest Prewar Apartments. New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2014.

Nielson, Karla J., David A. Taylor. Interiors: An Introduction. New York, McGraw Hill, 2011.

Ojeda, Oscar, Riera. The New American Apartment: Innovations in Residential Design and Construction, 30 Case Studies. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 1997.

Ojeda, Oscar, Riera. The New American House 1: Innovations in Residential Design and Construction, 30 Case Studies. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 1995.

Ojeda, Oscar, Riera. The New American House 2: Innovations in Residential Design and Construction, 30 Case Studies. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 1997.

Riley, Terence. The Un-Private House. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1999.

Trulove, James, Grayson: II Kim. The New American Cottage: Innovations in Small-Scale Residential Architecture. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 1999.

Trulove, James, Grayson: II Kim. The New American House 3: Innovations in Residential Design and Construction, 30 Case Studies. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 2001.

Trulove, James, Grayson: II Kim. The New American House 4: Innovations in Residential Design and Construction, 30 Case Studies. New York, Whitney Library of Design, 2003.