

# USC School of Architecture

**ARCH 548: Media for Landscape Architecture**  
**UNITS: 3 SPRING**

**MEETING: MONDAYS 9:30 AM – 12:20 PM**  
**LOCATION: HARRIS 115A**

**INSTRUCTOR: Ben Tekena Koko**  
**CONTACT: Email (TBD)**

**OFFICE: TBD**  
**OFFICE HOURS: Mondays. Please email for an appointment slot.**



Nicolas Pelzer, *Collider Body*, 2017

## **Course Description**

*In an attempt to forge a new discourse in Landscape Architectural representation, the course exploits theory to smoothen the duality between conventional and explorative modes of landscape representation.*

This course will enhance the participants craft in representing landscapes at varying scales via current and emerging digital tools. The technical and analytical abilities acquired in this course will be directly applicable towards studio work. Upon completion, course participants will develop a sound visual language informed by a rigorous evaluation of the state of *the image* in contemporary design, and conceptual artistic practice.

## Conceptual Background

*Contemporary Media and Representation in the Design Academy.*

The decline of technological determinism and the ascendancy of the post-digital has ushered a renewed interest in the role of representation in current design discourse. Our era of flattened-hierarchies has instigated a transfer of value whose orientation is in favor of image making and by extension, 'representation'. Dissociated from its role as a precursor to the real, the image now stages the emergence of multiple material realities that are at once factual and fictive. This forms the basis for advancing a critical examination of media and representation in contemporary landscape design discourse.

The misuse of information and its consequent weaponization has been implicated in societies growing tolerance for false narratives and counterfactual realities. Albeit sinister, the appropriation of misinformation (and other counterfactuals) appears as a productive reference for design thinking and representation. The capacity for misinformation to produce material consequence upends the notion that representation be grounded in factuality or certitude, thus advancing an uptake of projective modes of representation contingent on multivalent and at times, incongruous circumstances.

## Learning Objectives

*Upon completion of the course, participants will:*

- Gain an understanding of the role of *representation* as a *productive* means of ideation, critical thinking and evaluation.
- Learn conventional techniques in 3D landscape representation via software tooling.
- Produce physical representations of landscapes via digital fabrication.
- Explore unconventional techniques in representing landscape morphologies, processes and concepts.

## Structure

*The course will focus on 3 core themes (practice, theory, design):*

- *Practice (Conventions):* Mastery of conventional modes of representation and tooling.
- *Design (Instigations):* Advancing core competencies - *tooling / thinking*
- *Theory:* Smoothing binaries - *conventions / instigations*

## Projects & Assignments

- *Ground*: Modelling topography and natural site attributes
- *Case Study (Facts)*: Production of exact representations of case studies via conventional means: Material Accuracy, Plans, Sections, Axonometric, Aerial, Perspectival, Topographic Modeling, Depiction of Vegetation, Analytic Diagraming.
- *Case Study (Artifacts)*: Production of obtuse representations of case studies via body, surface, image translations. Body (volumetric), Surface (material), Image (presentation).
- *Fictions and Figuration*: Reinterpreting site features as figures in pictorial space.
- *Sartorial Landscapes (Final Project)*: Production of moments within a larger site. (branded sports park & fashion week Plaza)

*Assignment Note: Focus on a specific technique discussed in class and strive for continual refinement, or explore multiple techniques with rigor. Do not shy away from experimenting with different materials: textiles, readymade objects, etc.*

## Format

Class sessions will comprise in-class modelling exercises, assignment pin-ups and review, overview of contemporary cross disciplinary media and representation, reading discussions, and guest lectures. Because our time together is very limited, it is imperative that if you “get stuck” that you seek out help from advanced students, and from the resources listed at the end of the syllabus. During demos, please try to pay attention to the concepts and do not get hung up on writing down all of the steps, as these can be found in software help files and also on Blackboard.com via the Lynda tutorials. Participants will meet in small groups and pin-up and share work. ***All sketches must be printed for discussion and markup. No work will be reviewed on screens, except during in-class modelling sessions. Anyone that does not bring new design work to their designated meeting or pin-up will not have their work reviewed.***

## Reference Text

Design with Nature - Ian L. McHarg

Critical Territories: From Academia to Praxis - AA Landscape Urbanism – edited by Eva Castro

Seamless Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture - Jesus Vassallo

The Estranged Object - Michael Young

Francesca Woodman: On Being an Angel - Anna Tellgren

In Defense of The Poor Image - Hito Steyerl

Real Fictions : Alternatives to Alternative Facts - Hal Foster

The Yokohama Project Paperback - Michael Kubo

## **Viewing**

Persona - Ingmar Bergman

Under the Skin - Jonathan Glazer

Blade Runner - Ridley Scott

## **Additional Resources**

Tutorials are available within Rhino, Lumion, Grasshopper etc, and online with Lynda.com through BlackBoard and or YouTube. Class meetings are an opportunity to bring forward conceptual or analytical questions about the landscape. It is imperative that you also learn how to solve technical answers related to industry standard software from your peers or online resources.

## **Required Software**

*Rhino, Lumion, Adobe Suite, Vray, Processing, Grasshopper, Cinema 4d (optional)*

## **Hardware**

*Vacuum former, 3D Scanner, CNC Mill, Laser Cutter, 3D printer*

## **Grading Breakdown**

Criteria of evaluation include a student's contributions to the seminar through collective research, documentation and discussions. Grading is based on creativity, mastery of concepts and effort. For an "A", the student must satisfy the course objectives excellently. The student ; for a "B", in an above average manner; for a "C" in an average manner; for a "D" in the lowest acceptable manner; and an "E" denotes that the student has not satisfied the course objectives.

Projects are not assigned percentages, because participants bring different strengths and weaknesses to each type of project. What is valued in your grade is your progress over the semester, your willingness to take risks (and sometimes fail in trying something new), and your comprehension of the subject matter. At the end of the semester you will be provided a self-evaluation form with a series of questions that will allow you to write about your efforts in each assignment or portion of the course, and assign yourself a letter grade.

## **Assignment Submission**

Assignments should be submitted on time. Physical assignments will be reviewed in seminar meeting room. Assignment should be printed and pinned up where indicated.

### **Additional Policies**

Smartphone use is prohibited during class, except when used to access tutorials.

### **Conversations with Your Instructor**

Office hours are right after our class meeting. If you have any questions, concerns, problems, please email me with a request for an office hours meeting. I do not conduct extended discussions by email.

If you are having any issues related to Title IX, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, assault, or stalking, I will listen and help you connect with appropriate resources, but please be aware that I do not have any training in medicine or counseling. As an obligate reporter for Title IX, I must report these issues and cannot maintain confidentiality.

	Topics / Exercises	Lecture / Visual Referents	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 7 <b>GROUND</b>	<b>Ground: Topographic Modelling</b>  <b>Exercises:</b> Intro to Rhino: views, points, lines, lofted volumes, surfaces, basic commands, shortcuts, modelling topographic surfaces, make 2D, importing google earth data, scales, intro to Grasshopper.	<b>Course Overview</b> (Designing a new discourse in Landscape Architectural Representation)  <b>Lecture:</b> Towards a disciplinary project: From Mc Harg to Waldheim, an overview of representation in landscape architecture.	<b>Assignments:</b> Topographic model studies Printed on 11x17 (typical) scaled. Due Jan 14  <b>Reading Assignment:</b> Landscape Urbanism and the Dialectics of Praxis. Eva Castro et.al  Towards a Transdisciplinary Praxis
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 14 <b>GROUND</b>	<b>Ground: Artificial Topographies, Populated Topographies</b>  <b>Exercises:</b> Intro to Grasshopper Surfaces: lofts, instantiations, tessellations, weaverbird smoothening.  Intro to Vray: standard settings, frame overview, lenshift, materials, proxies, populating vegetation.	<b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 1)  <b>Visual Referents:</b> Representation in contemporary Landscape Architecture (LCLA, Vogt, FOA, JCFO)	<b>Assignments:</b> Topographic model studies: Utilizing grasshopper to create surface distortions. Due Week 3  Populated ground: Depicting Topographies with vegetation, and material.  <b>Reading Assignment:</b> The Post-Political Condition and the environment.  Between Nature, Culture, Society, Technology and Politics: The infrastructural turn.
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 21* HOLIDAY <b>CASE STUDY FACTS</b>	<b>Facts: Case Studies</b> Yokohama Project Tongva Park  <b>Exercises:</b> Exact representations of case studies in Rhino: sections, plans, diagramming, and assigning line weights.	NOTE: Due to the holiday a class meeting will be held on an alternate date & location.  <b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 2)  <b>Visual Referents:</b> The Digital Turn: Artificial Topographies - AALU	<b>Assignments:</b> Case study: 3D model, plan, sections, axons, diagrams. Due Jan 28

<b>Week 4</b> Jan 28 <b>CASE STUDY</b> <b>FACTS</b>	<b>Facts: Case Studies</b> Yokohama Project Tongva Park  <b>Exercises:</b> Exact representations of case studies.  Intro to Lumion	<b>Visual Referents:</b> Fact: Bas Princen Luisa Lambri  Artifact: MALL: (Still Life, Another Axon) Off Off: (Srfc_play, Island 01)  <b>Guest Lecture:</b> <b>Haoran Liu</b> Project Director, RCH Studios. <i>Professional representation and Intro to Lumion.</i>	<b>Assignments:</b> Final Case study: 3D model, plan, section, axons, diagrams, materials. Due Feb 4  <b>Reading Assignment:</b> The Curve Gallery: Introduction to Contemporary Collage. <i>Exhibition Text</i>  Elgin Lindsey (from one many) 306090
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 4 <b>CASE STUDY</b> <b>ARTIFACTS</b>	<b>Artifacts: Case Studies</b>  <b>Exercises:</b> Inexact/obtuse representations of case studies with rhino, lumion and grasshopper.  2D Image Distortions: Intro to Processing. digital collaging.	<b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 4)  <b>Guest Lecture:</b> <b>USC Faculty TBD</b> <i>Artifacts</i>  <b>Visual Referents:</b> Lindsay Elgin Phillip Jurdadin, Thomas Demand Mattieu Bourel (the curve) Anthony Gerace (the Curve)	<b>Assignments:</b> Progress review of case study (artifacts): Plan, sections, axons, diagrams. Due Feb 11  <b>Reading Assignment (Selected Essays):</b> Jesús Vassallo: Seamless - Digital Collage and Dirty Realism In Contemporary Architecture.  Young + Ayata: The Estranged Object.
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 11 <b>CASE STUDY</b> <b>ARTIFACTS</b>	<b>Artifacts: Case Studies</b>  <b>Exercises:</b> Inexact/obtuse representations of case studies.  2D/3D Distortions: Processing, digital collaging, Vacuum forming, 3D printing, CNC milling	<b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 5)  <b>Visual Referents:</b> Philipp Schaerer Chitose Abe Laura Owens (The Geffen) Megan mueller Nicholas Pelzer	<b>Assignments:</b> Vacuum Formed / 3D Printed / CNC milled Model Sections Due week 7  <b>Reading Assignment:</b> Francesca Woodman: On being an Angel. Anna Tellgren  Log 31, Out of character Figure V. Figurative. Amy Kulpa  Sara Awad, Night Gallery <i>Exhibition Text</i>  <b>Viewing (optional):</b> Bricks Like You, Andrew Holder.

<b>Week 7</b> Feb 18* HOLIDAY <b>FICTIONS &amp; FIGURATION</b>	<b>Figuration as Fiction</b> Peculiar landscape figures  Site features are reinterpreted as figures in pictorial space.  Medium Multivalence: Producing multiple readings via medium manipulation (folds, slips, voids, layering)  <b>Exercises:</b> Use of software, photography, collage, textiles, paper, synthetic skin, 3D scanning & printing, cinema 4D.	NOTE: Due to the holiday a class meeting will be held on an alternate date & location  <b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 6)  <b>Figuration as Fiction</b> Francesca Woodman Anne Holtrop Burle Marx (drawings) Nona Inescu Sara Awad (night Gallery) Christina Quarles	<b>Assignments:</b> *No Assignment (Studio Mid-Terms Feb25-27)  <b>Reading Assignment:</b> Exile Gallery: Litho Spleen <i>Exhibition Text</i>  Moca, Los Angeles Laura Owens <i>Exhibition Text/Review</i>  <b>Viewing:</b> Under the Skin (Jonathan Glazer)
<b>Week 8</b> Feb 25 <b>FICTIONS &amp; FIGURATION</b>	<b>2D Depth</b> Navigating pictorial space	<b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 7)  <b>2D Depth</b> Gordon Matta Clark Tauba Auerbach John Hock Cahterine Opie (Moca) Laura Owens (Moca)	<b>Assignments:</b> Figures & Folds: Manipulation of digital images and physical media (paper prints, textile) Due Mar 4  <b>Reading:</b> Eigen + Art Lab: Condition Uncanny <i>Exhibition Text</i>  Carla 12: Interior states of the arts, Travies Diehl  Marciano: Anna Uddenberg <i>Exhibition Text</i>
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 4 <b>FICTIONS &amp; FIGURATION</b>	<b>The Uncanny</b>	<b>Text review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 8)  <b>Uncanny (Unheimlich)</b> Asger Carlsen Anna Uddenberg Suah Im (Condition Uncanny) Joan Leornard (frontiers of photography) Pakui Hardware Ivana Basic	<b>Assignments:</b> Soft: Manipulation of digital images and physical media (3D scans/prints) Due Week 11  <b>Reading:</b> Carla 13: Fiona Connor at the MAK. Thomas Duncan  Melanie Schiff, Night Gallery <i>Exhibition Text</i>  Soo kim, Denk Gallery <i>Exhibition Text</i>



<b>Week 10</b> Mar 11* SPRING BREAK			<b>Viewing:</b> Blade Runner (Ridley Scott)  <b>Viewing (optional):</b> Persona (Ingmar Bergman)
<b>Week 11</b> Mar 18 <b>FICTIONS &amp; FIGURATION</b>	<b>Fictive voids, poetic excisions</b>	<b>Text/Film review:</b> In-class discussion: Reading assignment (week 9)  <b>Fictive voids, poetic excisions</b> Lebohang Kganye Melanie Schiff Fiona Connor (Closed down clubs) Soo Kim (Denk) Maya Alam (Berlin studies) Celeste Dupuy Spencer Dale Quarterman (frontiers of photography)	<b>Assignments:</b> Cuts: Manipulation of digital images and physical media (3D scans, textile, 3D prints) Due Mar 25  <b>Reading:</b> Review the works of Issey Miyake/ Pleats Please
<b>Week 12</b> Mar 25 <b>SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES</b>	<b>Layering</b> Production of moments within a larger site. (branded sports park & fashion week Plaza)  <b>Exercises:</b> Experimentation with readymades, use of software, photography, collage, textiles, foam, paper, synthetic skin, 3D scanning & printing, cinema 4D.	<b>Project Review:</b> <b>Fictions and Figurations</b>  <b>Layering</b> Kiko Konstadinov Elise van jollen one to one Dion lee B.wurts (@ ICA) Benjamin Renoux (@ Baert, Spatial layering) *Acronym nike *Issey miyake	<b>Assignments:</b> <b>TBD</b> Due April 1
<b>Week 13</b> April 1 <b>SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES</b>	<b>Volume and Softness</b>	<b>Volume and Softness</b> Margiella Sara borg (@ Eckissens) Land Art *Nadine Geopfert Franco Mazzuchelli (Pneuma @Chertludde berlin) Catherin Jansen (frontiers of photography)	<b>Assignments:</b> <b>TBD</b> Due April 8

<b>Week 14</b> April 8 <b>SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES</b>	<b>Landscape Moods</b> (Iridescence, reflections and doubles)	<b>Landscape Moods</b> Nick night Galiano for Margiela SP 18 M.Maltzan at (Sci arc gallery) *Michelangelo Pistoletto (frontiers of photography) doubling/flatness	<b>Assignments:</b> Final Project Due April 22
<b>Week 14</b> April 15 <b>SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES</b>	<b>In Class Working Session</b>		<b>Assignments:</b> Final Project Due April 22
<b>Week 15</b> April 22 <b>FINAL SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES</b>	<b>SARTORIAL LANDSCAPES (FINAL)</b>		<b>Assignments:</b> Final Project Due
<b>Week 16</b> April 29	<b>Assist with Final Studio Project as Needed</b>		

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/departement-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

### Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.