VITREOUS – A PROJECT WITH THE JUDD FOUNDATION

A Student Run Crowdsourced Project

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1. Introduction

"A shape, a volume, a color, a surface is something itself. It shouldn’t be concealed as part of a fairly different whole." - Donald Clarence Judd (1928–94)

The collaboration between the Judd Foundation (Marfa, Texas) and this project further investigated, critically examined, and applied both theoretical study and practical design-research into the highly debated idea of ‘delegated fabrication’, within the context of design-fabrication, in the field of architectural design. It has been widely publicized that most of Judd’s work from 1964 onwards was delegated rather than fabricated by the artist himself. Rather than constructing his work personally, Judd had it industrially fabricated—a practice criticized at the time but emulated today by many contemporary artists.

The course ambition is to develop an active prototype, whereby the cluster of fifteen students will work together to design, fabricate, and discuss the potentials of hands-on digital and analogue learning, while undertaking an active role of understanding the current contemporary role of fabrication in architecture, versus the available means of production during the time of Judd. The concept of the course is not to replicate the Minimalist works of Judd, but rather, to further the theoretical and practical understanding infused by the two, and investigates on the potential use of innovative means of delegated fabrication within architecture and design.
Design Fabrication and the digital design culture within the past five years have shifted from the technique of digital and physical tooling, to a further contextualized and sophisticated understanding of expanded integration within application and enterprises, driven by a developmental matter of paradigm shift and culture. Craft on the other hand, partially originated through the craftsmanship and early works of furniture and as a building technique by artisans, particularly as pertinent to the medieval history and earlier - from the Tang Dynasty of China to later during the Renaissance. Craft, a term defined through the skill in planning, making, or executing, similarly sets the tone of the seminar—the seminar will require students to rigorously research and develop critical thought within concerns of detailing incorporated with careful diligence of their experimentations and iterations of design.

Figure 1. Systematic fabrication process of Analogue (Physical) Prototype, Image provided by Author.

Students investigated the formal, geometrical, scalar, and material effects, along with understanding the larger potential of teamwork and practical applications of physical large-scale prototyping, and installation. A course trip to Marfa, Texas was part of the site-visit to gain a better perspective of the desert environment, while also collaborating with the Judd Foundation’s Programs Director. Students who participated in this project worked with the Director of Development and myself at the College of Architecture to allocated sponsorships and funding opportunities around the region, and also initiate national partnerships with the Kickstarter and USA Projects Campaign. The opportunity encouraged students to be entrepreneurial, learn about project management, project development, fundraising and crowdsourcing, as well as project construction, design-fabrication, and installation.

Project website: http://vitreous-uhcoa.tumblr.com