THE POST-MODERN ANALYTIQUE

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ABSTRACT

The 'analytique' is a Beaux-Arts approach to teaching design principles through an 'order problem' which relies on the analysis and representation of built work. The term 'analytique' refers to the product of a student's study: a carefully composed and drawn expression of the solution, emphasizing the relationship of parts to the whole, and of details to overall proportions.

This paper presents a post-modern approach to the analytique. The post-modern analytique expresses the nature of current practice in landscape architecture: pluralistic in meaning, expressed through layered references and materials, and focused upon 'ideas, not authors.'

This paper first presents an overview of the Beaux-Arts analytique and then defines 'post-modern.' Examples of student analytique projects, made using both traditional and digital media, illustrate the post-modern approach to the analytique.

KEYWORDS: analytique, appropriation, Beaux-Arts, framing, montage, photo-imaging, plurality, post-modern, text

INTRODUCTION

Many critics recognize current practices of landscape architecture as post-modern (for an example, see Meyer 1996,1997). I propose that the current practice of landscape architecture is post-modern in three ways: it is pluralistic in meaning, it has broken with the 'purity' of modernism, and it has a decreased emphasis on authorship[1]. I present a post-modern variation of the Beaux-Arts analytique, used in a second-year design studio, as an appropriate vehicle for the exploration of contemporary landscape architecture.

This paper first addresses the history of the analytique as a teaching tool. It then defines three traits of post-modernism relevant to contemporary landscape architecture. Accompanying each trait, the post-modern

analytique is described and illustrated by examples of student work.

BACKGROUND: THE BEAUX-ARTS ANALYTIQUE OR ORDER PROBLEM

As an instructional project, the 'analytique' was popular during the late 19th and early 20th Century, during the height of the Ecole des Beaux Arts influence on architecture. Analytiques were pursued by students in ateliers and judged by Beaux-Arts practitioners of architectural design. The term 'analytique' or 'order problem' refers to the product of a student's study and drawing process: a carefully composed and inked solution, emphasizing the relationship of parts to the whole, and of details to overall proportions (Harbeson 1926, p.7-24).

Lloyd Warren, in his foreword to John Frederick Harbeson's book on the Beaux-Arts instructional program, lists the following desired outcomes of the analytique: "…sensibility to proportion, feeling for composition, character in drawing, appreciation of ornament, and knowledge of descriptive geometry in projections and in shade and shadow" (Harbeson 1927, p.5). These goals, as well as formal ordering principles, are illustrated in winning examples of the analytique from the Beaux-Arts program (Figure 1).

The strength of the analytique, as opposed to any other assemblage of architectural drawings, lies in its rigor as a two-dimensional composition problem. Harbeson was acutely aware of this rigor. He illustrated potential compositional pitfalls with clear sketches. His sketches demonstrate a heavy area of the composition that stops visual movement, an unfortunate vector that pulls the eye out of the composition, and an incomplete frame that leads the eye off the page (Figure 2).

Harbeson recommends that students use the most common type of analytique composition (Figure 1), in which a "frontispiece" composed of architectural details rendered at a large scale frame an elevation or perspective drawn at a smaller scale (p. 37). His emphasis on the frame
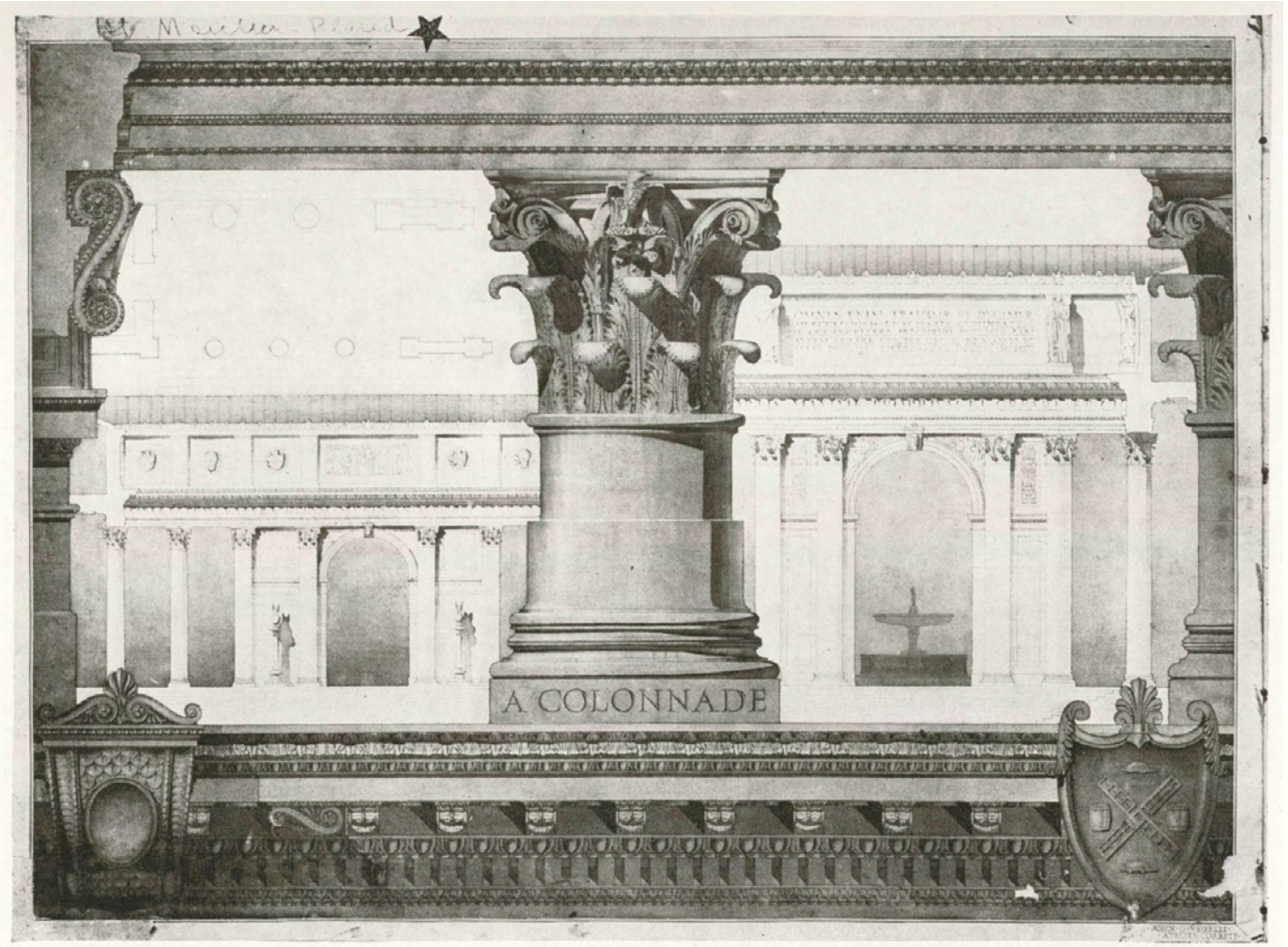
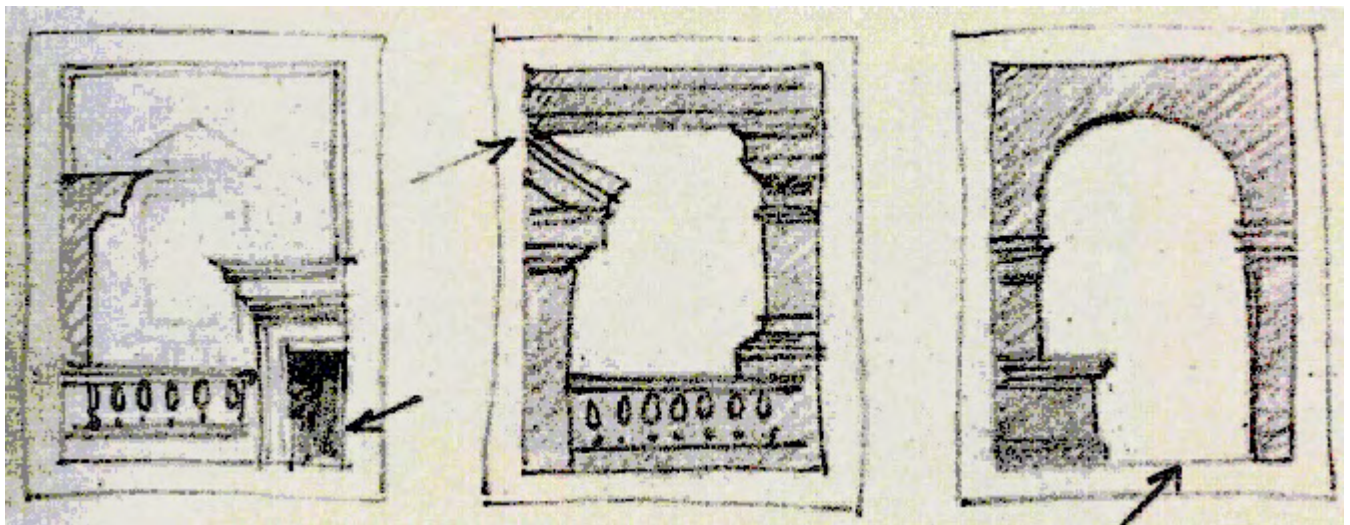Figure 1: John O. Vegezzi, Atelier Corbett. Analytique, "A Collonade" reproduced from Harbeson 1927, p.6.

Figure 2: Sketches illustrating common foibles in composing a traditional analytique, reproduced from Harbeson 1927, p.39.

is clear when he writes with dismay that an incomplete frame is "never very satisfactory" (p.43). His advice is exemplary of Beaux-Arts emphasis upon formal order.

THE POST-MODERN ANALYTIQUE

Our post-modern analytiques, completed in a second-year design studio, also aim for excellent proportion and dynamic composition[2].   However, we embrace contemporary landscape architecture by using a variety of compositional strategies (dependent upon subject) and the use of photo-imaging software. Our goals are to express not only the wholeness of the work studied, but also the plural, divergent qualities of the work. We hope for products that reflect the post-modern nature of current practice in landscape architecture.

I first presented the students with examples of historic analytiques and, in contrast, photo montages by contemporary designers and artists, such as Ken Smith and Robert Rauschenberg[3]. Each student was then assigned to research the work of a designer from the 20th or early 21st Centuries. Rather than propose a hypothetical design problem which the students should answer by applying precedent[4],   I asked for an original graphic composition, accompanied by an expository essay, to communicate the essence of a designer's practice.

In composing the analytique, I stressed the need to tailor composition to subject. For instance, an asymmetrical, unbounded composition might fit one designer's work, while another's work may call for a more controlled approach. I encouraged students to explore the ideas of post-modernism presented here: plurality of meaning, a break from the 'purity' of modernism, and decreased emphasis on authorship. The resulting post-modern analytiques are illustrated in relationship to each characteristic of post-modern practice.

PLURALITY OF MEANING: 'TEXT'
Pluralism is often cited as a marker of the post-modern (Jencks, C. 1987 and Acker, K. 1984)[5]. But rather than refer to a 'collection' of singular meanings, the post-modernist's pluralism refers to the inherent complexity of culture. This pluralism can be understood through cultural critic, Roland Barthes', theory of 'text,' popularized in his essays and lectures at the cusp of the modernist and post-modernist eras.

The 'text' is a concept of language. Barthes describes text

as the meaning evident in a work (of literature, art, or design, for example), but not confined to that work, as an interpretation would be. Texts are not merely multiple meanings; they are "overlappings" of meaning, "variations" of meaning realized according to "serial movement and disconnection" (Barthes, R. in Wallis ed. 1984, p.171)[6]. Barthes asserts that in a text, "the activity of associations, contiguities, [and] cross-references coincides with liberation of symbolic energy" (p.171). Barthes refers to a text as an "explosion, a dissemination" of meanings (p.171). I visualize a text as a fluid path of meaning that cuts across time, works, and place. A text holds complex meaning; no accumulation is required for plurality.

Barthes idea of 'text' assigns greater significance to ideas than to actual works. He refers to works not as the vessel for texts, but as the by-products of the text (p.170). Texts can be perceived through a work, but are greater than a single work. According to Barthes, experiencing a work as 'text' occurs only through an "act of production," not through passive perception (p.173). Barthes, himself a cultural critic, included criticism as an act of production. The students' production of the analytique is a critical activity involving drawing, diagramming, writing, and the assemblage of photographic images.

Textuality, as a concept of language, may hold an even greater significance for landscape architects than for writers and artists. Our acts of production (both in design and construction) allow us to experience places as 'text,' places as 'liberation of symbolic energy.' Following the idea of text, the students' post-modern analytiques address 'meaning' but not 'a [singular] meaning' in the work of landscape architecture practitioners[7]. The student analytiques embody the plurality of meaning as 'text' in two ways: partial dissolution of the beaux-arts 'frame' and the inclusion of very different works by a designer (Figure 3).

THE FRAME   The carefully composed frame of the traditional analytique was an expression of the classically-ordered Beaux-Arts approach to design. Rather than echo the Beaux-Arts format of a composition framed by design details, I encouraged the students to challenge the frame.

The act of framing has been described by art critics as essential to the concept of landscape. Landscape in western art is predicated upon the framed view, which allows an artist to process the raw place into a controlled image (Andrews 1999, p.5, 205-206). By contrast, 20th century Land Art reversed the act of framing, attempting to

Figure 3: Erin Bisges. Analytique: Carol Franklin, digital print, colored pencil, and graphite on Arches paper, 2007.

Figure 4: Elijah Wegele. Analytique: Roberto Burle Marx, digital print and graphite on Arches paper, 2007.

reconnect with land as something less-bounded, less defined (p.208). Historians have noted the influence of late 20th century Land Art on contemporary landscape architecture practices (Meyer 1996). The difference between 'landscape' and 'land' can be compared to Barthes concept of 'work' versus 'text' (Table 1).

Landscape : Work	Land : Text
Singular object	Plural
Framed, bounded	Unbounded, expansive
Seemingly edited, controlled	Infinitely complex

Table 1: Work versus Text

While I encouraged the students to be critical of the Beaux-Arts frame, some still chose to use fragments of design details to frame their compositions. Elijah Wegele's analytique of Roberto Burle Marx (Figure 4) employs plant details to partially frame a perspective of Marx's estate. His incomplete frame at the top of the composition is accentuated by the scrawl of Burle Marx's bold signature. Some broke with the 'framing' approach and allowed elements of the larger composition to overlap and define an ad-hoc edge, in the manner of a full-bleed (Figures 3 and 9). A few students consciously shaped the negative space of a border. Lee Adams' analytique of Carol R. Johnson Associates (Figure 5) uses a border of negative space, shaped by fragments of Johnson's iconic gateway at Chinatown Park in Boston, to frame a perspective composition. All students were limited to a 20"x30" composition on paper, which functions as a unifying (or restricting) frame in its own right.

INCLUSION OF MULTIPLE EXAMPLES OF WORK
Barthes idea of text is also expressed in the students' analytiques by a break from the traditional rule of a composition based upon a singular work. Instead, the students were free to choose whether their composition would focus on one or multiple works in order to express the essence of a designer's practice. Daniel Taylor's analytique of Lawrence Halprin focuses solely on the FDR Memorial (Figure 6).

Taylor's composition is dominated by the memorial's granite fountains. Though only addressing one work, he invokes a larger text that runs through all of Halprin's work: dynamic power and permanence of landscape. Taylor frames the fountain with figures extracted from one of George Segal's sculptures at the memorial, The Breadline.

The large scale of the figures, superimposed over the fountain, and the inclusion of a bold Roosevelt quote underscore the text of power and permanence, but add hunger, pain and death, all permanent parts of the human condition.

Taylor's inclusion of the quote, although arbitrarily added to the composition, is central to the meaning of the memorial and the analytique. "I have seen war. I have seen war on land and sea. I have seen blood running from the wounded. I have seen the dead in the mud. I have seen cities destroyed. I have seen children starving. I have seen the agony of mothers and wives. I hate war" (Roosevelt 1936).

Charles McDowell's analytique of West 8's design practice incorporates images from two projects in the Netherlands, Schouwburgplein and Interpolis Garden (Figure 7). MacDowell chose to use West 8's giant, theatric light features at Schouwburgplein as negatives shapes that contrast with the Interpolis Garden images . He turns the Beaux-Arts composition on its head: his frame (the light feature) pierces the composition and a design detail (the holly leaf fence) assumes prominence as a cascading pattern through the center of the composition.

Studying MacDowell's analytique allows me to read a text of entropy and natural resource exploitation present in both West 8's work and Robert Smithson's land art. West 8's use of piled slate as a ground cover bears striking similarity to Smithson's Non-Site, composed of slate from a quarry (Figure 8). The contrast of delicate magnolia blooms with the angular slate reinforce this text, by adding allusion to the material contrasts and play of culture and nature characteristic of Japanese gardens.

A BREAK WITH PURITY: LAYERING OF MEDIA

Post-modernism can be understood as a break with the 'pursuit of purity' common to Modernism (Foster 1984). This purity, expressed in landscape architecture through purity of geometry and materials, was expressed in the visual arts through purity of medium, the idea of each art (painting, poetry, sculpture) as a pure form[8].

The post-modern analytique breaks with the Beaux-Arts approach of an inked composition by encouraging layered media. My parameter (admittedly arbitrary) of a fifty percent hand-made analytique resulted in varied outcomes; some projects appear machine-made, while others are

Figure 5: Lee Adams. Analytique: Carol R. Johnson Associates, digital print and colored pencil on Canson paper, 2007.

Figure 6: Daniel Taylor. Analytique: Lawrence Halprin, digital print, colored pencil and graphite on Canson paper, 2007.

Figure 7: Charles McDowell. Analytique: West 8, digital print, ink pens, colored pencil, and pastel on Arches paper, 2007.

Figure 8: Robert Smithson. Black and white reproduction of *Non-Site (Slate from Bangor, Pa.)*, shown next to slate in a quarry at Bangor, Pennsylvania, dimensions not known, 1968. Both images reproduced from Flam, J.(Ed.) 1996, p.100. Art copyright Estate of Robert Smithson/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Pennsylvania, 1968. Both images reproduced from Flam, J.(Ed.) 1996, p.100.

entirely hand-drawn. Some students chose to mock up a composition digitally, then transfer the image to paper by drawing (Figure 9). These analytiques are entirely hand-made; though imaging software was used as a visualization tool. Some chose to make delicately hand-altered prints, by re-touching a pale print of a photo-montage with graphite or colored pencil (Figure 10). Others chose a contrast of digitally printed imagery and hand-made marks (Figure 3). The latter appear most like digital prints.

All the students worked on fine art papers. Those who incorporated digital imagery had to hand-feed their paper into a plotter. The choice of rendering media was decided by the student. No preference was given to achromatic versus chromatic rendering. In each case, the student was encouraged to tailor his or her process to the subject.

DE-EMPHASIS OF THE AUTHOR: APPROPRIATION OF IMAGES

A 'good' academic scrupulously cites sources; not so for a good artist. In visual culture, images are appropriated and re-appropriated without apology. Although this has always occurred as the recycling of symbols and signs in art, the advent of photography (then digital photography) has engendered an ever higher degree of borrowed imagery in art. This shift in contemporary art has been noted as a post-modern shift from "production to reproduction" (Walter Benjamin quoted in Solomon-Godeau 1985, p.75).

Robert Rauschenberg's silkscreen/paintings from the mid-1960's provide an excellent example of appropriated imagery and layering of media. His montages combine co-opted images silkscreened on canvas with oil paint. Materially, he fuses borrowed (silkscreened) and original (painted) marks (Figure 11). These 'original marks' in oil paint call attention to the media itself, but refuse the 'pursuit of purity' common to Modernism. Rauschenberg's borrowing of various images, ranging from the banal (street signs, street scenes) to the political (parachutes, Kennedy) constitute a critical appropriation of images. Appropriation is critical of "a culture in which images are commodities of an aesthetic practice that holds (nostalgically) to an art of originality" (Foster 1984, p.197).

In the student analytique problem, the use of appropriated imagery is our most radical departure from the traditional analytique. Students were allowed to co-opt images of a designer's work. Normally, I would insist on citation of all images used in a student project. But in this instance, they

are practicing the critical appropriation of post-modernism. Imagine, for example, how stilted Rauschenberg's montages would appear if he included an image citation under each bit.

While the entire world may be open for the taking in artistic appropriation, ironically, artists themselves have not surrendered authorship of their works. Existing in this middle ground of authorship, I insisted that the students note which designer they studied and sign their analytiques!

CONCLUSIONS

This variation of the analytique led to products that embody post-modernism, particularly as it relates to landscape architecture practice. Three traits of post-modernism, plurality of meaning, a break with the 'purity' of modernism, and an emphasis on 'ideas, not authors' can be seen in the student work through composition, content, media, and the appropriation of digital images.

The post-modern approach satisfied several educational goals. Layering media helped students develop skill with traditional media such as ink, graphite, and colored pencil. Using photo-imaging software (Adobe Photoshop) made envisioning compositional alternatives easier and more plastic than traditional sketching. Photoshop allowed complex pattern visualization and quick alterations of color. Students developed skill with digital photo-montage. Compared to a more traditional approach to the analytique (used previously in the second-year studio), these students spent more time (and enjoyed more success) on the two-dimensional composition.

But the students also spent less time practicing hand-drafting skills, such as constructed perspective. Those students who took the 50% hand-drawn requirement most literally struggled to render the hand-made pieces of their compositions. Those who committed to more than the required amount of hand-drawing were either more skilled, or savvier about using visual references to aid their drawing. On the other hand, those who only minimally altered digital prints also had a high rate of success, perhaps because they had more visual cues as they rendered.

Dissolving the Beaux-Arts frame, encouraging layering of media, and incorporating photo-imaging software did lead to analytiques that express a post-modern practice in landscape architecture. But as a post-modern product, these neatly executed analytiques are admittedly timid. None approach the freedom of Rauschenberg's layering of brash

Figure 9: Emily King. Analytique: Peter Latz+Partner, digital print, colored pencil, and graphite on Canson paper. 2007.
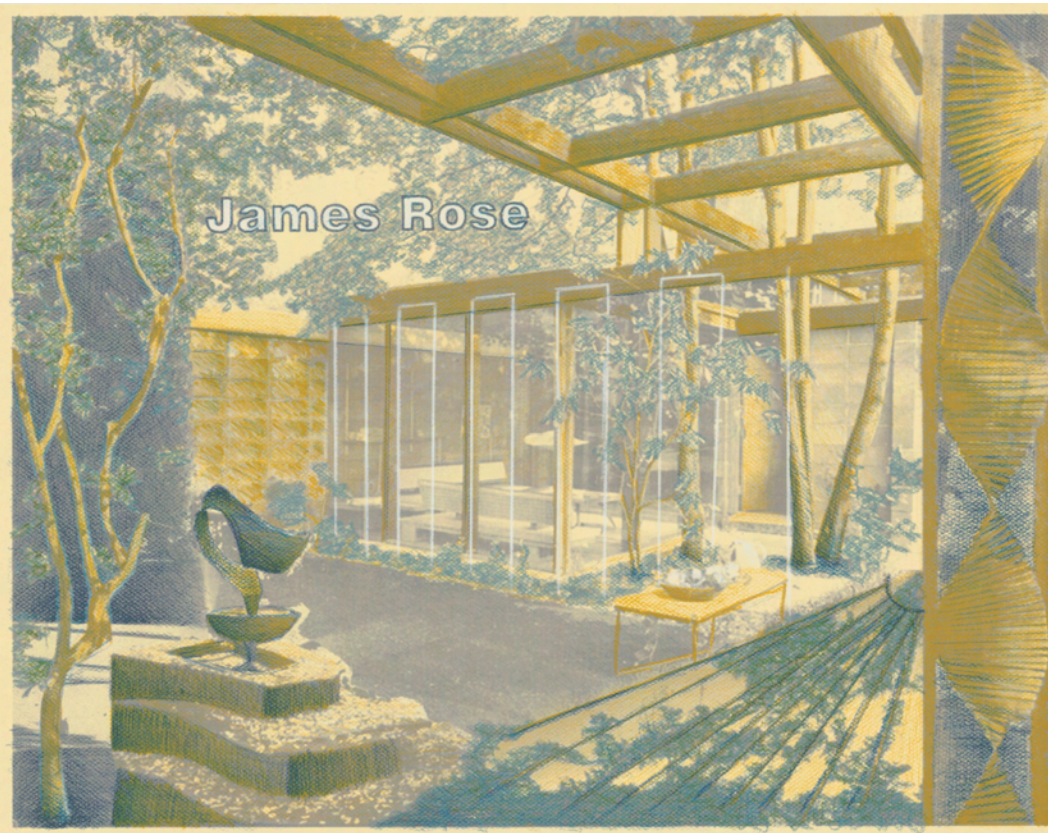

Figure 10: Caitlin Admire. Analytique: James Rose, digital print and colored pencil on Canson paper, 2007.

Figure 11: Robert Rauschenberg. *Quote*, oil paint and silkscreen ink on canvas, 96"x72",1964. Collection of Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf. Reproduced from Kotz 1990, p.174. Art copyright Estate of Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

oil paint strokes over silkscreened canvas. The question is, how should the post-modern analytique, as a means of studying built work, evolve: perhaps with an increasingly critical use of imagery; as sculptural assemblage; or as a digital video product? Those of us who teach early design education must continually strive for balance between traditional drawing skills and the need to embrace contemporary culture in the digital age.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Ricardo Dumont expressed this as an emphasis on "ideas, not authors" when he described the current practice of Sasaki and Associates in a lecture at Kansas State University's Little Theater, November 10, 2008.

[2] I am indebted to the faculty at Kansas State University, especially Anthony W. Chelz, but also Laurence A. Clement, Jr., Stephanie A. Rolley, and Melanie F. Biggs Klein, who have previously taught the analytique in a second-year studio. I have adapted a post-modern analytique from their Beaux-Arts and modernist variations of the analytique.

[3] Chip Sullivan's Drawing the Landscape (2004) provides excellent examples by Ken Smith and other designers.

[4] This was the Beaux-Arts approach. Harbeson (1927) gives this example: A church has been left with its side elevations unfinished; the student must propose a treatment (p.9).

[5] Charles Jencks (1987) describes Robert Rauschenberg's early 1960s art as "fragmented pluralism" (p.14). Kathy Acker (1984) discusses pluralism as cultural democracy in her essay on activist art.

[6] Roland Barthes' essay "From Work to Text," originally published in 1977, is cited here in reprint.

[7] An adaptation of Barthes claim that the "aim of literature is to insert meaning into the world but not 'a meaning'" (quoted in Sontag 1982, p.xi).

[8] Foster (1984) notes that art critics Michael Fried and Clement Greenberg popularized modernism 'as purity' (p.189-191).

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