



Beyond Desire: Los Angeles

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Konsumtion drivs ytterst av *Desire*. Ingenstans förkroppsligas och monumentaliserar *Desire* såsom i Los Angeles. Och på ingen annan plats rättfärdigas heller stadens tillkortakommanden med *Desire*. Hur ser Los Angeles ut bortom *Desire*?



HOLLYWOOD

Beyond Desire: Los Angeles

Finding a peaceful transition from fossil to alternative energy sources is the greatest challenge we face today. We find ourselves in the midst of a decisive moment of transit. A transitional phase between old and new energy sources necessitates a change to other economies, cultural patterns and built structures.

The American urban environment is predicated, both physically and socially, on a limitless supply of cheap oil. How will this be affected by a shift in energy systems? Are we ready to reassess our car cult? Are we prepared for post-motopia?

Consumption is ultimately powered by *Desire*. Nowhere is the monumentalization of *Desire* more palpable than in Los Angeles. As in no other place, the city's perpetuation is dependent upon *Desire*. Los Angeles is the place for extreme lifestyles, parallel universes, segregated dreams and secured utopias. However, Los Angeles is also a place where alternative cultures and progressive grassroots movements seem to originate and flourish, fulfilling other kinds of dreams. The invention of alternative patterns of consumption must be based on other aspirations and longings. What does Los Angeles look like beyond *Desire*?

Cities and Energy

Resources.08 continues its program series *Cities and Energy*, in which we investigate how changes in energy consumption and production influence and inform our cities and our way of life. From the investigations of Shanghai and China's racing economy and rapid urbanization we conducted in **Resources.07** (*Beyond Oil: Shanghai*) we now look eastward across the Pacific rim towards one of our planet's wealthiest regions. With its 17 million inhabitants, Los Angeles is one of the fastest growing regions in the Western world. Having emanated from an oil well, the city exemplifies the history of capitalism. To site Fredric Jameson – L.A. is the result of a multinational capital, a city whose only exemplary feature is its spatial segregation.

But the winds of change are blowing. Schwarzenegger intends to take the lead in the US with his statewide program for sustainable development and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has formulated visionary environmental goals in which he intends Los Angeles to become the greenest city in the US. Projects such as the expanding metro system and a plan to reduce the city's dependence on coal and increase its use of renewable energy to 20% within the next three years are evidence of a will for change. Furthermore, Los

Angeles economic growth should be based on environmentally sustainable principles. How will these initiatives affect a gasoline-dependent lifestyle? How do we escape the homogeneous flatlands of motopia?

Diversity

The architectural critic Reynar Banham praised the Los Angeles of the early seventies »the city as scrambled egg« as a unique mixture of geography, economy, demography and lifestyles. This was an image of the city relevant just before the oil crisis. It was also before road-rage, drive-by shootings and endless commutes transformed the car from a symbol of freedom to an isolated and desperate refuge. Did Banham see a glimpse of the necessary diversity that Los Angeles must nurture in order to survive post-oil? **Resources.08** will continue its investigations of cities beyond oil by examining Los Angeles as the definitive playing field for experimental architecture, new lifestyles and next year's model, as well as the quintessential landscape of conspicuous consumption, riots and homelessness. How will the City of Manufactured Dreams transport itself into the next energy era?

Case Study: the LA River

The L.A. River, a concrete gully made emblematic by countless Hollywood car chases, is in the midst of an urban makeover. The concrete is being jackhammered away, parks and new structures are being planned along its shores and the 50 kilometer long floodway will again become a river. The river's revitalization aggregates the present urban challenges facing Los Angeles – little public space, gentrification, segregation, as well as problems related to drought and natural disasters. In **Resources.08** we will study this unique project that affects numerous ethnic groups and social strata and notably, is being supported by developers and environmental activists alike.

Working partners

Resources.08 will look at scenarios for the future urban development of Los Angeles post-fossil and examine density and mobility patterns as well as social segregation. We will look at the indigenous typologies that have evolved – from *Dead Malls* to *Latino Urbanism* – and explore the rich flora of architectural experimentation, urban theory and social test bed that emanates from the City of Desire and Disaster. The goal of the course is to present a tangible and innovative urban planning proposal that both responds to

necessary changes in present consumption patterns as well as contributes to a discourse on the future urban development of the city. To this end we will work with SCI-Arc in a mutual exchange of knowledge and feedback. We will also discuss our ideas with Arup/L.A. as well as relevant grass roots organizations. Carmilla Floyd, author of the book *Respect – A Report on Gangs and Violence in Los Angeles*, will participate throughout the year.

Perspectives. The course is structured by sections, each with a specific theme. The common group project will be developed through workshops that relate to the theme discussed.

Specificity. Will Peak-oil turn the tide on the process of globalization and instead intensify those qualities that make each city unique? How will the city's patchwork of communities be affected by such a scenario?

Movecity. How will L.A. transform beyond fossil fuels? Can we find innovative solutions to the pressing need for mass transport that is applicable to a car culture that is stuck in a traffic jam?

Density. Is density the most energy effective strategy we have for urban development? Today we talk about the need for hyperdensity as a method for achieving sustainability. Will L.A. ever become a dense city and is this desirable?

Justcity. 224 languages are spoken in *The Minority-Majority City* and half of the population has emigrated there. Who has a right to the city and how does it generate possibilities for its inhabitants?

Syncity. The synchronized city makes double use of time and space. How do we discuss synchronization in a city that worships individuality and private ownership?

Systematicity. How do we build a city that considers all types of production as components in a closed system? What are the indigenous resources of Los Angeles and what are their potential?

Productivity. In a dwindling oil-based economy, the need to secure water and food supplies becomes increasingly urgent. What does this mean for the city and its relationship to the greater region? Can we create new urban production systems and building typologies that adapt to changing consumption patterns?

Biomimicity. Nature has had millions of years to develop its tailor-made solutions. Can architectural innovations be derived from biological experience? Does the unique Los Angeles biotope hold answers?

We will meet architects, urban planners, engineers, geographers, natural scientists, sociologists and artists

who have already probed these questions and are speculating on possible solutions. We will find a foundation in architectural and planning theory, as well as in geopolitics, philosophy, sociology, economy and ecology. Underlying all aspects of the course is a focus on visualization and communication.

Program

Resources.08 consists of three consecutive day study periods, occurring every other week. These periods are complemented with two or three weeklong workshops, spread throughout the study year. Eight fields of study structure the year. Each field will be investigated by means of lectures and seminars. The common group project will sequentially develop in short workshops that follow throughout the course of the year.

Resources.08 commences week 39, 2008 and concludes week 22, 2009. Winter break is between weeks 52 and 4. The fall term will begin with a workshop and short study trip. The spring term will begin with a longer study and workshop trip to Los Angeles. The course gives 60 academic credits. Each student is responsible for paying 12.000 SEK for the obligatory study trips and reading material. Payment will be divided into two installments. The project produced during the course of the year will be exhibited in Stockholm. Long-term plans include a publication documenting the experiences from *Cities and Energy*. Those responsible for the course are professor and architect Henrietta Palmer and teacher and architect Michael Dudley. Fredric Bédouire, professor in architectural history, will also participate.

Applications

Resources.08 is looking for engaged individuals who are interested in investigating these issues and developing proposals within a team. Applicant should be able to demonstrate design ability, or have knowledge relevant to the subject, as well as describe an idea or thoughts pertinent to the themes presented above. You should be an architect, landscape architect,

urban or regional planner, or from a related design discipline such as; photographer, filmmaker, designer, artist or journalist – with a specific interest in architecture and urban planning issues. Applicants should have a college degree or in the process of completing their masters thesis. The course can also be attended as a lecture series, not participating in the group project and giving 30 academic credits. An application should consist of a CV, a concise written reflection on the subject for this year, as well as a passport-sized photograph of the applicant. The application should be postmarked, or left at the school no later than the 9th of June, 2008. Those accepted will be informed by the 16th of June.

Additional courses, grants and economic support

As a student at the School of Architecture at the Royal University of Fine Arts, you are entitled to attend lectures held within the other courses at the school, including Architectural Restoration as well as Art & Architecture, in addition to those within the Fine Arts program (for additional information about these courses, please see www.kkh.se). At the conclusion of each year, the school awards a number of grants based on a project application and/ or individual achievement. In the beginning of the spring term, students are encouraged to apply for grants from the Research and Development in the Arts program. These applications can be based on ideas developed during the course of the study year and that the student wishes to continue exploring during the consecutive year.

Additional information:
Michael Dudley, md@kkh.se
Tel.+46 8 614 40 00
www.kkh.se
Postal address:
School of Architecture, Royal University of Fine Arts
Box 163 15, S-103 26 Stockholm
Visiting address: Flaggmansvägen 1, Stockholm



The School of Architecture at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Stockholm is a forum for post-graduate education in architecture and urban studies. The school dates back to the end of the 18th century and is the oldest institution for architectural studies in Sweden. Today, the school concerns itself with current issues relevant for the general public and investigates how these are con-

nected to an architectural and urban discourse. It provides one-year courses in three disciplines including Architecture, Architectural Restoration and Art and Architecture, the latter conducted in conjunction with the Fine Arts department. Each course includes an extensive lecture series, which addresses the chosen theme in a comprehensive manner. Study trips are also an integral

component of each curriculum. The goal of the School of Architecture is to engage society through the generation of relevant and tangible projects, as well as the creation of working networks for all involved that continue outside the academic realm. Projects that have their inception at the school often become independent platforms that continue to develop on their own.