

USC School of Architecture

ARCH 499: Imaging a Sanctuary City

Units: 3

AU17 Thursday from 1-4pm

Location: Harris 115a

Instructor: Sarah Cowles

Office: Watt 321

Office Hours: Fridays 11-12

Contact Info: scowles@usc.edu.



Together: Wildlife Corridors in Los Angeles. Photos Takashi Homma. In Mills, M.2009. *Mike Mills: graphics films*, Alleged Press/Damiani. Distributed Art Publishers, Bologna, Italy.

Course Description:

ARCH 499: Imaging a Sanctuary City

A sanctuary is defined as a sanctified or holy place, and place of refuge or safety, and a reserve for nature. A sanctuary city is a municipality that will not implement new federal directives to prosecute undocumented citizens. In this seminar, we will begin by conducting two concurrent investigations to inform new critical perspectives on, and visions for, Los Angeles as a sanctuary city. First, we will discuss the history of, and contemporary definitions of sanctuary cities in the United States; second, how political, social and ecological aspects of Los Angeles are represented in landscape imagery. We will conduct analysis of historic and contemporary visions for, and interpretations of, the city of Los Angeles, media coverage of the Sanctuary City concept, and visit cultural institutions to become familiar with frameworks for curating and exhibition. These two threads will be tied together via a curatorial project: an individual exhibition proposal (and optional 3000-word curatorial essay) that construct a particular perspective on, and grounds visions for, an expanded definition of Los Angeles as a sanctuary city.

In this seminar we will discuss such questions as:

- What is a sanctuary city? Who controls the discussion about the topic? Who benefits from living in sanctuary city? Who doesn't?
- How can an expanded definition of a sanctuary—that which includes “a sanctified place” and “a reserve for nature”—benefit all citizens?
- How might this transformation inform the perception of the city as a sanctuary: as a sanctified place, a nature reserve, and a refuge?
- How can media and other rhetorical modes shape this expanded concept of sanctuary city, and in turn, how will Angelenos themselves represent this transformation?
- With Los Angeles being a place that resists tidy representations (as detailed in the following discussion) how can we reinterpret historic representations—as well as the unsuccessful attempts-- of Los Angeles landscapes to document the here and now?

In other words, this seminar will engage two simultaneous approaches to critically unpack the conventional definitions of sanctuary—as a consecrated place, a place of refuge for people and “nature”—and redefine it in light of current political events. Collectively, we will undertake a historical and curatorial project on the representation of Los Angeles landscapes. We will reinterpret these historic and contemporary representations in order to capture, analyze and interpret new visions for life in Los Angeles.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to

- Orally discuss conflicting sides on the topics of sanctuary cities in the early 20th century
- Orally discuss major themes of representation of Los Angeles Landscapes
- Develop arguments and interpretations of what a sanctuary city means with respect to political and art-historical themes.
- Curate an exhibition on historic and contemporary depictions of Los Angeles as a sanctuary city
- Write critical, curatorial comments about images for an exhibition on depictions of Los Angeles as sanctuary city

Prerequisite(s): TBD

Co-Requisite (s): TBD

Concurrent Enrollment: TBD

Recommended Preparation:TBD

Course Notes

This course is led as a seminar. The general structure of class meetings involves an instructor-led presentation, followed by student-led discussions and presentations. Guest lectures and field trips are interspersed throughout the semester. The role of the seminar leader is to facilitate vigorous discussions and aid the student discussion leaders of each week's discussion. Each week a “discussant” will lead seminar participants in the discussion; these leaders will distribute a list of discussion points to class members on the Friday preceding the Monday class. We will assign discussion leaders in the first class meeting; please review the syllabus and make note of your preferred topics.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Word processing, Adobe Suite

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Readings will be posted on Blackboard

Assignments

The assignments will build your familiarity with both current events in Los Angeles and the ways in which the diverse landscapes of urban Los Angeles are represented in media.

- Oral and visual presentation on contemporary issues of sanctuary cities (small groups)
- Weekly discussant: prepare questions and post to Blackboard by 6PM on the Friday preceeding class to prepare students for a targeted discussion on the following Monday (pairs)
- Short presentation on a cultural institution in Los Angeles for exhibition (mission, history, audience, facilities (spatial analysis of exhibition spaces) (small groups)
- Final project: 15-20 images, plus 2-3 artists you select to commission works from, with extended captions describing the relevance of the work to your curatorial position. List name of institution and provide rationale.
- EXTRA CREDIT: Curatorial essay of 3000 words with a critical interpretation of the works you selected for your exhibition.
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Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments due in class and posted to Blackboard.

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>.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

| Week | Month | Day | | Content |
|------|-------|-----|---|--|
| 1 | Aug | 21 | M | Presentation & discussion: Introduction to course and relevant themes. |
| 2 | Aug | 28 | M | <p>Discussion: What is a sanctuary city and how is it currently represented?</p> <p>Due for discussion: "Introduction" in Bagelman, J.J., 2016, <i>Sanctuary city: a suspended state</i>, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.</p> |
| 3 | Sep | 4 | M | <p>Labor Day: No class meeting: Class make-up day: Visit LACMA: <i>Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915–1985</i>,</p> |
| 4 | Sep | 11 | M | <p>Presentation: Ordering the landscape. Examples by Catherine Opie, Ed Ruscha, David Maisel.</p> <p>Due for discussion: Ruscha, E. 1966, <i>Every building on the Sunset Strip, Los Angeles</i>. "Foreward", "Both Sides of Sunset" in Brown, J., ed. 2015, <i>Both sides of Sunset: photographing Los Angeles</i>, Metropolis Books, New York, NY. Mills, M. 2009, <i>Mike Mills: graphics films</i>, 1st edn, Alleged Press/Damiani ;Art Publishers, Bologna, Italy :New York.</p> |
| 5 | Sep | 18 | M | <p>Guest Lecture: Tim Durfee, Art Center College of Design: exhibition design</p> <p>Due for discussion: "The great wide open" in Watts, J.A., Bohn-Spector, C. & Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery 2001, <i>The great wide open: panoramic photographs of the American West</i>, Merrell, London.</p> |
| 6 | Sep | 25 | M | <p>Presentation: Meta-architectures and Sited Pedagogies: Sci-Arc and Environmental Communications</p> <p>Due for discussion: Selections from McConnell, M. 1994, <i>LAX: the Los Angeles experiment</i>, SITES/Lumen Books, New York, NY. Greenberg, D.L., 1942, Smith, K., 1945, Teacher, S. & Environmental Communications (Firm) 1977, <i>Big art: megamurals & supergraphics</i>, Running Press, Philadelphia.</p> |

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| 7 | Oct | 2 | M | <p>Discussion: Landscape as Ensemble</p> <p>Due for discussion:</p> <p>Analysis of the depiction of landscapes in relation to character or plot; how is risk and refuge in the landscape conveyed by the director? Choose one film:</p> <p><i>The Player</i>, 1992 [film]. Directed by Robert Altman USA: Avenue Pictures</p> <p><i>Magnolia</i>, 1999 (film). Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson: New Line Cinema</p> <p><i>Short Cuts</i>, 1993 (film) Directed by Robert Altman. Fine Line Features.</p> <p><i>Crash</i>, 2004 (film). Directed by Paul Haggis. Bob Yari Productions.</p> <p>Student presentations: Sanctuary cities: Group 1: History</p> |
| 8 | Oct | 9 | M | <p>Presentation: Managing the Sanctuary</p> <p>Due for discussion:</p> <p>“Prologue. Water in Los Angeles: A Portrait of an Urban Ecosystem”, p. 16-36” and “ City of a Thousand Rivers: The Emergence of an Urban Ecosystem, 1884 –1914”, p 27-50 in Orsi, J. 2003, <i>Hazardous metropolis: flooding and urban ecology in Los Angeles</i>, University of California Press, Berkeley.</p> <p>Student presentations: Sanctuary cities: Group 2: <i>Perspectives from the right</i></p> |
| 9 | Oct | 16 | M | <p>Guest Lecture: Nathan Masters</p> <p>Due for discussion: TBD by Masters</p> |
| 10 | Oct | 23 | M | <p>Presentation: Mapping Los Angeles</p> <p>Due for discussion:</p> <p>Varno, Teddy “The Bovid Metropolis” p 53-61, and Alvitre, Cindi Moar “Coyote Tours”, p 43-51. In Wakida, P., ed., <i>LAitudes: an Angeleno’s atlas</i>, Heyday, Berkeley, California.</p> <p>Student presentations: Sanctuary cities: Group 3: Legislation</p> <p>Student presentations: Los Angeles Cultural institutions, Group A</p> |
| 11 | Oct | 30 | M | <p>Field Trip: Center for Land Use Interpretation, Culver City</p> <p>Due for discussion:</p> <p>“Introduction” and Circling the Center” in Rugoff, Ralph et.al.</p> <p>Overlook: Exploring the Internal Fringes of America with the Center for Land Use Interpretation.</p> |

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| 12 | Nov | 6 | M | <p>Presentation: SoCal Utopias</p> <p>Due for discussion</p> <p>“Epilogue: The Historical Structure of Disorder: Urban Ecology in Los Angeles and Beyond” in Orsi, J. 2003, <i>Hazardous metropolis: flooding and urban ecology in Los Angeles</i>, University of California Press, Berkeley.</p> <p>Notes on images of urban landscapes in Goldin, G., Lubell, S. 2013. <i>Never built Los Angeles</i>, Metropolis Books, New York.</p> <p>Student presentations: Sanctuary cities: Group 4: Perspectives from the left</p> <p>Student presentations: Cultural institutions, Group B</p> <p>Due for discussion: Unbuilt LA</p> |
| 13 | Nov | 13 | M | <p>Presentation: On curating</p> <p>Due for discussion:</p> <p>Introduction, in Voorhies, J.T., 2017, <i>Beyond objecthood: the exhibition as a critical form since 1968</i>, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England.</p> <p>“Introduction” in Goin, P., 1951, Manchester, E. & Sheppard Fine Art Gallery 1992, <i>Arid waters: photographs from the Water in the West Project</i>, University of Nevada Press, Reno.</p> <p>“Introduction: Photomontage and Landscape Architecture”, p. 15-22, and “Back to Form: Landscape architecture and representation in Europe after the sixties”, p. 93-115, in Waldheim, C., Hansen, A. & Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum 2014, <i>Composite landscapes: photomontage and landscape architecture</i>, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Ostfildern; Boston, Massachusetts;.</p> |
| 14 | Nov | 20 | M | Due: Draft curatorial statement and artist selection |
| 15 | Nov | 27 | M | Progress review |

Grading

| Percentage | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| 15% | Class participation |
| 15% | Discussion leadership |
| 15% | Sanctuary City presentation |
| 15% | Cultural presentation |
| 40% | Final curatorial project |

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/departments/departments-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 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.