Research Grant – Spring 2009

Title or Proposal: Presentation of Research at the American Collegiate Schools of Architecture National Conference

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Abstract:
The American Collegiate Schools of Architecture national conference is an annual event where architecture faculty and professionals from across the country and internationally come together to interact, network and share valuable knowledge about architecture pedagogy, theory, technology and practice. The ACSA maintains a high standard for the selection of papers. This year's acceptance rate was 32%. Two papers I have written on Japanese Architecture, “Metabolism Revisited” and "Designing with the Craftsman's Eye/ Building with the Artist's Conscience", were selected for presentation and publication in the proceedings. I plan to use the CVPA grant funding for registration, and travel expenses to the conference, which will be held in Portland Oregon, March 26th - 29th 2009. .https://www.acsa-arch.org/conferences/annual2009.aspx

Proposal:
Japan has one of the world’s most important architectural traditions and continues to be on the cutting edge of architectural design and technology. Since Adolf Loos’s declaration of the Katsura detached palace as “absolutely modern and of complete validity for any contemporary architecture”, Contemporary architects around the world have been fascinated by Japanese architecture.

I will present my recent research on Japanese architecture in two papers at the 2009 ACSA National conference. The purpose of this research is to create an increased understanding of the continuity between contemporary and historic architectural phenomena in Japan and draw parallels with related issues in the US as a means of increasing global awareness and perspective for students, researchers and professionals.

The first paper "Designing with the Craftsman's Eye/ Building with the Artist's Conscience" takes the example of the Master carpenter tradition in Japan as a point of departure for a broader discussion about the schism between design and construction in the US building industry, which has long suffered from the gulf between Architects and Builders, and theory and practice. The research was conducted as a hands on experiment in Japan where I acted as designer, architect and builder on a project to better understand the Japanese building system and what implications that system and a greater involvement of the architect in the construction process can have on the development of architects, the quality of buildings and the vitality of the profession.

The second paper “Metabolism Revisited” looks at a once popular architecture and urbanism movement from the 1960’s and argues many of the same issues related to rapid urbanization that were addressed by the Metabolism manifesto have once again become relevant. However compared to the 1960’s, the building industry in the 21st century has many new materials and technologies available that promise to revolutionize the way we
build and plan our cities. Cad Cam, for example, holds the promise of turning the homogenizing effects of mass production of the previous era into liberating self determination through economical, mass customization. With the promise of these new technologies and in light of society’s unprecedented level of awareness of the built environment, this paper revisits the ideas of Metabolism to measure their relevance as a possible model for urbanization in the 21st century.

My research in Japanese Architecture supports the goals and values of the SACD by increasing emphasis on Global Design Issues increasing understanding of how history informs the present; emphasizing the value of craft; discussing the relevance of emergent technologies and sustainable practices; facilitating international discovery and connections and awareness of diverse cultures. This research supports the goals of the CVPA by contributing to the diversity of faculty experiences related to different cultural and geographic perspectives while facilitating global opportunities. It is consistent with the University goal of promoting cultural and ethnic diversity and inclusion along with an enhanced global experience, understanding, and appreciation while the knowledge gained by this research can be directed towards state, national, and global problems.

The presentation of this research at a high profile national venue increases the national and international exposure of the SACD, CVPA and USF as contributing to the national and international dialogue about architecture and sustainability and promotes a spirit of Collegiality and participation with other universities and facilitates the optimal development of the personal and professional potential of faculty.