

Credibility: The "Second Space" of Projects

There are two "spaces" in the development of projects and the communications of their results. The first is superficial and evidence-based. In the case of the architectural project, the majority of this category is filled by drawings, programs, written statements, plans, elevations, sketches, models, etc. The second, by far more important, is the credibility that is established by the character and demeanor of the investigator.

Without credibility, it goes without saying that any communication in the first "space" is null and void. This priority is, however, established by rhetorical and theatrical means, also funded by reputation and memory of past behaviors. Once credibility (or its lack) is established, its presence or absence is difficult to alter. It is summarized by the popular idea of trust, an investment that allows the investigator latitude and a freedom to make exceptions, break rules, and commit errors.

How is credibility established? This workshop interval/discussion aims to *open up the topic in order to establish durable themes for other workshops*. This workshop takes the position that the "space of credibility" is unexpectedly and inexplicably material and material-izable, a "performative" space that can be scale-adjusted and reconfigured within the multiple stages and zones of the architectural project. *As material and materializable, it is not only conceivable but desirable that workshops address this dimension specifically, and outside of the context of conventional studio projects and discussions.*

Credibility combines a number of loosely related but important components of academic performance.

- First and foremost, it is the resilience of student performance in the face of unanticipated, randomized challenges, whether generated from personal difficulties or institutional unpredictability. "Work" is a quality factor that comes to informally credit a program based on visible results, levels of ambitions in projects, redirection of clichéd themes into hybrid and more complex analyses.
- Credibility is open-ended. It resists being contained completely within a set of references from a fixed set of resources (i.e. projects must resist being uniformly thematized, as in the frequent case of "sustainability" themes). There must be tangible demonstration of "strategies of continuation" that resist closure and hold open the larger architectural projects that co-exist inside each specific and limited project.
- Credibility also requires accountability, and to the extent that projects must "give accounts of themselves," this seems to work opposite the aims of open-endedness. The accommodation of both aims/goals proves the necessity to develop the "second space," within which open-endedness and accountability not only co-exist but require each other.
- A revised view of accountability shifts its meaning from the model of the trial under supervision of experts (a common definition of the critique) to a place where the idea of the project undergoes a transformation into a nucleus for the collective elaborations of presenters and their audience. At all levels, speculation enters into revisionary attitudes toward potential and, hence, effectiveness of the tangible artifacts of the work. Accountability is not established through confrontation, which in fact often precludes any version of accountability/credibility.
- The "second space" is based, topologically, on a triangulation of the "fixed coordinates" of the presenter and the "audience" (critics, etc.). It stands both inside and outside the optical and tactile transactions of the review but allows for "marginal revisions" to extend and retroactively redefine the artifacts of presentation.