

VAS FINAL STUDIO – SPRING 2009

Julio Bermudez, Instructor

This studio engages in a semester long disciplined, spirited, and committed study of **VAS** (or **Voluntary Architectural Simplicity**) as one possible design response to the major challenges confronting each of us individually and all of us socially and globally. The philosophy of **VAS** is offered as a voluntary and critical direction that resists the forces of today's unconscious materialism, empty consumerism, unnecessary complexity, and life in the fast lane. **VAS** also provides students with the knowledge and skills supporting clear architectural methods, technologies, and vocabulary as concrete ways to embody such position. **VAS** encourages students to turn toward the minimal, the direct and the conscious.

During Spring 2009 students had to design an 80,000 sq.ft **alternative University campus**. The '**Tao metaversity**' as it is called, aims at a different type of learning based on the premise that knowledge comes as much as from within and social contact as from scientific and objective sources. Furthermore, the *Metaversity* professes an experiential approach to learning based on a three-fold path organized around the good, the beautiful and true. The site is located in a very strategic part of town (sugarhouse shopping and hidden hollow) and its size is as big as the building program. Site conditions and programmatic requirements in the context of **VAS** demanded students to question architectural, urban, and socio-cultural expectations. Additional challenges included responding to a real client and community while preserving the manifesto-based ideological and ethical attitude of **VAS**.

For more information visit:

<http://students.arch.utah.edu/courses/vas/index.htm>

<http://faculty.arch.utah.edu/people/faculty/julio/abstracts/vas-manifesto.htm>

GUEST JURY (Review 20-21 April 2009)
(in addition to CA+P faculty)

Tom Barrie is a professor at North Carolina State University at Raleigh. He teaches undergraduate and graduate design studios and courses in history-theory and design theory. His research focuses on alternative histories of architecture, and in particular the interrelationship of a culture's architecture and its cultural/religious beliefs and communal rituals. He is the author of the well known and recognized book "*Spiritual Path, Sacred Place*" and just got the publication contract for another book entitled "*Between Heaven and Earth: The Mediating Role of Sacred Architecture*".

Alice Kimm co-founded Friedman-Kimm architects in Los Angeles. Their design work has been widely published and recognized. Her education is from Cornell and Harvard. Alice has taught design studios at USC, SCI-Arc, and the Otis College of Art and Design. Looking at their office website, I was particularly stricken by their professed attention to "*Emotion and Meaning: JFAK designs spaces to elicit meaningful emotional responses and moods. It searches for those moments that give meaning to the ordinary rituals and activities of daily lives.*"

Doug Thornley is principal at Gould-Evans Baum Thornley Architects in San Francisco. His education is from CalPoly, Columbia, and the Royal Academy in Denmark. He has been recognized for his innovations in work space design and is particularly interested in the built form with an urban context. He believes that "*architecture encompasses all aspects of design, from buildings and interiors to furniture and lighting.*" Doug has taught at the San Francisco Center for Architecture and Urban Studies, the University of Manchester, and Stanford University.