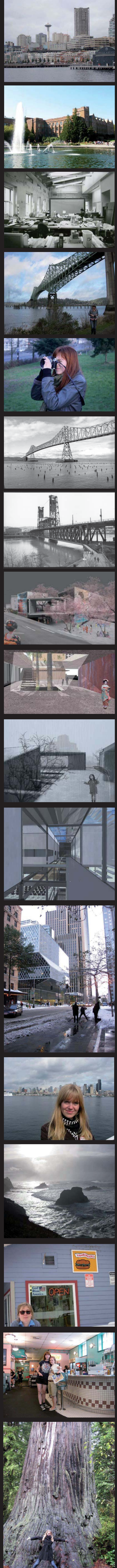


Architecture Study at University of Washington, Seattle, Sep 2008 - Jun 2009



Expectations

I have wanted to try to study abroad ever since I started my Architecture study at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Architecture. I wanted to take advantage of the international orientation field of Architecture and try to use and test my architectural skill in a global and unknown scene.

These were the main reasons why I applied for one year of Study at University of Washington Department of Architecture. I was attracted to the more technical and sustainable profile of the Architecture Department at University of Washington and the possibility of living in the city Seattle.

University of Washington

I arrived in Seattle in the beginning of September 2008 and noted immediately a lot of cultural differences between Denmark and USA. Everything seemed to function a little bit differently and my live-long study of the American culture through film and music was not anywhere near the experience of living and interacting in the culture. Luckily my English language skill allowed a quick adaption into a new culture.

There were a lot of differences between the Danish school system and the American school system. The two school systems are completely differently constructed and the fact that the Architecture School in Denmark is part of an Academy and the Architecture school in Seattle is a part of a University makes a huge difference. At the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art School of Architecture in Copenhagen the students normally work at one project at the time and get longer time and guidance to investigate and specialize in this particular project. The students at University of Washington Department of Architecture juggles with Studio project and several courses at the same time which gives them a broader knowledge in many different fields of architecture but also gives the student less time to specialize and investigate one specific project or topic. The many written assignments, presentation and exams help force the student to work hard and focused, as well as force the student to learn how to make priorities and optimize his or her time. The students at The Royal Academy have less supervision from the teachers as well as more freedom and time in school to focus on their own architectural interests and experiment with architecture, but this study form force the students to be very good at study management and self motivation. The academic level at University of Washington is very high and the professors and teachers were well-known and specialized in their fields which created a very motivating and enthusiastic academic atmosphere at the whole University Campus. The fact that the Department of Architecture did not existed as an individual school but functioned as a part of a campus made corporations between different majors possible. The Department of Architecture was places close the "Department of Engineering" and was placed in the same building as the "Department of Landscape Architecture" and "Department of Planning" which had a huge influence on the academic level. It was very learn full and benefitting to have courses and interact with landscape students, architectural planners and engineers.

My Courses and Studios during my study at University of Washington

"Materials and Assemblies" (Autumn 2008), with Professor *Kimo Griggs*. This course taught the students the different building materials history, use and possibilities in the building industry. The course was both theoretical and practical and we learn to use the "woodshop" and work with the different materials.

"Introduction to Architectural Photography" (Autumn 2008), with Professor *John Stamets*. This course introduced the student to silver black and white photography and the photographic media's use and possibilities in architecture.

"Studio 500" (Autumn 2008), with *Peter Cohan*. In this studio we had to design a sustainable university in Seattle. The Studio included both city planning and building design. The students worked in groups and independently.

"Advanced Rendering" (Winter 2009), with Professor *Mehlika Inanici*. This course thought the student the practical and theoretical sides of computer rendering.

"Low-income Housing" (Winter 2009), with Professor *Michael Pyatok*. This course was a study in the reality, fundraising and practice of designing low-income housing in America and Mexico.

"Architecture Photo Projects" (winter 2009) by Professor *John Stamets*.

This course was an advanced Photography course in developing a style and documenting a specific topic.

"Vision of the Japanese House" (Winter 2009) by Professor *Ken Tadashi Oshima P.h.d.* This course analyzed and compared the traditional Japanese architecture to the North Pacific architecture through study cases and literature.

"Study Trip Preparation" (Winter 2009) by Professor *Ken Tadashi Oshima P.h.d.* This course was a preparing course for the Spring break study trip to Japan.

"Independent Photography Study" (Spring 2009), with Professor *John Stamets*. This course was an individual study in Photography and the developing of the book "Bridges -Creatures in the Landscape". A photography book documenting and showing bridges in the North Pacific America.

"Seminar on Vernacular Architecture" (Spring 2009), with *Kathryn R Merlino*.

A seminar where the students discussed Vernacular Architecture and the reuse of old structures. The discussions were based on case studies and literature about sustainable architecture, American building tradition and regulations such as the LEED-system and preservation laws.

"Studio 560" (Spring 2009) by *Ken Tadashi Oshima P.h.d.* A design studio where the students had to design a Japanese cultural center in Seattle based on the knowledge from the course "Vision of the Japanese House" and the study trip to Japan in Spring Break.

The Country USA and the City Seattle

Besides the meeting with another school system I also found the life in America and Seattle very interesting and learn full. There was a huge difference between my home city Copenhagen and Seattle. Copenhagen is characterized by its old history and main founding in the Middle Age. The city is characterized by its low-rise building and old towers as well as the narrow maize looking road system. Seattle on the other hand is characterized by a newer city planning with a systematic road-grit and a high-rise city center surrounded by a lot of low-rise neighborhood. I was very captivated by the different neighborhoods in Seattle and their different images and atmospheres. The fact that a pedestrian could experience the Asian culture in International District, the business wise in Downtown and the experimentation artistic atmosphere in Capitol Hill within a few hundred meters was to me very fascinating and inspiring. These different neighborhoods and the high level of contrast between the neighborhood style and population was a huge factor in the pulsating and metropolitan atmosphere in Seattle.

The nature surrounding Seattle was amazing, coming from a very plain and planned farming country without untouched nature, the variation and brutal nature surrounding Seattle was breathtaking. The nature surrounding Seattle offers many possibilities for hiking, skiing, camping, sailing, swimming, climbing etc.

My stay in Seattle also offered me possibilities for a lot of traveling and excursions. I manage to visit the states Oregon, California, Utah, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. I visited cities such as Portland, San Francisco, Salt Lake City and Vancouver BC. I saw the amazing nature of the Pacific Coast, the rainforest at the Olympic Peninsula, Mount Rainier, Mount Saint Helens, the Dessert of Oregon, The salt lakes in Utah, The geysers and animal life in Yellow Stone National, the farming country and hills of Montana, the lakes and mountains in Teton National Park and the mountains and lakes in west Canada.

I also got the unique opportunity to go with my Department of Architecture and a Japanese architect to Japan in the Spring Break to visit and analyze the architecture and culture in Tokyo and Kyoto.

Final Thoughts and Conclusion

My year in Seattle provided me with at great knowledge on the American School System as well as the American culture. I was given the unique possibilities to meet and talk with a lot of different people in and outside school. My study at University of Washington gave me a big network of American architecture students and teachers as well as a large network of international exchange students from many different backgrounds and fields of study. My stay in Seattle taught me to live and interact in a different culture and on a different language. I gained a huge knowledge about the American and international architectural scene.

I fell like I am leaving Seattle with a toolbox filled with new tools and experiences which I can take with me back home and use in my future work as an architect. I have learned a lot of architectural and personal skills and experiences which I couldn't have learned back home in Denmark. I can highly recommend fellow students to move out in the world for a longer period of time and test their thoughts and skills in a different unknown context. I promise they will learn a lot about themselves and the world and get a lot of precious experiences and memories that will last the rest of their lives.

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