

Architorture 101

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There is none. Just follow along; you'll know where you are. If you want to turn back, good luck. I vacuumed up all of your breadcrumbs. You are in this for the long haul.

Introduction

Let me start off by saying that I am not trying to teach you architecture. Reason being is that I know nothing about it myself. I am also not trying to bore the hell out of you for the duration of this book. You might still get bored; I can't help with that. The voices in my head tell me I'm funny, and I don't like to ignore comments that make me feel good. But let me be clear; **YOU WILL NOT LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT HOW TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT** (except for what not to do). Also, I have some descriptions in here that are based off of real people whom I know. If I know you and you should see a description that you think is describing you, it probably is. Don't get alarmed; it's all good fun. No nasty letters/emails, thanks. So, if you're game, then follow me through my short journey of architectural studies (remember to keep all hands and feet inside the vehicle at all times).

Why am I Writing About Architecture?

That is a very good question. It's kind of like that question that asks "Why did you choose architecture as a major?" Difference is, for the former question, I didn't bullshit an answer. Also, I wasn't half asleep, unlike the latter question, which I assume went something like this:

What do you want to do in life Charlie?

Huh, what?...zzzzzz

What career do you want to pursue?

Something in...zzzz...math and science....zzzzzzz

Architecture?

Yeah, that sounds goooo....zzzzzzz.

I have to warn you I am not an expert on the subject; I only had about a full year of schooling before I gave it up as a career. But I have amassed enough information to say something about it (And I'm funny). And that's why I'm writing about it. I hope to either fully understand it by the end or know even less, either way, it doesn't matter to me. I just hope that you can take what's here and apply it to your life in some way (but don't forget to laugh at my misfortune).

The Ten Commandments (of architecture)

Let's begin like the Israelites (minus all the desert wandering):

1. All styles of design are right when designing a building. Just don't choose the wrong one.
2. Don't forget that the project statement is flexible; after all, it's just paper.
3. If at first you don't succeed... well, you should probably succeed on your first try, just to be safe.
4. If you build it they will come screaming telling you not to (yes they will).
5. Buy some textbooks but don't look at them. They make great paperweights.
6. You never know what material you might need to build a model. So here's what you do. You have to go out and rent a storage room and fill it completely with boxes of paper, cardboard, plaster, foam, chicken wire, hair driers, thin sheet metal, plastic, wood, and anything else you can think of. If you can, I mean ideally, you should buy an art store, but, if you can't, the storage facility will work (for now).
7. Have your own computer with all of the necessary programs installed on it ready to go. This means a windows operating system, as some of the programs do not run on the Mac OSX and you are not majoring in broadcasting. Plus, you are older than 5 and can deal with a less intuitive computer.
8. Make sure that your drafting Mayline is perfectly straight. They will tell you it is, but if you think it's not, then say so. My lines were bowed and that's all I know for sure. (Same thing happened with my rulers. Ok, now I'm starting to think I might have been part of the problem....probably not though. I'll chalk it up to shoddy craftsmanship. Yeah that'll work.)
9. Know how to draw at a higher level than stick figures. It will pay off in the long run, trust me.
10. Try not to fall asleep in random places with your eyes open. You won't know where you are, what time it is, or how you let the laser cutter burn down.

These are important. I might not have gotten everything correct, but even still, I'd like to think I did. Now that the foundation is in place, we can begin to explore life as an architecture student. Maybe just my life as an architecture student, although I think I am pretty average, so it might be the same.

I started with the idea of the American dream. Work hard, make money, easy living. Architecture takes a considerable amount of work, willpower, and know-how. So naturally, I struggled. And my craft wasn't good. No I'm not talking about a packet of cheese; I'm referring to the quality of my model building. These things have to mesh or it won't work out. I kept making models that did not stand up. I found myself saying "I was going for a leaning tower of Pisa approach" (but, hey, even that stands up!!). And that's when I starting leaning towards a different major (like writing) but probably engineering.

Where's the First Aid Kit?

Blood, sweat, and tears go into model making (literally). What would architecture be without the occasional slip of the blade into a finger or knee into a bottle of blades? It would be art class. It is a very wise idea to become friends with the EMT guys on campus. You may see

them more than you think. And always keep a first aid kit in reach. I once let the Exacto© blade slip into my left index finger. It was darn lucky that a first aid kit was nearby because I could have bled to death (not likely) or worse, gotten blood on my project (very likely).

And then there's the wood shop, a dangerous place full of roaring machines and sawdust. If the dust inhalation doesn't kill you, I'm sure one machine will (my bet's on the jigsaw, small but feisty). Every architect needs to know how to use the woodshop so that when they are out at the construction site and see someone cutting something, they can tell them that they are doing it wrong. So, in order to survive the woodshop and studio, respect the tools you use. Even the smallest piece of paper can still hurt you if you are not respectful of it (and a paper cut stings like a bitch).

Architecture TV

I have to say, I watch a lot of television. And in college, that's hard to do, since it is not a "TV friendly" place. Anyway, I have done some thinking (without hurting myself) and have come up with some shows that sound more architecturally appealing. This is by no means an exhaustive list:

House (not M.D., just House)
Flip This House (it needs a new orientation)
The Biggest Model
America's Funniest Home Videos
The Basementalist
Two and a Half Storeys
The Amazing Space
Undercover Truss
Law and Order: AIA
Dangerous House Pipes
Crits
The Construction Zone
Architecture's Next Top Model
The Studio
Minute to Build It
Without a Space
Tales from the Crit
Private Practice
CSI: Studio
Up All Night

(Check your local listings.....)

Inner Eyelid Study 101

Sadly, this class is not offered anywhere in the architecture program. To get into this class, it first has to fit into your schedule (it's offered mostly at night, when the archies are

working). Second, you have to major in business. Then, and only then, can you fully enroll in this class.

Can I assume that you know I am talking about sleep? I can't? Oh, ok, I can? Good. So the recommended number of hours of sleep per day is about 6 to 8. You'll average that per week. Now, there are ways to get your work done and get sleep every night, but only a select few are allowed to know those hidden secrets. I don't know them, so no help here. Sorry.

In all seriousness, sleep is very important to your health. You should get as much as you can. It's just that that architecture that you design while on auto-pilot will be somewhat worse than the stuff you design while fully awake. I never noticed a difference, but you might.

"I have a dorm room? Which studio is it in?" – Me

The All-Nighter

There is no other feeling than admitting that you successfully pulled the architecture all-nighter. Anyone who says they haven't pulled an all-nighter is either lying or bad at their work. But what you have to keep in mind is that the process that the body goes through when up all night, at least for me, is very dynamic. It changes hour by hour. Let me describe it for you.

12:00 am – Feeling good, just got snacks, lots of work to do.

1:00 am– Still feeling good, ate some snacks, little tired, lots of work to do.

2:00 am– Kind of tired, but shrug it off, blink real wide, lots of work to do.

3:00 am– Getting sleepy, yawning real wide, at this point you realize that all of your family is asleep and your friends went home so no one to talk to, lots of work to do.

4:00 am– You try to take a nap, set an alarm for five, lots of work to do.

4:00 am – 5:00 am – Quick question. Is this very late or very early? (Yes/No) – Please Circle

5:00 am– You wake up, bags under your eyes, feeling even more tired, stumble to your desk because you have lots of work to do.

6:00 am– You look out the window and the sky has a slight bluish tint to it, nice you're getting there, there are birds outside (early bird gets the worm, they say), and you still have lots of work to do.

7:00 am– At this point sky is noticeably light, you're tired but somehow "up" and you are getting work done.

8:00 am– The video you watched just ended; now you see people outside and you decide to go back to your dorm to rest for an hour or so. You wake up at 3 in the afternoon, having slept through all of your classes. ☹

The "Artch" Store

As an architecture student, it is your responsibility to go out and buy all of the materials that you need for a project. There are ways to get around this: bum them off friends, steal from classmates, or the occasional "I didn't get this in my kit" at the art store. It's no wonder why architecture is all over our money. It costs a lot to become one. It's like, hey Andrew Jackson, or as architects know him, one-sixth the cost of the final model.

Stereotypes

The Douchebag Architect:

You know who this is. He has glasses and has that attitude of superiority. He walks around a lot to see what others are doing and doesn't say anything. When you ask him why he's behind you staring at your work, he smiles, chuckles, and walks away. He's also the one who responds to all of the professors questions in a seemingly profound way. Plus, you can make a drinking game out of it; Every time he stops talking, take a drink. On second thought, that's a terrible game because he doesn't shut up. Nevermind.

The Last-Minute Man:

This guy is always rushing to get work done. It's Sunday at 9:00 pm and he just showed up to work on his project due Monday morning. How will he finish? Why is he starting so late? These questions go unanswered because he doesn't have time to talk. He must work, work, and work some more to get his project up to C grade level.

The Perfectionist:

This description needs to be perfect. This is the person who obsesses over the little things until they cry. Don't get them confused with people who naturally have good craft with models. They are efficient. Perfectionists are not. And quite often, the model doesn't even reach the final table because it's not done on time. Just perfect! After all of that careful work, you don't even get to show it off.

The Cardboard Jungle

If your studio is like mine, the professors say try different mediums when building models. I frankly don't believe in psychics, but I tried a few. None were helpful. I don't need a long lifeline, I need an A+ project. Then, I realized that they were referring to different materials. (Whoops! My bad.) At first, I tried cardboard. That didn't work out too well for me but for some reason I kept using it (I think it was the cheapest). Anyway, I tried to make it work out but couldn't. So the projects did not end up well for me. I mean, you didn't have to be psychic to see that coming. But others got the cardboard to work, and that's when Studio changed into the Cardboard Jungle.

The Cardboard Jungle, a place where models hang from the ceiling like vines, plaster models of spiders walk around, and everywhere you look on the floor there seems to be a piece of cardboard shaped like a leaf. You trudge through hot glue pits and navigate around piles of trash. Some have called it a "prehistoric wasteland," and it is clear why. This is where the cavemen went to design their rock homes.

Of course, it is more commonly referred to as Studio, a place where some of our best architects have been told "No!!!" on many occasions. Aside from all of this, this is where the bulk of the creativity takes place. Not at my desk, but at the ones around me, I saw creative juices flowing, brains working hard to create the unknown. Half of the time, I was tripping over models on the floor. And every time I put my cardboard creation next to other peoples' models on the Crit Table©, they screamed "Noo!!!" and I had to take mine away. The world is not ready for my brand of architecture yet. I get it; I'm ahead of my time.

My INCEPTION Moment

(Assuming you've seen INCEPTION)

Just consider this statement for a second:
“The only way I am an architect is in my dreams.”

Pretty powerful, right? Let me explain. There are three levels, just like Inception. Level 1 is the truth of the statement. I am not an architect, but I dreamed of becoming one. Level 2 is the fact that I am the architect in/of my dreams, according to Inception. I create the dream world, just like Juno does in the movie Inception. And here's the kicker. Level 3 is the fact that the statement goes 3 levels deep just as Inception does, but the third level in the movie is a stretch, just like this level 3 description. WHAAAT? BOOM! Blew your mind. Wake up!!

You Know you're An Archie When.....

its 5 am and you're not alone in studio.*
you critique Ted Mosby's architectural lectures while watching How I Met Your Mother.*
you're not me.
you don't know how to get into your dorm room.
you don't like to sleep.
you wear glasses.
you feel good about getting 2 hours of sleep at night.*
you look at receipts and think “When did I spend a hundred dollars on plaster?”
you own a Mac but need a PC.
you pull an all-nighter and realize you need to pull one every day to get all your work done.*
you take classes that don't give you much work, except for one.
you pull an all-nighter to do your laundry.*
you realize that no matter how many times you recut the wall, it just won't fit in the model.*
you refer to studio as the place you live.*
you reference architecture in good movies.*
you see projection lines everywhere.*
you see scale and think “figure”
you think of modular housing while using the bathroom.*
you walk down the hallway and think about drawing it in perspective.*
you work all weekend.
you're excited to get pencil covers instead of candy.*
you're not sure if you had a meal (you didn't).*
your idea of a fun Friday night is catching up on sleep.

*Thank you to my fellow architecture
students for some of these one-liners.

Architecture as a Religion

I think architecture is a religion to some people. They practice it every day, and don't just go to church, they build it. But what do they worship? Pencils? No, what I think architects

worship are other architects. Who do they worship? Architect Jesus T. Acevedo? No that's a Diego Rivera painting. They would worship other architects, like I said.

Architecture would be a polytheistic religion, with tons of alters built and designed in the style of the architect it relates to. For instance, Maya Lin's would look something this: Picture a container made of granite, with her name on the bottom, glass pieces poured over that, and running water constantly streaming in from a fountain. Le Corbusier's would be a box with a garden on top, supported by pilotis. It would have brise soleil on one side to block out the incoming sun. You get what I am trying to say. I don't even have to describe Frank Gehry's because we all know it would look like a building that was drawn while looking in a funhouse mirror. .

Architect

This song is a parody of Billionaire by Travie McCoy (featuring Bruno Mars). Enjoy!

I wanna be an architect so fricking bad
Design buildings 'til I go mad
Uh, I wanna be on the cover of Architectural Record
Smiling next to models made of chipboard

Oh I never ever close my eyes
To get any sleep at night
A different project every night oh
I swear the world better protect
Against me as an architect

Yeah I would build my own house like Wren did
It would be a home that costs my whole bank
Give Charlie a fish tank
I'd probably pull an all-nighter to design it
Even though I'll never be able to afford it
Give away a few spaces like here people live in this
And last but not least build somebody their spacial wish
It's been a couple days since I used an exacto
I don't have all my fingers but I got most though
Get it, hehe, I'd probably cut all of them off
And damn sure not be able to grab any stuff
Yeah can't afford to be stupid
I wanted to be an architect since I was a young kid

Oh I never ever close my eyes
To get any sleep at night
A different project every night oh
I swear the world better protect
Against me as an architect
Oh oooh oh oooh against me as an architect

Oh oooh oh oooh against me as an architect

I'll be drawing in walls on my drafting board

Drawing all for the client

Then I'll complain to him on his architectural requests

Toss a couple thousand away to make it the best

But keep the rooms, spaces completely separate

And yeah it'll be a whole new design agreement

We in recession but let me take a crack at it

I'll probably make whatever I feel like and build it up

So that the client can give me a couple bucks

And not a single person around me will know how sucky it is

Meeting demands with a design like this

I know we all have a similar scheme

Go in your pocket pull out a sketchbook

And draw in it and write that

I wanna be an architect so fricking bad

Design buildings til I go mad

Uh, I wanna be on the cover of Architectural Record

Smiling next to models made of chipboard

I wanna be an architect so frickin bad!

My Work

Do not be alarmed by what you see here. Yes, all of this work is real and was submitted for grading purposes. That's what makes it even more painful (and funny). I have learned from my mistakes, and to this day, I am still trying to identify some of these drawings.



Now, what do you notice here? It appears to be a crudely drawn perspective done in conté crayon (my favorite!). That was sarcasm. Conté sucks. Anyway, the weird thing is that a celebrity has appeared in the drawing. The person in front is none other than Lisa Simpson, from the popular TV show, The Simpsons. Amazing! Thank you to Lisa for taking time out of her busy schedule to make a cameo in my drawing. It was much appreciated.



Ok, your guess is as good as mine. \$5 to the first person who can tell me what the hell this is. My guess is a fat person wearing a Hawaiian grass skirt carrying a long spoon. You can send your guesses via email to cantdrawforcrap@gmail.com.

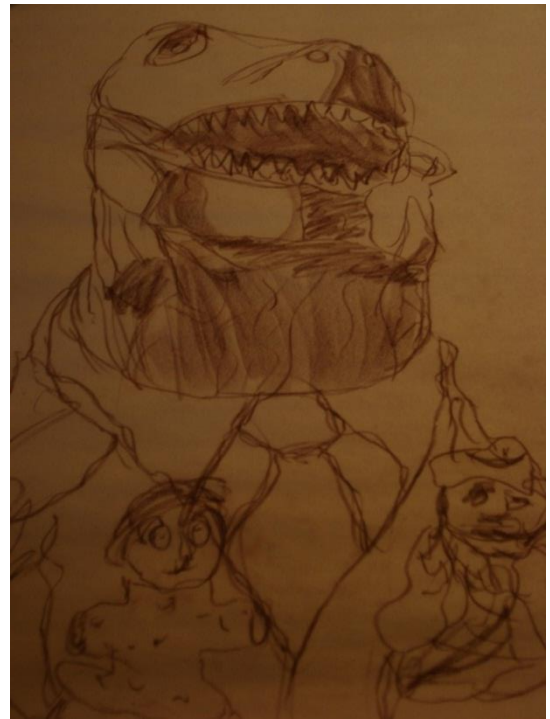
This was a tour de force (horse?) drawing, showing what I learned from the professor's lectures. Looks like I learned that hands are always misshapen and Moses had a small head and rode a horse. The horse looks happy, though, which is good. However, I don't know if the professor was happy... (he probably was).





← This is your Barney.

This is your
Barney on pot!! →
(Don't do drugs)



Does anyone have a level I can borrow? I have
to check something real quick. (This should
only take a sec.)

The first image is a paper mapping of Fred Astaire's movement through space in a segment of his dancing from the movie Puttin' on the Ritz. This actually came out ok. The professors seemed to moderately enjoy it (I might be inferring here, you know, reading between the lines).



The second image is the next step (up or down I'm not sure). I think the cardboard transformation went pretty well. You can really see the space he moves through. (Once again, this is all sarcasm.) Oddly enough, this is what it looked like before I threw it out. Go figure!



This is my head, made from folding paper, which I submitted for my Introduction to Digital Media class. Don't I look like a squirrel?



Oh no, someone stepped on it!!
Oh wait, no they didn't... ☺



Who wouldn't want to read here? It's a library tree house, but you already guessed that. There are "IKEA® shelves" on one side, stairs on which you have to duck as you get closer to the top (low clearance), and platforms with no railings. The cost of construction is low, so you can double up on life insurance.

In Conclusion

Now, what have you learned? Perhaps a better question is "Have you learned anything?" or "Have you stopped laughing yet?" If you're like me, well, then you haven't for either. But I don't know. You're not me, you're you. And I'm not you, I'm me. So we are who we are. But in all seriousness, I would like to think you learned something. Every experience should teach you something, and architecture did that for me. I have nothing but the utmost respect for anyone in the field of architecture. It takes extreme dedication and hard work. These are commendable qualities.

And I'm not saying I didn't like doing it. I am a better person because of it, and I have made some of the best friendships I will ever have (you know who you are..... you're you, not me; we already covered that). Anyway, I would like to conclude with an all-original quote.

"Architecture: can't live with it, can't live without it."