

ON ROME

Second years,

The Rome program highlights the best of what our school has to offer. It also has some issues:

1. The selection process. You will be asked for a 200 word paragraph. Nothing else. The acceptance rate is $\approx 60\%$. Nevertheless, the faculty call it a 'selective program.' As if! Who gets in seems arbitrary, but those left out will not see it that way: they will take it personally. This does not contribute to a healthy class dynamic. Nor is it productive competition. Instead, it creates arbitrary rifts in the school. I have talked to graduates five years out who still resent not getting into Rome. It is unfair.

2. The program is pretty clearly an award for finishing the second year. There are gelato breaks. The whole class goes to the beach for dinner. It's a free trip to Rome. But you get class credit for going. There is real work involved, but those left out have no alternative way of getting that credit over the summer. If you are not chosen, you have to take more courses. Also not fair.

3. The program is not sure of its *raison d'être*. Is the course mainly about representation? Or technique? Or intense precedent study? Or analysis? Must all 30 go together? Should there be a cultural immersion component?

At one point I asked why the program is limited to 30 students, and a faculty told me they think 30 is the perfect number.

It is not: both too small because it does not include everyone, and much too large because 30 is a lousy number for traveling, touring, having a conversation.

Ever tried snagging a table for 30?

Another conversation revealed that they might soon increase the number, because Mr. Bass is considering a new donation. Again, the course is phenomenal, with virtues that I need not list. Since its humble inception have built it into a fundamental part of the program here, but it can be better. This year, as George Knight takes the reigns from the programs' founders, we have a real opportunity to improve it.

So two suggestions:

1. Petition the school to make selection by lottery. That removes most grounds for resentment, and makes going on the course what it always has been: arbitrary. This reform could be implemented tomorrow.

2. Request an open, constructive, critique: invite the new team to sit down, ask them to articulate the objectives for the course, participate with other students to propose new ideas, and work with the faculty to identify how to achieve them. Constructive feedback is a good thing.

This is not my fight. It could be yours. It is somewhat pressing: they are going to ask for those paragraphs any day now, at which point your class will have a harder time acting cohesively. And hey, maybe you can convince Mr. Bass to go ahead and make the donation.

Nicolas Kemper M.Arch '16

PAPRIKA!

Bulletin, November 19, 2015

Issue Editor: Jacqueline Hall

CEs: Nicolas Kemper & Andy Sternad

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ADVOCATE FOR THE KICKSTARTER

We are launching the kickstarter today.

We are asking for \$15,000. All the money will be for Paprika! in 2016—it will be for the first and second years. More than finally establishing a budget outside the purview of the school, more than funding twenty more issues of Paprika!, having financial independence will give us a fighting chance to hold our institutions to account, elevate student pieces and voices, and mobilize to fundamentally alter the culture of our school and profession, making both more transparent, horizontal, and student driven.

We need everyone as an advocate if we are to succeed.

Forward the link, post the link, if you can find ten friends who can pitch in just \$10, **then we will have \$15,000 in a day.** Let's do that.

STUDENT TOWN HALL

Thursday,
November 19
6:15 pm
Drawing Studio

“SHE DESTROYED HIM”

Last Monday, November 9, the Fall 2015 session of the Ph.D. Dialogues series brought George Baird and Peter Eisenman together in conversation. During this forum, some comments were made that we would like to bring to the attention of the YSOA community because they are emblematic of broader, longstanding issues about gender and its representations at the school.

The comment, highlighted in bold, and its immediate context are provided below.

On the opposite page, four members of Equality in Design respond.



Peter Eisenman: Let me ask you a question because you raise something; wouldn't you say there's an enormous difference between "Complexity and Contradiction" and "Learning From Las Vegas"?

George Baird: (loud noise)

Peter Eisenman: No?

Kurt Forster: (laughing) You said it!

George Baird: Well, of course. It's a rather large gathering in which to say so (additional words mumbled) and I know I'm not the only one that thinks it—and that is, while I understand that their marriage is perfectly compatible, and she's looking after him wonderfully—but the terrible truth is that Denise's sociology was unassimilable to Robert's formal project and she destroyed him. It's as simple as that.

Peter Eisenman: Well I...

George Baird: (interrupting Peter Eisenman) ...you know I don't think she meant to...

Robert Stern: (interrupting George Baird) No... I'm not sure about that. As someone who watched from close range. It was the "who's afraid of Virginia Woolf" period, remember?

George Baird: but but but...

Alan Plattus: Well, I think the key kind of pursuit is one that you always repeated of Colin's to the point where I probably came to believe, I'm sure that Randall and other people heard it as well, is that he preferred looking at painting than architecture.

That for him [Colin] the illusion was more interesting than...and one sees that.

Regardless of the validity of Baird's claim, the way in which the comment was phrased highlights the differing attitudes and reactions towards men and women in architectural discussions. The work, pedagogies, and ideologies of many influential male scholars and practitioners were critiqued and criticized that night, but none in the personal way that Denise Scott Brown's contributions were. Often our discussions of gender at YSOA revolve around the inclusion/exclusion and treatment of women in academic and professional spheres. But the comments above highlight that we must take issue with not only what is said to women, but about them. **Preeti Talwai, MED '16**

In characterizing her first and foremost as a wife, Baird's statement about Scott-Brown overlooked her role as an equal partner in Venturi Scott Brown and undermined her professional contributions as an architect and scholar in her own right. In saying so, the only agency that Baird ascribed to Scott-Brown in their partnership was in its alleged destruction. This is not an isolated event. Baird's statement is a powerful example of the unequal ways that we discuss the architectural accomplishments of men and women. It is suspect that in this equal partnership, the fault of any perceived pitfalls fell along gender lines. It is this same flawed logic that failed to include Denise Scott Brown when Bob Venturi was awarded the Pritzker Prize. The Pritzker Prize exclusion and Baird's comments are symptomatic of a broader professional climate that consistently fails to fairly recognize the contributions of women in the design disciplines. The outdated and sexist nature of such comments cannot be overlooked. At YSOA, we often fail to question the information we receive from our predominantly white male faculty. The responsibility is on all of us—not simply those speaking—to hold ourselves to a higher standard. **Cat Garcia-Mencocal, M.Arch '17 & Jacqueline Hall, M.Arch, M.E.M. '18**

There is another point to be made about the fact that many of the participants at this dialogue were also sitting at the table in the late sixties when the exact same conversation was unfolding. In other words, the gender trouble surrounding the authors of Learning from Las Vegas goes back almost as far as these halls. The book was the culmination of a famous Yale studio (1968). Dean Stern is acknowledged in Complexity and Contradiction. He also famously walked out of the final review for Scott Brown's "Learning from Levittown" studio at Yale. Peter Eisenman's IAUS published Scott Brown's "Learning from Pop Art" in a special issue of Casabella. Denise later wrote "View from the Top" chronicling some of the gender trouble and then went further with "Hanging Words: Denise Scott Brown," a series of essays critical of the state of practice. While Baird's statement may have seemed admissible forty-five years ago—and it wasn't—more recent events across Yale underscore that these 'slips of the tongue' are even more caustic today. His choice of the word "destroy" and the conflation of their professional and personal partnerships are glaringly out of sync both with the discourse established for Scott Brown's work and with a new sensitivity being debated on campus now. **Anonymous**