# Thinking Through Image

Research by Design
Lecture Series

Zoom Lectures
Zoom meeting links will be sent closer to the dates

NUS Research by Design proudly presents *Thinking Through Image* – an exciting new lecture series examining the enigmatic practices of representation and making in the age of the digital image. Join us as we deconstruct and deliberate on images as a mode of thought, drawing speculations from past, present and future architectures.

Conceptual Models of Space | Time
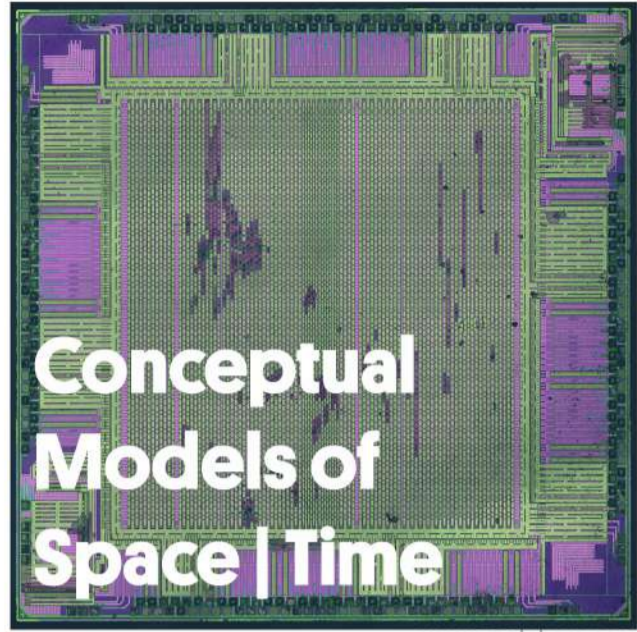
3-Part Series

The series is a tryptic working at different scales to expose a delicate knot: in what sense technology predefines the "model" — epistemological, aesthetic, ontological — in which we happen to be situated and designing? The three lectures march through a speculative history of abstraction/ re-presentation uncovering the intrinsic "model" and its transmutation —or in other words, how the meta-historical, collective conceptualisation of "space | time" has morphed altering our cognitive capacities of modelling the "world", of projecting novel world-views into the future, thus altering the very sense we give to the word "world".

Part 1
18.09.20'   6.30pm
Part 2
**23.09.20'**   6.30pm
Part 3
25.09.20'   6.30pm

Federico Ruberto

Federico Ruberto is a writer and architect working between philosophy and design. He holds a PhD in "Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought", a research that focused on the concept of "contingency" in formal/natural languages. He is co-founder/partner of formAxioms, a Singapore-based research laboratory for speculative narratives and virtual-realities, and reMIX Studio, an architectural office in Beijing. His investigations, presented at symposiums and through publications, look at contemporaneity inquiring the potentials/problematics of the current computational paradigm, scrutinising the hyper, multi-scalar processes that exponentially virtualise the "self", the world(s), and language.
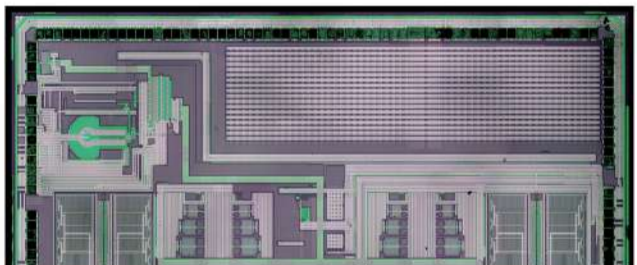

John May

John May is founding partner, with Zeina Koreitem, of MILLIØNS, a Los Angeles-based design practice, and Assistant Professor of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. May previously taught at MIT, UCL and SCI-Arc and in 2012 was named National Endowment for the Humanities Visiting Professor in Architecture at Rice University. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Visual Art from the College of William and Mary, a Master of Architecture (AP) with Distinction from Harvard GSD, and a doctorate in Geography and Environmental Studies from UCLA. Most recently, MILLIØNS was selected as the winner of an international competition to reimagine the west wing of I.M. Pei's Everson Musum, in Syracuse, NY.

A Conversation With John May

SIG-NAL. IMAGE. ARCH-ITI:-TURE.

JOHN MAY
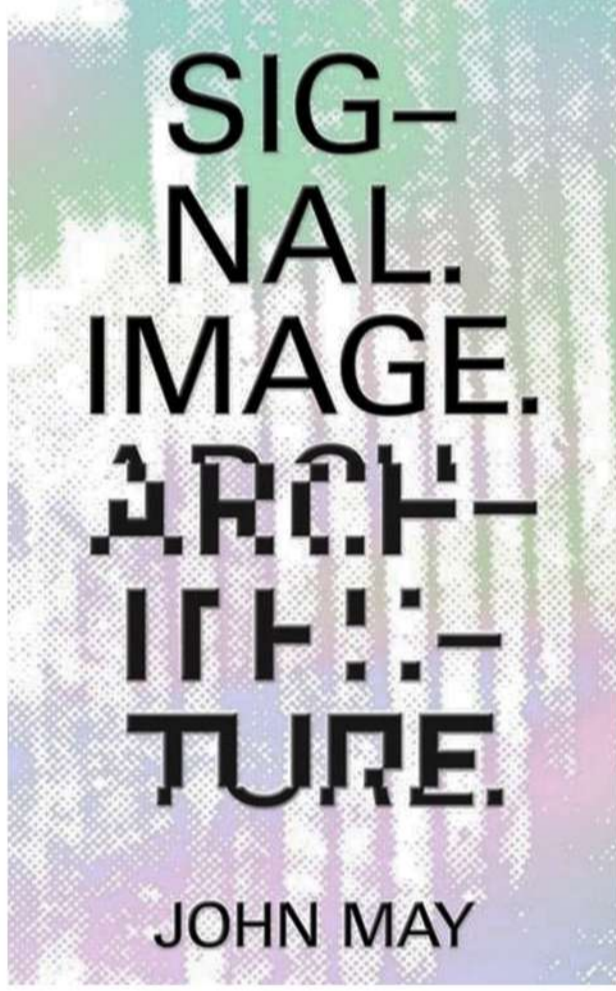
30.09.20'   7.30pm

Situated at the intersection of philosophy, technology, and the politics of environmentalism, May's writings aim at a continual articulation of the conditions surrounding the contemporary design fields. His most recent book, Signal. Image. Architecture (Columbia, 2019) contemplates the psychosocial effects of transmissible electronic images, and their consequences for architecture and urbanism. Design Technics: Archaeologies of Architectural Practice (Minnesota, 2019) explores the philosophical, historical, and political dimensions of contemporary design technologies.

Material Matters

09.10.20'   7.30pm

Material Matters explores expanded sites of architectural production, and the methods of diagnosing political and ecological externalities embodied within our cities, buildings, and material supply chains. Focusing on Drawing Agency's research and design projects in Myanmar, Singapore, and the United States — and the drawing machines, geospatial datasets, and models produced to explore them — Material Matters proposes new methods of understanding architecture's impact on the world, and how these embodied costs are communicated to architects and the public alike.
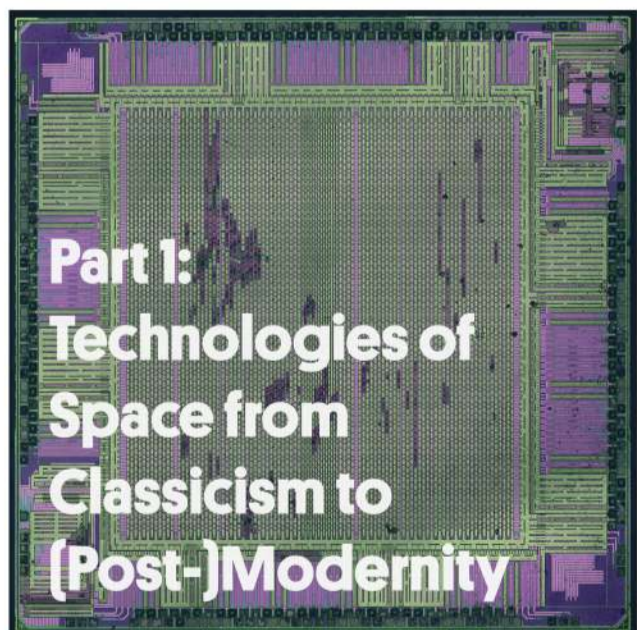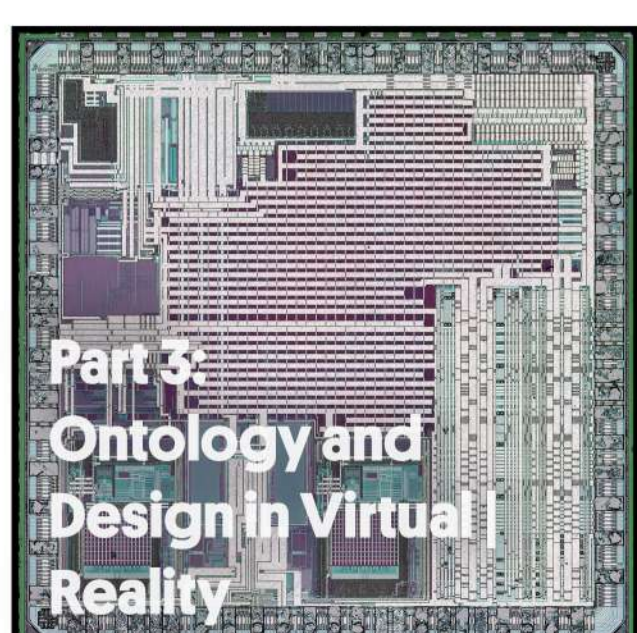
Galen Pardee

Galen Pardee is a designer, educator, and researcher; currently the LeFevre Emerging Practitioner Fellow at The Ohio State University. He received his BA from Brandeis University and an MArch from Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP). Galen has taught at Columbia University and Ohio State, and designed projects in New York City and California. His studio Drawing Agency explores dimensions of architectural advocacy, material economy, and expanded practice. His research projects have been funded by The Ohio State University, Columbia University GSAPP, and the Graham Foundation; and published in the Avery Review and FAKTUR, among others.

Additional Information   ☰

Part 1: Technologies of Space from Classicism to (Post-)Modernity

Conceptual Models of Space | Time

The first part begins from the Classics' spatial quandaries, focusing on diverse processes/devices of abstraction and briefly peeking at geometrical-logical developments, it ends reaching Postmodernism's attempts at deconstructing space-language. Selected historical thresholds at which thought radically transformed are outlined in order to expose how alternative visions of space emerged mutating the very sense of reality, opening art-design to novel forms of experimentation.

The second part starts right after Postmodernity. It wanders at the foundation of computational thinking, asking a seemingly simple question: what is "continuous" and what is "discrete"? It looks at "architecture" qua processes of formation and patterns emerging iteratively and stochastically via the construction "games". It turns around the "digital" paradigm, focusing mostly on the last 30 years of history and different concepts/scales of "nature". Notions such as "emergence", "control" and "contingency" are examined. Examples of analog and digital projects either leaning towards discrete, mereological solutions, or continuously differentiating, smooth surfaces are shown.

Part 2: Tectonic Games (of the Digital): Parts / Wholes - Relations

The third part departs from a wide question: what is "real"? What constitutes collective reality in a contemporaneity modelled by generative algorithms, in which our epistemological framework is constantly processed/formatted by machine learning models? What is to design experiences and spaces in such contemporaneity, one in which the "subject" —the subject of design and the subject that designs— is a spectral presence caught by modes of digitalisation, or better said, its being is reformatted in real-time, displaced onto hybrid fields, morphed into physical-virtual concretions? The aim underlying the lecture is to reveal the ethical necessity of holding things together by processes of narration and creative story-telling, via an ethical renewal of fiction.

Part 3: Ontology and Design in Virtual | Reality

by Federico Ruberto
Images courtesy of www.zeptobars.com

Materials & Sources
for *A Conversation With John May*

Read and watch these to engage in conversation with Dr. May in this open Q&A session, moderated by Dr. Joshua Comaroff!

Lectures

Newish Media: A Conversation with Lucia Allais and John May
https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/ catherine-ingraham-newish-media/

Virtual Public Lecture: John May, "Rules for the Electronic Zoo"
https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/ virtual-public-lecture-john-may-rule s-for-the-electronic-zoo/

Texts

Signal. Image. Architecture
https://www.arch.columbia.edu/books/ reader/448-signal-image-architecture

Everything is Already an Image
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/ 579fef6903596ed4bfa1eb90/t/597a30b a8419c206392318b5/1501180118492/ JMay_Log40.pdf

Life, Autocompleted
http://www.harvardesignmagazine. com/issues/46/life-autocompleted

Recognize or Deny, "Everything is Already an Image": A Conversation with John May
https://yalepaprika.com/articles/recognize -or-deny-everything-is-already-and-image -a-conversation-with-john-may/