

# Narrative Processes in Architectural Design

temsil  
anlatı  
öznellik  
zamansallık  
mekansallık  
**representation**  
**narrative**  
**subjectivity**  
**temporality**  
**spatiality**

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Bu makale, dört kişi olarak çeşitli üniversitelerin mimarlık bölümlerinde verdiğimiz Mimari Tasarımda Anlatısal Süreçler isimli seçmeli dersin pedagojik amaçlarını ve içeriğini ele alır. Böyle bir dersin varlığına ihtiyaç duyulduğuna dair gözlem ve görüşlerimiz mimari tasarımın eğitim ve pratiğine dair güncel bir kritik bakışa dayanıyor. Bu kritik bakış, temsil pratiklerinin mimari tasarımdaki rolünün ve onların kullanım biçimlerinin sorgulanması ile ilişkili. Mimarlık tarihinde son birkaç yüzyılda egemen olmuş ideolojilerin en önemli sonuçlarından biri disiplinin nesne odaklı bir düşünce ve pratiğe dönüşmesine sebep olmalarıdır. Nesne odaklı bir pratik, ölçülemez olan hisler, deneyimler, atmosfer gibi fenomenler yerine, ölçülebilir olan boyutlar, geometriler, malzemeler ile ilgilenmeyi tercih eder. Mimari tasarımda temsilin rolü açısından kritik bakışımız bu çerçeveden şekillenmektedir ve dersimiz bu duruma eleştirel bir bakış üzerine kurulmuştur. Bu anlamda dersin kurgusu, gündelik anlatıları temsil aracılığı ile mimari pratiklere yeniden dahil etmeyi önemser. Dersin bu meseleye yaklaşımı, üç ana eksen üzerinden şekillenmektedir; öznellik, zamansallık ve mekansallık. Ders, modüller halinde tasarlanmış ve her modül bu üç eksen ile çeşitli şekillerde ilişkilendirilmiştir. Özneye has deneyim ve hislerin silikleşmesine karşın dersin hedeflerinden biri olan öznellik, bunları düşünce ve üretime yeniden dahil etmektedir. Mekana nesne değil olay aracılığı ile bakmak ya da dahil olmak, eksenlerden bir diğeri olan zamansallık açısından da önemlidir. Zamansallık, ders kapsamında iki şekilde ele alınmıştır; parçalı ve lineer. Parçalı zamansallıkta zamansal akış içerisinde alınan kesitlerin birbirleri ile anlamlı bir ilişki içerisinde olması beklenmezken, lineer zamansallıkta ardışık, anlamlı bir olay örgüsü hedeflenir. Dersin kurucu eksenlerinden üçüncüsü olan mekansallık ise iki ana yaklaşım ile ele alınmıştır; tabula rasa ve mevcut olana eklenme. Bu tavırların her ikisi de öznenin kendini var etmesi için farklı olanaklar sunar. Geliştirdiğimiz pedagojik yaklaşımlarla ders, bu üç eksen üzerinden gündelik anlatıları temsil aracılığıyla yeniden mimarlığın gündemine getirir.

This article focuses on the pedagogical approaches to representation in architecture through an elective course titled Narrative Processes in Architectural Design, which we instruct as four lecturers in the architecture departments of various universities. Our observations and thoughts on the need for such a course are based on contemporary critiques of the education and practice of architectural design. The critical vision we have adopted questions the role of representational practices in architectural design and their uses. One of the most significant results of the rooted paradigm in the history of architecture is that the discipline has turned into object-oriented thinking and practice, which includes measurable dimensions, geometries, and materials, rather than immeasurable phenomena such as feelings, experiences and atmosphere.

Our critical vision for the role of representation in architectural design, which forms our course, aims at reintegrating everyday narratives into architectural practices through representation. Approaches of the course include three main themes; subjectivity, temporality and spatiality. The course is designed in modules, and each module relates to these three themes in distinct ways. Despite the ambiguity of subjective experiences and feelings, the course aims to reintegrate them into thinking and production. We discuss temporal constructions in two ways within the scope of the course; fragmented and linear. While addressing the theme of spatiality, another theme of the course, two main approaches are emphasized; tabula rasa and responding to the existing. Both of these approaches offer distinct possibilities for architectural practice. Our pedagogical reflection and methodology bring daily narratives back to architecture's agenda by engaging these three themes with aspects of representation.

## INTRODUCTION

In his distinguished book, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Bernard Tschumi (1994) explains a set of concepts he uses for realizing his remarkable studies about New York City in the chapter titled *Illustrated Index: Themes from the Manhattan Transcripts*. Among various concepts such as notation, articulation and sensation, he also includes the concept “narrative” and defines it by asking, “Is there such a thing as an architectural narrative?”. One of the early architectural theorists to consider the relationship of architecture and narrative, Tschumi seeks the answer by stating, “A narrative not only presupposes a sequence but also a language. As we all know, the ‘language’ of architecture, the architecture ‘that speaks,’ is a controversial matter.” Following this, he asks another question: “If such architectural narrative corresponds to the narrative of literature, would space intersect with signs to give us a *discourse*?” He argues that “Spaces are qualified by actions just as actions are qualified by spaces. One does not trigger the other; they exist independently. Only when they intersect do they affect one another”. He suggests that “movement, object and event become fully interchangeable, whereby people are walls, walls dance the tango, and tangos run for office”. This speculative and relatively early argument encouraged us to think back to the question of why narrative matters in architectural design.

Thinking along with the questions of Tschumi and ideas of other theorists who focus on narrative and architecture, we have been discussing the potential advantages of narrative making in architectural design and, more specifically, in architectural education. Since the distant past, architects have been using certain representation styles and techniques to communicate with other people involved in building,

such as constructors, patrons, and users. The curriculum of almost every undergraduate architecture program includes visual communication and representation classes at the very early stage of their education that usually aims to teach certain architectural drawing conventions such as plan, section and perspective. Even though these representation styles are fundamental for students to learn in representing the built environment, we find a lack of defining temporality and subjectivity when considering students’ works. We think including narrative into representation is not only vital to present the honest intentions of the design, but it also helps each student to uncover their subjective side. Inspired by Tschumi’s words, *action, movement and event*, we aimed also to think deeper about the concept of process. Similar to that approach, Tschumi’s concept of language meant to us the presence of subjectivity in the representation instead of an anonymous and homogeneous style. Considering these particular issues in representation, we designed the course titled *Narrative Processes in Architectural Design* to explore the role of “the narrator” in architectural education.

This article first looks into the historical background of narrative in architectural practice and the emergence of narrative discussions in academic circles by providing prominent examples. Then, we give insights about the course we designed and have been teaching in different universities since 2016. Engaging with distinct aims, we detail some approaches of the course that we find useful in an architectural representation, such as subjectivity, temporality and spatiality when producing a narrative. In the last instance, we argue that narrative strengthens the relationship between thinking and visualization, and therefore

it represents the process in architectural design by employing subjective new approaches.

## Narrative in Architecture: A Brief Historical Background

There were several radical thresholds in history when architectural practice depended on representation and, in narrative more than ever. The production of narrative in architectural practice throughout history affected how architects design and became the main focus of the practice from time to time. Especially starting from the 1960s, several architects and practices, such as Hans Hollein, Constant Nieuwenhuys, Cedric Price, Archigram and Superstudio represented their projects by producing unique narratives and demonstrated that architecture is not only an act of construction with physical elements but also a practice that can be produced on paper with narratives.

For example, Hans Hollein, with the provocative idea of ‘everything is architecture’, placed abandoned aircraft carriers from World War II in landscapes in his photomontage narratives. Driven by a politicized approach, he made a claim for using narrative in architecture in his project *Aircraft Carrier City* (1964). Constant proposed a new form of urbanism with his project *New Babylon* (1974). He produced hundreds of models and drawings and expressed his narrative culturally, sexually and politically liberated. Archigram explored the possibilities of metropolitan dynamics through temporary events, mega-structures and new forms of technology. When proposing new ways of living, such as in their projects called *Plug-in City* (1964), *Walking City* (1964) and *Instant City* (1968), the Archigram made narratives with temporal elements such as the display of moving cranes and floating balloons. Last, but not least, Superstudio imagined a new world order without the need

for urban features such as roads or squares. When proposing an endless mega-structure called Supersurface (1969), the team narrated various nomadic new ways of living by adding close-up images of people who made their way of habitation on the surface. These architects and teams experimented with new modes of representing architecture when they provocatively made and narrated new worlds.

Although the aforementioned architects used narrative significantly in their projects since the 60s, the theorization of narrative in architectural design and the use of the concept "narrative" has been discussed only after the 80s in academic circles. Architects like Bernard Tschumi embraced the concept to explain the theoretical framework of their projects which were works that were mainly displayed in an exhibition or a book. Other than these architects, several researchers drew upon conceptual analysis of the narrative production. For instance, Nigel Coates' (2012) *Narrative Architecture*, Sophia Psarra's (2009) *Architecture and Narrative: The Formation of Space and Cultural Meaning*, and Sylvain De Bleckere and Sevastiaan Gerards' (2017) *Narrative Architecture: A Designer's Story*, all focus on the question of narrative in architecture.

Some of these works include theoretical and historical discussions of narrative making in architecture, and some have interdisciplinary links with other fields such as literature, film making and computing. For instance, Coates (2012) looked for how narrative helps to analyse the built environment. He states that every building has a self-narrative from the beginning of its construction to its destruction. The spatial narratives that we produce consciously or unconsciously help us relate to physical spaces every day. Bleckere and Gerards (2017) frame the question of

narrative by drawing a long-term historical perspective. By relying on Lyotard's (1984) critique of meta-narratives, the authors bring Husserl's (1970) phenomenological idea of narrative to the surface. Husserl's idea of the phenomenological way that connect humans with the things around them inspired the authors to think about narrative in architecture. They state that by using narrative, architectural design becomes no longer timeless and spaceless as are meta-narratives. Psarra (2009) criticizes the lack of temporal experience in conventional architectural images. By including narrative, the author argues that not only the built environment becomes less abstract but also the architect's design process becomes visible. Therefore, architects who include narrative in their design process demonstrate the potential of buildings to be more open to human experience. These discussions helped us to frame the theoretical perspective of our course and the importance of narrative production in architectural design. Remembering another assertion of Tschumi (1976), "There is no architecture without action, no architecture without event, no architecture without program", we find it critical to deal with narrative processes in architectural education.

## A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO THE REPRESENTATION IN ARCHITECTURE

The *Narrative Processes in Architectural Design* is an elective course that has been taught at MEF University, Kadir Has University and Istinye University by various combinations of four lecturers. Groups are composed of between 10 and 25 participants varying from second-year students to seniors. It is designed as an applied course based on

representational techniques and narrative making. The course focuses on developing the "narrator" character of an architect. Regarding this approach, participants are encouraged to utilize communication tools according to their personal interests and skills to generate new ideas rather than simply preparing presentation materials for their school projects. During the course, students design visual processes and experience multiple modes of media that vary from analog to digital ones.

In order to explore the wide variety of tools, techniques and media, we designed the course on the basis of different modules. At most, four modules, concentrating on distinct tasks, were developed in an academic term.

Throughout the lifetime of the course, new modules have been designed and combined with this premises. Free-hand drawings, perspective drawings, collages, diagrams, videos, cross-sectional drawings, and data visualizations are some of the primary techniques that students practice in the course. We often support the modules with presentations of relevant tasks and weekly reviews of on-going works. Then, we exhibit every module's outcomes for the purpose of motivation of the studio environment.

All the course modules are based on three major themes; subjectivity, temporality and spatiality. This section follows these approaches and looks into the connections between them. We believe these three themes always intersect each other, since a narrative depends on a specific time and space in which various events take place. Compared to the constructive aspect of architecture, the experience of space and time becomes more significant than ever in any architectural narrative. And the term, "experience" is always articulated from a particular bodily position which

we call subjectivity. This theme invites students to regain their subjective vision and at the same time bring empirical effects into the realm of architectural representation. Firstly, we follow and detail subjectivity and give a short account of the historical process of its emergence as a phenomenon. Then, we discuss the concepts of temporality and spatiality and exemplify various modules under the relevant topics.

## SUBJECTIVITY

With the impacts of the intellectual thinking of the Renaissance era, individuality emerged as a new idea. But much later, positivism and rationalism (reason) became ideologies that shook the position of the sacred, and individuality opposed the sublime position of God. However, soon the Cartesian paradigm taught that people would not trust their senses and the idea of the 'eye of the rational mind' arose. Thus, people no longer could trust their senses and the idea of positivism constructed its own authority different from the religious sacred that it replaced. Descartes' ideas promoting the actual separation of intertwined and complex phenomena, such as mind-body, self-other, and time-space, had a significant role in this process. The most prominent idea of the new age of reason that emerged as a result of this intellectual history was the reification of the 'quantifiable'. We have long lived in a world where the quantifiable is considered superior to the intangible. For the sake of quantifiable, the intangible was ignored, excluded from everyday life, and trivialized. This idea has been beneficial for capitalist dynamics because quantifiability is an instrumental concept for commodification.

### Quantifiable (Tangible) / Immeasurable (Intangible)

Perceiving quantifiability as

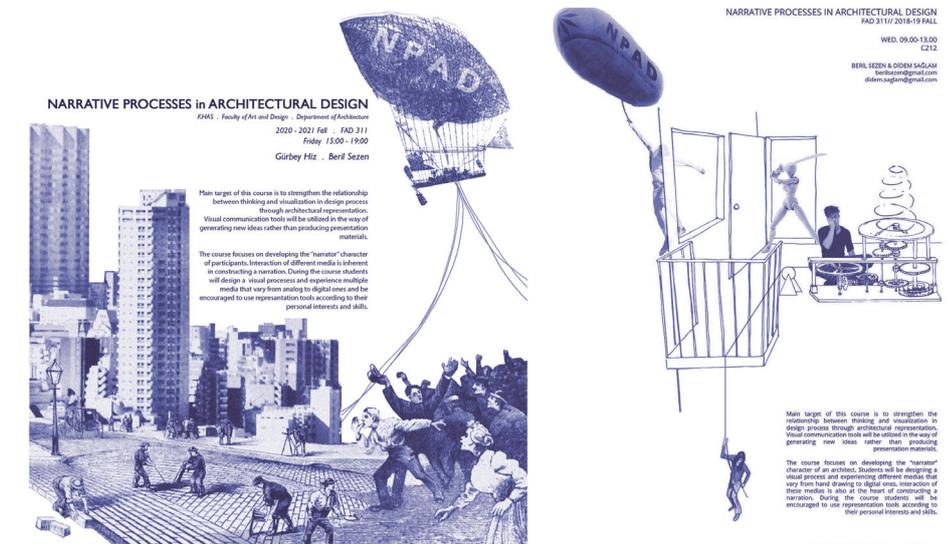


Fig. 1 - Course Posters.

an indisputable reality is one of the situations that defines the problem. For instance, if the length of a table is 150 cm, it is 150 cm for everyone. But we often forget that this perception is actually fictional. For the sake of this ideological system to keep working, we must forget the fictionality of our perception and believe it truly. To explain the opposite of this perception, for instance, when one tries to measure the length of an indented coastline, the following problem often emerges: the length of the coastline would constantly change, the detail of the indentations increase and decrease as one approaches and moves away from the coastline. In addition, boundaries that seem perfectly clear from a distance would become blurred as we approach. So how can the boundary of the coastline be identified and what would be its length? Therefore, measurability is an ideological construct that is functional only within a certain framework accepted by everyone.

Being measurable requires that everyone who looks at any object perceives the 'same' thing. There is no space for scattering, distraction or different readings in the system of measurability. Of course, such perception is possible with a certain functional system that would cover, shut out and

trivialize different ways of seeing and personal uniqueness. On the other hand, for sure, we need measurability. We would not be able to survive in a world without this concept. However, our critical problem today is the superiority of measurability over the immeasurable. One of the most important results of this situation in the context of representation has been the transformation of the representation tools from experiential tools to controlling ones.

The superiority of the measurable over the immeasurable is directly related to what is worthy of representation and what is not, and how it would be represented in a space. This situation determines whether any architect deals with qualitative features of the space such as its atmosphere, emotion, smell and experience or quantitative features of it such as its dimensions, geometry, form and material. Between these two opposite ideologies, both the value of any subject's experience and the means of representation being used and the way they are being used would be completely different.

The hegemony of measurability has caused objectivity to take center stage in architecture, leaving the experiences and feelings in the background.

However, subjectivity, which we cannot separate from feelings and experiences, can be described with the immeasurable rather than the measurable.

### Engaging with Digital and Analog Tools

The emergence of digital tools in the production of representation, especially since the 90s, provided great excitement and enthusiasm. However, we have witnessed that these new tools were perceived and presented as tools that would replace the old tools and improve their 'dysfunctionality' by performing faster and better rather than adding new possibilities to the existing tools.

This belief has not been widely questioned or embraced during the initial 10-20 years of the progression of digital tools. However, today, we can see more clearly that the way these tools are being used and our expectations from them, remove us from various capabilities that we had before, in spite of the advantages such as the speed they provide. One of the problematic issues of digital representation tools is the very limited relationship with the body. Today, this relationship has started to be improved with digital pens, glasses and sensors that detect body movement. Another issue is that digital tools often work predictably and are designed to perform in a way that is free of ambiguity. All these criticisms do not mean that digital tools cannot be used in different ways.



Fig. 2 – Students working on a daily exercise.

However, it would be appropriate to question why and how these tools produced the culture that will transform representation tools into discipline tools.

Thinking with these critical issues on subjectivity and the role of tools, our course aims to use both digital and analog tools without separating them from each other. Thus, we propose to mix these two tools to include the engaged bodily understanding and ambiguity that analog tools offer.

### Representing Subjective Experiences: Visual Diary

Visual Diary is one of the



modules of the course that continues in the background in addition to other works of the course. (Fig. 3-4). The module's task is to visualize each students' situation and environment at 9 pm sharply and produce at least ten narratives in three weeks. One of the characteristics of this module is that it inevitably includes the subject in the fact of it being a diary. The module aims to place the subject's point of view, experiences, feelings and memories at the center of the representation. Another characteristic of this module is constructing the narrative of space with the event, allowing the subject to think about the space through temporality.

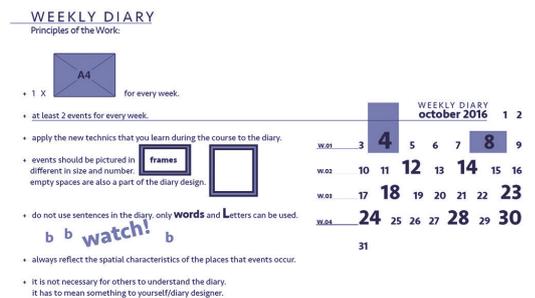


Fig. 3 – Flyers of the module titled Visual Diary.

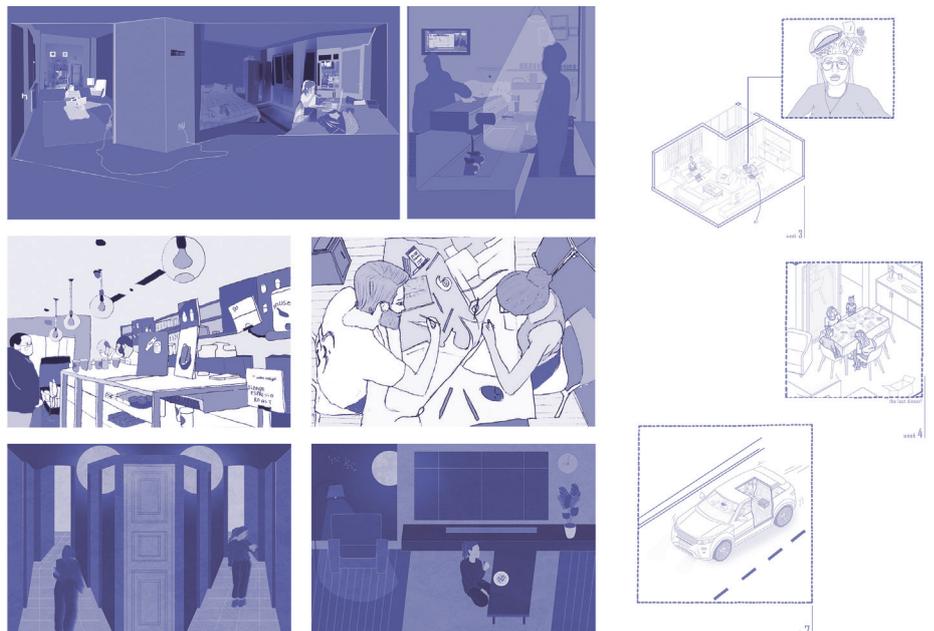


Fig. 4 – Student works of Visual Diary (Cansu Erdem, Ceyda Pektaş, Dilan Elif Korkmaz, Sinem Öngül).

We find this approach very important for any architecture student where the object-oriented perception of space is prevalent. We have seen that all this is reflected in the forms of representation and that digital and analog tools can be used by customizing them.

## TEMPORALITY

We think it is essential to discuss the time and space perspective that we see directly related to the subjectivity issue and how we embrace it in the modules of the course. Time and space are critical concepts in architectural theory that cannot be separated from each other. When time and space are considered separately, space turns into an object. Perceiving the space in an object-like way disrupts the palpability of feelings, experiences, events and their effects on the space. This misguided representation of the space lacks the perception of subjectivity for both comprehending and imagining space. We argue that an image (object) becomes imaginative when it is thought and constructed with time, difference and movement. Therefore, we find temporality critical for narrating not only the built environment around us but also how we perceive it with our emotions. One of the primary tasks of architecture is the production of space to be inhabited by events, people and time. In architectural education, imagining space with temporal effects helps students to gain the idea that it is a process rather than that architecture is an object.

This section focuses on temporal constructions of narrative by detailing two different conceptions of time and space. We exemplify two modules of the course named *Visual Diary* and *Post-Catastrophic Stories*. *Visual Diary* provides the instantaneousness of time construction, whereas *Post-Catastrophic Stories*

presents the space constructed by chronological time with measurable effects.

### Fragmented Temporality: Visual Diary

The module of *Visual Diary* aims for students to practice visual thinking and visual note-taking in their habitual everyday life. Its importance in the question of the temporal-spatial dichotomy relates to performing the narration at the same time each day. We asked them to keep a diary of their actions and where they were, plotting details that were distantly or closely related to that moment or space. (Fig. 4-5)

Everyday life has become critical for architectural theory, especially since the 1960s. The rigid temporality of the workers' working hours and leisure time eventually changed its form after World War II. Thereafter, spaces like streets, where mundane everyday life took place and stimulated possibilities, chances, encounters, and randomness have become an issue for modernist minds. Since then, we argue that the discipline of architecture, both as a profession and in terms of education, has paid attention to

any space where there are events, people, and activities that occupy time.

Around discussions on mundane life, narrative becomes a mediator to keep time and space together while representing everyday activities. Even the days that we often assume to be much the same and ordinary, but any single moment is connected to other moments and details that we are unaware of, and overlaps with all other times. The works of the *Visual Diary* between 2017 and 2020 narrated different venues. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic and several lockdowns, students narrated the different moments in the same place, in their room at 9 pm. The module encouraged students to narrate the qualitative characteristics of the space, such as atmosphere, emotion, smell, and light.

Although single frames of each students' diary contain overlapping times and places, diaries do not attempt to narrate linear stories. They allow other people to read them freely because of their characteristic of being fragmented, independent works.



Fig. 5 – Student work of Visual Diary (Tuğba Erkutlu).

The outcomes of this module are often very subjective because they are biographical studies. However, another essential reason why they are subjective is the construction of diaries' temporality, as Bergson puts it; "the only subjectivity is time, non-chronological time grasped in its foundation, and it is we who are internal to time, not the other way round" (Deleuze, 2001). Hereby, diaries become a representation of how we inhabit time. The movement in them is affected and subjective. In his book *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze (2001, 83) explains time through subjectivity and affection as: "Subjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual. The actual is always objective, but the virtual is subjective: it was initially the

affect, that which we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affector and affected, the affection of self by self as definition of time."

### Linear Temporality: Post-Catastrophic Stories

*Post-Catastrophic Stories* is a module in the course in which the construction of time emerges by manipulating the image and its spatial elements. The moment of an 'event' fictionalized in the image establishes a narrative by producing sequences of its before and after temporality. The task requires students to use a given photographic image and convert its temporality into five different images. The interval between the

scenes differs according to the plot of the story of each students' imagination. In some narratives, there are only seconds between two scenes, and in others, there are years. The essential thing is that the passage of time needs to be visualized in the image's spatiality.

*Post-Catastrophic Stories* is a module in which collage is used as the featured representation technique. Unlike using digital tools, analog production of collages brings along new discoveries and solutions. Students usually have digital collections of images that they can easily scale and adapt while making colleges. Instead of using ready-made figure printouts, when students make hands-on

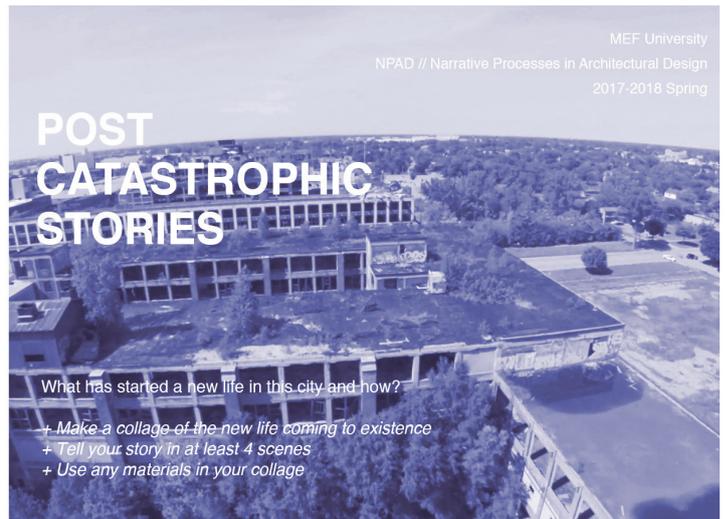
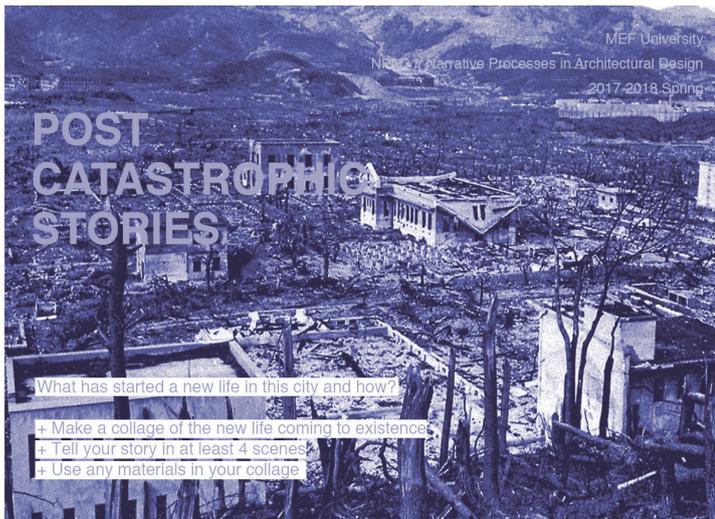


Fig. 6 – Flyers of the module titled Post-Catastrophic Stories.



Fig. 7 – Exhibition of the works of Post-Catastrophic Stories.

collages, the image and its spatial elements transform unexpectedly. Analog collage is helpful to include the atmosphere and feeling of the space as a unique experience with the use of different materials and textures. By employing collage technique, the works in which each student explores his/her own method become subjective. (Fig. 6,7,8).

Building stories and rethinking space and events with the theme of temporality offer a mode of world-building experience. Their works represent both the qualitative effects of time in that world reflected in the spatial changes, and the measurable time in terms of quantity since the scenes should be arranged chronologically so that the viewer can follow the flow of the story. The students narrate the worlds they build as an outsider. We have observed that this module requires a timeless meta-narrative, unlike the narration in the module of *Visual Diary*.

We consider both approaches of constructing temporality are essential in the course. *Visual Diary* is a module where students zoom in time and space and search for moments in detail, while *Post-Catastrophic Stories* is a module in which students change the scale of time by zooming out in time.



Fig. 8 – Studio time, discussion and exhibition.

## SPATIALITY

In this section, in which we describe the theme of spatiality in narrative production, two distinct approaches are taken. We use the term *Tabula Rasa* also known as *Blank Slate*, the well-known theory of John Locke (1979), to distinguish works starting on a blank page from ones responding to a given image. The reason we conceptualize this dual position is related to a long-standing discussion in architectural design and theory: does architectural practice establish itself on a 'blank slate' or is it possible to imagine it independent of the existing conditions? The discourses of the early 20th century avant-gardes were eager to construct the future by abolishing the existing forms, structures and memories of the past. For instance, the destructive language of the *Futurist Manifesto* (1909) and Le Corbusier's (2014) vision of urban planning followed this idea as their visionary motive. The critical ground, which emerged in architectural thought in the 1960s, mostly conceptualized under the title of 'postmodernism', re-evaluated the relationship between the past and the present. For instance, Aldo Rossi's book titled *The Architecture of the City* (1982) explores the city as an artifact embodying living memory. Lefebvre (1991), on the other hand, demonstrates the relationship between the production of space and the homogeneous and hierarchical form of time. The argument of this perception of time, and the concept of duration (1991) enabled us to understand that space is in interaction with events and movement. As a matter of fact, we often assume that architecture rises on empty ground, or a cleared site. However, all the built environment, streets, buildings or trees are an outcome of socio-economic, political and cultural networks. Memory of the past is also part of these networks. Therefore, we learn to evaluate

space as a phenomenon that is not separate from the existing network of spatial patterns, and architectural design can contribute to this thought by creating spatial narrations.

In addition to its consequences on space, the tension between *tabula rasa* and responding to the existing, challenges the students' subjectivity. We always see design as a process in which a personal style is developed by questioning the lost experiential understanding. While in the *Miniatures of Daily Life* module, the constructing process precedes other acts, *Section Zero* module compels subjectivity to constitute itself with the presence of 'the other'.

### Tabula Rasa: Miniatures of Daily Life

The module titled *Miniatures of Daily Life* provides the context of *tabula rasa* when thinking of spatial construction in representation. In this module, students were expected to represent different events taking place in public spaces on a single page. (Fig. 9). The places in question can be an utterly fictional depiction of an imaginary place or one of the actual urban areas in Istanbul, such as Taksim Square or the seaside of Moda. The blank canvas at the beginning demands all decisions of spatial construction to be made entirely by students and as similar as in paintings, the setting and the story are fictionally constructed on a page. Distinct techniques of drawing, painting and collage are involved during the process. The module focuses on whether we can ever imagine architecture as an act of world-building. Reconsidering Tschumi's statements on narrative once again, the fact that architecture is the interaction of the space(s)-event(s) means that it is world-building, that is, by a process of narration, rather than only the action of erecting



Fig. 9 – Student works of Miniatures of Daily Life (Aylin Kanar, Berilnur Güngörmez, Ceyda Pektaş, Melis Zeynep İleri).

physical buildings, or any artifacts. Therefore, this module does not broach the problem of design including dimensions, forms, programs of structures and the design approaches or coherence of them. On the contrary, we are concerned with those issues of the interaction of all kinds of events that occur in built environments and the effects upon the sensory and psychological features of the spatial experience, such as texture, atmosphere, and

temporality. We expect students to consider the reflections of movement and time in spatial narrative construction, such as the texture of the worn cobblestones on the street, the eroded grass floor, the dust lifted by the falling rain, the splash of the water when a ball touches the surface, the randomly laid beach covers on the ground, people looking out of the window. We expect the inclusion of essentials that are perhaps not precisely designed but that make

up a world, a life and therefore, a narration.

On the other hand, the technique of miniature, comes into play in the representation of the world-building process that constructs the space by providing distinct perspectives. Miniature allows one to approach each part of the public space with an equivalent attitude, without creating a certain hierarchy between distances, between

inside and outside, or between front and back. The dissolution of perspective (the representation of the whole from a single point of view) often leads to conflicting information about the space. In this sense, miniature can be an uncanny technique for representing architecture in a precisely quantifiable world. Because perspective and orthographic projection (as established architectural representation techniques) are tools by which space can be measured, thus a controlled representation becomes possible, or at least offers a consistent perception of scale even though (as in perspective) it cannot be measured. The white canvas is defined as an unreferenced and unconditional space in which architecture students have to act by excluding familiar forms of seeing and representation. The construction of miniatures provides a political arena that helps the invention of new languages that are possible by trial and error. Thinking from this Ranciereian perspective (2009), including an unfamiliar technique that architecture did not apply to the field of the sensible, is itself political.

### Responding to the Existing: Section Zero

The module titled *Section Zero*, contrary to the *Miniatures of Daily Life*, focuses on two other common representational techniques of architecture. Let us describe the two aims of this module as a task of cross-sectional perspective work. First, inspired by the cuts and splits of Gordon Matta-Clark in the 1970s, we encourage students to use objective and universal methods like the section as constitutive elements of subjective speculations and narrations. Prescribing a representational tool as an actual action, triggers the metaphorical and critical power of such tools by transforming their function. Secondly, we include

collage technique including the presence of the photographic image as a given starting point. Therefore, we intensify the module with the combination of two essential methods of section and perspective, as well as the use of different media of photography and drawing. This module starts with a found photographic image from various spectrums of complex urban landscapes, such as slum areas, factory campuses,

transportation hubs, etc. As is the case in photographic images, these pictures include specific points of views. Students are required to make a cut on the surface of the already defined scene captured in pictures. The shot belongs to someone else, yet the cut action is made by students and therefore, let them include their fiction onto the given picture itself. (Fig. 10-11).

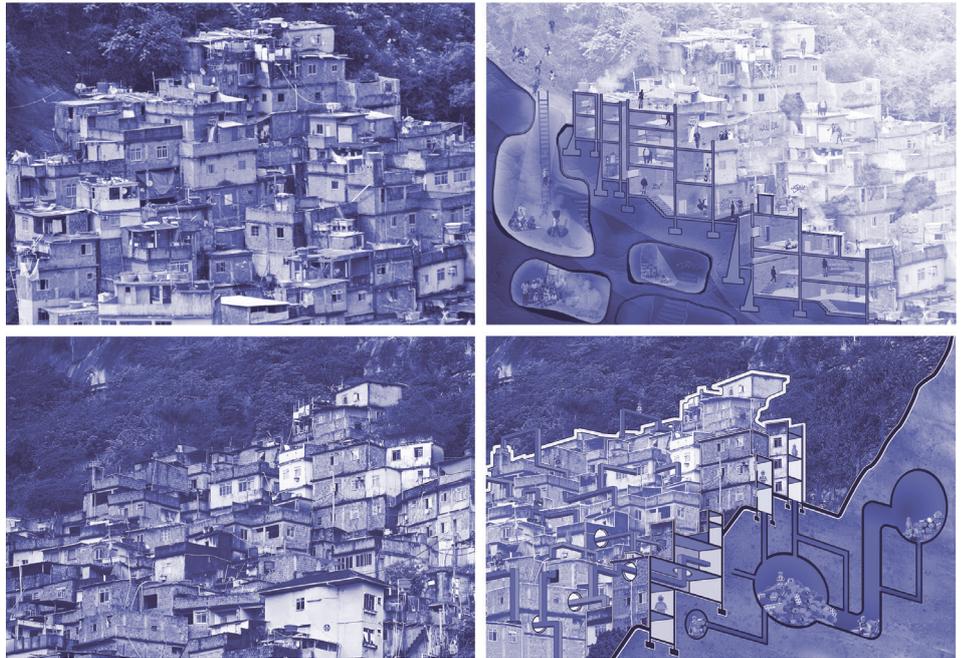


Fig. 10 – Student works of Section Zero (Cansu Erdem, Sena Ongun).



Fig. 11 – Student works of Section Zero (Dilan Elif Korkmaz, Serra Aleyna Bilgin).

One of Picasso's early collages, titled *Still-life with Chair Caning* (1912), shows the emergence of mixed-media by composing various found objects on the painting canvas, which was an original construction of narrative in the realm of art. Accordingly, as the photograph came to occupy the position of engravings widely used as illustrations to narrate stories in 19th century, photographic fragments became prevalent in collage art. Nevertheless, in Section Zero, we regard the photographic image as the canvas itself to be ripped apart and the drawing as the one merged with the ground. This is where the technical challenge of the module appears, since students must follow the perspective axes already existing in the given pictures while drawing the section in its right principles.

On the other hand, drawing a section is an introspective form of expression. Cross-sectional methods reveal what is behind or inside, so to speak, what is hidden or invisible to the eye. However, this process also means the dissolution of the 'aura', too. When Benjamin (2019) used that term for the phenomenon of technical reproduction, he was actually referring to a broader range of technical tools, methods and actions. For instance, scanning devices and tools such as tomography and x-ray provided people with undiscovered and specialized facts of the body. The process of reification of the body is inseparable from these developments and the reification of other components of life. In this respect, our concern is whether we can replace the quantitative aspects of section drawing with the help of narration to regain surprising forces of spatial representation. Students create unexpected events taking place in their scenes and reveal what is unmeasurable, uncapturable, inconsistent between the surface and the story behind it. They contribute to the memory of the

constructed space in the picture by, not designing, but re-imagining it by making up narratives about it.

## CONCLUSION

This article focused on the idea of narrative in architecture. We raise questions of why narrative matters in architectural design and what potential advantages of narrative making in architectural education can be.

Based on a critical argument of the architect's narrator role, we illustrate the modules of the Narrative Processes in Architectural Design course under three themes; subjectivity, temporality, and spatiality. We elaborate on these three themes separately, but essentially they are interrelated concepts with shared outcomes. In various course modules, we embrace these themes with the dichotomies of each concept that we discuss in the article. Customizing tools by adding new possibilities is essential, rather than replacing analog tools with digital ones to embrace subjectivity in architectural designs in new ways. We pay attention to immeasurable techniques together with universal measurable ones. For instance, collage, section, and perspective bring their uncanny aspects into the narration of photographic or pictorial images. We find it essential in the modules to consider time both as instantaneous and chronological since these aspects of constructing temporality are also related to subjectivity. As a method, we develop distinct strategies to widen the discussions on representing space by starting with a white canvas or responding to an existing image.

Consequently, including narrative in design processes is vital as well as rewarding in terms of embracing the human experiences. We argue that these modules strengthen the

relationship between thinking, visualization and designing in architectural education and practice. We believe that the emergence of the narrator in architecture transforms how architects comprehend the world and how they design.

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