

Digital Survey as a Method for Creative Thinking in Architectural Design

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Architectural surveying has always been the purview of the architect, despite the fact that it is practiced by other disciplines. Technological innovations in surveying have led, at least in France, to an ambivalent relationship with these new methods of documenting the existing. Although very rare in teaching, learning digital surveying techniques is nevertheless inevitable for future architects who will be required to handle these tools directly or to interact closely with their operators. Lyon School of Architecture has a head start thanks to the presence MAP research laboratory, which has distinguished itself on the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris and which participates in the teaching from the first year of the pedagogical program.

The objective of this paper is to critically communicate the pedagogical experience of the fourth semester project studio, “Designing with the Existing,” with a focus on the role of digital survey throughout the entire design process. With a transdisciplinary approach and an emphasis on the interaction with the existing, this studio gives students their first introduction to the peculiarities and difficulties of design with the existing. A series of methodologies are proposed to enhance the process, and digital survey methods have been suggested not just to produce data for analysis but also as thinking techniques that foster and enhance the creativity and as a method to re-examine the decisions made throughout the process.

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