

archiCULTURE

PRESS KIT

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ABOUT THE FILM

Mission

Archiculture examines the current and future state of studio-based, design education and highlights the various debates on the impact of architecture on our society.

Synopsis

Archiculture takes a thoughtful, yet critical look at the architectural studio. The film offers a never before seen glimpse into the world of studio-based, design education through the eyes of a group of students finishing their final design projects. Interviews with leading professionals, historians and educators help create crucial dialog around the key issues faced by this unique teaching methodology.

Summary

Archiculture is a documentary film that examines the strengths and perils of architectural education. The film follows a group of young design students through their final semester at Pratt Institute in New York City. The students interactions and reactions help illustrate the challenges of being a young aspiring designer in todays world. The film weaves back and forth between the architectural studio and the architectural profession creating convincing impressions between students and industry leading professionals.

The audience gets an authentic look at the friendships, culture and habits that result from peer-to-peer learning. From the dedicated all-nighters to the ubiquitous coffee-runs, these students spend day and night together struggling through the same set of questions and problems. In what sometimes seems like aggressive competition, the film illustrates the symbiotic benefits that arise in the shared studio environment.

A large portion of the film focuses on the benefits and detriments associated with open criticism. From one-on-one reviews to public juried critiques, the film shows the ups and downs of these often intense interactions. The film also addresses the recent trend in training “star” architects and begs the question of how we should go about training the next generation of designers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why did you decide to make this film?

We were inspired enough by our own experience in design school that we thought it warranted some attention. Although studio-based education can be extremely public, it generally remains insular to the design community and we sought to make it accessible to anyone and everyone. Because the two of us and our professional colleagues shared similar studio experiences, we knew the students and setting would offer the right balance of humor, passion and tension. Our goal with *Archiculture* is to shed light on some of the benefits of studio-based design education over more traditional seminar and lecture classroom methods.

What is the story behind the title?

The project was originally titled, *Architorture*. Being a fairly ubiquitous term among students and architects, we thought it would be a catchy, helpful way to grab the attention of non-architects. It was great at first when we were in pre-production, because it really helped us establish a strong following among our core audience of designers. However, many people within academia thought it misrepresented the mission of the project and negatively portrayed the studio environment. Although we were fond of the title, we ultimately thought it best to change the title to something with a more positive and broader meaning. We think that by incorporating the term “culture” into the title, it both describe the studio culture that that the film explores as well as the cultural impact of design on our daily lives.

What were some of the challenges to making the film?

Honestly, we spent entirely far too long trying to make the film we wanted to make, instead of allowing the footage we captured dictate the story. We went through a series of options in regard to format ranging from feature-length, to episodic series, as well as a few different editors, before we were able to crystallize a meaningful storyline. There were many other behind-the-scenes pitfalls that were not things we could control or fix. It also didn't help that we started to make the film at the beginning of a long, drawn-out financial depression that created hurdles for a lot of independent filmmakers and dissolved our core donation base of architects and design firms. Ultimately, it turned into a true passion project between the two of us, and an evolving cast of crew, to finish the film.

What's next?

We plan to continue heading down the path we are going. We have a feature length documentary on the way by the name of *Girls' Show*. We hope to continue growing our company and pull in more commercial projects. That's not to say that we don't still desire to generate original content, we are just a lot more humble about the effort, cost and time it takes to produce such documentary projects.

Did you learn things about the profession from making the film that you didn't know prior?

We have gotten to see and hear a lot of things that we would never have working in an office. I think the biggest eye opener for us was to see both sides of the education system; one side from the students but also the viewpoint of the professors. It felt like we were balancing on a circus wire between the sharks and the lions. We were only a four years removed from the students being filmed, so we totally related to everything they're going through, but also we're aware that we were also not that far from the age and perspective of the professors. It is difficult as a student to understand the complexities behind the scenes of the educational system, and as a professor to realize where the students are pulling their personal inspiration. During production we were stepping between both at a moment to moment basis.

Another topic that blindsided us was the hypersensitive exploration of technology and its influence on education and inevitably our built environment. There were very intense conversations discussing the pros and cons, and right and wrongs to the use of digital technology from conception to creation. When you actually start to hear the deliberations it is quite a fascinating argument on where it is disassociating the architect from the process of making or re-empowering them with a more holistic design/build approach as architects did in the past.

The other thing that stood out for us was the lack of power and voice currently behind the architectural profession. We obviously felt it in the profession first hand, but to hear some of the world's leading architects echoing the same sentiments was disheartening. It was a bittersweet realization, because the fact that we have gotten to this point through such hard work and sacrifices frustrated us, yet it reinforces our decision to make the film and especially to step outside and hold an lens up to the community of designers.

How long has it taken to make archiCULTURE?

We have continuously been working on it since July of 2007, although the concept came in spring of 2004. We put ourselves through film classes while simultaneously developing the proposal and working 50+ hour architecture jobs. Once the proposal was done, we started fishing the film around to institutions nationwide and started building a team of people in San Francisco to help out with the project. In December of 2008 we left California in a white van full of equipment and a few scraps of clothing to come to New York. We spent the next 5 months living in Pratt's School of Architecture following the thesis class, capturing over 160 hours of footage. The five years since have been dedicated to fundraising, grant writing and editing the film through its multiple storyline iterations and formats. We always read when starting this that it takes on average five years to make a documentary, and that seemed insane with our determination, but in the end we were right on point!

Will you return to the architectural profession after the film?

We still don't feel like we have really left the architectural profession. In a way we feel like we are playing a larger role than we ever would have behind the desk or computer screen. As far as returning to the "traditional" practice of architecture, I think the two of us are more interested in exploring our new found tool of communicating the built environment to the masses through film and volunteering our design services to socially engaging design organizations.

BIOGRAPHY

ARBUCKLE INDUSTRIES

Arbuckle Industries was founded in 2007 by David Krantz and Ian Harris. The company was originally formed with the purpose of producing the documentary film, *archiculture*. Once *archiculture* entered post-production, Arbuckle spontaneously grew into a small production company. Now, five years later, Arbuckle is a well established video production and web consultancy firm serving the greater New York region. The company has filmed a range of memorable icons including David Byrne, Bill Clinton, Todd Oldham and Arianna Huffington and worked with a range of prominent companies from Meetup to Yamaha.

DAVID KRANTZ

David Krantz is the founding partner of Arbuckle Industries. He is a filmmaker, photographer and graphic artist, when he is not behind a camera or computer he can usually be found basking on a rock or on some sand. He recently Directed and Produced the documentary short, *Archicutlure* and is now working on the upcoming feature *Girls' Show*. In 2007 David was the co-recipient of the Youth Noise Short Film Contest and in 2010 the co-recipient of the Brunner Grant. He graduated Clemson University with a Bachelors in Landscape Architecture where he was awarded the 2005 Most Creative Portfolio.

IAN HARRIS

Ian graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture with a focus in Urban Planning from the University of Cincinnati. After graduating, Ian moved to San Francisco to pursue his architectural career. At first job out of school he met David and the idea of *Archiculture* soon followed. Ian completed film classes through Empty Kingdom Media and has spent the past six years devoted to developing his cinematic eye. He currently balances time between being the heading Technology Coordinator for the Center for Architecture/AIANY, teaching Design Education residencies to public school students, and producing films on the built environment through his co-founded production company, Arbuckle Industries.

TIMELINE

PRE-PRODUCTION

2006.01 - David and Ian meet at Hart Howerton's San Francisco office
2006.03 - David shares film concept with Ian over after work beers
2006.07 - David and Ian meet, begin training with Empty Kingdom Media
2007.08 - Arbuckle Industries, LLC is formed
2007.10 - Visit and selection of host school
2007.11 - David and Ian leave their design jobs in San Francisco
2007.12 - Cross country road trip to move to New York for production
2008.01 - Pierce joins team in NYC and production begins

PRODUCTION

2008.02 - Students selected
2008.03 - Production-Teaser Debut Party NYC
2008.05 - Students graduate and principal photography completed
2008.06 - Post-Production begins with 150+ hours of footage

LOGGING FOOTAGE

2008.12 - First cut of footage to 80 hours
2009.04 - Second cut of footage to 40 Hours
2009.09 - Trailer Premiere Party in NYC draws 400+ people
2009.12 - Third cut of footage to 20 Hours
2010.05 - Awarded Brunner Grant from Center for Architecture Foundation
2010.08 - Hired Justin Strawhand as editor

POST-PRODUCTION

2011.01 - Rough Cuts of feature length film edited and reviewed
2011.02 - Film format changed to an episodic series
2011.05 - Rough Cuts of episodic series reviewed
2011.07 - Justin Strawhand is relieved from editing duties
2011.09 - Jesse Garrison takes over as editor
2011.12 - Film format changed to short film due to streamlining of storyline
2012.04 - Rough Cuts edited and reviewed
2012.07 - Final Cut set
2013.02 - Music Composed and Audio Mastered
2013.03 - Color Mastered
2013.04 - Trailer Clip Released



d Krantz (left) and Ian Harris, creators of the documentary *Archiculture*.

Text Braulio Agnese Photo Ken Weingart

STUDIO VERITÉ

TWO DESIGNERS-TURNED-DIRECTORS PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION.

DAVID KRANTZ AND IAN HARRIS finished architecture school in 2005, and already they want to go back: this time not as students, but as filmmakers. Krantz, a landscape architect who went to Clemson, and Harris, who studied architecture at the University of Cincinnati, want to make a documentary about undergraduate architecture students and their final studio theses.

The idea goes back to Krantz's school days. In his fourth year, having completed his studio requirements, he took a graduate-level course. With little prior connection to the other students, Krantz experienced the studio as an outsider. It proved a revelation. A documentary fan, he recognized the story waiting to be told: the egos, the 16-hour work sessions, the agonizing crits. "Architecture school," says Krantz, "requires you to be in a studio on weekends, at night, and your friends just don't understand: 'Why can you not go out and party with us?' ... Why do kids [endure this] to get this job? What is the job? Why is it such a desirable job?" It wasn't until Krantz and Harris met in early 2006, however, that the film became more than a notion. The two bonded over the idea. Says Harris: "We both believed in the story, started to develop the story, and then [asked ourselves]: 'How are we going to do this?'"

Since that self-reflective pause, the two have had a hell of a year. Each day, after long hours at their San Francisco firms—Krantz, 24, is employed at Hart/Howerton, and Harris, 26, at GLS Landscape/Architecture—the budding filmmakers return home to work on the documentary. They've tapped into the Bay Area film community to learn how to shoot a movie, partnered with the Film Arts Foundation to help with finances, and found friends and others to provide occasional assistance. The apartment they share splits the distance between their offices, maximizing collaboration time, and its slightly down-at-heel address saves rent money. (Plus, if you lean out of the kitchen window, there's a fine view of the new federal building by Morphosis.) Krantz and Harris are the film's producers, directors, and, so far, financiers. They calculate it will cost \$175,000 and another two years to get the film ready for screening.

In September the pair toured a handful of schools that expressed interest in the project. Now they are in discussions with the Pratt Institute School of Architecture. If all goes well, in a few weeks Harris and Krantz will leave their firms and head to Brooklyn, N.Y., to start filming.

Initially, Krantz and Harris called the documentary *Architorture*—a wry, if lovingly intended, comment on the demanding nature of design education, and one they fully realized might seem like bad PR to most schools. ("I've been lectured to by deans," says Harris.) The working title has since been changed to *Archiculture*. "We're not making this film with an agenda," says Harris. "Hopefully, [it's] a means for people to watch and then begin to discuss what the architectural education system is like."

Learn more about *Archiculture* and track the documentary's progress at archiculturefilm.com.

architecture anonymous

A documentation that captures Architecture students and their interactions with one another within the studio environment

To those who have never meddled with the industry, architecture is just another means of making a building work. Try talking to a layman about spatial colloquial, plot ratio, liquidated ascertained damages or performance bond and you will probably draw a blank. Archiculture, a portal that encourages architects and architecture undergraduates to share their experiences was initiated by Ian Harris and David Krantz.

Archiculture is a documentary that captures five diverse students in a single studio at one university throughout the entirety of their thesis project. The film will convey a mere sliver of time, wholly representative of the experience to create a student's paramount work. The footage will illustrate the range of emotions and process of this extremely intense period at the conclusion of an academic career. It is the directors' goal for the documentary to possess educational, entertaining, realistic and inspiring qualities in response to the dynamic world these students cross.

What brought you into architecture?

Ian: I began in engineering because it was the inevitable path for a kid who was good in science and math coming from a blue-collar family. I quickly realized that I was not like the other engineering students and wanted more creativity in my endeavours. Although I enjoyed the complexity and knowledge learned in my science, math and systems studies, the finite quality of the field was not something I wanted my life to pursue. The grey areas of design, the feel, the touch, the playful qualities of architecture were far more intriguing. You become a life long student, learning daily some new set of needs for your potential user. About this time I had a close friend in the architecture program and when I stepped in one night to visit him in studio, I got a glimpse of the "other side" in my friend's first year design course. A light bulb sort of went off in one of those vividly memorable moments. I made the leap and have been pursuing architecture ever since.

SPACE MAGAZINE 2008 #5



PRATT CAMPUS HOSTS DOCUMENTARY ON ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

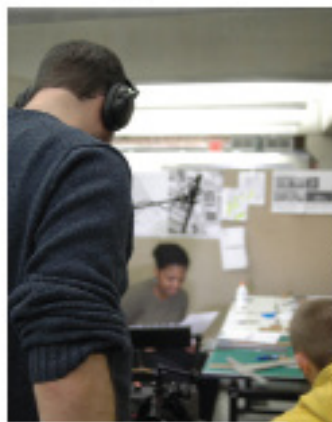
Architecture may be a glamorous profession to the public at large, but to filmmakers Ian Harris and David Krantz, architects themselves, it is worth putting their careers on hold to tell the true story of its grueling curriculum. The way to address it, they decided, was through a feature length documentary. After reviewing 20 options, the duo choose Pratt Institute, due to the diversity of its student population and the architecture program's willing support. After securing funding, they took leave from their San Francisco firms and headed for Brooklyn, where they are shooting film footage on campus, most of it during this spring semester.

The feature length film, titled *Archiculture*, will provide

viewers with an in-depth look into the creative yet competitive process of architectural education by following five different student personalities during their turbulent final semester at Pratt. It will reveal the passion felt by these driven students, as well as their unflagging

determination. The film will use the students' projects and their stories to examine contemporary issues surrounding the profession of architecture.

The filmmakers say that interviews with family, friends, significant others, industry professionals, architects, and design professors will be woven throughout the film to create a story that builds an intimate connection between the characters and the audience.



Archiculture filmmakers, from left, David Krantz and Ian Harris, at work

COURTESY OF THE FILMMAKERS

PRATT NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008



The best laid plans ... Photograph: Martin Godwin

We've been in the jungle, in the kitchen and at the hairdressers ... and now the world of reality has found another arena which is all about life at the sharp end - the architectural practice.

GUARDIAN BLOG DECEMBER 2007

Documentary on 'Archiculture' to Premiere at Newport Beach Film Festival

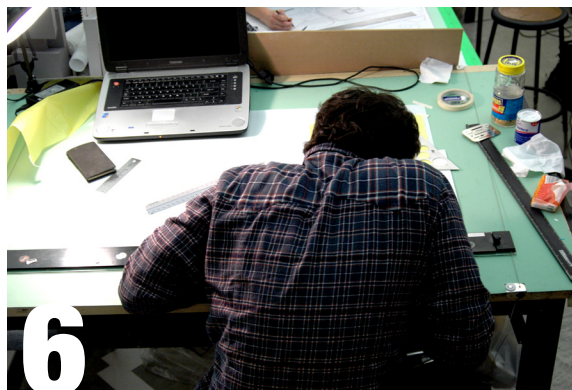
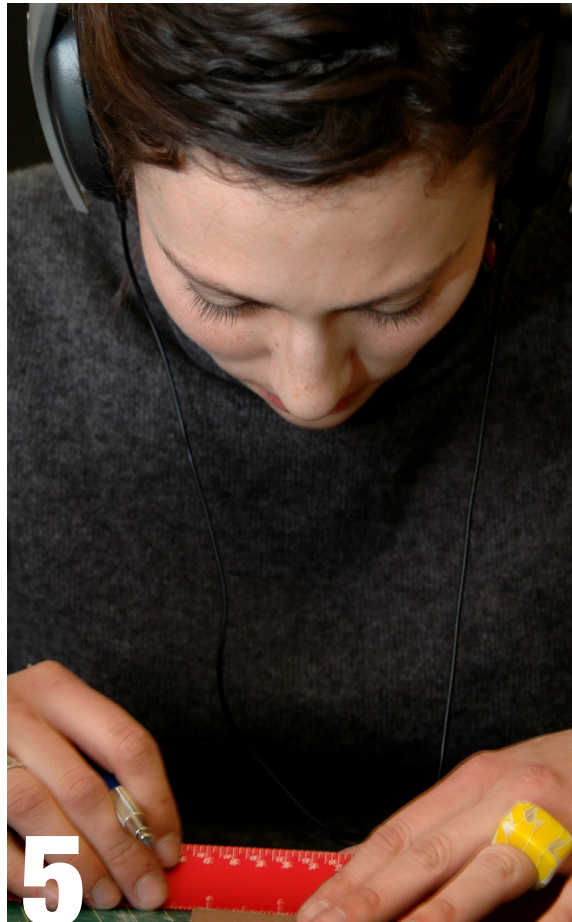


After years of production, the [documentary](#) film [Archiculture](#) is set to premiere at this year's Newport Beach Film Festival, which will commence on April 25th. Highlighting a group of students amidst their final design projects, the film illustrates the strengths and perils of architectural education. Shigeru Ban, Thom Mayne, Ken Frampton and Phil Bernstein are some of the leading architects, educators and historians that will be featured in the film, offering insightful criticism about studio-based, design education as it exists today.

ARCHDAILY APRIL 2013

STILL IMAGES

TAKEN DURING PRODUCTION



SCREENSHOTS

TAKEN FROM FINISHED FILM

