

THE RETURN OF DEATH

a contemporary cemetery for the city

STUDIO BRIEF

Cemeteries, tombs, mausoleums, charnel houses, crypts, catacombs and cenotaphs are the inevitable built result of death and have defined one of the oldest and most ubiquitous architectural lineages in history. It has been argued that these places can embody the values of a culture, define the placehood of a society, and represent the pinnacle of architectural endeavor. This studio will investigate the architecture of death, speculating a contemporary advancement from the current marginalization, sterilization, and critical stagnation defining discussion.

STUDIO ORGANIZATION

The studio will be organized around five themes, acting as frames through which the idea of a contemporary cemetery will be investigated. The role of the themes is to focus the critical and creative energy of the student on one relevant architectural imperative, or method, at a time.

TYPOLOGY
TECHNOLOGY / ECOLOGY
STRUCTURE
FORM
DIAGRAM

Each theme will last two weeks and result in a concise, complete schematic proposal, represented within a specified format. Each proposal will be evaluated and synthesized, privileged or abandoned. The result will be developed and refined for the final review.

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Harrison, Robert Pogue. *The Dominion of the Dead*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. and Camilo José Vergara. *Silent Cities - The Evolution of the American Cemetery*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989.
- Ragon, Michel. *The Space of Death*. (1981) trans. Alan Sheridan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983.
- Yalom, Marilyn. *The American Resting Place*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

CLASS INFORMATION

Required Material: Rhino3d, Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, manual drafting and modeling supplies including Mayline Parallel Rule.

Office Hours: MWF 12:00p - 1:00p or by appointment, Room TBD

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Studio Website(s): <http://alfordF09B.blogspot.com> (TTU BlackBoard)

“For as long as we think of our houses, cities, and nations as **merely places to live, and not as places to die**, those houses, cities, and nations can never become homes or take their stand within the limits of containment **from which all shelter and placehood ultimately derive.**”

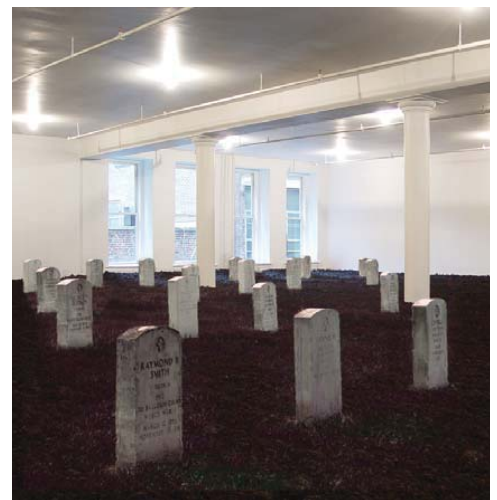
Robert P. Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*

“It is right to remark here, in view of the useful but overexclusive preoccupations of modern rationalism, that **the engineer, as builder and scientist, may compete with the architect, as builder and poet**, where a factory or any other purely utilitarian building is concerned, **but never for a tomb**”

César Daly, *Architecture funéraire contemporaine*¹

“Mid the uneasy wanderings of Paleolithic man, **the dead were the first to have permanent dwelling...** The city of the dead antedates the city of the living. In one sense, indeed, **the city of the dead is the forerunner, almost core, of every living city.**”

Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*²



1. Daly, César. *Architecture funéraire contemporaine: spécimens de tombeaux*. Paris: Ducher, 1871. quoted in Michel Ragon, *The Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration and Urbanism*, Charlottesville: Virginia U.P., 1983, 237.

2. Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961.