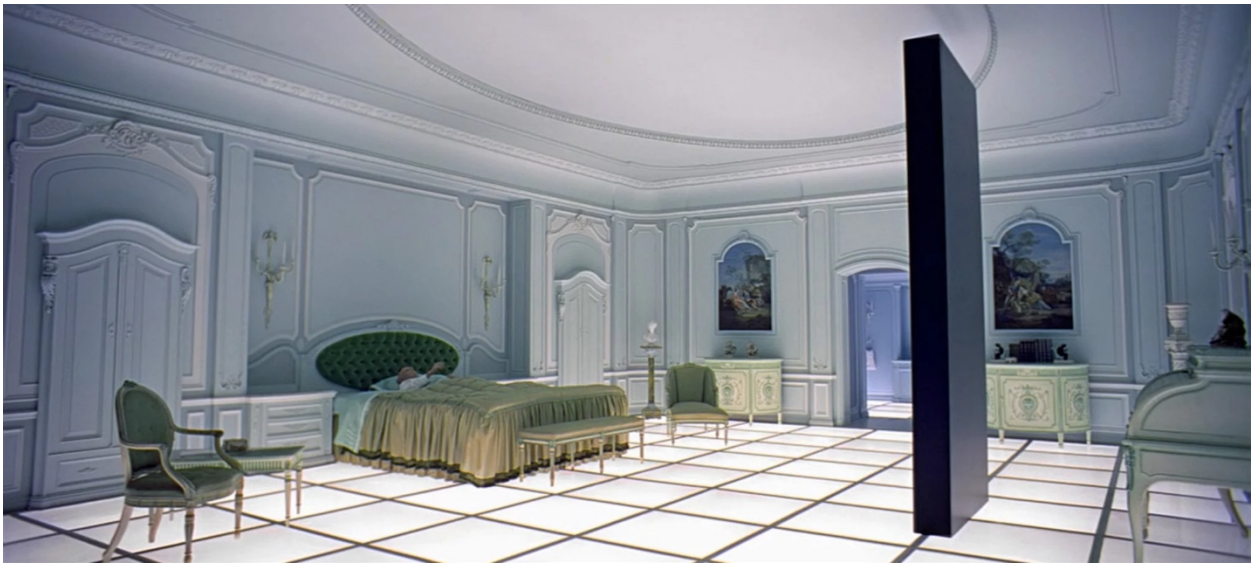
JOINT DESIGN STUDIO: ROBINSON 2025/26

The Room



Still from *2001 A Space Odyssey,* directed by Stanley Kubrick, 1968

“Contrary to [the] widespread and prevalent extra-architectural attempts to enrich the buildings of today, architecture is first and foremost the conception, construction and building of rooms; it deals with scenography and movements through rooms. As such, architecture engenders, above all else, a basic physical and sensual experience prior to also initiating intellectual interpretation. […Rooms] trigger both an experience of space as well as a common human yearning to make sense out of that experience”
Excerpted from “Non-Referential Architecture” by Valerio Olgiati & Markus Breitschmid, 2021

In both transient and non-transient senses, a room is a space for holding “things”. A room generatively initiates the ordering of architectonic space: a room can be a space for routine domesticity, for contemplation, for holding an artifact or artifacts; it can be a place of gathering or hiding. Things emerge from rooms transformed—anew or decayed. Things live and die in rooms; things are made and stored; ideas are conceived and jettisoned. A room is both material and non-material. One enters a room with anticipation and leaves holding memories. A room can be filled with darkness or with light; a room can be dogmatic or stifling; it can be domestic, public, dangerous or safe. The word room, because of its ubiquitousness, sounds mundanely ordinary, but through its ubiquitousness a room can be extraordinary.

2025/26 Studio Program

It is highly recommended that each student be enrolled for both academic semesters. The projects are sequential and interconnected.

Our semester begins with the deceptively simple task of designing and modeling a room for an object. In this sense the object, no matter how ordinary or extraordinary, is considered an 'embodiment': a 'thing" that holds within the content of its form.

Project Phases:

Fall/Winter 2025

1. Object space: program, materiality, duality and containment (ante-space, room, exit)

2. Positioning the room as urban artifact

3. Positioning the room within the artificial landscape

Winter/Spring 2026

4. The contextualization and unfolding of the room within the contemporary context: the interface with the existing.

Initial references: John Soan, John Berger, Gaston Bachelard, Non-Referential Architecture, Marcel Proust (Swann's Way), Object-Oriented ontology (Graham Harmon) and others.

Texts: Readings will be distributed and discussed in studio.

Critical dates, excursions and project criteria will be discussed in studio.

Grading Criteria

The seminar/studio operates as a group. Although there will be individual critiques, group discourse is the general format each studio session. Sessions are in English.

Studio meetings: Our studio meets in the Attic Space Tuesdays and Fridays beginning at 09:00 and ending at approximately 14:00; please be punctual. You are expected to participate. Before each meeting you should have all process work ready to discuss with the group. It is our belief that group discussions and in-class work foster a deeper and more diverse understanding of design and design process. We learn from others. You are encouraged to work in the seminar when at all possible. The seminar is your place – use it.

Attendance is required at every class, project review and scheduled lectures. Completion of each assignment in accordance with the assignment requirements is mandatory. All legitimate absences must be pre-arranged or medically excused with a letter from a physician. Excessive absence or lateness will affect your grade, and three unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. Cell-phone usage during seminar is prohibited except for emergencies.

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