



Learning from LA & TJ: *The Architecture of Seven Ecologies*

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In the creation of artistic and cultural works, where you are, and at what time period, will have a constitutive effect on the kind of work you produce. Especially, during times of turmoil in social, economic, or political life, there are opportunities for a radically altered art and architecture. Such creative processes are both, a reflection of changing contexts but also an act of re-creation: it is an interpretive strategy and an opportunity to reimagine, and even transcend the present.

Since early XX century, Los Angeles has been a dynamic place for different kinds of cultural, artistic and architectural experimentation. From the early regional modernists such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler to the second generation of LA modernist that culminated with the Case Study Housing Program in the 50s. This experimental tradition has continued and evolved over the last decades producing some of the most innovative forms of contemporary popular culture, visual arts and architecture. Interestingly, also Los Angeles has been the stage for some of the most devastating urban riots in the recent history of the US, endemic gang violence and pervasive police brutality, chronic homelessness, all these urban problems get exacerbated by the environmental fragility of the region, always vulnerable to unpredictable fires, earthquakes and tsunamis.

This research seminar will explore the different historical, cultural and physical forces that have made Los Angeles a paradigmatic place for social and cultural experimentation. This seminar will also further explore and analyze the permutations of artistic, architectural and popular culture in contemporary Los Angeles as influenced by three major cultural streams: historic progressive California ethos, Chicano (Mexican American) Culture, and Mexican Immigrant. We will focus our inquiries on cultural forms and practices that: *1) have predictive qualities of future creative expressions in Los Angeles as related to architecture; and 2) reflect the emergent Spanglish hybrid condition of Los Angeles culture.*

Based on demographic information, we can discern that, the fact, L.A. is the most Latinized American metropolis in this country. This Latinization process is closely connected to the South, to Latin America and Mexico. From this perspective, we will look at the Los Angeles/Southern California region as a type of macro-frontier that extends beyond the US-Mexico border, this liminal space has created a dynamic *postborder* cultural corridor from Los Angeles to Tijuana with its own unique spatial, cultural and artistic permutations and forms.