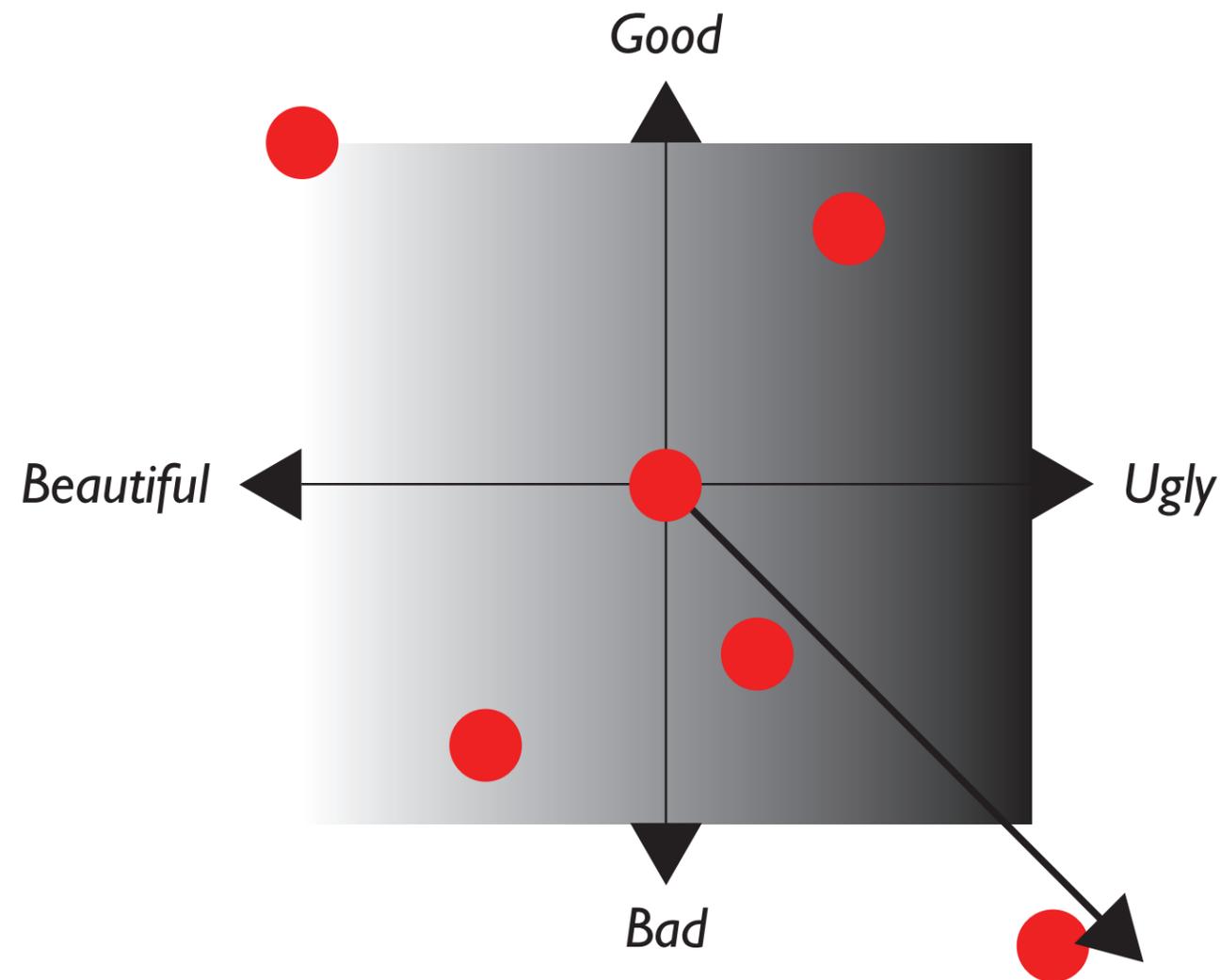


queer aesthetic categories



Queer Aesthetic Categories: Mess, Excess, Nothingness

Seminar: ARCH 509.009 Winter 2022

Fri 1:00-4:00 Place: 3154 A&AB Credits: 3

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mess, excess, nothingness...

Can there be an aesthetics of refusal, of resignation, of obstruction, of opting-out? For too long, the aesthetic goal of architecture has been the production and preservation of beauty, and that beauty has been predominately a straight, masculine, Western and white one. This aesthetic paradigm perpetuates real violence on bodies and buildings: preserving and promulgating if beautiful, leaving indifference, disdain, and destruction for the rest. As inevitable participants in this aesthetic paradigm, pursuing aesthetics of resistance and refusal are necessary for survival. This seminar will locate alternate aesthetic expressions which better suit our politics. Students will contribute original thinking through the investigation of aesthetic expressions outside the beautiful/ugly binary, with a particular interest in hybrid and nonbinary logics.

Beyond positing a recuperation of the ugly, as Venturi, Scott Brown, & Izenour pursued, the seminar seeds the field in-between the major aesthetic categories of beautiful and ugly, refusing their attendant polarizing value systems of good/bad. Via minor aesthetics like mess, excess, nothingness, and more, students will pursue new frameworks of value—wrenching an opening for queer aesthetics in the context of architecture its politics.

This is a reading and discussion seminar with multimedia content, including writing on aesthetic categories and affect by Sianne Ngai, and Kyla Wazana Tompkins; queer models of success and failure and nothingness by Jack Halberstam; Bartleby by Herman Melville; messy art by genderqueer artists including Johanna Hedva; campy film by John Waters; critical readings of aesthetic manifestos by architects like MOS's "dumb architecture"; and more. Students will develop an aesthetic category of their choice and produce visual and written reflections on its politics, ultimately collaborating with others towards a hybrid aesthetic. Student research may be included in an exhibition in Fall 2022.