

Instructor: **Steven Fong**



Title: **RHETORICAL UTILITY**

During the last several decades, many creative disciplines have been reinvented and reinvigorated by engaging conditions of contemporary society. New genres of cultural production have emerged through various actors' commingling of disciplinary means and methods with externalities- Joseph Beuys's performance art; Quentin Tarantino's radical intertextuality; Virgil Abloh's high fashion / streetwear. These transformations have democratized once-exclusive pursuits and removed barriers to who participates in cultural praxis.

In the same period of time Architecture has for the most part remained autonomous. We laud each other for increasingly daring formal gymnastics and extravagant detailing. Our esoteric accomplishments seem to be intended for the pleasure of a select few *cognoscenti*. Meanwhile the majority of people's daily lives have no connection to architecture. In this context, the current socio-economic and cultural inflection point offers an opportunity for Architecture to change. Urgent social justice issues, the urban affordability crisis, and the climate emergency all suggest new trajectories.

This studio will explore a narrative of change; challenging Architecture's self-referential status; and introducing "street style" into the discipline's lexicon. We will take inspiration from value-conscious, unaffected construction- parking garages, warehouses, factories, viaducts, underpasses, dockwalls. A paramount concern will be to establish a correspondence between performance and form.

But make no mistake; this is not to claim that "utility" constitutes a moral high ground. What we will explore will be no more "honest" or "truthful" or "humble" than any other mode of architectural projection. Instead like all other architecture we will recognize our capacity (and obligation) to engage in rhetoric, to inspire and influence people to consider new values and a better future.