Works in the Works Review

Review: **Epistemological Constructions: The Eternal Struggle with the Real and Virtual in Architecture by Professor Phillip Anzalone**

On February 21st, Professor Phillip Anzalone delivered an enlightening presentation on the role of technology in architecture. In his talk, Anzalone showed how innovative technologies, such as robotics, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, have transformed the way architects approach design and construction.

Professor Anzalone's research focuses on the intersection between design and building; he investigates what happens in the space between the virtual and the real. It is in that space, he contends, that designers learn what is possible. He began the presentation by breaking down the framework for building and showed how virtual designs become physical objects. As he explained, technology is an integral part of that process and advancements can alter the way designers think about space, form, and function.

Throughout his presentation, Anzalone shared compelling images from his classes to show how robotics, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) are incorporated in the design process. In one image, a student wearing a VR headset moves through a virtual space with little regard for the surrounding furniture and equipment around them. The photo aptly demonstrated how digital devices disconnect users from the physical world and can negatively impact spatial perception, a vital skill for architects.

Finally, after showing how designers utilize various technologies, Prof. Anzalone delve into a discussion about artificial intelligence (AI), its current applications, and implications for the future of design. He specifically focused on Midjourney, a popular text-to-image artificial intelligence software. He shared captivating images of physical structures, buildings, and houses created by the program. The software generates designs that are impressive and seductive, but virtually impossible to construct. As he explained, the program is trained on massive data sets that include everything except real world parameters. A self-described pacifist, Prof. Anzalone believes the technology will eventually catch up and, as it's wont to do, revolutionize the way architects create and construct their designs.

Review by Duval Bodden