

Cornell University  
AAP, Department of Architecture

Elective Course, Spring 2019

SECOND NATURE 01: LANDSCAPE  
PEZO VON ELLRICHSHAUSEN

Wednesday 10:10 am - 12:05 pm  
Milstein W. Exhibition Hallway



*Jean-Baptiste Corot, The Roman Campagna, c1826 (detail).*

As an extension of our Naïve Intention program, Second Nature is a seminar that explores the degrees of consciousness after a “mechanical reproduction” of hand-made pictures. Naturally, the selected machinery is not a digital tool but our own automatic action, our unavoidable handwriting (perhaps as a shortcut for self expression), those instinctive gestures, tediously repeated over and over again, so as to become a “deeply ingrained habit or skill”. Literal and figuratively, the study is about painting painting; an exercise that employs the technique of painting as a means to wonder about painting (in a sequence going

from landscape to room to still-life). As part of a rhetorical tradition, we read painting as an illusion in its own right: not only as the deceptive impression of space contained on a flat surface but also as the emotional invention, almost a daydream, of an idealized foreign domain. Under the blessing of our scarce resources (somehow following Cusa’s “learned ignorance” or reverting Borges’s improbable figure of Funes the Memorious) we will compress the roughly two centuries that turned Romanticism into Post Painterly Abstraction. By carefully looking, reading and re-painting a collection of classical paintings, we are going to explore notions of source, mimesis, forgery, translation and originality in its broadest sense. The depicted scenes will cover a wide range of natural landscapes, from monumental mountains to bucolic prairies, from ancient trees to ruined buildings, from the sublime to the picturesque, pastoral or primitive beauty. Moving our painted surfaces from reality to abstraction, back and forth, we will venture into the definition of a puzzling aesthetic (or rather ethical) paradigm: a profound flatness with severe outlines and a loose definition of tone and character, a tacit enigma, a silent drama, in other words, a form of inexpressive realism. By doing so, we believe, Architecture will be to painting what Nature is to poetry.

Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen, Associate Professors of the Practice and founding partners of Pezo von Ellrichshausen, will be in Ithaca on the following dates: January 23 - 25, March 13 -15, April 12 - 15 and May 7 - 10. Diego Perez, Assistant Professor and project director architect at Pezo von Ellrichshausen, will be based in Ithaca with a full time commitment to the seminar.