



Image: detail of Belgian poster for *La Robe Déchirée* [*The Tattered Dress*], directed by Jack Arnold, 1957

ARCH 3308/6308:

**SPECIAL TOPICS IN THE THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE I & II:
THE ARCHITECTURES OF GENRE**

PROF. V. WARKE

A seminar; 3 credit hours

Wednesdays: 10:10 AM – 12:10 PM; in-person

Permission of Instructor, upon attendance of first class

Is it possible for an act of architecture to be invited in through the front door, and then to upset or even replace the furnishings inside? Is it possible for a presumably familiar work to budge an anaesthetized audience from complacency? Is it possible for architecture—normally the mute, compliant servant of a static social order—to introduce perceptions that would otherwise be kept unseen?

Not only has "genre" had bad press since the onset of the twentieth century, but it's gone largely ignored in terms of its implications for architectural design. ...Quite a shame, really, because virtually every creative discipline seems to operate through genres. Embedded in the genres of popular architecture, for example—not the franchised drive-thrus (meticulously premeditated contrivances, really), but the Moose lodges, the health clubs, the organic food markets, the amusement piers, the biker bars, the mirror-glassed office buildings, the exotically-trussed sport venues, to name a few—there linger the biases, aspirations, and discursive interrelationships of a multitude of cultures and sub-cultures. Penetrating this embeddedness can bring to the surface a lexicon of formal significations as written and read by a public. It can also lead to an examination of the various mechanisms, latent within forms, that serve to perpetuate hegemonic structures and render entire cultures sedate, if not content.

This course proposes a better acquaintance with genres and their operative modes—with genericity—and with the recent and rapid rise of manipulated genres: feminist-inflected science fiction, religious heavy metal, bowling raves. —Because architecture always needs to find techniques for sharpening its aim as well as for honing the means and motives of its messages.

Class requirements:

seminar presentations:	40%
final project:	45%
participation in discussions:	15%