PARAMOUNT RANCH: SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

***IMPORTANT NOTE: THERE IS A REQUIRED STUDIO FIELD TRIP DURING ZERO WEEK (September 21-24, 2015)

MORE INFORMATION BELOW UNDER “SITE VISIT”
INTRODUCTION
This studio takes place at the historic Paramount Ranch, in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation area, north of Malibu, California, a unit of the National Park System. Our goal is to aid NPS in protecting and preserving Paramount Ranch, while assisting visitors to appreciate, understand, and enjoy this important location for film and television program sets from the 1920s into the 21st century.

We will assist the National Park Service in a number of ways:

- updated documentation of the Ranch, based on NPS cultural landscape guidelines;
- support for park visitors, including design of interpretive interventions and other park priorities;
- support for NPS personnel, including development recommendations.

We will work very closely with NPS personnel from the park and the regional office.

BACKGROUND
In 1927, Paramount Pictures purchased 2,700 acres of the old Rancho Las Virgenes for use as a "movie ranch." For 25 years, a veritable who's who of Hollywood practiced their craft at Paramount Ranch including director Cecil B. Demille and actors Bob Hope, Gary Cooper and Claudette Colbert. The diverse landscape was the real star of the show. It offered film makers the freedom to create distant locales such as colonial Massachusetts in The Maid of Salem (1937), ancient China in The Adventures of Marco Polo (1938), a South Seas island in Ebb Tide (1937) and numerous western locations including San Francisco in Wells Fargo. The art of illusion was mastered on the landscape.

The golden era of movie making at Paramount Ranch came to an end when changes to the studio system prompted Paramount Pictures to sell the ranch. Paramount Ranch found renewed life as a film location when William Hertz bought the southeast portion in 1953. An ardent fan of movie westerns, he built a permanent western town utilizing Paramount Pictures' old prop storage sheds. As a result, television companies began producing westerns at the ranch such as The Cisco Kid and Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theatre. William
Hertz sold the property in 1955. The Paramount Racetrack opened a year later, and some considered it one of the most challenging in the U.S. Although it closed 18 months later, after three fatal accidents, the racetrack was featured in The Devil's Hairpin, filmed in 1957. Most of the track still winds through the grasslands of the park.

From 1957 to 1980, the ranch changed ownership several times, but filmmaking continued. After purchasing a portion of the original Paramount property in 1980, the National Park Service revitalized the old movie ranch. From 1992 to 1997, Paramount Ranch was used as the setting for the television show, Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman.

STUDIO PROGRAM
This studio will address two key and important activities, in close cooperation with the National Park Service.

1. We will document and record cultural landscape sites within Paramount Ranch, updating previous NPS work. This work will conform to established NPS cultural landscape guidelines, and will add to the baseline inventory of cultural landscape features that contribute to the significance of this cultural landscape. These will be small group projects.

2. We will develop design proposals for different sites within Paramount Ranch. These will be individual design projects. Additional information about each site will be discussed during the field visit in September.

In addition the studio will consider and include:

- NPS policies, procedures and guidelines
- Design precedents, both within and outside of the parks
- Contexts at multiple scales
- Various materials
- Appropriate modes of representation
- Design at multiple scales

STUDIO GOALS
The studio has three broad goals:
1. Understand the current landscape conditions and resources at Paramount Ranch, and provide detailed documentation of these resources at the selected sites.
2. Develop broad visions and detailed plans for the sensitive and appropriate design of each of the sites at this important cultural landscape, with particular respect for its history and continued use by NPS personnel, movie studios and visitors.
3. Closely coordinate these efforts with our project partners in the National Park Service.

STUDIO PARTNERSHIP
This studio is being directly supported the National Park Service Pacific West Regional Office and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. We will meet and work closely with NPS staff. These partners include Gary Brown, Cultural Resource Program
SITE VISIT
There is a required studio site visit during the week of September 21-24, 2014. The exact details for this trip are still being discussed but it will be within this timeframe.

We will fly from Eugene to Los Angeles, then drive from LAX to the project site, about 50 miles northwest. The project site is north of Malibu.

NPS will provide funds to cover all travel, lodging and meals while on the site.
RESOURCES
All studio documents and resources including schedule, maps, planning documents and important websites will be posted to the course folder on the AAA Server.

EXPECTATIONS
In addition to the usual requirements of studio participation and timely project completion, the field trip to the site is required. Studio schedule and format for submission of final work will be discussed in studio. All work will be submitted in both digital and analog formats.

This is a rare opportunity to directly impact the future of an important unit of the National Park System, and develop skills in cultural landscape work and site design. The studio requires a trip to the site during zero week (the week before classes begin in the fall), and all expenses will be covered by the National Park Service.

*** Once plane tickets are purchased they cannot be refunded, so please consider this requirement very carefully before registering for this studio.

For more information:  http://www.nps.gov/samo/planyourvisit/paramountranch.htm