Toys! spring semester 2019 _the finale
Design Studies, Don S 546 - 6 credits
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Summary Description
This advanced interdisciplinary studio invites students to expand the development of conceptual, technical, and creative methods that they’ve acquired in the broad spectrum of design programs in the College, and apply them to toy design at various scales, categories and environments. The challenge will be to critically examine the creative processes used in the design of toys and play that engender greater meaning in our everyday lives and embolden us to have significant and creative impact in the world. Emphasis is on historical and cross-cultural typologies and uses of toys and play for education, entertainment, and recreation. Participating students will individually design and fabricate toys to a finished quality suitable for museum exhibition.

Outline of Projects
Over the course of the semester a total of 3 design exercises comprise the workload students should anticipate engaging. The first two projects are constant, occurring every semester the course is offered, while the third is reserved for taking up specific issues related to cross-cultural typologies of toys and play. Initial research of the particular 19th century toys created by Friedrich Froebel in the founding of the educational system known as kindergarten, and showing how those forms serve as precedents for contemporary toys currently on the market, opens the semester dialogically. The most recent semester syllabus from spring 2016 will be included at the end of this section.

Project 1: Re-CREATE Eames: to create a toy based on the repertoire of mid-20th century designer Charles and Ray Eames that is not merely intended for the market but rather which might ignite a “revolution” of play and promote the connection between playful exploration and meaningful innovation. This production has to be complete with packaging design, promotional image, and short video that help to situate or provide meaningful context for the work in a compelling manner.

Project 2: The HAPPENING: to collectively host a college-wide event that engages the public in activities associated with imaginative play, socialization and creativity. The brief for this course is included below.

Project 3: The THEMATIC: this penultimate project (which has on occasion been divided into two phases) considers the vast array of toy typology throughout history and asks students to respond with the design and full-scale construction of a concept toy. The thematic project for the semester will not be determined until the first day of classes.

Expanded Description
Over the 9-years he Toys! studio has consistently provided an ambitious program of opportunities for College of Design students. As a highly innovative and challenging work of ‘creative pedagogy,’ the Toys! educational project has proven capable of fluidly moving within and outside institutional boundaries to take on special community and institutional projects as well as teen workshops. Its core ambition is a desire to cultivate an understanding of the potential of toys not only for childhood development but also for shaping our views of the world well beyond our formative years. The products of students’ efforts have been featured in a broad array of academic institutions, conferences, and galleries and museums nationwide. As designer Charles Eames is quoted as saying, “Toys are not really as innocent as they look. Toys and games are preludes to serious ideas” this deceptively simple studio is built on a rather complex premise: that to design a toy that mediates between play and the production of knowledge is a challenging exercise wherein one must formulate both a theory and method of production that allows the toy to be fully engaged for wonderment and play, yet extended into more serious aspects of culture through further inspection. As such, toying and playing may be embraced as forms of social practice that draw inspiration from, and seek to engage with, contemporary cultural events inasmuch as accommodate basic human needs. Utilizing archetypal forms representative of the most normative play objects, the resulting designs of this studio might first appear innocent but upon further contemplation are found to be more poignant than what one might expect to find in a typical playroom. Often wildly ambiguous, these designs merely carve out a space into which the viewer/player is invited to drift, dwell within for as long as desired, and wonder from.