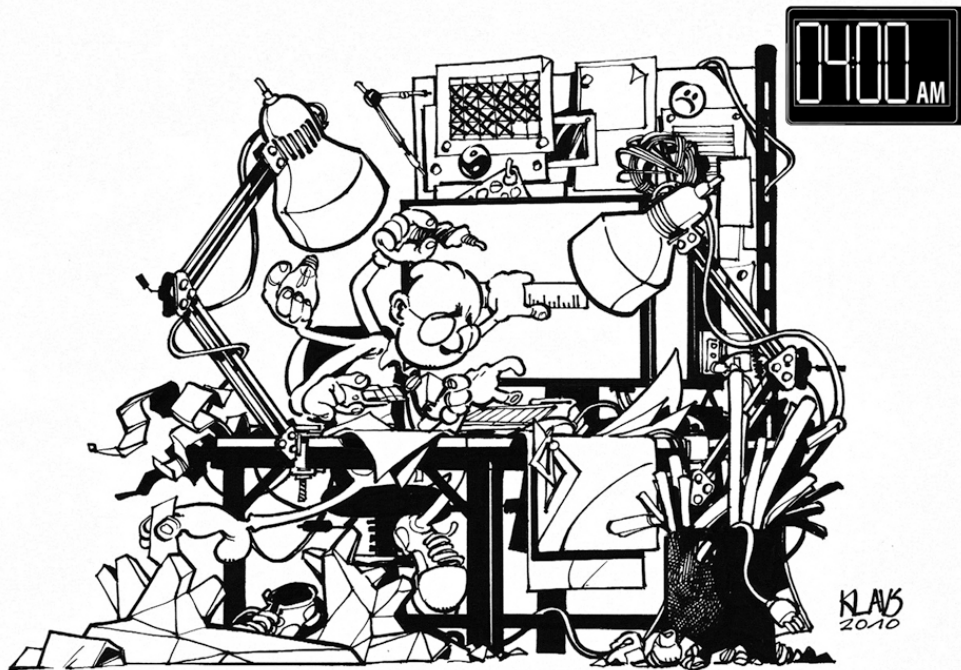


Dan Willis

ARE CHARRETTES OLD SCHOOL?



Does the charrette—the word comes from the French *en charrette*, with its image of École des Beaux-Arts students working on their drawings even as they were being taken away on a cart¹—still exist in professional architecture offices? Is it an integral part of their culture, as it remains, stubbornly, in most architecture schools? My curiosity about these questions stems mostly from my awareness, as an educator, of the efforts by the American Institute of Architecture Students to eradicate the “all-nighter” from architectural education.² Over the past few years, I’ve discussed the issues of work practices and time

management with many professional architects, several of them alumni of the school where I teach. For this article, I asked these two questions to six architects representing a range of firm sizes and types. From largest to smallest, my sample included the multidisciplinary giant AECOM, with 45,000 employees worldwide; a very large firm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, focused primarily on architecture; three medium-sized firms, O’Brien/Atkins, Bernardon Haber Holloway, and SMP Architects; and the small office of James Oleg Kruhly, a sole proprietor with typically no more than five employees.