A Secret Lair for an Evil Villain

While there is an obvious fictional aspect to this studio, students will be tasked to thoughtfully design a big-budget contemporary dwelling that includes a few unusual ‘extras’ deemed necessary to support the lifestyle and profession of their mysterious client. We will have some fun with the extras, but our attention will be focused on good architecture. Students will be expected to treat issues of building form, structure and space, light, and materials and detailing with the same degree of conviction and seriousness of intent as they would with any other professional project.

In addition to designing the residence, students will be engaged in site selection, program development, and the definition – through informal storytelling – of their shadowy patron. A particular focus of the studio will be to develop a deeper understanding of design process and to implement that over the course of the term. We will spend some time studying various precedents within the canons of high-end contemporary houses and notable retreats of fictional characters found in literature and cinema, and we will plan some social evenings to ‘study’ some of the films in the genre.

Students in this studio will be expected to come to the first class with three things:
- A written or verbal sketch of their client villain that outlines their character and career, and that can be shared with the rest of the class
- Documentation – maps, photographs and whatever else is helpful – of three candidate sites, assuming these would be shown to the client for site selection, along with a summary of site selection criteria. The sites can be anywhere in the world, in any landscape, and you can assume the client is looking for something rather exotic, but consistent with their careers and professional ambitions.
- The first draft of a detailed program of the residence, including the unusual extra features.