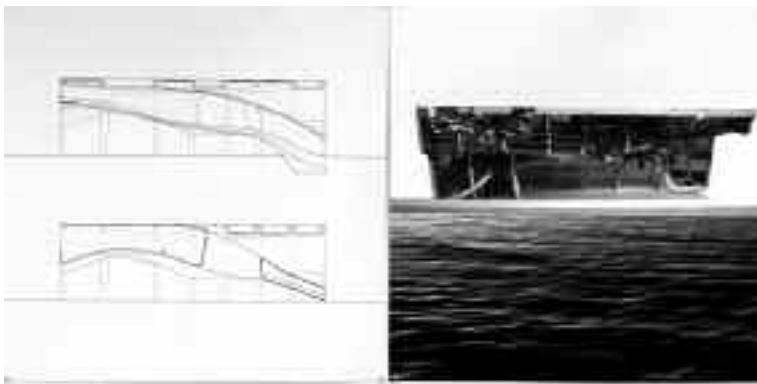


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- 1 Design IV, Spring
- 2 Design IV, Spring
- 3 Thesis, Hearth
- 4 Thesis, Fall

- 5 Thesis, Dead Sea Settlements
- 6 Thesis, State
- 7 Thesis, American Monuments

## STUDIO COURSES

In the development of the design, the site is assumed to be an intrinsic component of the project. Its identity is constructed, and represented by means of drawings and models, in terms of the dialectic between its autonomous finite configuration determined by the imposition of the 260' by 520' frame onto the city fabric, and the identities that the individual elements of the morphology of the framed site are to acquire when considered within the topological field of latent relations at a larger scale.

The site configurations emerging from such a dialectic, to all intents and purposes already morphological and conceptual elements of the project, constitute the concrete figurative environment to which the design will respond and within which it will take shape.

The strict figurative integration and conceptual continuity between site and intervention directs the programmatic concern of the project toward the definition of an urban public institution, where its public nature should reverberate with the nature of Central Park understood as a *public building* and with the public space of the *promenade* along its perimeter.

## FIFTH YEAR

### THESIS: FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER

Professor David Turnbull  
Professor Urtzi Grau  
Professor Hayley Eber

It is clear that many of the dependable certainties, the ethical assumptions, and foundational principles that might guide a young Architect as they shape their future, and plan their individual or collective form of practice, have been profoundly shaken by current events, geo-political and environmental traumas, radical and not so radical social transformations, catastrophic technological failures, technological 'miracles' and unprecedented change, good and bad.

There is a credible atmosphere of 'struggle' in the air, renewed and reinforced everyday... many of our colleagues are justifiably concerned that they cannot find any way of engaging adequately with the uncertainty that these changes induce. Heretical whispers, the scandalous manipulation of the truth, the construction of elaborate hoaxes, phony wars, phony politics and phony architecture create a milieu in which lies are confused with integrity, and an honest, serious engagement with difficult issues is almost impossible. Add to this the near impossibility of 'employment' in any satisfactory situation after graduation and it becomes even clearer that constructing a 'thesis' in an architecture school will be hard, if not pointless. The obligation of intelligent thought and action is more open to criticism than ever. Cynical reason

haunts the discipline. Cynicism, opportunism and a tragic entropic infantilism have driven Architecture (with a big A) into a corner.

In this context we have to be grateful for many things—the abundant spirit and enthusiasm of our students, the profound OPTIMISM that they embody, everyday, and their incredible fortitude. They are hunting, searching for new possibilities for practice in a world where the guidelines, the sign-posts, the guides, the leaders, the mentors, the heroes, have either vanished or have been exposed, revealed as chimeras or as phantoms, unreliable, and untrustworthy. Our students face incredible uncertainty, but they confront it, boldly—they are not timid, they are strong.

The Cooper Union has never been a place where 'anything goes', but it has always been a special place, a secure place where creative freedom is supported, encouraged, stimulated, and where speculative thought and imagination has been directed inward, within the discipline of Architecture, and outward, to the World, simultaneously. The Thesis year allows our students to be strong, but also, to be secure. We insist that real speculative thought, and inventive design can only take place in surroundings that are protective. The School of Architecture used to be described as a sanctuary. In the World, such places are now rare, precious and more necessary than ever. But, it is apparent that the desire for sanctuary can no longer be understood as a symptom of the desire to escape from the world. Rather, the sanctuary has to be conceived as a protected place that provides a protected vantage point, from which a thorough engagement with contemporary realities can be conducted. In this place the studio is both mirror and lens, the work of the studio is both reflexive and projective.

Periods of economic decline and geo-political instability have always provided the circumstances for disciplinary reformulation. This year has been exceptional in this regard. It is no accident that the work this year is strange. The work is strikingly personal, and provocative...at times, perplexing, but always purposeful. As critics we hold up a mirror to the students, reflecting back their thoughts, their hopes and dreams. They hold up a mirror to themselves, to the city, their homes, the World. For these speculative realists, looking through the mirror, there are revelations... at times like these revelations are necessary. Are these revelations 'architectural'? Perhaps. Is this speculative realism 'Architecture'? Perhaps it is... a reflexive relational architecture (with a small a), that is aggregated at multiple scales, distributed, clustered, concentrated and diffuse, magical. To make architecture like this the architect adopts the identities of the ethnologist, the anthropologist, technologist, detective, historian... simultaneously, multiple

faces, not one and never two. Under-cover the architect is free to act on and in reality.

This year there is no parametric design. There are no decorative cover-ups, just RAW architecture.

Thesis Proposals:

*THE FRAGILE HOUSE.* The project begins with the building of a house as a still life, nature morta, a three-dimensional paradise that is fabricated to become a two-dimensional transfer: the still life decays while giving birth to a house. I have chosen the Spanish Desert as the site for the architectural interventions with the intent of making use of fragility as structure and way of life.

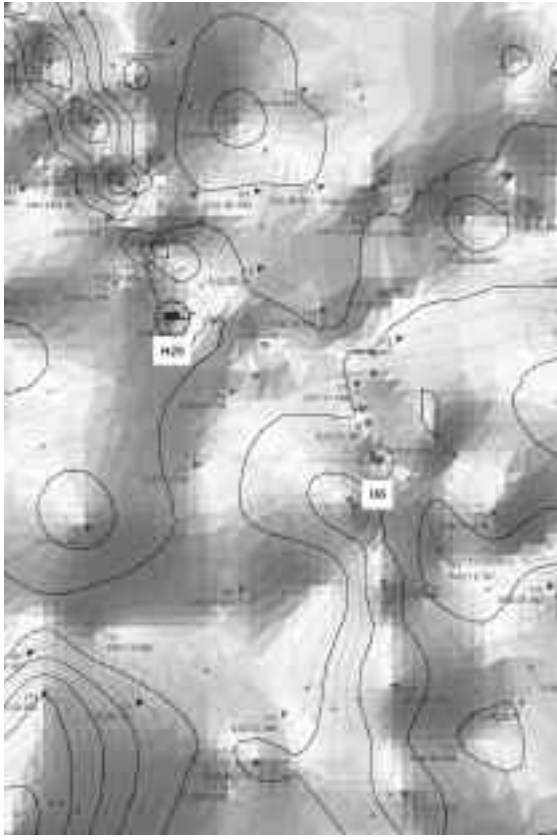
"Never let us forget that Faith alone supports it, and that, if Faith fails, Heaven is lost. The equilibrium is visibly delicate beyond the line of safety; danger lurks in every stone."  
—John Hejduk

*GROW A HOUSE, GROW A CITY.* Caracas needs 600,000 low-income homes within the next five years, and the shortage is expected to reach 1.5 million homes by 2020. The poor have self-built housing solutions while faced with difficult geologic conditions such as mudslides and earthquakes that undermine their ability to overcome poverty. Safe government built vertical sites, equipped with plumbing, electricity, communications, and transportation, allow families to self-build homes, businesses, and community services over time into the 30 foot bays of the structure. The project calls upon the transfer of knowledge across the formal and informal divide through the construction workers, which traditionally build the formal city while living in the informal city.

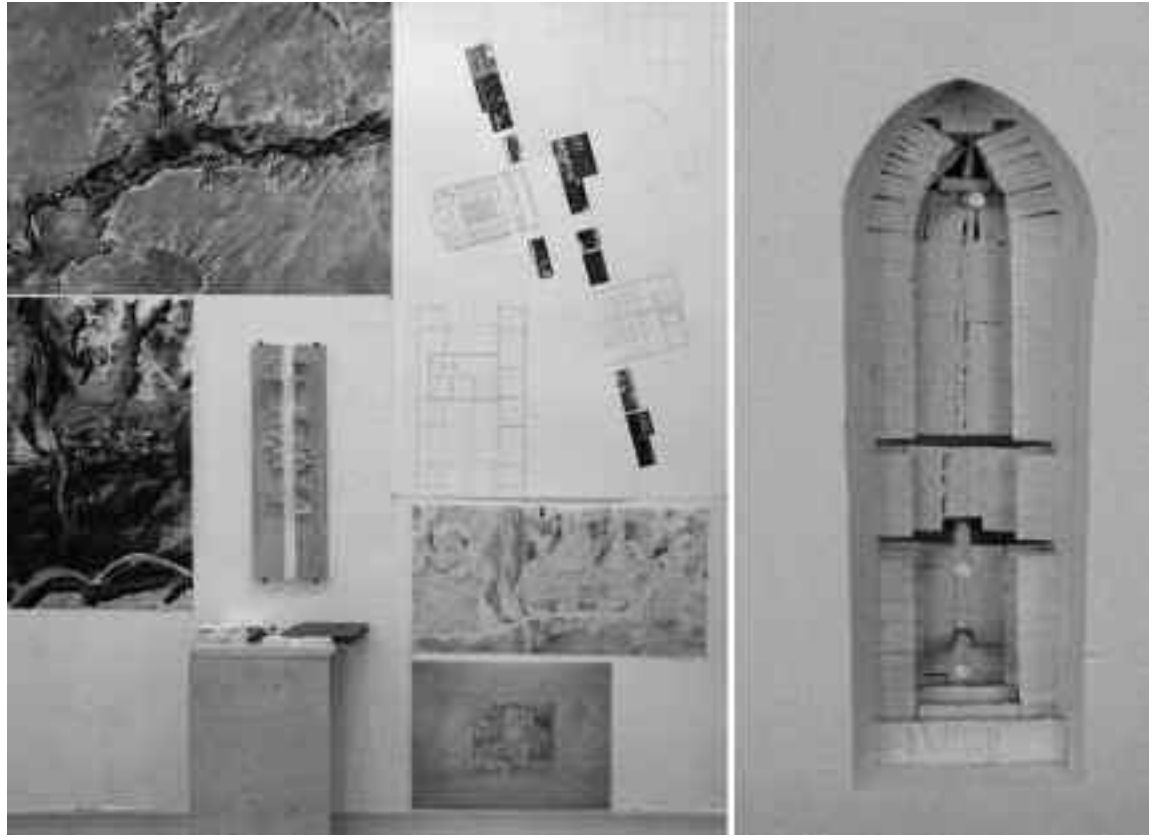
*HEARTH* is a mobile bread oven that serves as a platform for events sited in the community gardens and parks of New York City that range from bread making demonstrations to the distribution/collection of recipes submitted by event participants. HEARTH embodies the spirit of the communal oven but is adapted to exist in the urban environment. HEARTH travels by bicycle and uses wood collected from event sites as its fuel source. A series of work surfaces unfold from the oven that facilitate in the process of demonstration and promote an engaged and informative public space.



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*My thesis is a proposal for a series of prototypical settlements around the shores of the Dead Sea, delineating a path around it. These prototypes, in the form of road stations for both transient travelers and permanent dwellers, integrate wastewater treatment into domestic and public facilities. All the water used on the premises is treated by the use of plants in constructed wetlands and lagoons and released into the sea so as to replenish its declining water level.*

*Camoës Garden + North Area = A New Macau.* Like many other Asian cities, Macau is on the cusp of great change. In the North Area of Macau Peninsula, the answer to this need for development has been generic housing blocks, which deny the specific history and culture of Macau. My proposal gives an alternative to Macau, by having the 125m x 125m block while also grafting the urban fabric of Camoës Garden, an older area of Macau. In doing this, the isolating nature of these blocks is broken and continuity is created with the smaller sub streets, while at the same time maintaining the density of an enclosed housing block.

*A person's engagement or interaction with an architectural space can crystallize in theater or performance.* This can occur from the point of view of a player playing or an audience member viewing. If there is no disconnect between the theater and the play this unity can be achieved. The theater and the play can exist as one entity, founded at the moment of performance. My project has this intention. By at once writing a play and designing a theater, every aspect of the work has become dependent on every other, rendering it a singular work.

*Society's use of technology and digital media is not only changing our understanding of space, but the way we expect to experience it.* The demands of architecture are shifting and the embodied experience of it is getting lost. Looking at patternmaking, the goal was to understand the translation process in which the body's dimensions as well as the three-dimensional information of a garment can coexist on the same plane. While it contains the body's information and affects the human form directly, the garment's also has potential to transcend the body and transform our understanding of space. I chose the New York Public Library and Bryant Park as a site to examine how a technologically embedded garment could change the limits of a library. The garment can offer a new interface that can radically alter the experience of the library.

*THIS IS NOT A SINKHOLE, IT IS A PIPE.* In 2007 and 2010, two 64' wide by 250' deep "sink-holes" formed in Guatemala City. These two points formed a mile-long line parallel to a major expressway. Both holes formed because of a broken black-water pipe in the pumice layer. The controversial notion that these are man-made piping features and not sinkholes, is

radicalized by the corrupted socio-political conditions in Guatemala. Each hole will be perceived as a cenote for a stabilizing water cistern. A tower as high as the cenote is deep would stand adjacent to each hole to house three programs: a leech field system using pumice to purify water, facilities for the San Carlos University School for Engineering, public civic spaces. As new holes are anticipated to form, each tower would participate in a growing and recognizable network of communicable structures that subverts the government's ambivalence to the city's health, and that captivates public imagination.

*Playing Ball and Popping Bubbles: Spatial Provocation through Spheres and Pneumatics.* From the beginning of pneumatic architecture in Boullée's Cenotaph and Montgolfier's balloons, the theme of spatial provocation through spheres and bubbles has been given breath. Experimental architects and artists in the 1960s and 1970s deviated from structural norms and questioned modernist theory; as a result, provocative pneumatic architecture and spherical art works thrived. These ideas are reappearing in new forms. If the return of bubbles and balls in art and architecture are any indication of our current cultural climate, then we are floating on the surface of a new conception of space.

*State.* As we continue to encode our thoughts and actions digitally we lack an intuition for observing the record of our output. Empirically, data has dimensions in the same way that space does, but we rarely understand the equivalency. In the pursuit of the universal exchange of information we no longer occupy a site in the traditional sense. We each occupy and possess a state and create sites of varying size and duration. Our ability to transmit and correlate these states is dependent on a consistent set of tools and structures that appeal to our intuition. Our position is similar to the builders standing in the desert thousands of years ago struggling to give consistent form to communal rites and exchange.

*On the Art of Building Without a Book On Purification.* The expanded definition of architecture that developed in the late 20th and early 21st century that "architecture is everything," is detrimental to architecture itself. The attempt to redefine what architecture is and can be has resulted in a nebulous conception of architecture whose physical manifestation has proven equally as indefinite as that from which it came. Instead, architecture can still be the *art of building*, a return to the immutable constituents, their relationships with each other, and an individual's relationship to them. The project is a bathhouse. It is a sincere attempt to implement material understanding with a program of elutriation.

*Nepantla: The Middle Territories of Similarity.* Our understanding of reality is constructed through our own translation of images, language, and experience. The first marker placed on the Mexican-American border was a loose mound of stones. Next came a string of obelisks, then a wall of steel. The way the border is marked shows in the image of what it asserts. In order to torch open doors through the physical and mental walls, which separate identity into polar difference—from the past into the future—we must first step beyond the line in both directions towards the infinite territories of similarity. To move this borderline to borderland we must erase the line and draw it open, again and forever more.

*Tree and Well—Small London.* Guabuliga, a small village of the West Mamprusi District of Northern Ghana has renamed itself Small London predicated on its participation in the global market and the volume of those who have left in search of education and enterprise. The villages are left with fragments of local, national and international systems at play. The thesis attempts to catalog the residual influences, which have generated a heterochronic settlement and places them alongside personal research and experimentation with local materials in Ghana in attempts to find an entrance point to African development that avoids issues of NGO-isms and humanitarian intervention made without proper understanding of the very local equilibrium. The village serves as a lesson in listening and the sensitivity that is necessary for meaningful interactions between architect and client, between architect and environment, between architect and material. A new methodology of interaction is proposed.

*American monuments have unfixed meaning and are informed by media, history, and conflicting narratives.* The monument is part of the American collective unconscious and is represented in the project through an archipelago of models. These objects and dissections of icons led to the design of four spaces that investigate American memory and contradiction. Located in an apocryphal town called Kodi, the four collaged spaces- the baker/butcher/convenience store, the petro glyph/uranium mine, the Mission/Mormon Church, and the internment camp/reservation, make monuments out of complex and sometimes turbulent histories. The series of models, including the four proposals, represent the Hall of Record, and examine the idea of the index, the relationship between the souvenir and the monumental, and the hand-held and architectural scale.