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## STUDIO COURSES

After a sequence of studies at one-quarter inch and one-half inch scale, of the details of the plinths and entry conditions experienced in the Manhattan architecture we visited, a definitive entry condition and façade concept were formulated by each participant. The idea that an entry condition of the twenty-first century can confront the memory of the archaic temple was the objective. Oedipus Rex, Medea, Notes for an African Orestia, and Diable in Corpo were viewed with a critical eye for a cinema of the ancient world, its literary roots, and the tragedy, in contemporary terms as an incentive for innovation.

### SITE: THE COLONNADES AS TEMPLE IN THE ASTOR PLACE PRECINCT

Each of the studio participants was then asked to confront a given site plan, edited with select structures of the present and previous epochs. The La Grange Terrace structure called the Colonnades on Lafayette street is shown to be a fragment of its original length, which spanned the length of the block as a Nash like urban fabric, which served as counterpoint to the previously existing church façade at its north and its frontal relation to the Astor Library, now the Public Theatre. Considering the transformation of the Colonnades from a fabric building to an object building, with its implicit structural grid etched on the site, the project must address this site area in specific, as well as the larger urban address of the Astor Place precinct in which our school sits as a key templum.

*The tectonic proposal must be verified by the civic program proposed.*

Each project title had to embody the spirit of the project as rooted in conceptual structure, and carry the civic and literary memory that has inspired the project author.

Orders, the literary dimension of form, civic memory, and the dialogue of the proposed to the existing, were the fulcrum of the critique.

## FIFTH YEAR

### THESIS: FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

Professor Anthony Vidler  
 Professor Stephen Rustow  
 Professor Lydia Kallipoliti  
 Professor David Allin

The Thesis studio is organized to support each Fifth Year student in the discovery of a broad topic of research and a valid axis of inquiry that will occupy the entire school year, gradually leading to a concisely defined project in the Spring term. Pedagogically, the claim of the thesis, the refinement of an appropriate working method and the elaboration of a critical position with respect to the research are the most significant goals of the year. This however in no way diminishes the enthusiasm and self-imposed pressure that students bring to the development of an architectural project that attempts to synthesize the year's exploration.

The fall semester began with a series of brief "warm-up exercises" wherein the juxtaposition of a seemingly random group of buildings and objects was intended to help students extrapolate a plausible hypothesis along some clearly identified line of inquiry. The semester was punctuated by a series of rich and suggestive lectures by Visiting Professor Kurt Forster, which provided a succinct overview of relevant methodological questions by tracing the evidence for an operative thesis in a series of projects by architects as diverse as Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright.

As students began to determine their individual research agendas a broad range of subjects emerged; nevertheless, certain underlying similarities could be traced among groups of projects. For example, the significance of built or implicit axial relationships in the natural landscape was explored in settings as varied as the demilitarized zone that divides the two Koreas; the Australian desert site of the first continental telegraph; the regional habitats traversed by the transcontinental Canadian highway; and the trans-hemispheric latitudinal connection that juxtaposes the representational spaces of Lima, Peru with those of Washington D.C. Similarly, a number of research efforts coalesced around the documentation of complex formal patterns in, for example, the traces of tools used both to map and to exploit the plains atop the Ogallala Aquifer; or the transposition of urban grid fragments to the geological strata of the Colorado plateau; or the random web of neighborhood sites where court witnesses have been murdered in Brooklyn. Yet another series of investigations sought to isolate the formal properties and generative potential of various architectonic fragments, in sources that range from the

ecclesiastical structures of the French Gothic to the housing blocks of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Finally, a number of students began to experiment directly with specific materials and to examine their intrinsic formal qualities.

By mid-term review, students began to draw from their research a line of inquiry that would clarify the thesis as a concise claim and define the project to follow. While the range of individual projects is ultimately as diverse as the students themselves, here again one may distinguish three broad types of proposals. First there are those who posit their thesis as a project of documentation in which a deep understanding of a place, process or phenomenon in the real world will be presented in descriptive and analytical terms. Their work has been focused on fashioning the set of documents and the hierarchical organization of material that most effectively conveys the narrative of their understanding. Next are those who see their project as a kind of experiment, or series of experiments, in which the creation of a controlled condition throws into relief the behavior of some variable. Their efforts are concentrated on refining the experimental procedures and the methods of observation so that some predictive understanding of behavior can be presented, whether the subject be light, structural stability or interactivity with virtual stimuli. Finally, there are those who are determined to push their inquiry to a conclusion in which a clear design project is discerned, with the questions of site, program, form and materiality all embodied in a suite of conventional architectural drawings and models.

In all of these theses there is strong evidence of structured design thought; taken together they document the breadth and diversity of interests that animate this graduating class.



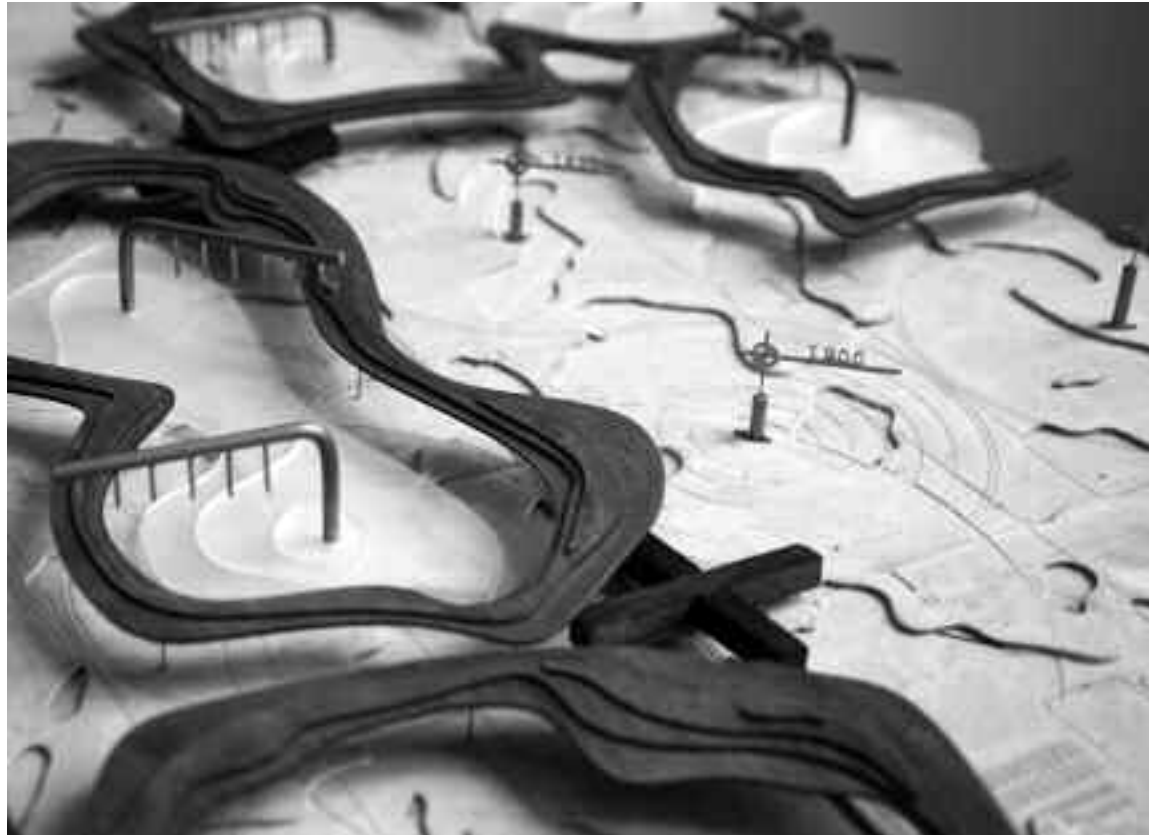
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Thesis statements include:

*de facto/de jure neutrality.* This thesis proposes to define spatial neutrality through a reinterpretation of Yeon Pyeong Island in South Korea as an extension of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ is a 4km wide strip of uninhabitable void across the Korean Peninsula that serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea since the Armistices Agreement in 1953. Unlike the barbed-wire fence of the DMZ, a coastal border is constantly exposed to various infringements that diminish the clarity of the demarcation. For the past decades, violations of the border has threatened the island with political reterritorialization, and this thesis explores a new interpretation of the island in political, social, and spatial contexts. By introducing a dialectical relationship between a mother and an infant during pre and postnatal periods as a metaphorical parallel to a relationship between North and South Korea before and after the division, this thesis provokes a reconciliation of binary conditions through architecture.

*Two places are one, one place is two.* The ground is constructed. Innumerable pieces of earth form together to create a vast composite whole. Its vastness cannot be captured by human limits. It must be broken down to be understood. What new terrain is formed when these now disparate pieces are put back together again? Through conflating two sites, one is transposed on to the other in order to produce a new composite. This new terrain is the product of three imposed limits: an idea of measure, an idea of extraction, an idea of re-composition. These limits are explored in two separate case studies. Both studies conflate a site in the wilderness and a site in the city. One takes place immediately in space, while the other takes place over a much longer time.

*A Summer House.* "Truly, as is often said, the lessons of our childhood make a wonderful impression on our memories, for I am not sure that I could remember all the discourse of yesterday, but I should be much surprised if I forgot any of these things which I have heard very long ago." —Plato's *Timaeus*, 26b-c, trans. Jowett

*Death and the idea of Mexico—Memento mori.* Mexico is currently subject to a civil war. Individual existence is conditioned by the permanent possibility of Death. The project begins with an analysed four architectural artifacts, which are related to Mexico's sacred totems: the Templo Mayor was the navel of the Aztec cosmology; the flag rises up on the main square, the Zocalo; the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a sanctuary to contemplate the figure of the Virgin; the house of the Mexican architect Luis Barragan is a refuge connected to the sky. Four sanctuaries of Mexican identity are designed: a rose garden, a crypt, a tower of rest,

a translation chamber. The passage from the original grid to a new system of projection activates sites in the city. The sanctuaries become an archipelago of places for contemplation of life.

*PROLOGUE/PROJECT/IDEA.* The genesis of my thesis began with an investigation into the Overland Telegraph Line constructed in 1872, which ran from the Southern to the northern most tip of the country. A straight line that cut through the heart of Australia's vast desert interior connected the country via underwater cable to Java, Indonesia and then across land through Asia and the Middle East into Great Britain. My thesis design is five theatres that rest on a voided site in the city of Darwin, in the Northern Territory of Australia. Situated in the most northern and tropical end of the continent at the end of the telegraph line. When Darwin was bombed by the Japanese in 1942, The Overland Telegraph Line was severed by the citizens of the city out of fear that this infrastructure would be used to take over the country in the event of an invasion. With the cutting of the line the country's voices were severed and history was dismembered and disembodied. The theatre therefore functions as an archive of memory, a site for stories dispossessed and those yet to be written.

*Hospedaje/Pedaje (Lodging/Bridge Toll).* Within the narrow sliver of forest that remains between South America's largest slum and one of Rio de Janeiro's wealthiest neighborhoods, my thesis tests the claim that architecture can bring together members of socio-economically disparate societies and facilitate their mutual examination. This has been achieved through the design of a public promenade, which wraps the northern edge of the favela Rocinha, to be used both as a key circulation route for favela dwellers as well as a path leading to the entrance of a hostel designed to house outsiders.

*The projected body in the site of the un-scaled.* The thesis investigates the capacity of forgotten spaces of the city to expand an understanding of perception in the body and the mind. The proposal spans several sites beneath Manhattan Bridge to create platforms for performance of distinct spacing and timing that reintroduce the projected body to this site of the un-scaled. Through its uncanny proximity to structures of transition and movement, it is a constant reminder of the proscenium of the city upon which real and imagined worlds play out.

*NYCHA's social housing towers that line the Lower East Side of Manhattan.* It proposes a method for densifying and diversifying the projects through the insertion of a new layer of programs that are built in such a way that redefines and reinterprets the urban space around the towers. In doing so, it deals with the identified issues of connectivity, engagement of the surrounding neighborhood, variety and hierarchy in public open space, which result in the creation of a new identity for the superblock.

*Creative destruction in modern urban development.* The study of Le Corbusier's Radiant City plans informed a research and design project based in the outskirts of Beijing, China. The project questions the trends of motorization, consumerism and westernization in the Chinese cityscape, proposing instead an urban scheme that derives from the programmatic and transportation based qualities of the site itself. The site is a circular railroad test track, two miles in diameter, inciting an opportunity to design an ideal city and an architecture that corresponds to that ideal.

*Library: Inside Out.* The contemporary state of the library is in question with the advent of digital technology. Now, the library is everywhere. The search for information is no longer confined to the walls of the library and does not stop when these walls are closed. My thesis proposes to attach a new layer of function according to the current social and technical habits of searching for information. It will provide 24-hour accessibility in an open transient space that connects to library resources, the fabric of the city, and the network of the world. Three architectural elements—roof, ground, and wall—are designed to create an attachment inverting a part of the library to blur interior and exterior boundaries.

*Cultivating the Map.* The way we live leaves traces on the Earth. The tools we use to situate ourselves in the landscape leave marks and inscriptions of these processes on the ground, becoming a direct reflection of the society that formed it. The map acts as record of these inscriptions. It is an outcome of a gathering of elements for the construction of a narrative about the site's reality. This thesis finds itself in the territory of the map, proposing that the map is also a generative tool. Using the drawing as fertile ground, this thesis attempts a predictive organization of territory through the design of four new tools for the management of natural resources in the Great Plains, a region threatened with the cumulative adverse effects of industrial farming. Each tool proposes new ways of drawing the land and acts as an instrument that reveals the landscape's new potential.