

# STUDIO COURSES

## FOURTH YEAR

### DESIGN IV: FALL SEMESTER

Professor Susannah Drake  
Professor Sean Sculley  
Professor Lydia Xynogala

Nature of Urbanity

A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time, a Course of Action

This studio takes its name from the 1994 compilation of essays by John Brinkerhoff Jackson entitled "A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time." Jackson posits that in our ever evolving urban, industrial and post-industrial environments there is an increased importance of ritual, routine, and schedule over the creation of more permanent place making. This idea, while somewhat reductive, is useful because it calls in to question the nature of urbanity.

At a time when the impacts of climate change necessitate a radical rethinking of the role of landscape ecology and infrastructure within the city, the qualities of human experience cannot be lost. Historically cities developed as places of commerce, removed from their agrarian surroundings where goods and services were exchanged. Location related to power, protection and resources. Geography played a critical role in the site, spatial definition and form of cities. The studio is an introduction to the relationship between urban design and the larger scale landscape systems that shaped them. Truly interdisciplinary design thinking requires consideration of the nuances of how scale and operation impact process, product and experience. Architecture, landscape architecture and urban design disciplines may suggest particular formal and material characteristics. Regional geography defined by physical characteristics such as topography, climate, soils, water flow, bathymetry, geology developed over thousands (in some cases millions) of years. An urban transportation system or economic development plan may suggest a logic to maximize efficiency in movement of people and goods. At the scale of a building, the mediation between the social and physical context that occurs through form, space and materials can define human experience.

The studio explores opportunities to transform the experience of the city by rethinking how increased climate change impacts might help us design a reflexive urban design strategy that reflects cultural, economic, political, formal, and ecological forces. The New York City Commissioners Plan of 1811 was radical in its rethinking of the nature of the city: it was designed to maximize efficiency in economic and traditional urban terms. Perhaps we can consider an equivalent rethinking of the nature of the city in the age of climate change.

### DESIGN IV: SPRING SEMESTER

Professor Diane Lewis  
Visiting Professor Daniel Meridor  
Visiting Instructor Peter Schubert, FAIA  
Instructor Mersiha Veledar  
Assistant Professor Visiting Daniel Sherer, Ph.D.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY STUDIO  
YOUNG KIESLER RESEARCH AWARD STUDY IN  
CONJUNCTION WITH THE NEW MUSEUM INVITATION  
TO PARTICIPATE IN IDEAS CITY.  
THE BOWERY: ARCHITECTURE AND CONTINUUM  
THE CITY AS CIVIC ART WORK

Each student proposed a civic institution for the Bowery with a view on civic program for the twenty first century as integral to site and memory. The study to derive the frame for each proposal integrated the following drawings:

1. MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE BOWERY: A minimum of three eras of architectural form and civic program were drawn in plan at 32nd and eighth inch scales. These drawings were overlaid to see the transformation of the city as it manifests in the Bowery in order that each participant to designate and derive a site condition of great import in the memory of the Bowery.
2. LEXICON OF PLAN SYNTAX: Each participant made a "lexicon" drawing of the unique and memorable elements of plan syntax they discovered within their plan morphology drawings. These elements became a text for the spatial organization and elements of the intervention.
3. SELECT ARTIST OF THE BOWERY: A map of the studios and domiciles of the great artists who worked on the Bowery was an element of research in this project. Each student selected one or more artist and explored their work, the titles of their work and their writings to inspire the project program, content and form.
4. SELECT EXISTING CONDITIONS MODEL: Each participant constructed a one eighth inch scale model of the existing conditions of their site of focus. This model was made as a given condition in which the elements and disposition of the field of civic activity were positioned, sized, and derived in form and relationship to the city fabric and the internal demands of the proposed program and spatial objective. The project is directed to an architecture that addresses the city as a spatial and a temporal field or still life, a civic spatial construct integrating art, humanist program, and the architect's author's hypothesis of the authentic civic memory embodied by the Bowery. In order to introduce the students to a more advanced understanding of architecture as opposed to the design of a singular internalized building.

5. TEXT/ORATION ON THE BOWERY—  
ARCHITECTURE AND CONTINUUM

Having begun with Freud's quote on the city as a psychological phenomena as opposed to simply a dense human inhabitation—where all epochs of existence are simultaneously present from the earliest to the most contemporary—each student was asked to write answers to a series of prompts which were filmed mid semester for a video presented in the lobby of the New Museum for the Ideas City festival.

To complete the text developed throughout the semester for the final project presentation, each student concluded the text of their earlier writing that is in the video of their work with conclusive formulations.

## FIFTH YEAR

### THESIS: FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER

Professor David Turnbull  
Professor Hayley Eber  
Professor Urtzi Grau

We are proud of our students, their fortitude, their determination, and their desire for creative freedom.

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.

2013 Thesis Proposals:

*BLACKOUT.* The BLACKOUT reinstates a mode of being that is at the very beginning of Modernity—coinciding with the advent of electricity as a utility—but at the same time retains all of the memory, experience, history and infrastructure that was created since Modernism.

*On Domesticity and En/gendered Space.* Classifications of gender and typologies of architecture within the site of domesticity create preconceived notions. Evoking the tensions that reside unseen, this thesis locates inherent relationships underwriting societal convention providing the disruption necessary towards de-narrativization.

*The Education of a Convict.* An extension of the university shall be designed for the education of the convict. Existing educational facilities within New York City shall act as the site of a newly implemented prison system where the perimeter wall of the prison is transparent and permeable.

*Stadia de facto.* The political barrier has suppressed sport activities in Kosovo. The design of a modern football stadium with all facilities can counter that barrier and attract young talents, educate, train and form them into young ambassadors of the nation.

*Exactitude.* A reading of Venice from which to draw an indeterminate space of architectural history, whose architectures are mediated by the aqueous.

*The Manhattan Project.* An investigation into the creation and deployment of the Atomic Bomb in the form of an archive containing a 'black-box' investigates conditions of disparate scales, invisible systems and pre-figured knowledge implicated therein.

*The Schizophrenic Memory of Chinatown, Manhattan.* Current historic preservation emphasizes faciality therein constructing national memory built by fragments. Schizophrenia as an analogy describes the postmodern society. The semiotics of preserved urban space become socio/political instruments to establish a fabricated memory for the collective consciousness.

*Warfare—Welfare.* Within the municipal boundaries of Jaffa—Tel-Aviv, this project explores and reveals the ways in which the Israeli architectural phenomenon of Built Civil Defense has constructed an additional, unique order of the urban landscape. A spatial and programmatic transformation is proposed.

*Shadow/Echo.* Architecture as urban instrument, medical patient and crucible of alchemy, and paralleled by the construction of traditional and non-traditional human-scaled instruments. This thesis strives to reveal layers of knowledge and experience that are otherwise undetected or ignored.

*Reconstructing the Banal: A venture into the disputed Bakassi Peninsula.* By engaging tools residing in the mundane: tales, the radio, the bamboo raft, and through subterfuge, this project attempts to expose, disseminate and inspire conflict and problem solving as local and collective possibilities.

*What's the Matter, Water, Mother.* Most architecture is conceived without duration, at a single time, as a single building, independently authored. Experiments in clay, steel, and typographic printing serve to re-frame architecture in terms of the choreography and language of material construction.

*Screens: A Saturnalia.* The thesis proposal is a masque for the East Village inspired by Jean Genet's play, "The Screens." Assembled from the city's existing screen vocabulary and positioned before its CCTV feeds, these screens aim to subvert the anonymity of our panoptic supervisors, providing a space for non-performance.

*The Reemergence of a Dynamic Landscape.* This project is a response to the negligent policies concerning the devastation of the region's eco-system. New systems of infrastructure directly addressing agricultural production and water control will re-envision the area's commerce and ecology.

*Pike National Forest: Firebreak.* The firebreak, situated on the boundary of the forest and the suburbs of Colorado Springs, is comprised of housing for those disposed of their homes by the fire and a bio-fuel furnace that utilizes harvested underbrush from unburned areas of the forest to generate electrical power.

*The Forest and the City: Houston, Texas.* My project attempts to restore the prairie and create a continuous urban forest in Houston, Texas. This strategy forms new spaces in the urban fabric and strives to achieve equilibrium between the city and its natural environment.

*The City Of Tomorrow and Its Burning.* My project is a study of urban conflagration using the idealized site and historic intersections of Le Corbusier's unrealized project, the Contemporary City, as a means to investigate the spectacle and transformative properties of fire through visual forms of media and architectural representation.

*Customizable Obsolescence.* Built within infrastructure designed to three-dimensionally print and erase [dissolve] the rapidly changing desires of its fashionable inhabitant, this city provides a glimpse into a future sustainable consumerist settlement.

*新星/Shinsei: The Rehabilitation of a Ghost Island.* 新星/Shinsei is a graphic narrative that embodies the transformation of Hashima Island (near Nagasaki, Japan) from a bustling urban environment to an abandoned coalmine town to a dynamic physics institute.

*Superhero in the City.* The characters of the Superhero and The City have been re-imagined and re-drawn by different teams and generations of writers and artists who have needed to address the concerns and fantasies of a popular audience. Manhattan, then, is the locus for an urban mythical imagination in America.

*The Antipode.* This is a study on the surface of the Earth, viewed from the satellite image and imprinted on the mind. The lens through each antipodal site reveals relations across the globe that creates a critical geography, one that negates political boundaries and instead reveals a new spatial hierarchy.

*Terrain Vague.* Drawing on the dynamics found in postmodern dance, a site-specific spatiotemporal performance is constructed for Detroit's Michigan Central Station. The abandoned train station is a 'terrain vague'—an expectant void embodying the latent energy and possibility similar to a dancer at rest.

*A New Kind of CAD.* I propose a computational environment where the materials of architecture can be played with in a casual way. By assembling structures and seeing how they respond to different loads, users will gain insight into these materials, opening up new possibilities for structural design.

*Collective Centralities.* These interventions address institutionalized segregation, redirecting focus across the sides of the Aker River in Oslo, Norway. Three main geographical highpoints within Oslo provide visual connection, highlighting the city as a whole, while a library of multi-scale interventions provides opportunities for playful and inventive participation.

*Hell's Gate.* This thesis proposes to reconstruct the Hell's Gate whirlpool that existed once in the East River. The forgotten mythology of maritime New York is unleashed through a selection of site-specific dramatic scenes and the design of fountains for the city.

*A Tactical Vision for the Arctic: Barrow, Alaska [71.3003° N, 156.7358° W].* Through the use of proposed instruments, such as re-purposed center pivot irrigation systems to spray sea-water to create ice island habitats and research stations, the results of atmospheric warming prevalent in the Arctic might be halted.

*Areas Under the Curve: A Methodology for Using Flat Planar Material.* A systematic approach can be taken to planning, tectonics, and construction where no material is wasted. Both the positive and negative areas of a shape can be used for elements ranging in scale from architecture to furniture.

*Foro Breuckelen.* Using Rome and NYC as a lens, the power of civic institutions within the framework of Brooklyn explores the impact of a contemporary forum in relation to natural tectonic landforms.

*Generative Architecture.* Can architecture be a cultural agent for both creators and audience, both in the process of creation and through architecture's role in social movements? It thus cultivates an attitude that can open a space apart from subservient culture and external repression.

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| 1 Design IV, Fall   | 4 Design IV, Spring | 6 Thesis, Spring |
| 2 Design IV, Fall   | 5 Thesis, Spring    | 7 Thesis, Spring |
| 3 Design IV, Spring |                     |                  |