

DEGREE BOOK

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ABSTRACT

I approached the M.S. AAD program with equal parts enthusiasm and skepticism. To my relief, upon entry into the program any doubts I held were quickly assuaged. Through the time I've spent at Cornell, the combination of core classes, electives, and extracurricular work have produced a change in perspective with regards to the place of architecture and agency both within academia and the professional world.

PRE-ENROLLMENT

Upon admission to the M.S. AAD program, my chief concern with the was that it didn't seem like the perfect fit. In fact, When applying to graduate programs, I took the care to avoid the infamous M. Arch II for a number of reasons. Having reached a level of contentment with my own skills as a designer and lacking a deep interest in representation, my chief objectives were to achieve a higher understanding discourse and theory, improve my critical reasoning and writing skills, and come to a better understanding of the differences between academia and the profession. After having suffered through a B. Arch degree and a number of years working professionally, I had already come to the conclusion that the program's chief conceit, an additional 3 semesters of studio, would largely function as ancillary and best and a distraction at worst from my actual goals.

Still, in spite of my misgivings, I tried to keep an open mind about what the M.S. AAD degree could offer. After all the open house demonstrated that the program was directed by a number of promising individuals working on fascinating projects within a state of the art facility. It seemed a shame to abstain from it simply because of a vague sense of unease and an unwillingness to readopt a student lifestyle. So I adjusted my worldview. In spite of my disinterest in studio, ultimately the admission period served as a reminder that theory within architecture within cannot be divorced from practice. Form gives weight to theory, which in turn serves as a justification for the importance of design. Studying either in isolation wouldn't offer the level of insight that I thought would be essential in conceptualizing architecture.

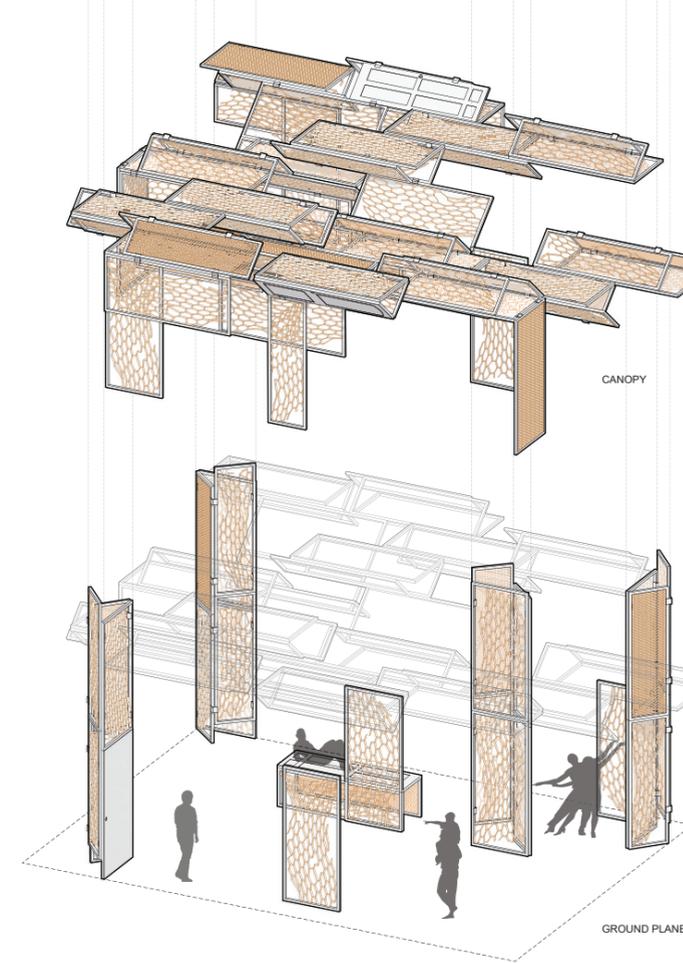
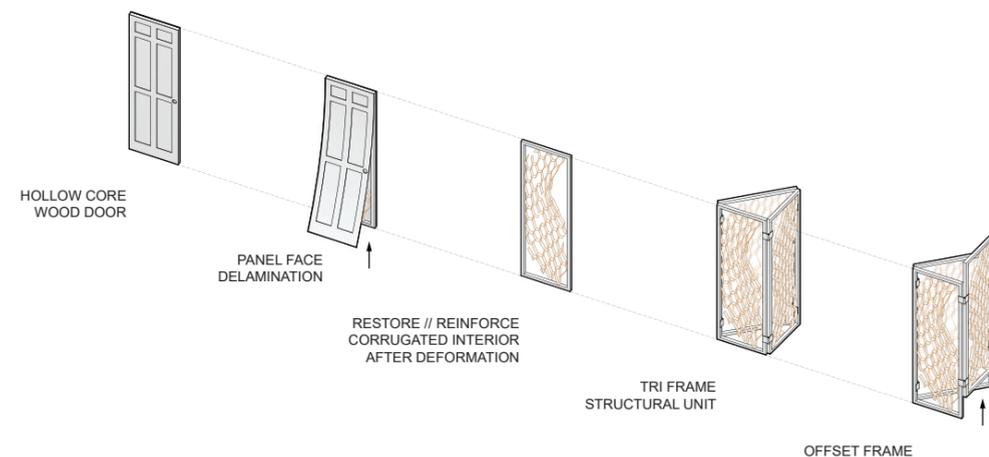
This is all to say that even before arriving at school, this program provoked a fair amount of reflection which, yielding a shift in perspective. This trend would continue over the subsequent months with my worldview being repeatedly challenged as it was forced to evolve.

SUMMER 2019

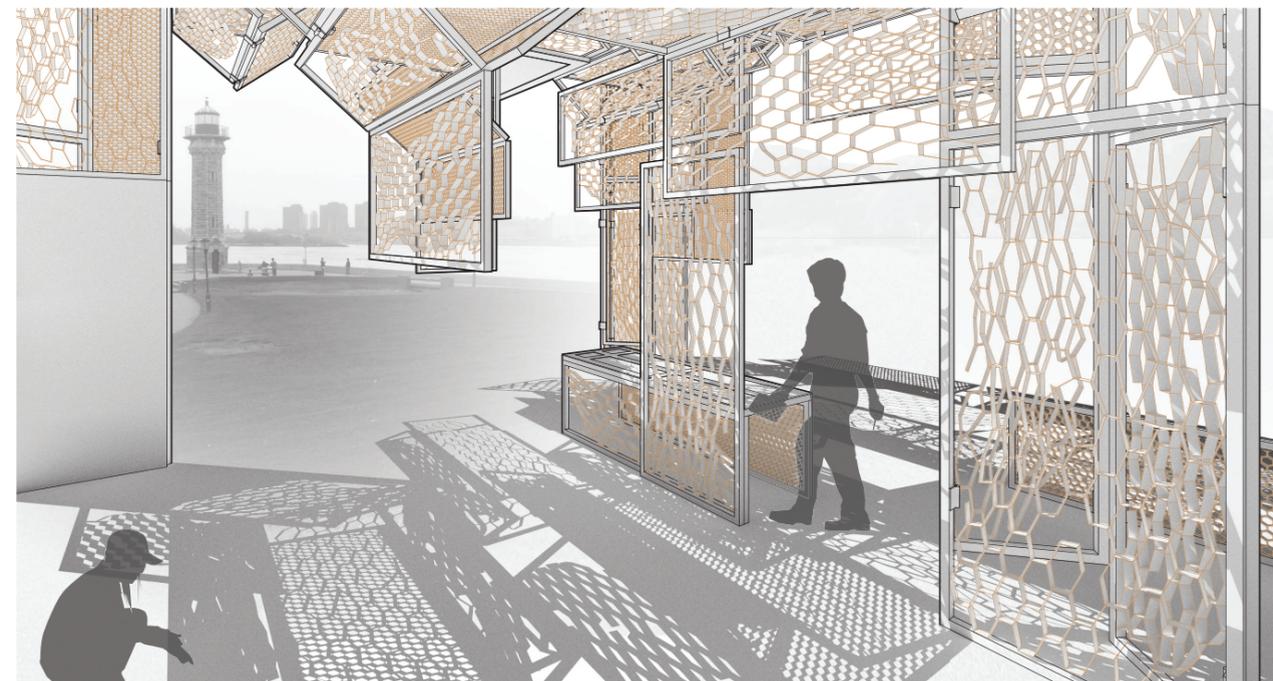
MODULE I

The first of these new challenges would be against my initial and fairly dim conceptions of studio. As mentioned previously, my renewed interest in education failed to spark a rekindled enthusiasm for the late nights, early mornings, and seemingly endless hours of primping and preening that traditionally comes with studio. While later classes would give words to validate my concerns, the summer semester in NYC nearly changed my opinion alone in the skill and proficiency with which it was executed. Consisting of a set of 3 relatively short design studios, each module within the summer program helped give a new understanding of what studio could be.

The initial and by shortest module sought to reconsider the relationship between architecture and materiality. In evaluating the processes by which architecture is propagated through the use of non-recyclable materials, this assignment sought to examine the history and aggregation of an otherwise discarded object unit such as yoga mats, plastic straws, animal bones, etc. To my dismay this manifested in the design of a pavilion as a conceptual entry for the Roosevelt Island City of Dreams competition. Based on my own experiences with competitions as a process and pavilions as a medium, they seem to make an excellent grounds for a level of innovation and experimentation which is promptly ignored as soon as money and practicality are understood as limiting factors. This module, unfortunately, did little to dissuade me of that opinion. In spite of my dissatisfaction, however, much of the contours of the project proved invaluable. In particular the visit to the Sims recycling center proved fairly insightful as to the failings of modern recycling processes. Unexpectedly, after the conclusion of the semester, Wendy Neue, the owner of the plant, would offer some insight into land development practices which would help inform later study.

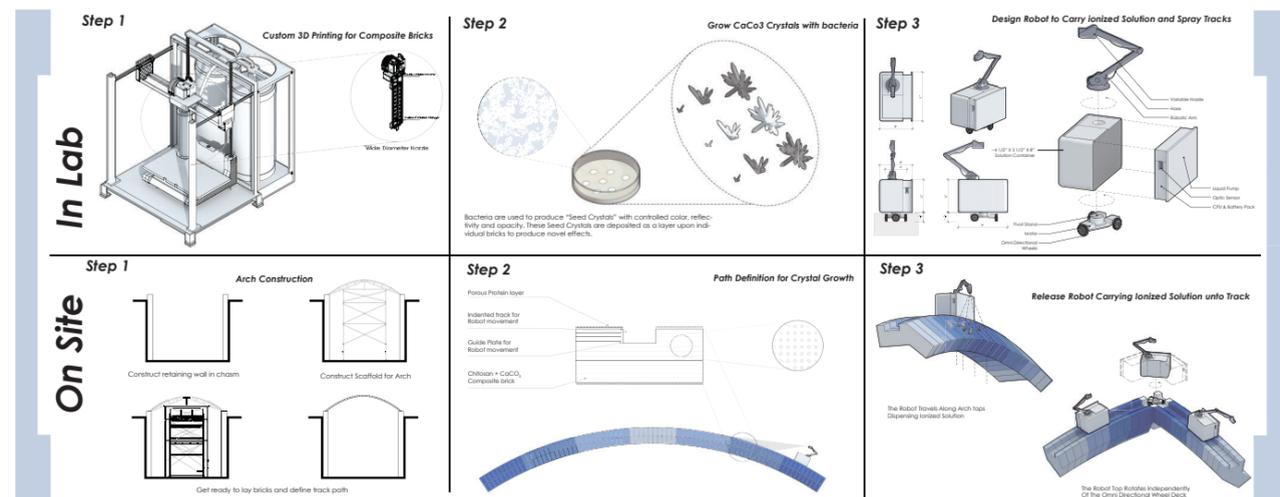


This project sought to deconstruct and aggregate hollow core wood doors, producing a graphic quality by exposing their corrugated cardboard interiors. While I initially proposed a more modest design, it was ultimately recommended that I ignore the material constraints presented by the degradation of cardboard in wind and rain in favor of a more bold design examining the potential light and shadow effects in a screening condition. In spite of the decent results, the recommendation that I ignore research coupled with the lack of time to adequately find a solution satisfied both the visual and material characteristics of the project ultimately led to a personally unsatisfying result. Still, the chance to develop grasshopper skills in this project at least proved valuable.



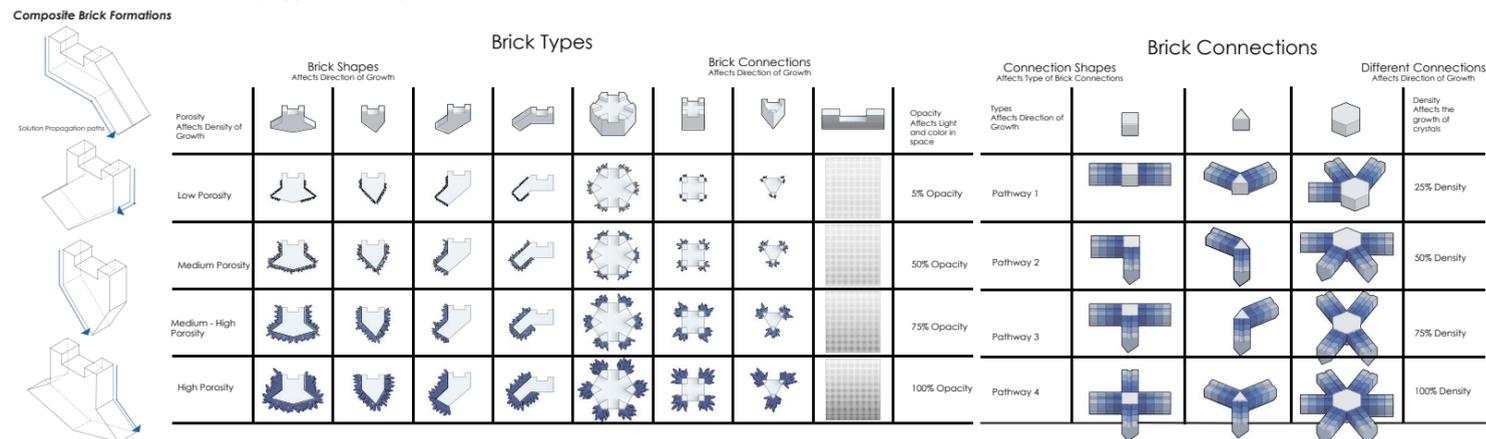
MODULE 2

The second module of the summer program was perhaps the most well informed and well-structured studio I have had the pleasure of working in. Consisting of a in depth study of materials and research, this studio offered the chance to research the properties of a material compound in scientific papers with the intent of extracting a mode of design from its associated processes, proposing not only a project, but also its mode of construction and development. While the first module was a consideration of ecology and the reuse of and aggregation of material units, this module considered the chemical potential for constructing novel forms through the exploration of new materials. Hence, while this project too ultimately amounted to a pavilion, this time it was supported by a rigid backbone of research into biology, robotics, and the broader lifecycle by which a given material could be manufactured to produce space . In addition, this project was the first instance in which I had the pleasure of collaborating with a group, which doubtlessly contributed to the sense of exploration, depth of study, and alacrity with which I feel with which this project was completed.

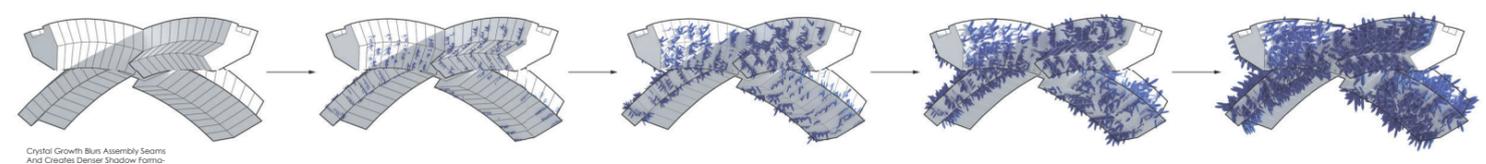


This collaborative project examined the potential in the implementation of Calcium Carbonate as a building material. Standing as the common chemical compound of chalk, limestone, travertine, and marble, the manipulation of CaCO₂ often leaves material runoff in the form of waste products such as marble dust. This project proposes that such material runoff could be recycled through its recombination with Chitosan (the polysaccharide which already serves to help differentiate chalk from its more stable cousins) in a specially designed 3D printer, which we had the opportunity to design, which could produce various bricks and forms of various shapes and sizes. These specialized brick allow for the interaction with a specialized robot which sprays them with an otherwise ionizing solution, which, in turn, provokes a reaction within the calcium carbonate bricks in the growth of crystals. This leads to a formal transformation over the extended life of the project governed by the geometry of the individual brick selected from a broader palette. As a critique it was noted however, that said growth also holds the potential for programmatic implications. Through the long term growth of calcium carbonate structure, a form holds the potential to be structurally reinforced over a long period of time, potentially allowing the same structure to have an increasing maximum structural capacity over its lifetime.

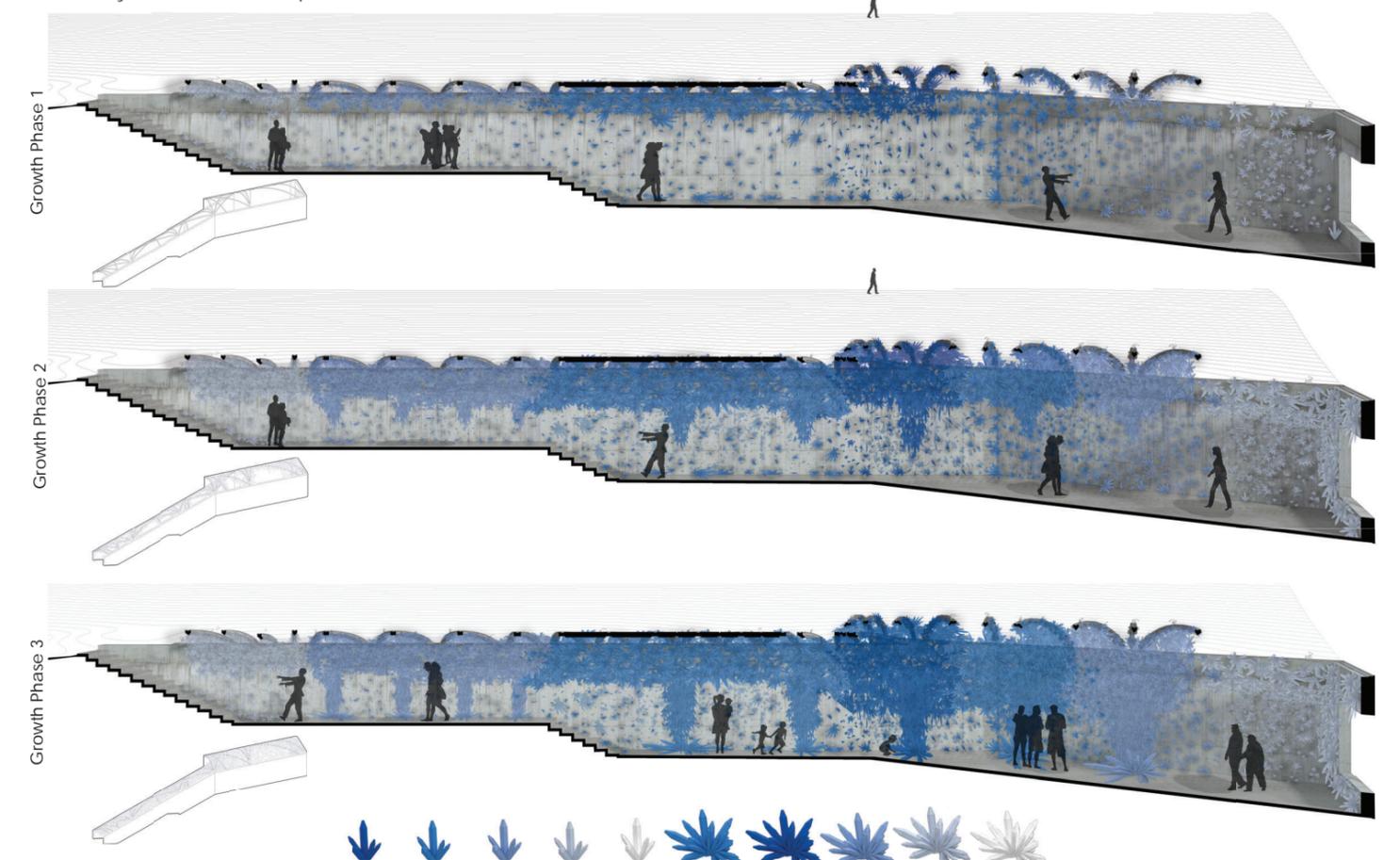
Composite Bricks : Making, Types and Layout



Structure : Growth over time



Process of Crystal Growth and Multiplication

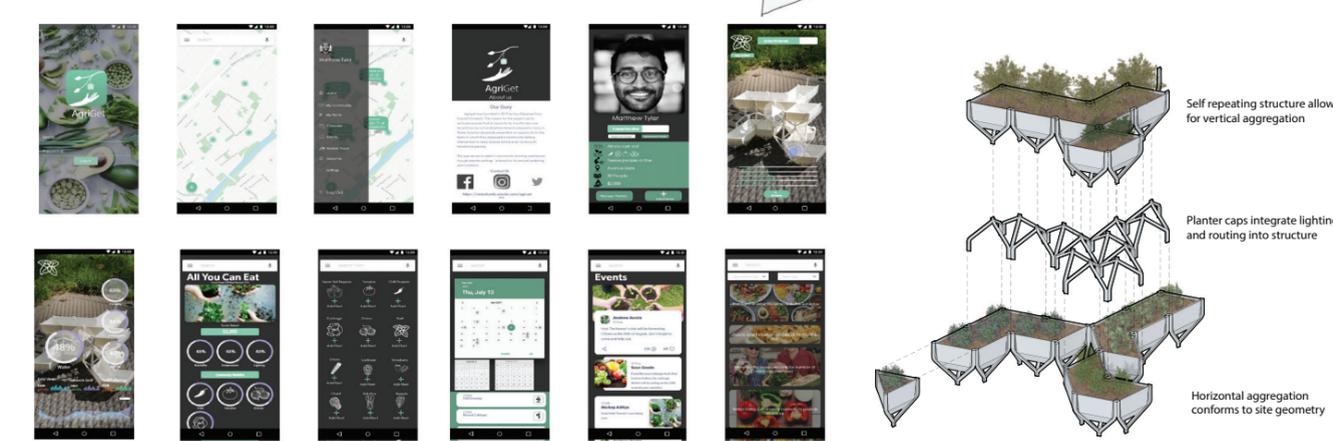
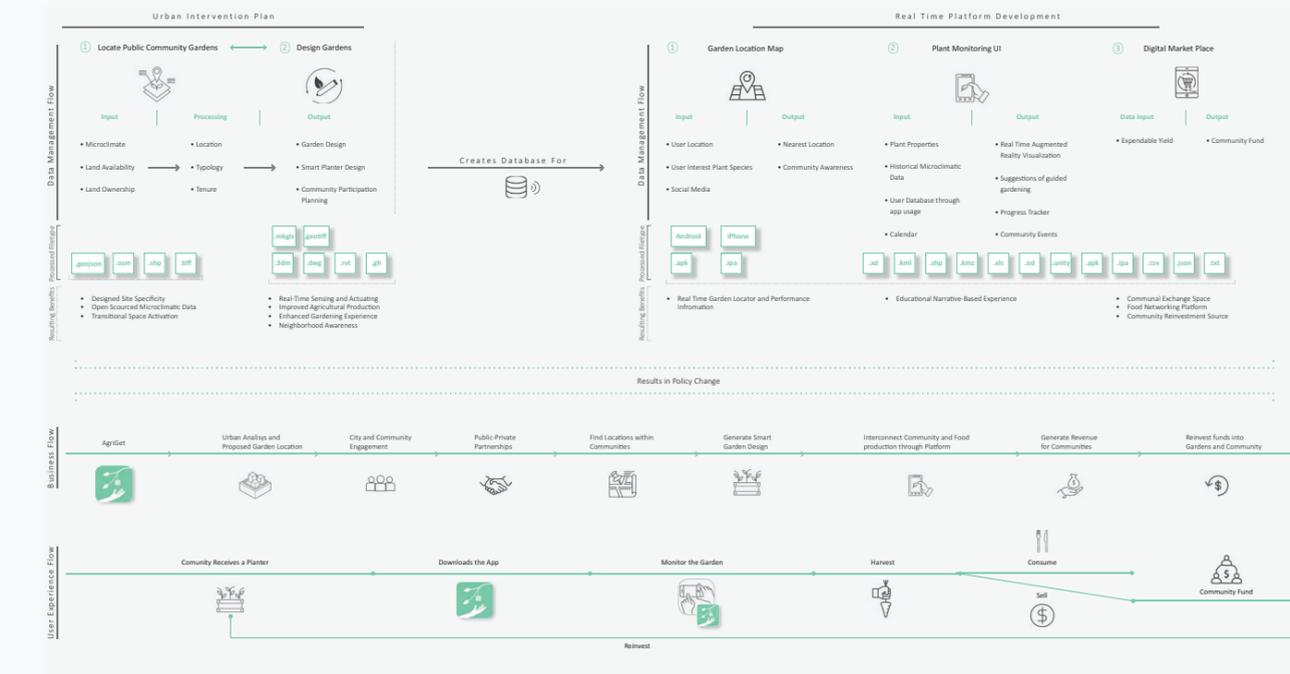


MODULE 3

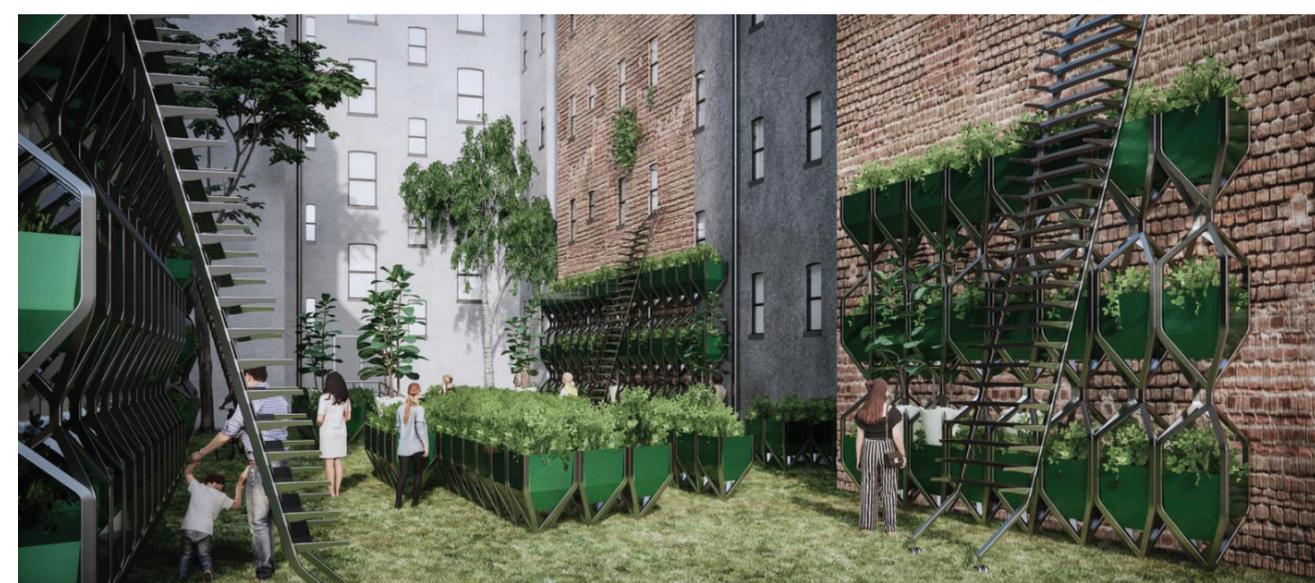
This collaboration would continue into the third module of the summer, which might likely have been the most challenging studio I've taken part in. Beyond formal considerations, this module demanded that our team not only design the parameters of what our project would function, but also the process by which the construction of this project this project could lead to a shift in policy and attitudes towards space. The difficulty in this studio which arose from functioning outside the purely formal conceptions in which we typically function were compounded by two additional factors: First, the project demanded research into open source land use city map databases, while in terms of representation, the final review made use of a video which was to include animation, music, walkthroughs, and even virtual reality as a mode of communicating the project, all modes of expression which I had found to previously be less common within school. In particular, the conception of architecture as a political actor capable of shaping policy in the city was one that I found particularly striking.

More than any other studio, perhaps, this final module beckoned to a set of recurring questions which I had previously considered resolved: What is the end goal of architecture? How is that it achieved? To what extent can the architect as an agent achieve these goals? My sense at the time was that, in answering this set of questions, my attempts to assess the relationship between theory and the profession would also be resolved. Additional studies in the summer seminars at the time certainly seemed to support this belief. From Keller Easterling's examination of Free Zones, Extrastatecraft, and Urban Multipliers¹ to the discussions with Joan Okman about the transformation in conceptualizing the city from Robert Moses² to Lewis Mumford³, Jane Jacobs⁴, and Rem Koolhaas⁵, my growing feeling was that in theory, there was some unacknowledged force looming in the peripheries. The task in moving forward, therefore, would be identifying what the looming entity could be, and how the architect could function within a space of broader considerations. The location of agency within architecture became my chief concern.

In pursuit of this goal, I signed up for a broad number of courses providing different perspectives in architecture, and anticipated travel to Ithaca.

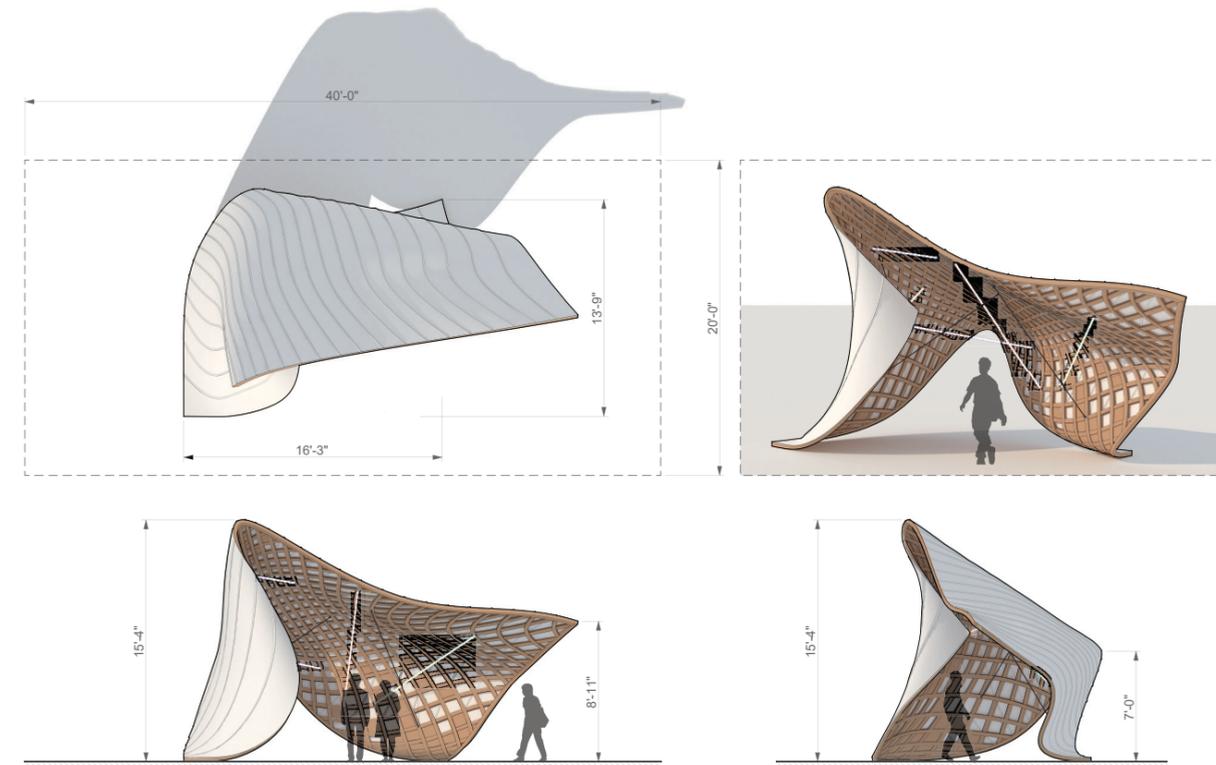
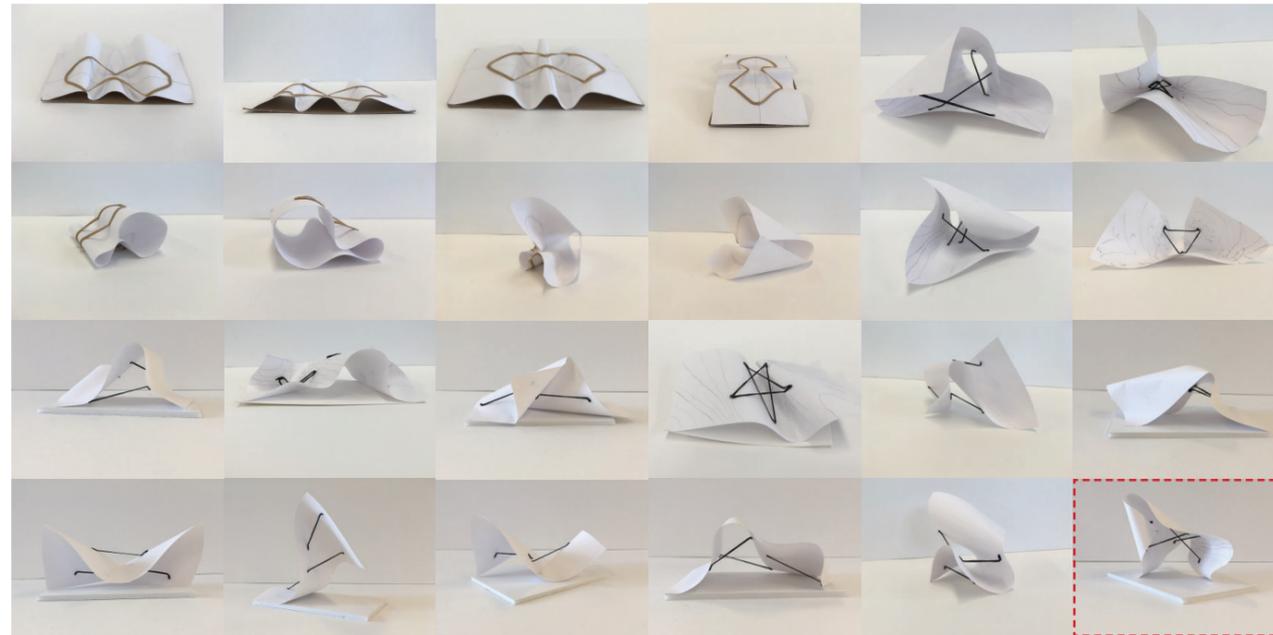


AgriGet, as it was conceived serves as a project which proposes that unoccupied private space could be used as a site for an urban farming initiative which could tackle the need for increased nutrition within selected New York localities. These aggregate micro farming units would co-exist with a community organizing app which would not only allow individuals to organize important planting and harvesting dates but also trade and barter harvested plants and monitor local climate conditions by pairing the app with smart planter technology. Ultimately the goal of this project would be a shift in policy that would change how cities approach unoccupied land and transitional spaces, using them as a means of public engagement rather than allowing them to languish as owned, yet empty fenced off areas



FALL 2019

Of my time in studio during this semester, comparatively little can be said on the ideological front. As a studio focusing on the interplay between structural and architectural thought, the Rational Formfinding Studio largely examined how the inception of architectural forms could be derived by from the behavior of physical models in the vein of Frei Otto or Antoni Gaudi's model tests. In this, much of the intellectual rigor came from a study of precedents through a series of tests, observations, and modes of representation. While I did develop technically, as an individual in the process of questioning the efficacy of creating space with purely formal intentions, I can't claim that this studio did much to answer the questions I sought to pursue. Still, as a perspective which was perhaps the most "architectural" in disposition of the courses I took over the semester, it nonetheless provided essential context for the views I would come to develop, in large part as a product of the electives which I partook.



Rational Form Finding. Beginning with a series of conceptual models based on a number of precedents including Eladio Dieste's La Gaviotta and the Shigeru Ban & Frei Otto collaboration, the Japan Expo 2000, this project sought to create form based on the principles of structurally generated form. After a period of investigation, I eventually came to be interested in surface deformation through the application of tensioned lines, a structural principle present in the precedents I studied. While the precedents I observed used tensioned lines as primary and secondary structural support however, my project sought to define its shape by applying tensioned lines to a flexible wood lattice structure, creating a shelter without the need for a crane or expensive materials. Though the varied modes of configuration which tension lines could be applied, each structure could respond to its site. This was explored through numerous paper studies. Though simple, the pin connection capable within lattice structures in particular served as an important tool in not only creating structural flexibility, but also in serving as an intermediate between the tensioned lines and the project's need to function as a surface. In its final stages, this project was conceptually deployed as a shelter for the bus stop in college town circle, a location which allowed the project's form to respond to a trio of intersecting pathways and conditions.

Of this triumvirate of electives, perhaps the most kindred to studio might've been the one on design in real estate. In demonstrating the monetary value achieved through architectural intervention, this course drew the heavy distinction between the production of a space and place. This binary would prove essential in my reconceptualization of the architect's agency. As stated, the architect is trained to produce imagery at the behest of a client, conceptualizing a space through formal incursion. Still, in producing spaces, the architect alone lacks the capability to breathe life into space, necessitating the seeding of behavior within a given design: The design of a chair within a space means little without an individual to sit, while the inclusion of a restaurant might serve as individual to eat, but still lacks meaning without an actor. The importance of this relationship cannot be stressed. Though perhaps obvious at first glance, the interaction between the individual and the built environment is ultimately what transforms an empty space into a place with emotional and cultural value. This served to answer one of my questions. Through the production of imagery, the ultimate goal of architecture is to magnify value.

This answer, in turn, prompted some consideration of agency: If the ultimate value in architecture lies in the multiplicative monetary capacity of imagery applied in the service of a client, and the ameliorated aesthetic qualities which provided to a user, where exactly does the agency lie for the architect?

Though there are many potential suppositions on the origins of agency within the field, one universally agreeable point might be that there is certainly no liberty in the assumption of style. Indeed, across the entire spectrum of theory, it seems that the only fully agreed upon point is that, whether in consideration of local vernacular⁶, the anteriority of history⁷, considerations of the user⁸, or the nobility of mechanization⁹, there are aesthetic conditions unacceptable within contemporary design. While the uniformed line of reasoning which I once held might hold that, as designers, we surely we have the right to appropriate whatever imagery we have fit, whether it be Ionic Column, Torii Gate, or Gothic Cathedral, any cursory glance at the imagery produced within academia and the professional world demonstrates that such a conclusion would be an error.

On a practical level, applied reasoning, which rarely finds justification cultural imagery or the assumption of historical forms, is the safest manner by which design is one that can explained is. After all, an unadorned W column requires less explanation from both a monetary and an ideological standpoint than an ionic column. Though one explanation for this lack of freedom might be that architecture is to a large capacity self-effacing, and in constant need of self-justification through the production of large quantities of novel forms and images, a more productive reading might look once again, at value.

If architecture functions as a means of magnifying value¹⁰, what is being multiplied is almost certainly governed by broader cultural forces. As a result, the act of construction architecture is always a political one where images are incapable of being "neutral," hence the lack of freedom in style and form. The imagery historical baggage which ionic column carry, for instance, renders it inappropriate in most uses as it has just as much become a tell for, global banking, Washington, and "western" supremacy as it has for its origins as a Greek temple fixture.

While a claim might be made that an architect has some means of directing or reclaiming such instances of political imagery, two counterarguments come to mind. First is that designers lack agency in construction. Contrary to what their name might imply, Architects don't produce architecture, they produce imagery. Cost, state regulation, environmental factors, and any number of additional actors guarantee the impossibility of a "pure" form of architecture as widely constructed mode of living. While schools are capable of circumventing these issues through a lack of commitment towards construction, the sheer number of actors within the built environment guarantees that, beyond considerations of style, the mediation between what is built and what remains unbuilt can never be apolitical. Construction is too inextricably tied to work and monetary influence¹¹. The second argument against the means of total control over imagery is that, as observed by Walter Benjamin, architecture in itself is never the pure subject of a place, but rather the medium which it comes to inhabit¹². As a result, the inhabitant of a given space is bound to come to overlook it, except, perhaps for its flaws.

As demonstrated with nearly any critique of modernism, however, this impossibility of a total design by singular individual isn't necessarily a detriment. On the contrary, while notions of the solitary genius are oftentimes lionized, recognition of the extreme limitations agency might be a healthier outlook, restoring some humility to the oftentimes all-important lens through which design is viewed. This is all to say that, in my studies, I've come to understand that the architect alone has little means of governing culture, only finding capability in offering imagery as the backdrop for the functioning of quotidian life.



An initial pass at the redevelopment of a site in Flushing Commons, Queens. Ironically, this same site would be returned to for a more in depth study within the VR studio in the following semester.

While this interpretation might sound cynical, it may actually be a more generous reading of an architect's function. The most cynical reading, as might be gleaned from my electives in Urban Theory and the Foundations of Architectural Theory, would be that the ultimate function of architecture has always been as an expression of power. In this reading the entire profession serves as the highest representation Thorstein Veblen's conspicuous consumption¹³, with the designer only functioning with no will or agency outside of its own narrow speculative, a cow from which imagery can be milked and consumed.

Troublingly, a study of Urban Theory provides evidence to support this mode of thought. By looking at history, it's possible to observe that the redemptive capacity for professional design has been remarkably small in the face of its aspirations. From the Chicago school's racist spatial policies¹⁴ to the New Urbanism's movement's lack of clarity and eventual appropriation by capitalistic forces¹⁵, the failure of new construction to account for informality, minorities, and non-gentrified growth has been well documented^{16, 17, 18}. This is further amplified by the alarming number of culturally significant spaces which have arisen without architectural intervention, further painting it as the arm which imposes socio-economic hierarchy on localities regardless of aesthetic quality of individual projects or design intent^{19, 20}.

This can be seen within a number of projects. The World Trade Center redevelopment plan, for instance, demonstrated a stunning display in the lack of architectural agency, with developmental and governmental agencies consistently using their actual power to overrule whatever scraps of agency the architects involved were allowed²¹. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Bilbao Guggenheim, while unambiguously more successful in its expression thanks to the cooperation of regional agencies, still demonstrated that the desire to quickly create a consumable product ultimately drove the freedom afforded the architect more than any individual expression of skill or style²². In both cases, economic considerations consistently trumped artistic merit and ideological intent, but also consume them as a means of self-justification. Indeed the only consistent thread between all successful architectural projects seems to be the need to distinct, novel, and visually appealing in a manner which has immediate marketability.

Still, if agency cannot be found in the style, the direction of culture, or independence from the hegemony of clientele, then some must certainly exist in the scant choices over which we learn to obsess. In this statement I've certainly found some truth, but not as much as I would've hoped. As emphasized within the Foundations of Architectural Theory, in spite of serving as perhaps the most intense visual medium tied to the western tradition of art history and, high architecture seems to rarely hold a particularly strong commitment to its users. While priority is consistently given to form, scale, parti, function, history, and intent in the production of imagery, the implications of occupancy seem to elude deeper considerations. A good demonstration of this might be our own Milstein Plate and Rand Hall library, which, though stunning from an visual standpoint, consistently prove to places where visitors are given more priority over more consistent inhabitants²³. This lack of concern for users is extended beyond the dimensions of academia into the professional practice: Building code, which has always been the barest of minimum conditions to accommodate safety and ease of access, is seen as an obstacle to be overcome. As much as they can mar the experience of a place, considerations of broader sensorial experiences such as sound and smell still rarely factor into design. While context is held in high regard, the limitations of zoning are seen as a chore while communities are rarely looked engaged as mode of informing design. This speaks to the question of for whom architects actually design, as, in spite of the glory of imagery, it appears that occularcentrism within the field leads to designs which serve to primarily stroke egos in the service of enriching clients who needn't necessarily care about the future occupants of an architectural space, much less the broader urban context in which a project is inserted²⁴.

This is all to say that, in the darkest reading of the architect as an individual, what little agency exists is used as a means of expressing an incredibly narrow field of artistic depth at the cost of practicality, equity, and the very urban fabric to which designers claim to pay homage.

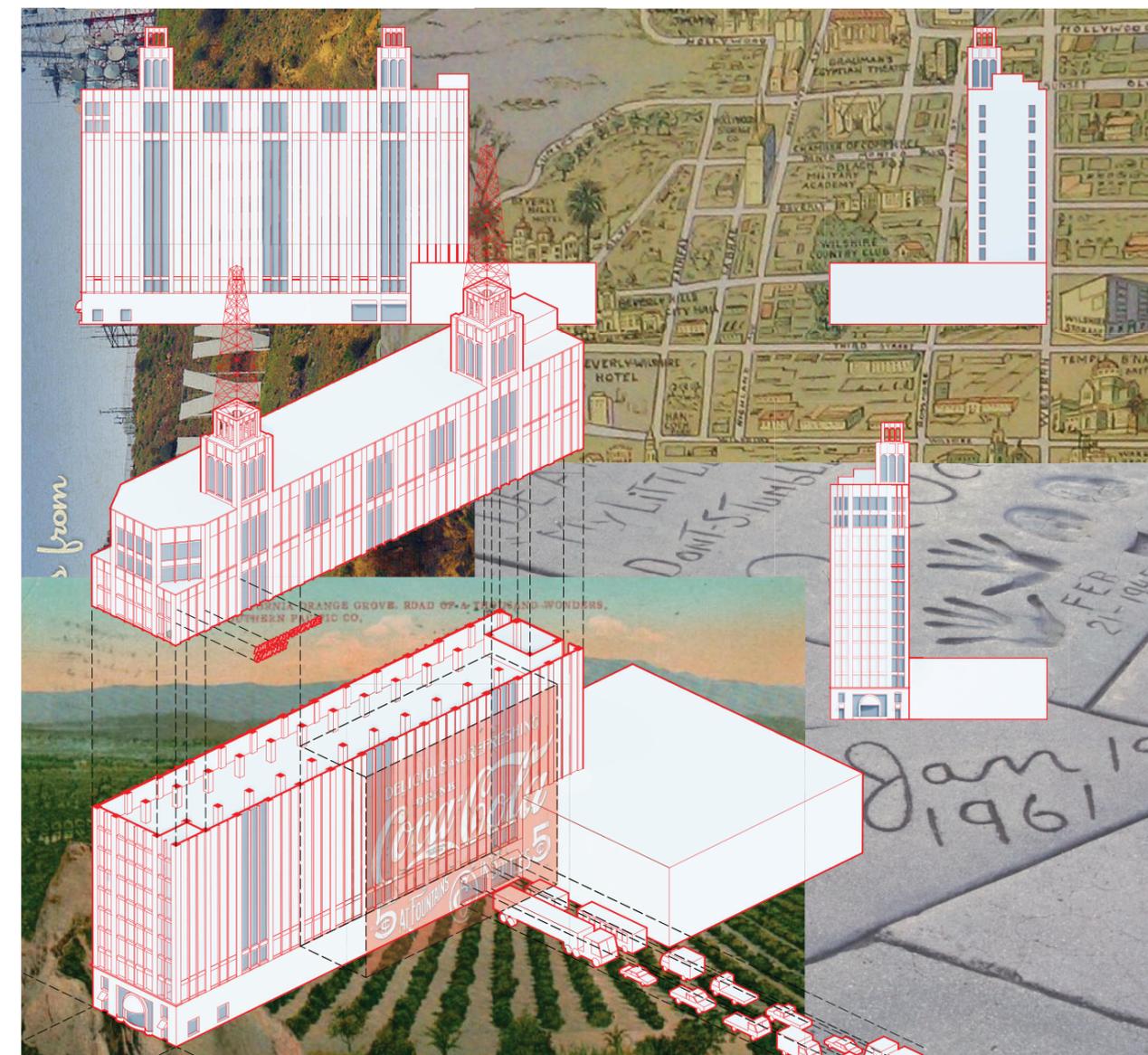


SPRING 2020

As ego collapsing as such a reading might be, meditations on a profession's function within society are hardly worthwhile if understood in isolation. Existential Nihilism, though occasionally conferring a unwarranted smug sense of superiority, is rarely productive, and choosing to cling to it as a worldview in the face of the broader professional goodwill is dismissive at best and callous at worst. We all attempt to function in an imperfect system, and sneering at one's antecedents from a safe place of inaction is worse than a failed attempt at change. I'll admit that there were certainly instances when ruminations overpowered my better senses, but, as I'm forced to remind myself, there are a number of factors which contribute to a more constructive reading of an architect's function.

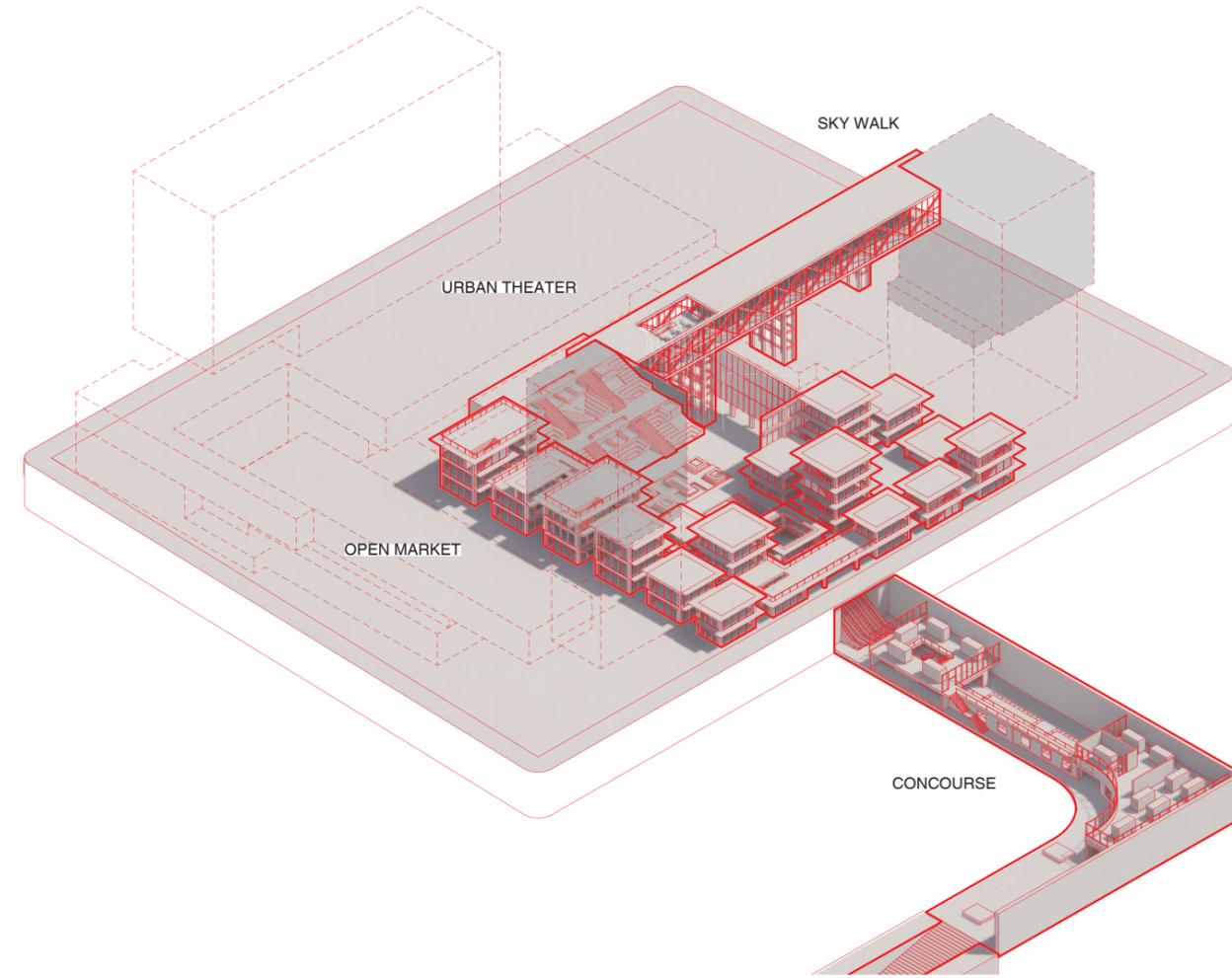
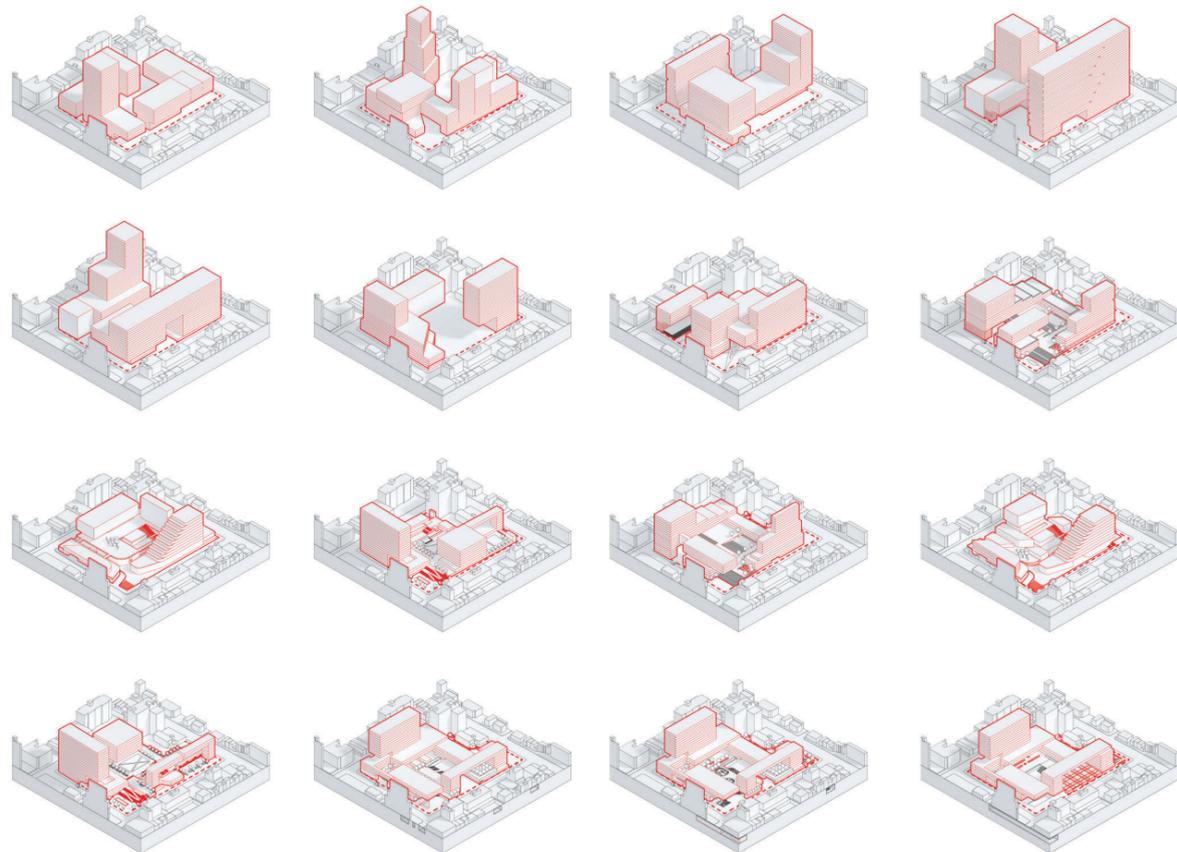
First, it's important to recall that architecture is just one service among many, and though it might of concern to individuals of a philosophical persuasion, a lack of total professional agency is hardly a unique condition. From lawyers, doctors to service industry workers, a concern about agency, successes, failures, and the imperfections of the broader systems is a constant issue. Secondly, while the appropriation of imagery in power politics is worthy interest, it isn't as if architecture is the exclusive or even the most oppressive means by which power is expressed. Returning to Walter Benjamin's notions, for all the rigor with which designers navigate the field, architecture is rarely the direct subject of observation. The dissemination of erroneous, or actively malicious information through film, the legal system, and political discourse is far more detrimental to society than any individual work of architecture could ever hope to be, and to claim otherwise would be a grave instance of catastrophizing. Lastly, in lacking an excess of agency, architects are largely insulated from the most grievous flaws of the built environment. This effect stems from a bicameral set of reasons: First, architects aren't consulted for every project, which is just fine as the field is clearly uninterested in the pursuit of understanding every building typology. This absolves the architect as an individual over the stylistic flaws of the broader built environment (although weather or not as much is a good thing is a topic of contestation). Second, even if architects were consulted for every project, it wouldn't necessarily restore power to the field in resistance against its assigned capitalistic functions. Construction occurs thanks to actors outside of architecture, and the designers inclusion can only serve to improve and redirect projects, not to stop and start them. The power of architecture is multiplicative, but design itself can only rarely provide the base number, with origins, additions and subtractions, largely falling outside the purview of the architect. Thus, the lack of agency, while troubling, isn't necessarily a crisis.

Still, acceptance of minimal agency doesn't impart complete absolutism. After all, though architecture may only comprise a small fraction of the built environment, the role of the architect is still to provide an aspirational model, and ceding such a position would push the profession into a state of complete irrelevance. With that in mind, I attempted to use my last semester here to reconstruct a notion of what my own standards as a designer should be.

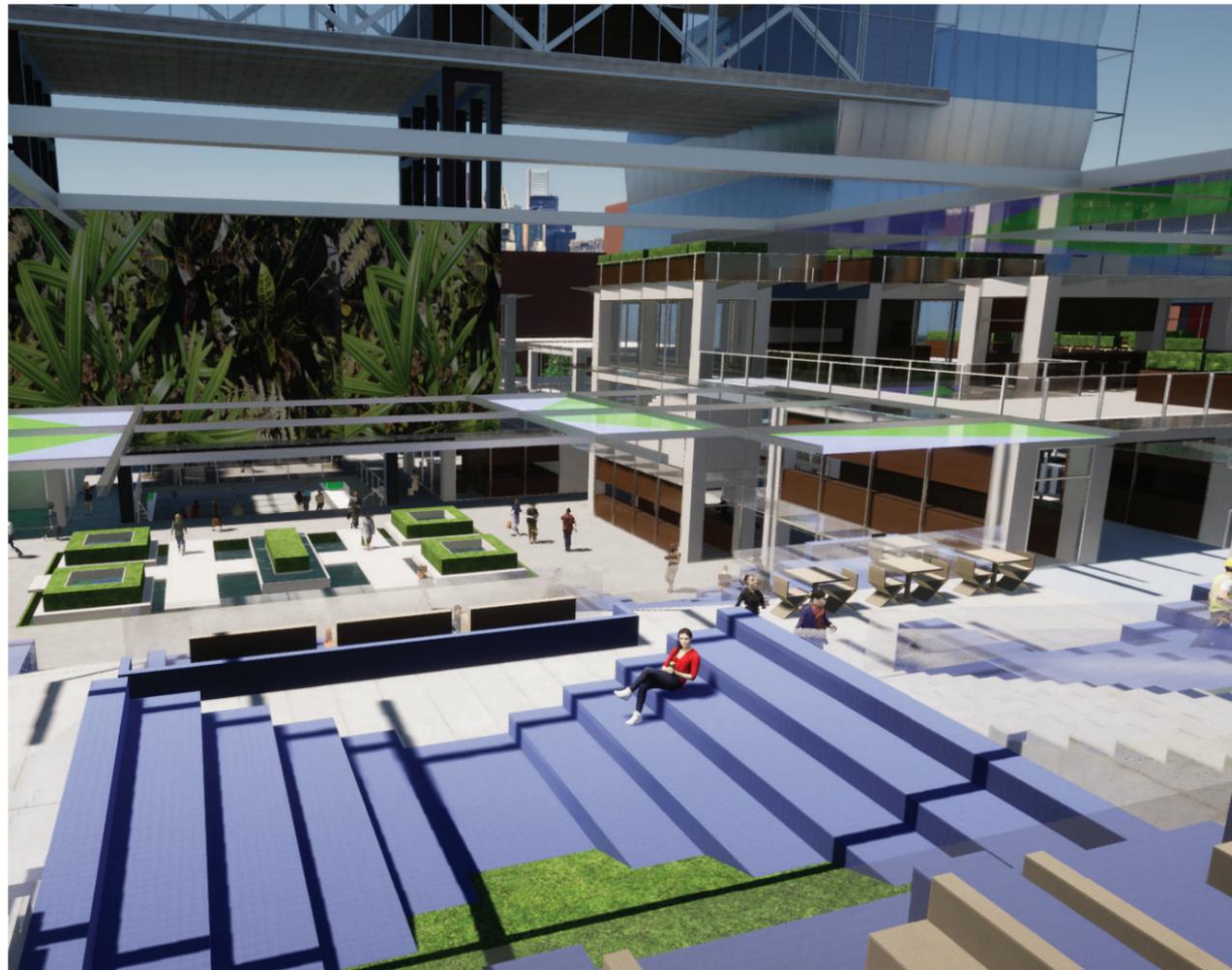


A2 from the course on the Postmodern Vernacular in Los Angeles. Though many typologies remain outside the realm of what is considered architecturally relevant, a closer study of such projects occasionally does more to uncover history within a space than a study of high architecture. This study of one of the first and last non adapted high rise storage buildings in Los Angeles, for instance, lead to a study of zoning, history, and expansion of the urban texture in the 1930s.

In the realm of studio, the Virtual Reality Studio offered a first foray into using the eponymous tool of design. Having had family members who previously had poor experiences in working in VR, and having had my own reservations about it as a mode of representation through an understanding of its manic depressive presence in the gaming community, I was initially skeptical of it as a tool. There's a trend of architects using technological advancement in form making and representation as means of deflecting criticisms of professional complacency or a general state of stagnation. Luckily, the VR studio seems to function with enough consideration of both formal and cultural necessities to quell any concerns. With a continued emphasis on place making and experience over more traditional modes of representation, I believe this studio actually provided a fairly deep foray into a workable future through which design could be communicated. Indeed, while smell and sound are still in the realm of the future, VR does offer a more complete means of experiencing a space as an occupant, and the community surrounding the development of new technologies do seem genuinely concerned with improving experience through simulation technology.



In this studio, Virtual Reality was used to inform a redevelopment scheme for Flushing Commons in Queens New York. After an exhaustive study of the local demographics and site conditions, our group proposed a design which would incorporate three separate place makers as a means of distinguishing the project from empty spaces by generating interest in the site. The first of these three design elements consisted of an underground concourse, which would not only connect the site to the local transit system, but also provide a visible space to inject local culture through temporary art installations. The second place maker consisted of an open marketplace consisting of a series of permanent, semi-permanent, and open stalls connected through a common framework. Finally, the last place maker consisted of a public theater space which would create a space to watch live or projected performances after partaking in the site's marketplace.



Still while technological advancement provides insight into future frameworks as to how designers might operate in the future, just as important is an ideological backbone. For that I'd have to turn once more towards my electives. A study of the Post Modern Vernacular, did provide some useful insight on the cultural landscape of the built environment in Los Angeles. In particular, the class illuminated the means by which architects embed their works into the vernacular of a space, a skill which I think is surely essential in at least attempting to minimize the potential damage done by architectural intervention. In particular the distinctions drawn between artistry and architecture were useful in reconceptualizing the architect as an individual who should at least nominally reflect a sense of humility and subservience to the culture in which their work shall find itself embedded. In spite of everything though, the class failed to change my view on Los Angeles as a city in which industry and machinery by in large lead to complacency and negligence in the built environment.

More directly useful in my reconceptualization, however, might have been my attendance in the course on Hidden Histories. In examining how architecture has confronted underprivileged groups in space, contended with issues of gender and identity, and been shaped by invisible forces in politics and media, this course offered an alternate mode of reading the built environment. In examining critical instances in which design choices actively made a difference in individuals' lives to their better or worse, this course in particular offered some insight into the priorities in understanding what little architectural agency exists.

First is that the production of imagery is the barest minimum which an architect can consider. To wit, this means that agency lies in functioning beyond considerations of visual language which, as the site of our collective fixation, has been rendered untrustworthy. After all, an image won't create a quiet place to read a book or a warm corner to dry a pair of hands. Just as agency can stem from an artistic vision, it can also stem from the sensorial qualities of a place, how people interact with built form on a daily basis, and what flaws present themselves in the life of a project. If architecture is ultimately to become a backdrop, then surely the least it can do is serve as one that doesn't hinder the actors on stage.

Second is that architects need to engage with the forces surrounding their projects more. While a lot of lip service is given to context, because architects have no commitment to embed anything but their work into a community, it's all too easy to become detached from the projects that are carried through construction. As much as it pains me to admit as a designer, how zoning, material sourcing, environmental considerations, fiscal responsibility, and state intervention, along with safety and access are mediated arguably more important than graphic considerations. This is especially true in consideration of a greater sense of ethics, a topic which seems conspicuously absent in discourse outside the incredibly narrow speculative of environmental design.

IN CLOSING

In my first week of professional employment, one of the senior employees at the firm, a Cornell Graduate, implored me to quit architecture. On a fundamental level, he claimed it was a bad profession, though when pressed on it, he failed to adequately articulate why. To my credit, even after coming to understand his point of view, I still strongly disagree with him. I have come to see how he might reach such a conclusion though. As workers within a highly competitive profession predicated on training students as original and solitary image makers, we're perhaps more prone to fits of isolation and closure to everything but the belief that anything short of a novel mode of design or representation is capable of giving a renewed weight and sense of purpose to both the world and our identities as designers. Utopian thinking, however, is just as unproductive as its dystopic counterpart, and if there's anything to take away from this degree it's that the world's too complicated for a pretty building on a single plot of land to serve any grand function as intended by the designer.

In this overly verbose and admittedly shallow trek through the few introductory courses I took as a graduate student, I've repeatedly referred to what I believe the limitations of architects as individual agents. In this, I've largely been assessing designers relative to their profession rather than their capabilities as human beings. This distinction is important. From an experiential, professional, and cultural standpoint, the ability to connect with others and allow their views to inform space is ultimately more valuable than any hierarchical benedictions, whether they be from within the profession through the constant need for novel form and self-definition, or from without profession in economic constraints and the appropriation of imagery. What little agency we have should be employed in the pursuit of collaboration and providing convenient and uninterrupted moments of joy to a project's most frequent occupants. A good practice not only needs to be articulated properly, but also be more careful in how and when design is employed. We need to constantly ask ourselves for whom our work is for, what are their interests, and who is being overlooked? The imagery we produce has multiplicative power certainly, but who exactly does that power benefit? Are we content with producing imagery for ourselves, or is functioning exclusively within our own sphere of influence simply a way of rejecting our lack of control?

Though these questions have no immediate answer, they require thought. If there's any take-away from this understanding is rarely achieved in isolation. Just as it's every architect's duty to understand the forces they're amplifying, in order to provide a splendid backdrop for actors to live, it's certainly their duty to live themselves.

So as a last note, perhaps a call to action is appropriate. Go outside. Find out what's worthwhile to the those around you. They're the ones for whom you're designing. And lastly, don't pull all-nighters. It's not healthy and regular people try to avoid them if possible.

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