

# new architectural realities

jackson studio  
2023–2024

FOR QUESTIONS  
ABOUT THIS IN  
GENERAL, OR MY  
APPROACH TO STUDIO  
IN PARTICULAR, YOU  
CAN WATCH A VIDEO  
THAT I MADE [HERE](#).

This thesis design studio is a think-tank and design laboratory dedicated to a broad-based critical inquiry into contemporary possibilities for architecture to sponsor new performances, new experiences, and new understandings of the world.

It is geared toward those of you who aspire to advance architectural thinking and practice by challenging existing conceptions and assumptions about architecture and the experiences it affords, and who are interested demonstrating new possibilities for architecture to meaningfully intervene within the world.

Rather than adopting a narrow focus, this studio is open to a diverse range of possible thesis investigations. This diversity of interests will stimulate a lively discourse within our studio that will help you to clarify and refine your ideas, and also to enable you to better articulate them and advocate for their value in the face of other architectural ideas and positions.

Based on the diversity of interests of the students in the studio, these thesis projects will range from extremely speculative and experimental to those that are realizable with present or near-term materials and techniques. They will examine form, space, materials, technologies, programs, constituencies, cultural habits and customs—and even discoveries and modes of thinking from other fields—in ways that open up new understandings of and possibilities for architecture. And they will be manifested in an incredible variety of compelling thesis design projects that could include buildings, furniture, cities, processes, graphics, games, and virtual realities. These might be demonstrated and represented across a variety of media and formats that include renderings, drawings, diagrams, animations, physical models, full-scale prototypes, fictional or sci-fi narratives, films, and graphic novels—or through some other creative means.

Although the work you produce in this studio will make comprehensive use of all that you have learned and experienced so far, it is not a studio that is merely intended to summarize your past experiences. Instead, it is geared toward speculating about and developing the future, both the future of architecture as well as your own. With this forward-looking attitude in mind—and with a commitment to rigorous research, thought-provoking discourse, radical experimentation, and compelling design work—the thesis work you produce in this studio will serve as an ambitious beginning to a long and fruitful career of culturally significant and profoundly visionary work, and will help enable you to become a powerful and persuasive advocate for new architectural realities.



## Introduction

Because architecture, in its most basic sense, is a kind of world-making, our discipline is fundamentally entangled in the politics of space, culture, power, and ways of life that define our world—to an extent that escapes the common, but completely inadequate, equation of it with the mere design of buildings. This implicates architecture in the problems and injustices of the world in a manner that is not sufficiently recognized. Specifically, architects give form to the social and cultural institutions that support many of us, but disenfranchise others. As a profession beholden to these dominant institutions for many of its opportunities to make space in the first place, architecture must acknowledge its own compromised position.

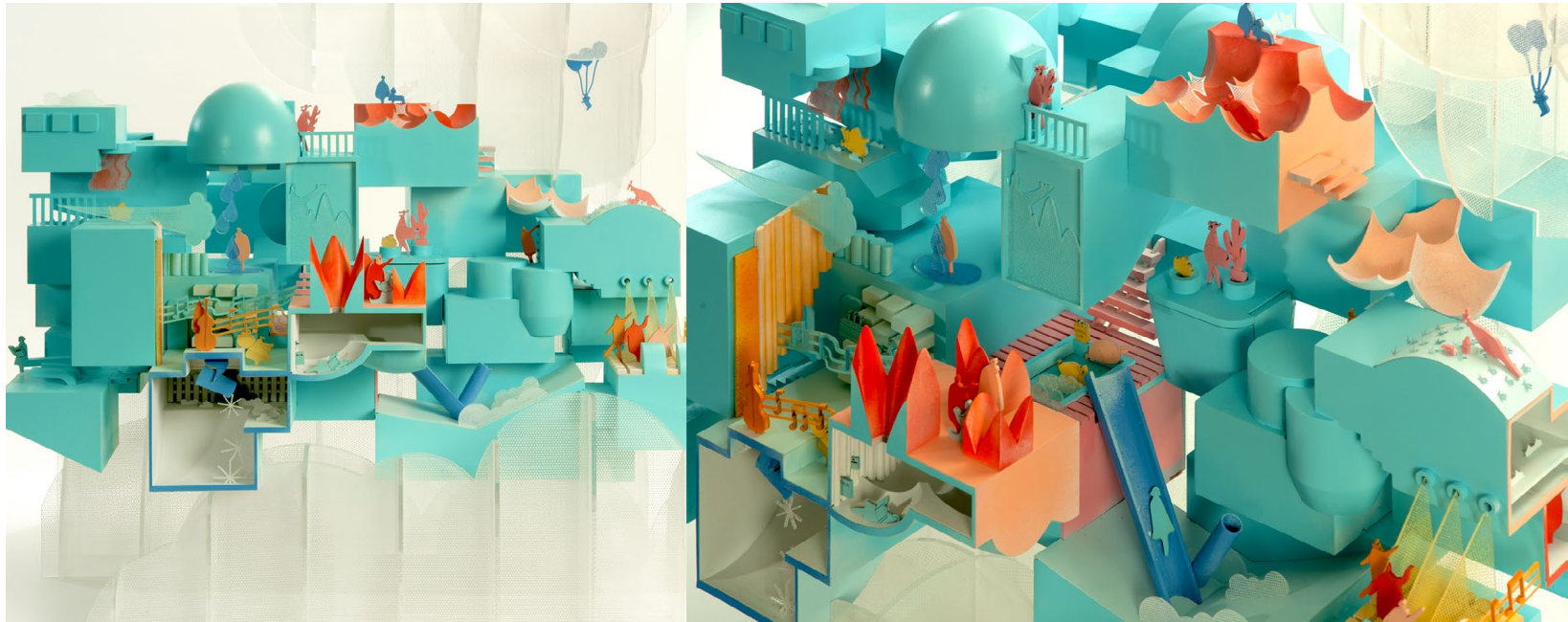
Nevertheless, architecture's multi-dimensional entanglement in these social and political structures and systems also means that it has a unique capacity to engage them and to effect positive change. As a fundamentally speculative and aspirational discipline, architecture always maintains the *potential* to rise to the occasion by envisioning and designing unprecedented spaces and experiences that expand and diversify the world.

To preserve its capacity to respond to new conditions, architecture maintains a degree of openness that is not characteristic of other disciplines, and which enables it to continually redefine its nature. Rather than a discipline founded on enduring truths, or the slow accumulation of irrefutable knowledge, every idea on which architecture is based is perpetually up for debate.

As a result, one might say that the architectural discipline is decidedly *undisciplined* one—desperately safeguarding a well-concealed and often unacknowledged messiness, wherein ideas are continually questioned, discarded or upheld, recycled, or adapted to address the needs, opportunities, and emergent realities of fluid and unpredictable times. Architecture, in the post-classical period anyway, is built for change. It depends on it, and it can also be instrumental to enacting it. Although concealed behind a seemingly assured and confident rhetoric, architecture's true nature is fluid, and also inscrutable. Reyner Banham famously likened this aspect of architecture to a “black box”<sup>1</sup>—an entity whose inner workings are fundamentally mysterious. However, this uncertainty lends architecture a corresponding elasticity—one that allows it to take on new forms, to embody the reality that society needs, and to serve as the basis for the renovation of a culture in response to the exigencies of its time.

<sup>1</sup> Reyner Banham, “A Black Box: The Secret Profession of Architecture,” in Mary Banham ed., *A Critic Writes: Essays by Reyner Banham* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 299. The essay originally appeared in *New Statesman and Society*, October 12, 1990, pages 22–25. It is tempting, when reading this essay—Banham's last completed essay, and published posthumously—to compare his final pronouncement on architecture with the final, dying words uttered by Kurtz at the end of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. However, it is not a fair comparison. While Banham may artfully characterize architectural rhetoric as a kind of *horror vacui* deployed to disguise an apparent void at the heart of the discipline, he himself is not actually horrified. Rather, his parting shot is intended to remind architects that the discipline's redefinability also makes it appear indefinite to the rest of society, and that therefore architecture's value must be continually justified.

*right: Celia Chaussabel's thesis, **House Party**, argues that contemporary society has been significantly impacted by access to virtual spaces within which idiosyncratic self-expression assumes a quasi-public character—a condition that, in its propensity to catalyze unplanned encounters with the ideologies and desires of others, better fulfills the aspirations for urban public space than the actual physical spaces of contemporary cities. In turn, Celia demonstrates a new, fictional form of urbanity comprised of idiosyncratic domestic “rooms” interlaced with public circulation spaces that can be spontaneously appropriated for unplanned encounters, exchanges, and events. The architecture is designed to trigger these unplanned public occurrences through the careful perforation of boundary conditions that allow for the leaking of interior effects (lights, sounds, smells, etc.) in proximity to suggestive forms that afford activities that benefit from the appropriation of these effects.*





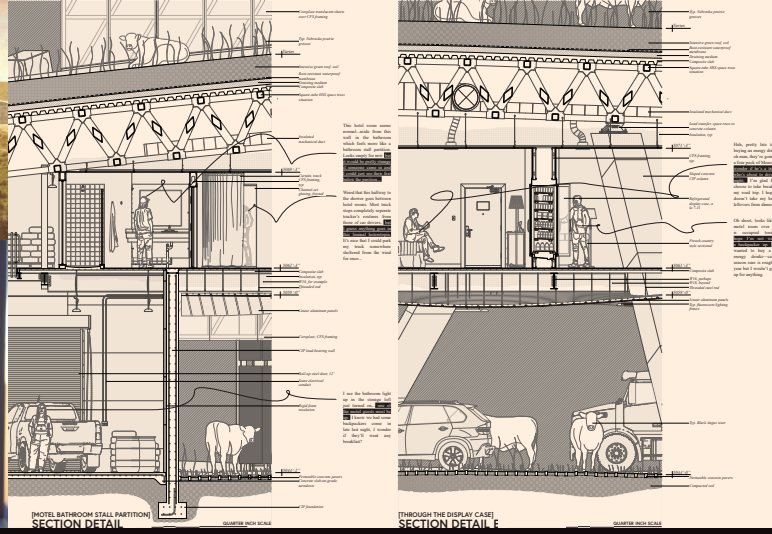
**left: Landscapes of Resistance**, by Violeta Smart. Violeta's thesis argues that conditions of precarity are formalized by architectural and urban spaces that prioritize the norms of dominant cultural groups at the expense of others. While domestic space provides a potential refuge wherein one can act in accordance with one's identity, such freedoms are compromised by the substandard (or absent) domestic conditions of many marginalized individuals, and are not available at all within the public realm. As such, and as articulated by philosopher Judith Butler, these individuals are denied their fundamental "right to appear" as co-equal members of the public. In response, Violeta's thesis project envisions a mixed-use structure, containing housing and community service programs, that demonstrates a new, quasi-domestic form of public space. Within this hybrid space, forms and surfaces afford a plurality of actions and performances that stray from cultural norms in order to validate the identities and desires of those individuals who are currently marginalized. These non-normative performances are enabled by the entanglement of spaces for domestic and public activity, and by the artful deconstruction and confounding of the boundary conditions that would otherwise clearly separate them.

The importance of this flexibility is evident in the way that architects are educated. In fact, one could say that it is in architecture school where this constitutional fluidity is most apparent. Architectural education is unique in its *discursivity*. It is founded on conversation—both in the everyday back and forth of a desk crit, as well as in the more formal presentation and defense of a design project during a review. This discourse foregrounds the voices of the participants, both faculty and students, and suggests that the exchange of ideas is crucial to developing the skills necessary to advocate for and give form to new ones.

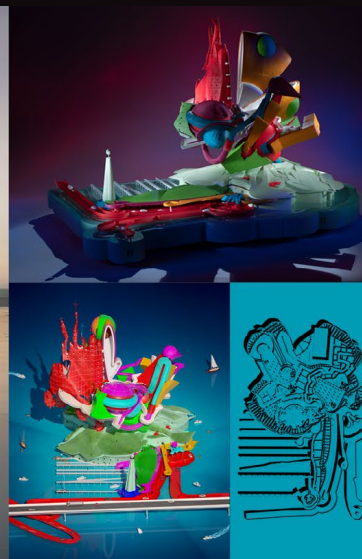
The undisciplined nature of the architectural discipline means that, hopefully, its students are not quite disciples. Instead, it is more productive if emerging architects are educated to become eventual leaders and agents of change. The inclusion of a *thesis* as the concluding experience in an architectural curriculum is one of the many ways that academic institutions demonstrate a commitment to cultivating such an ability.

In developing your thesis, we ask you to pursue novel ideas for architecture—ones that are non-obvious, and are thus subject to debate. You must then defend your thesis against reasonable objection by developing a persuasive argument that is situated in a lineage of prior discourse, which you can extend or re-direct as appropriate, and also by developing a thesis design project, which is expected to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of your thesis argument, as well as its architectural implications. As a result of this experience, wherein you are asked to redefine the possibilities for architecture, and to defend the value of such a redefinition, you will learn to appreciate, and work with, architecture's inherent instability. This instability is not a shortcoming, but rather one of the architectural discipline's greatest virtues. Its drive to continually interrogate, challenge, and redefine the very principles upon which it is based affords architecture the flexibility to engage the manifold and evolving aspects of reality—social, cultural, technological, political, and others. This allows it to reformulate those aspects into new representations of the world, which bring forth new spaces and experiences that confront the problems and opportunities of the present moment in the hope of affording a better future.

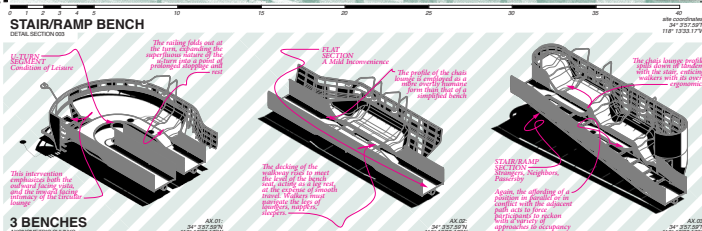
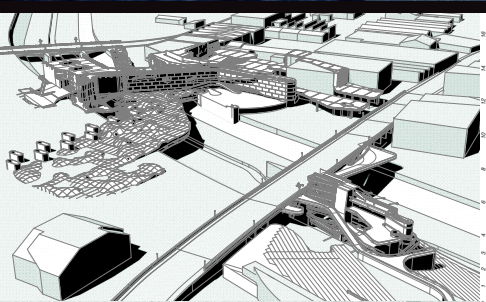
The world you are about to enter into is a particularly challenging one. In fact, it has always been so. It is a world that will require the continual re-making of our collective spaces, again and again, into new and *different* ones—in order to adequately redress the harm experienced by those who are marginalized, underrepresented, or outright oppressed, and to bring forth experiences and ways of living that make the world more representative of and meaningful to more individuals. This is, of course, a profoundly difficult task. Fortunately, architecture is a discipline that always wants to be different. And it is, after all, in its pursuit of this difference, and its ability to give form to such difference, that architecture is ultimately capable of *making a difference*.



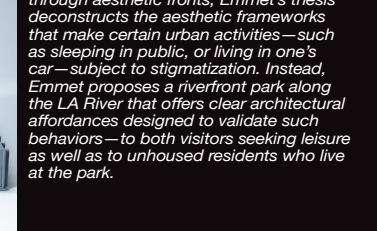
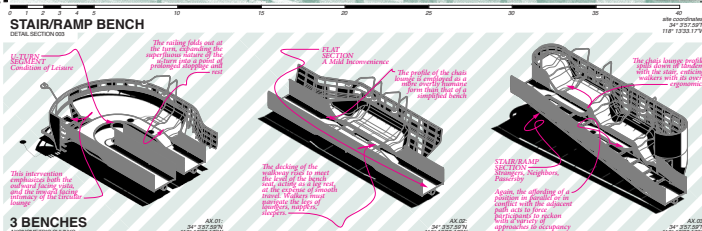
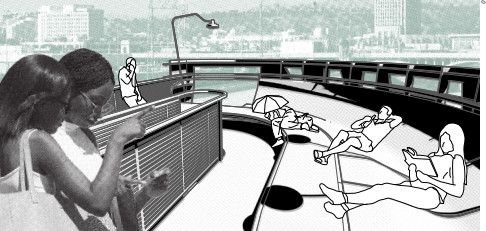
**left: Americana Love Song: Complexities, Boundaries, and Signs,** by Jacob Bodinger, responds to the contemporary socio-political problem wherein self-sorting into ideologically homogenous groups limits identity complexity and, in turn, fosters political intolerance. Using the liminal space of a truck stop in rural Nebraska as a programmatic framework, Jacob develops a series of formal, organizational, and aesthetic strategies designed to confound normative interpretations of space, use, and behavior. This is intended to foster new perceptions, ideas, and actions that deviate from the norms associated with the socio-political subgroups with which the individual visitors to the truck stop otherwise identify—and enable the possibility of mutual recognition and understanding across pre-existing socio-political divisions.



**left: The Immaculate Conception,** by Chad Miller, takes as its point of departure Reyner Banham's final essay, "A Black Box: The Secret Profession of Architecture," which decries the mysterious elusiveness of architecture's core values. Chad, in turn, argues that it is architecture's mystique that is its most crucial value—insofar as the inability to absolutely define architecture affords it the capacity to redefine itself in response to new concerns, opportunities, and ideas. As this continual redefinition requires the successive pronouncement of the "death" of architecture in order to enable its subsequent rebirth, Chad employs the idea of architecture's end as its essential means. He therefore weaves an alternative deathbed pronouncement that transforms themes of architectural death, dysfunction, and despair into narratives that give rise to new architectural performances. These are demonstrated in a proposed project for a hybrid monastery and travel center along Highway 1 in the Florida Keys, and are enacted through the careful deployment of formal and programmatic paradoxes—wherein basic assumptions regarding architecture's signification and usefulness are confounded.



**left: Hello, Neighbor—Or, the Existential Angst of Coexistence,** by Emmet Holton, synthesizes the urban critiques of Henri Lefebvre, Jacques Rancière's theory of political aesthetics, and Judith Butler's concept of performative assembly in order to define an arena of action for architecture to foster new political relationships between the housed and unhoused populations of Los Angeles. Drawing from Butler's observation that precarity is a relational condition between those who experience it and those who do not, and Rancière's general claim that such inequitable relationships are sustained through aesthetic fronts, Emmet's thesis deconstructs the aesthetic frameworks that make certain urban activities—such as sleeping in public, or living in one's car—subject to stigmatization. Instead, Emmet proposes a riverfront park along the LA River that offers clear architectural affordances designed to validate such behaviors—to both visitors seeking leisure as well as to unhoused residents who live at the park.



## What is an Architectural Thesis?

A major goal of the thesis studio and associated seminar class will be to assist each of you in formulating a true architectural *thesis* based on your unique ideas and interests, and in selecting the appropriate *project* within which to demonstrate that thesis.

The difference between these two terms is crucial to understand. An architectural thesis is not a design project, but is instead a hypothesis, conjecture, or idea about architecture that is defended through research, analysis, argumentation, and design. While it derives from your personal interests, it is subsequently developed into an intellectual contribution to the architectural discipline that synthesizes your cumulative experience, knowledge, and insight into a critical idea that has value, both to the discipline and society.

The *thesis project*, on the other hand, is an architectural design project that is employed to embody and demonstrate the architectural consequences of your thesis proposition. Its primary task is to showcase the value and credibility of the ideas you are proposing. However, like all design projects, it also becomes a vehicle for discovery during the process of design, and will therefore likely suggest refinements or modifications to the original thesis ideas that produced it. In that way, the thesis argument and the thesis design project will inform each other, such that both are developed in tandem throughout the year.

This particular studio will encourage theses (and thesis projects) that are visionary and provocative—ones that suggest new possible performances for architecture, and which open up new ways for individuals and society to experience the world. It should appeal to those of you who are not simply interested in only demonstrating what you have learned so far, or of imitating architecture-as-we-know-it, but who are instead interested in crafting a new vision of how architecture and the world could be. In short, it is designed for those of you who want to make a difference in the world, and in architecture's relation to it.

While united under this common goal, each thesis and project will obviously vary greatly according to your unique interests. This balance between a shared sense of purpose and a rich variety of thesis positions, areas of research, and design projects will be crucial to ensuring a dynamic and synergistic studio—a studio that will operate more like a think-tank or laboratory dedicated to exploring the broad spectrum of future possibilities for architecture.

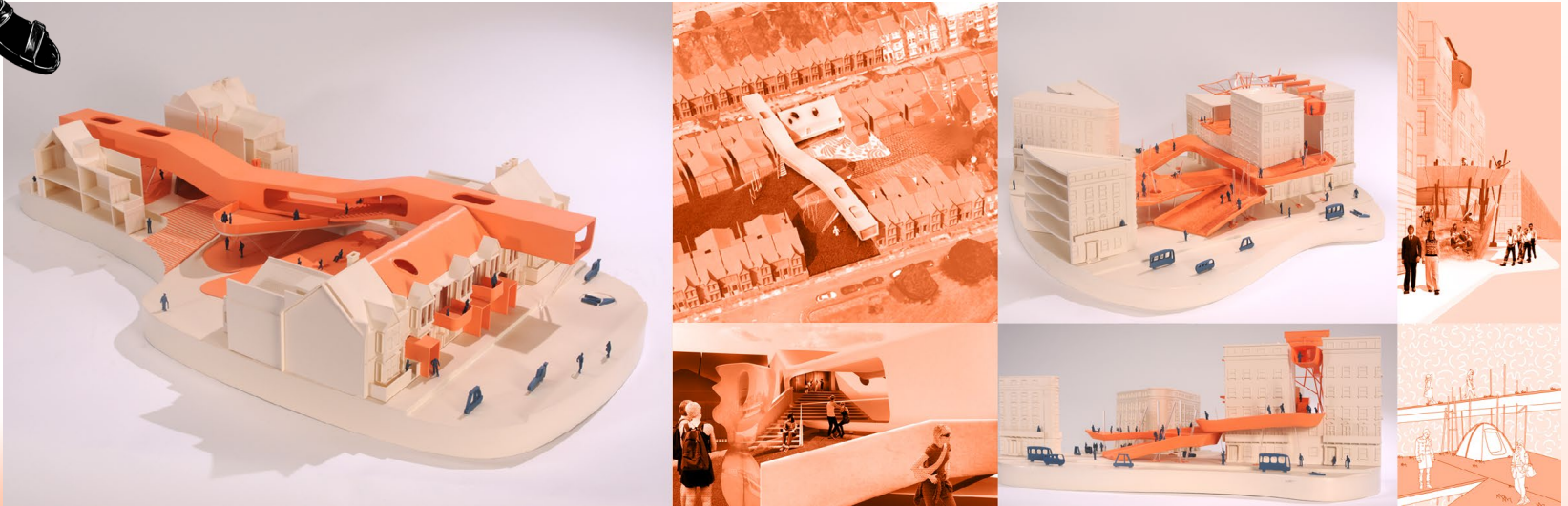
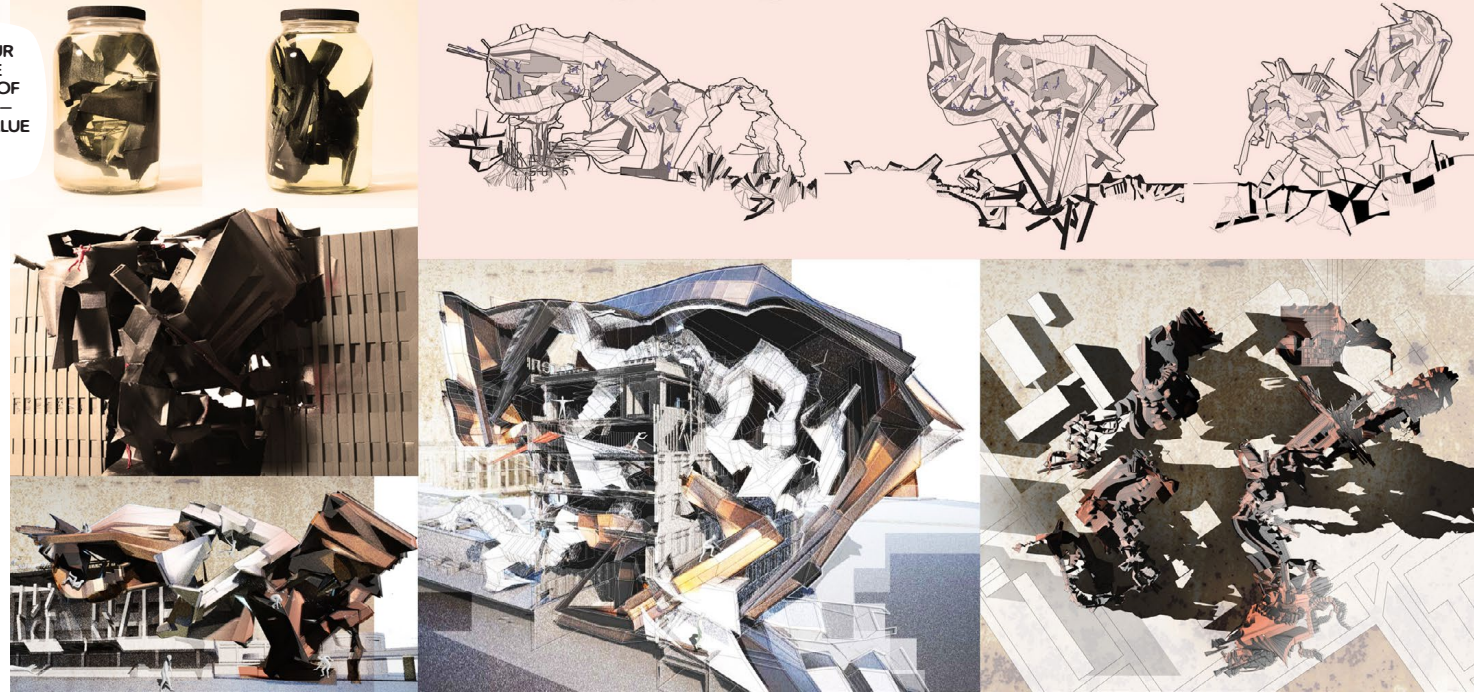
*right: Micro-Narratives for Mega-Futures*, by Josh Amaya, argues that novel technologies such as artificial intelligence, resource exploitation from near-Earth asteroids, space elevators, gene editing, 3D printing of organic tissue, and prosthetic implantation cannot realize their transformative potential without first recognizing, and preventing, their otherwise inevitable subjugation by institutions and forces dominated by neoliberal ideologies. Accordingly, this thesis comprises a series of visual representations, along with accompanying narratives, that speculatively envision the architectural and technological realities of a future world wherein the aforementioned technologies are leveraged to perpetuate, and even radicalize, the existing conditions of precarity, oppression, segregation, social stratification, and marginalization that characterize the cultural and political realities of late stage capitalism. These images and narratives collectively serve as a critique of these conditions, and a warning of the potential consequences of the future conditions that might eventually arise if these technologies are not decoupled from their current capitalist imperatives. (Also, as an aside, these images all predate the public availability of AI image generators such as Midjourney and DALL•E. Instead, they were all painstakingly produced through Photoshop and Blender.)



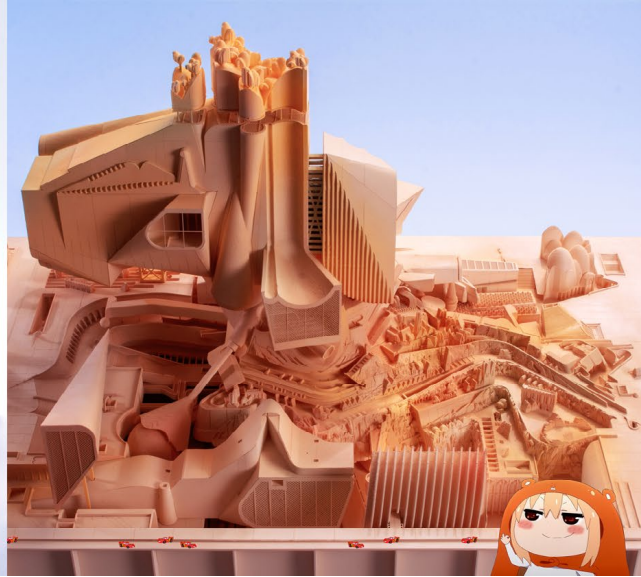
**below: Toward a Monstrous Architecture**, by David Hupp. David's thesis argues that the architectural discipline's rhetoric of radicality and innovation masks an overwhelming conservatism. He contends that architecture is inherently constrained by history and precedent, by its own discourse, and by the premeditated and authored nature of design itself—all of which narrow the field of potential for architecture's formal and spatial production. Consequently, David explores forms of spontaneous production and differentiation which occur through evolutionary processes of mutation and selection, and interrogates the possibility of such heuristic and wasteful forms of production as a type of "undesigned" and evolutionary architecture. Such an architecture would privilege monstrosity, freakishness, and otherness—and might ask humanity to evolve in relation to it, rather than assume humanity's current condition as its basis for evaluation.



YOUR THESIS POSITIONS YOUR IDEAS ABOUT ARCHITECTURE WITHIN A LARGER CONTEXT OF DISCOURSE AND PRECEDENT—AND DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF YOUR IDEAS IN A DESIGN PROJECT.



**above: IDIOSYNCRAcity**, by Natacha Schneider, proposes a series of interventions designed to introduce difference and idiosyncrasy into the modern city as a means to mitigate the homogeneity of use and activity that results from modern city planning's emphasis on zoning similar uses into segregated urban zones, as well as its requirement for large amounts of time to be spent in transit through unengaging circulation spaces. Located in London, Natacha's interventions take cues from the internet's abundance of idiosyncratic, individually authored and customized content that can be aimlessly surfed through. They then translate this affordance of non-identical, inexact, and unpremeditated experience into physical spaces that allow Londoners to wander, discover, invent program as they go along, and revel in their own and others' craziness.



**left: The Agony and the Ecstasy**, by Adrian Tsou. Adrian's thesis argues that the manner in which humanity employs various technologies, including language and architecture, to formalize the world into stable and discrete objects and categories problematically obscures actual and possible realities, and in so doing limits the possible practices and performances of individuals. Since architecture is one of the primary means by which the world is framed, Adrian argues that its formal techniques should be deployed to cultivate a surreality within which forms, spaces, and activities become uncertain—thus flattening the distinction between cultural and performative normality and abnormality. Adrian's thesis project demonstrates this in a formal and programmatic grotesquerie located in Manhattan's Upper East Side, within which all architectural qualities—form, space, program, structure, etc.—become flattened into an ontologically singular medium that is manipulated to proliferate unstable and conflicting interpretations.



**left: Meditations on Memory: Melange and Mirages**, by Munira Alesia. Her thesis argues that modernism and capitalism replace heterogeneous cultural spaces with uniform and homogeneous spaces devoted to the production of capital rather than the production of cultural memories. These cultural memories, she contends, are unique to each individual, and differ from the top-down, seemingly irrefutable narratives of the past promoted by authoritarian regimes, their monuments, and their museums. Targeting the replacement of the original urban fabric of Kuwait City by corporate modernism, she proposes a new cemetery and perfume production facility as a site of public appropriation and memorialization. To stimulate diverse experiences and memories, she employs formal, organizational, and material strategies based on the concept of "irresolution"—employing excessive or insufficient detail, or confounding normal programmatic or spatial zones, so that each visitor must uniquely resolve their own experience, and develop unique memories.



**left: Sublimation: A New Aesthetic of Urbanity**, by Grant Mattingly. Grant's thesis recognizes that, in the age of global economies and global scale computing, the reality of our immediate physical contexts is heavily influenced by forces that are remote or otherwise invisible, and that this leaves individuals incapable of visualizing or understanding the actual contexts within which they live. Accordingly, Grant argues that architects need to develop techniques to aestheticize these invisible forces, giving form and physicality to the unseen aspects of the contemporary world, and thereby creating a new subjectivity that is able to recognize and respond to these forces. His thesis demonstrates a parafictional image of Los Angeles that represents this expanded reality—creating a new form of the sublime that reveals the complex amalgamation of systems, forces, and users that constitute contemporary reality.

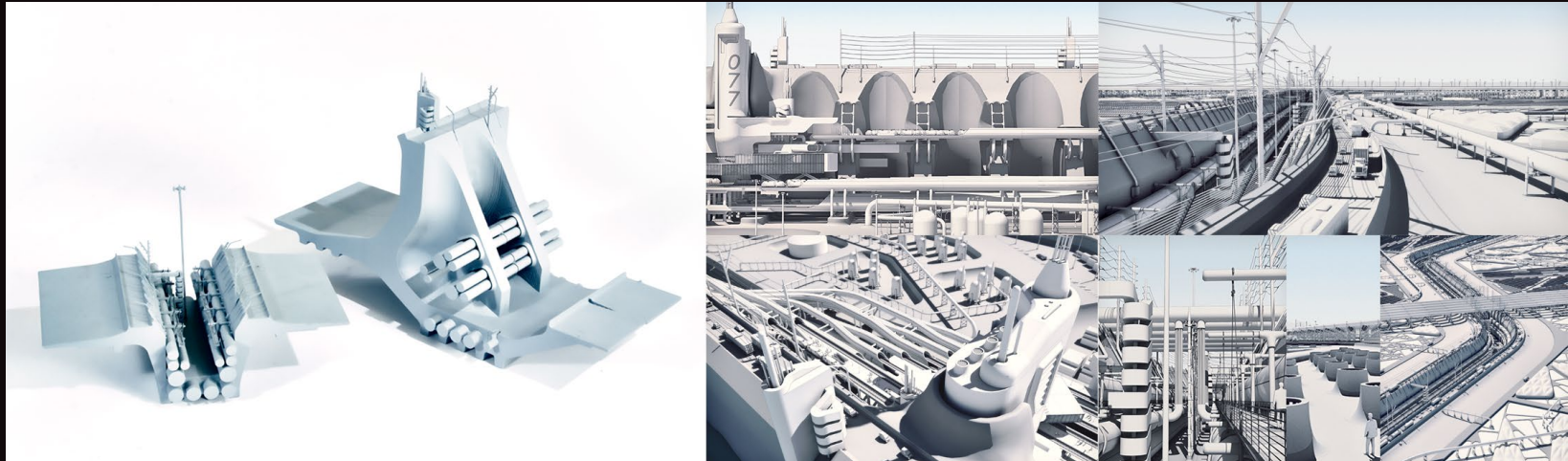
## Studio and Seminar Descriptions

The overarching goal of the thesis studio and associated seminar class is to formulate, investigate, and demonstrate new architectural realities. While the realm of practice rarely provides the opportunity for such a dedicated self-reflection of the architectural discipline, it is nevertheless crucial to the healthy growth and development of architecture as it continually negotiates its relationship to constantly evolving social, cultural, political, and technological conditions.

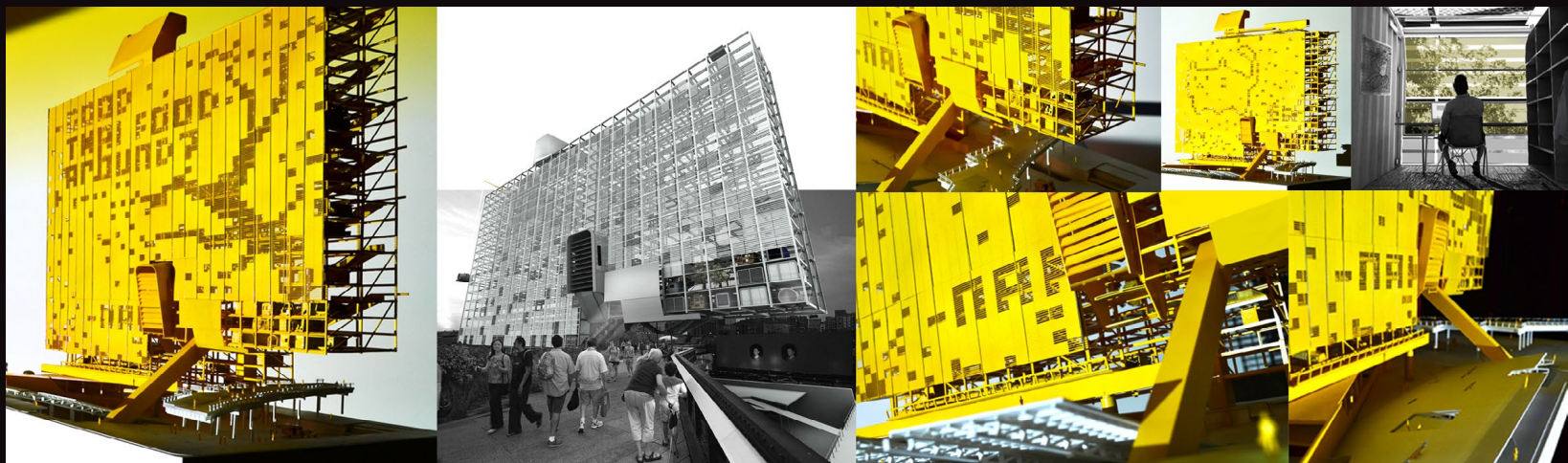
The studio and seminar are designed to help each of you produce a thesis proposition that is conceptually profound, rhetorically convincing, well-researched, and of disciplinary consequence—and to help you demonstrate that thesis in a thesis project that is thoroughly designed at multiple scales, architecturally compelling, and represented in a diverse range of media that might include high-quality drawings, renderings, animations, diagrams, physical models, full-scale prototypes, fictional or sci-fi narratives, films, graphic novels, and more.

The following pages more specifically describe how the Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters will be structured to help you achieve this.

**right: Tales from the RAMPART**, by Tyler Armstrong, considers the distinction between “the map” and “the territory”—famously conflated in the short story “On Exactitude in Science” by Jorge Luis Borges—and argues that not only has architecture always conflated the abstract and idealized intellection of the map with the lived experience of the territory, but also that the course of modernity has marked a social and technological evolution wherein this conflation has gradually become transposed from its unique locus in architecture and the arts to the arena of everyday life—which is now thoroughly penetrated by technologies of virtuality and data. Considering this, Tyler’s thesis demonstrates a speculative reality in which this condition is radicalized, and wherein humanity occupies a space that is the infrastructure necessary to transform the virtuality of the map—its political boundaries—into a physical reality, and in which the enclosed territory is reduced to a material resource to support this infrastructure.



**right: Networked Authorship**, by Sam Clovis, postulates that an architecture that truly engages the network would be one that monumentalizes the competing flows of authorship and feedback that characterize the contemporary experience of social media. The resulting immersive quality of perpetual experiential remix is demonstrated in a large micro-housing complex along New York City’s Highline—comprised of a matrix for DIY individual dwelling pods linked by an array of responsive space-making mezzanines and partitions within a shared atrium, and screened by a “pixel skin” that amplifies the spontaneous social media interactions between the inhabitants and the public on the Highline and city streets below.





## Fall Quarter

### Arch 481 Studio

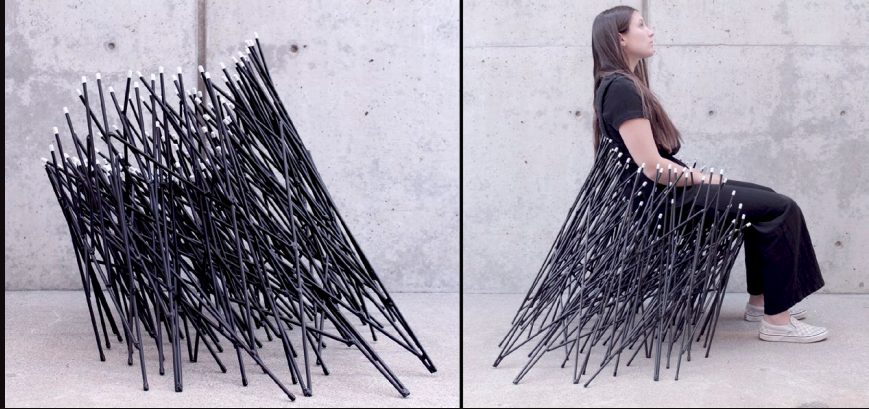
The Fall Quarter will begin with the development of an architectural thesis position. One-on-one discussions, group discussions, and suggested readings—both in studio as well as in the associated Arch 492 seminar—will assist each of you in developing your specific interests into an actual thesis. Meanwhile, additional reading, research, and writing will help you to enlarge and refine your thesis, help make it more relevant and compelling, and also help you to identify an architectural design project in which to demonstrate your thesis. Concurrently, you will conduct a series of preliminary design studies, which are designed to help each of you to engage certain key issues and ideas related to your thesis, and to serve as a useful complement to the reading, research, and writing that is occurring both in studio as well as in the associated seminar class (see below). These design studies will include the design and construction of a large-scale physical construct that will serve as a conceptual study for your thesis, and which will be in the form of a conceptually critical piece of furniture to be submitted as part of the Vellum Competition (as shown on the following page).

By the end of the Fall Quarter each of you will have not only developed and clarified a *thesis*, but will have identified a *thesis project* within which to demonstrate that thesis, and will also have begun significant work on that project.

### Arch 492 Seminar

The seminar class in the Fall Quarter is meant to provide an intellectual foundation to the studio as a whole. In this class we will read texts and engage in intellectual discussions designed to increase your command of important architectural issues, opportunities, and critiques—which are intended to assist you in framing your own unique interests and ideas in relation to new and ongoing concerns of the architectural discipline. These readings and discussions will cover topics of concern ranging from historical to contemporary issues, and will do so with an emphasis on encouraging an engagement of these topics from multiple perspectives in order to facilitate a vibrant and diverse discourse. These will be tuned along the way in order to most effectively relate to and clarify your theses and thesis projects as they develop. Some of the issues that might be discussed include:

- the way in which the queering or othering architectural form can afford new performances, habits, customs, and perceptions that can expand culture and make its spaces more inclusive
- modes of architectural speculation and representation across various media, and the political potential of aesthetics
- a critique of the way in which architectural form and space have induced precarity by endorsing and empowering certain subjects at the expense of others (based on race, gender identity, ideology, etc.), and the possibility for reformulating architecture in order to empower and engage a plurality of subjectivities—including those that are either marginalized and oppressed, or which fall outside of the limited categories imposed by dominant cultural frameworks
- the relationship between time and space in architecture, especially with respect to pre-modern and non-Western concepts of space-time, and the effect that various concepts of time and space have had with respect to the understanding of architectural space
- architectural agency and authorship, and how these concepts have evolved from the pre-Classical understanding of authorless architecture, to the 16th century origination of the idea of the architect as the primary author, to contemporary concepts of split-agency and multiple authorship associated with post-industrial forms of production (digital, open-source, crowd-sourced, etc.)
- the shift in architectural discourse away from networks and fields and towards objects and assemblies, and architecture's recent re-engagement with the ontological, epistemological, and phenomenal dimensions of those objects (Object Oriented Ontology, etc.)
- a critical look at the existing discourse of sustainability and contemporary concepts of “nature” through the lens of the Anthropocene, and the manner in which humanity's actions are entangled in spatial and temporal scales that exceed human perception and predictability
- the history and critiques of the modern city, and the possibility for concepts such as play, ludic space, openness, appropriation, mis-use, and individual creativity to constitute a form of urban critique and to serve as the basis for new forms of urbanity
- the distinction between representational and performative techniques in architecture, and the manner in which each produces cultural value
- the relationship between architecture and virtuality—including the question of whether architecture is really “real” or operates more like a simulation, how this relates to discourses of phenomenology, and the manner in which new technologies for producing experience are appropriated by architecture
- the rise of Artificial General Intelligence and the possibility of a post-anthropocentric world, and how a resulting post-human or trans-human world might give rise to a new aesthetic perception and the perception of new forms of space



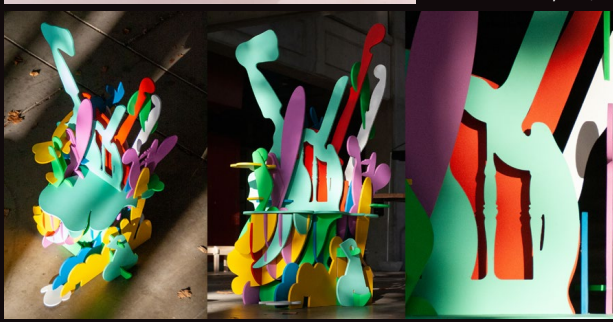
above: Mick Atkins, *post/human\_post/ure*

below: Stephen Zecher, *Aug. Vision*

below: David Hupp, *The Twinns*



above: Greg Schaal, *Sling Chair*  
left: Shaler Campbell, *Revolve*

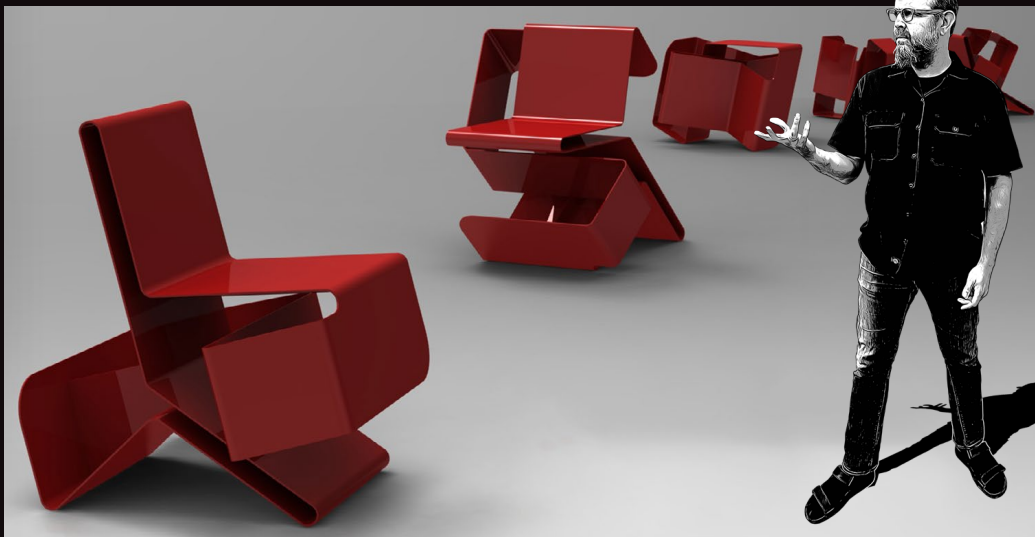


left: Chad Miller, *The Cactus, The Bunny Rabbit, & the Windsor*

I EMPHASIZE PHYSICAL TESTING AND EXPERIMENTATION AS A CRUCIAL MEANS OF IDEA DEVELOPMENT. DURING FALL QUARTER, VELLUM IS ONE OF MANY PHYSICAL STUDIES YOU WILL UNDERTAKE AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR THESIS.



below: Abby Dorrell, *Adam and Eames*



above: Grace Choy, *Möbi*  
left: Michael Charters, *Extenze*



## Winter and Spring Quarters

### Arch 481 Studio

The design studio in Winter and Spring Quarters will support the continual development and refinement of your thesis project, concluding with the public presentation of your work.

During the Winter Quarter your thesis projects will be developed thoroughly, with an emphasis on the plausible and compelling manifestation of your unique thesis position within your design project. Desk crits, reviews, and peer-discussions will be geared toward facilitating design development across multiple scales of consideration, and through multiple media. In addition to this ongoing design development, I will also help each of you to clearly and convincingly articulate your design ideas—graphically, verbally, formally, and spatially.

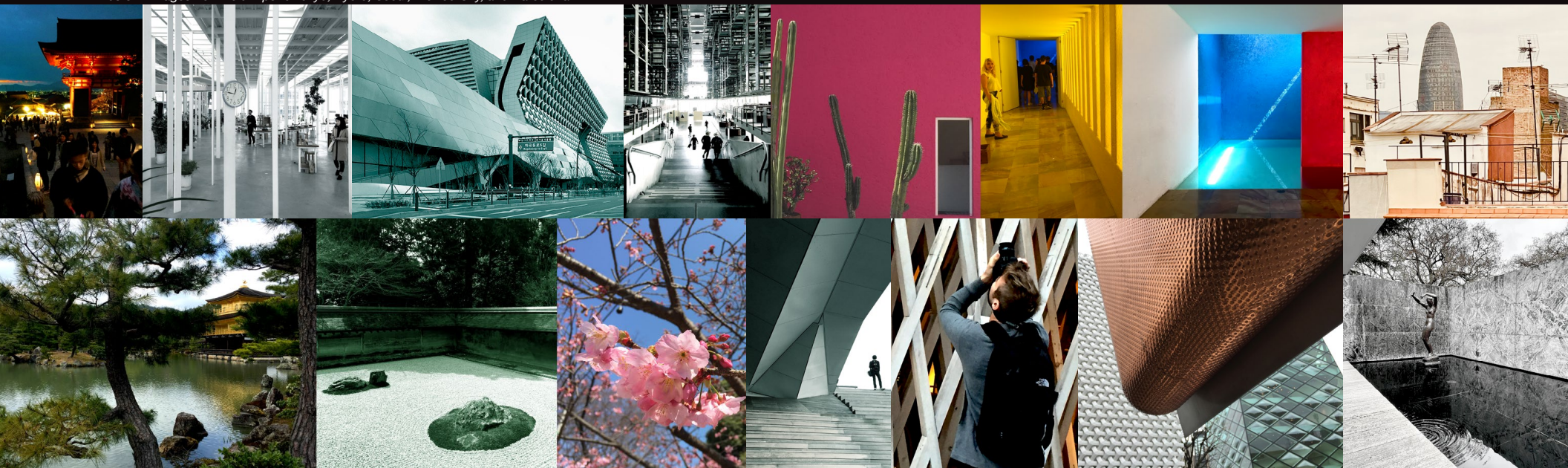
By the end of Winter Quarter each of you will have a substantially complete thesis project, supplemented by a substantially complete thesis book. Spring Quarter, in turn, will be primarily devoted to the refinement and public presentation of this work. Since your thesis project is unique in terms of its scope of critical inquiry and design speculation, the studio calendar is designed to allow you ample time in Spring Quarter for the production of unprecedented forms of design representation.

At the conclusion of Spring Quarter each of you will have a unique, profound, and thought-provoking architectural thesis and thesis design project that is fully developed and compellingly represented. These will be on display not only at a final 5th-Year Thesis Exhibition, but also in a final comprehensive studio show. In the past these studio shows have been curated and designed by the studio as a collective, and have resulted in a variety of engaging exhibitions—which you can see on the following pages.

There will also be a 5th-Year Final Thesis Review at the end of Spring Quarter, with esteemed architects and educators from other academic institutions invited to Cal Poly to serve as guest reviewers.

Finally, sometime during the year we will also take at least one major studio field trip. The specific destination and time of such a trip will be decided by the studio as a whole. Past trips have included visits to Tokyo, Kyoto, Mexico City, Seoul, Barcelona, and New York. Likewise, we will also do other things as a studio—day trips, dinners, drinks, etc.—both to bond as a studio and also just to have fun.

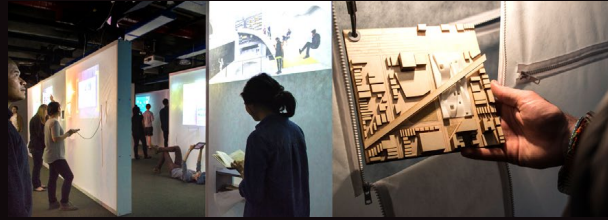
*below: images from field trips to Tokyo, Kyoto, Seoul, Mexico City, and Barcelona*



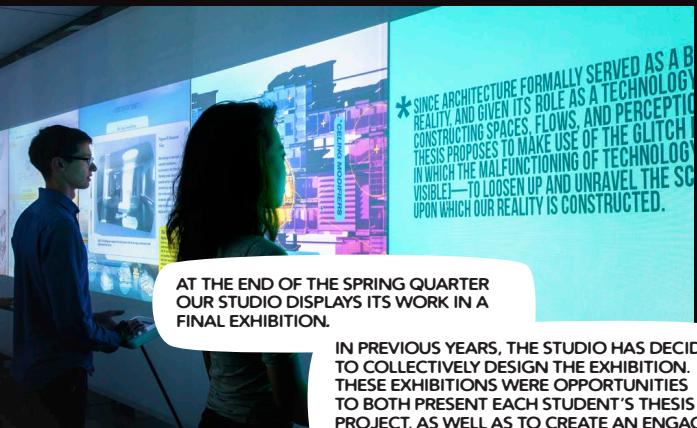
below: Lucid, 2016



below: Everything, 2014



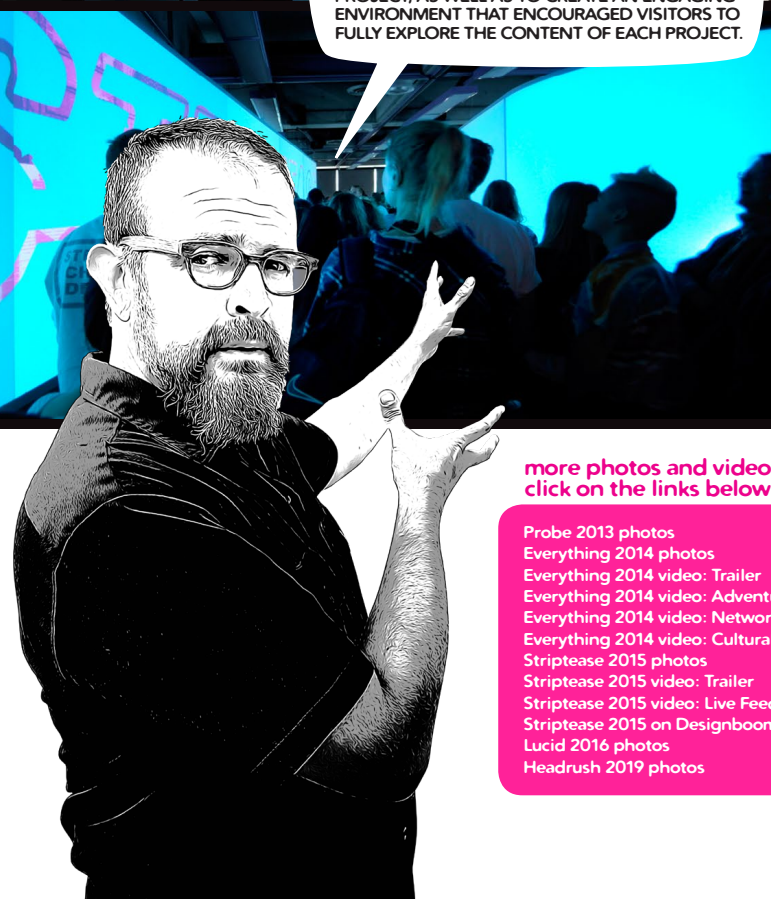
below: Probe, 2013



AT THE END OF THE SPRING QUARTER OUR STUDIO DISPLAYS ITS WORK IN A FINAL EXHIBITION.

IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE STUDIO HAS DECIDED TO COLLECTIVELY DESIGN THE EXHIBITION. THESE EXHIBITIONS WERE OPPORTUNITIES TO BOTH PRESENT EACH STUDENT'S THESIS PROJECT, AS WELL AS TO CREATE AN ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGED VISITORS TO FULLY EXPLORE THE CONTENT OF EACH PROJECT.

\* SINCE ARCHITECTURE FORMALLY SERVED AS A BARRIER TO REALITY, AND GIVEN ITS ROLE AS A TECHNOLOGY FOR CONSTRUCTING SPACES, FLOWS, AND PERCEPTION, THIS THESIS PROPOSES TO MAKE USE OF THE GLITCH (A STATE IN WHICH THE MALFUNCTIONING OF TECHNOLOGY BECOMES VISIBLE)—TO LOOSEN UP AND UNRAVEL THE SCENARIOS UPON WHICH OUR REALITY IS CONSTRUCTED.



above: Headrush, 2019



left and below: Striptease, 2015

more photos and videos—  
click on the links below:

- Probe 2013 photos
- Everything 2014 photos
- Everything 2014 video: Trailer
- Everything 2014 video: Adventure Time with Blair
- Everything 2014 video: Network Culture
- Everything 2014 video: Cultural Exploration
- Striptease 2015 photos
- Striptease 2015 video: Trailer
- Striptease 2015 video: Live Feed
- Striptease 2015 on Designboom
- Lucid 2016 photos
- Headrush 2019 photos



below: LINKS!, 2022



above: Fixation, 2023

more photos and videos—  
click on the links below:

- [LINKS! 2022 photos](#)
- [Fixation 2023 photos](#)
- [Fixation 2023 website](#)

WHILE LAST YEAR'S EXHIBITION  
WAS ONLY OPEN FOR A FEW DAYS,  
YOU CAN STILL VIEW THE WORK AT  
THE JACKSON STUDIO WEBSITE.



IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIND OUT EVEN MORE ABOUT ME, YOU CAN CHECK OUT AN INTERVIEW I DID ON THE "SECOND STUDIO" PODCAST [HERE](#).

## Bio

I am an architect, writer, and educator. Prior to coming to Cal Poly my entire career revolved around questioning assumptions about architecture, designing work that embodies new ideas about architecture, figuring out how to get that work built, and sometimes even constructing that work myself. Now, at Cal Poly, I am thrilled to get to help students do all of that as well.

Previously, I served as a principal along with Wes Jones in the award-winning and internationally-acclaimed office of Jones, Partners: Architecture (J,P:A), and during this time our innovative work was widely exhibited and was featured in numerous national and international publications, including the monographs *Instrumental Form* and *El Segundo*, published by Princeton Architectural Press in 1998 and 2007 respectively. While I was with J,P:A I was responsible for the design and management of a variety of projects, including the Confluence Point Bridges and Ranger Station in San Jose, the Andersen Consulting Corporate Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, the India Basin Technical Center in San Francisco, the "Shuffle" installation at SCI-Arc, the HSI Productions Satellite Office in Culver City, and numerous innovative residential projects. I was also the graphic designer for our award-winning monograph, *Instrumental Form*, the graphic director for our follow-up monograph, *El Segundo*, and the author of our firm's patent for our Residential Program Deck (PRO/dek) system.

Currently I maintain an independent design practice whose constructed as well as speculative design work has been featured in numerous books and design journals, and has also been exhibited both nationally and internationally—including at the Architecture + Design Museum in Los Angeles and the GA Gallery in Tokyo. I am also the author of a book titled *SOUPERgreen!—Souped Up Green Architecture* (for which I received a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts) and the guest editor for a special issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education* titled "Environments."

I am a licensed architect, and I received my BArch from Virginia Tech and my MArch from Princeton University. Before coming to Cal Poly I taught graduate and undergraduate design studios at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (where I was the Hyde Chair of Excellence—an invited position that has also been occupied by Wolf Prix of Coop Himmelb(l)au and Peter Cook of Archigram). In addition, I have served on studio and thesis juries all over the place, including SCI-Arc, UCLA, UC Berkeley, USC, CCA, Rice, Harvard, and Columbia.

If you want to talk to me about thesis studio and/or your thesis ideas then please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can email me and we can set up a time to chat.

E-MAIL: [dojackso@calpoly.edu](mailto:dojackso@calpoly.edu)



below: some images of my own work

