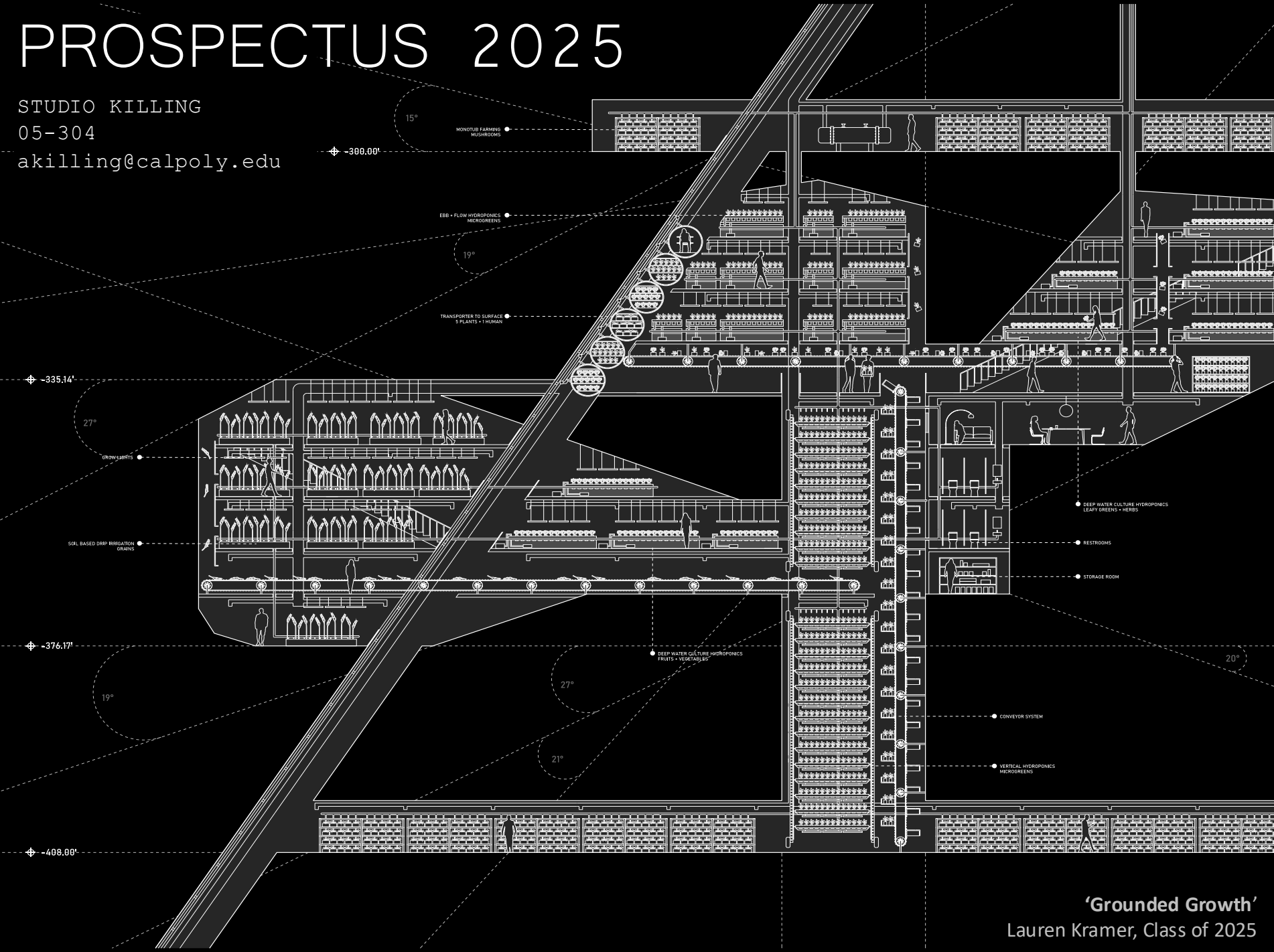


PROSPECTUS 2025

STUDIO KILLING

05-304

akilling@calpoly.edu



'Grounded Growth'

Lauren Kramer, Class of 2025



INTRODUCTION

Greetings, incoming fifth year students:

You are about to decide which studios could be the right place for you to wrap up your architectural degree at Cal Poly.

Ranking and writing your personal statement might appear daunting. Maybe you don't know each professor that well, or maybe you have not decided yet what area of interest you would like to focus on.

The good news is that no matter where you land, know that your success is **equally dependent on you and your studio peers as on your instructor.** While the instructors will mentor you and help solving problems, it is your dedication to your thesis and the contributions from your studio peers that will determine your 5th-year experience.

This prospectus describes:

- Studio culture
- Areas of interest
- Thesis year itinerary
- Instructor peculiarities

Hope you enjoy the read.

'SPACE[S] BETWEEN NATION[S]'

Sam Lee, Class of 2025

STUDIO CULTURE

Room 304: This studio is on the third floor of building 05. I prefer the studio door to be open during class time (..except when it's too cold) to welcome the exchange of ideas across studio boundaries.

Layout: The (initial) layout of the studio has your desk in the back of the studio close to the terrace and natural light, with dedicated pin-up space for everyone. In the front of the studio, the common area has a sofa (...naps are healthy) and a large worktable for model building, group discussions and meals... which brings me to another point:

Kitchen: The studio has a few amenities that allow you to prepare beverages, snacks, and – if you like – full meals. Occasionally, we prepare breakfast or lunch. I hope that you use this area to eat healthy, connect with your peers, and save time and money.

Rhythm: We start the day with a meeting that maps out the work for the day, upcoming milestones, or critiques. Typically, we are done in less than an hour, so you can plan your afternoon. At 2:45 PM, we have a coffee break, and at 3:10 we are back to the grind, with small group or individual desk critiques. I strive to critique each student at least once a week. By the end of Friday afternoon, you should be ready to call it a week and have a plan where to pick up on Monday.



STUDIO IS:

... the experience you shape:

You and your peers should form this milestone in your life, not me.

... the space where you feel safe:

- safe to explore ideas
- safe to work at your pace
- safe to disagree with your instructor
- safe to not know your thesis on day one

... the place that you enjoy:

Imagine a room that is bright, lively, and comfortable. Envision a collaborative environment with tools, materials, amenities. Think trust and camaraderie that grows from a shared experience.



STUDIO IS NOT:

... the course that you attend at your leisure: If you think you better work alone and from home, neither this studio, nor architecture as a field might be the right thing for you: Our profession relies on teamwork, immersive curiosity, and exchange of ideas. So does this studio.

...the class that spoon-feeds you to the finishing line:

If you were looking for weekly assignments and rubrics to check off deliverables, you will be disappointed: Your thesis is unique and so should be your research method and your schedule. I **won't micromanage** your academic journey, but I will want to learn about your roadmap.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano, Italy



Marktplatz Biberach, Germany



Salk Institute, San Diego

STUDIO FIELD TRIP[S]

...are an important, **non-mandatory opportunity** to perceive and explore architecture and its cultural context. I like to conduct these trips in Fall, so that the experience can influence your thesis. Also, travel is an excellent way to get to know each other. **Goal:** We all go! Sometimes, that does not work. I am aiming for 80% attendance. If we can't get that, let's find a better destination.

Bad News: Cal Poly's deadline for international trips in Fall closed in May.

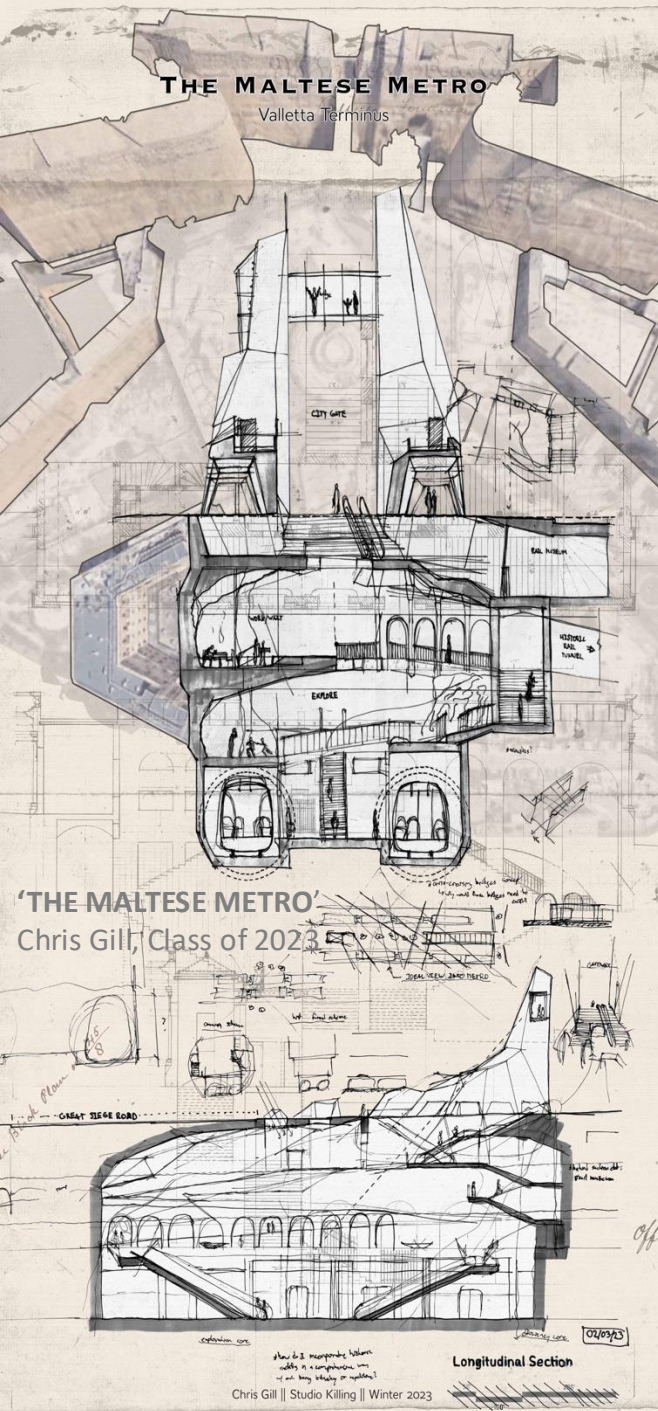
Good News: I submitted an application for an **8-day field trip to Japan, tentatively scheduled for October (...so we can catch the tail-end of the Expo).** If you are up for it, we can go there, **OR: we select one of the pre-approved itineraries from the past: Germany, Scandinavia, Italy.**



Opera, Oslo, Norway

If you want to prepare for the trip, find a job for the summer break, earn lots of money (trip cost will be somewhere around **\$1,900**) and **get a passport**. If you are an international student, we need to confirm visa requirements.

A **short, in-State trip in Spring** could keep your excitement up when your motivation hits 'recession'. If you want that, you need to help preparing it.



WHAT THIS STUDIO IS ABOUT

Responsibility of Architecture to Society: What you create as an architect will impact people and communities of the future. My studio emphasizes this responsibility. Anticipate future context and challenges to your design and ask yourself if your thesis formulates a viable solution.

Research and Contribution: It is likely that scholars before you were researching in your field of interest. This studio expects you to find what thinkers before you learned, to present their findings, and to build upon their conclusions so that your thesis contributes to your field of research. ChatGPT might struggle with that.

Physical Explorations: Digital models presented in 2D do not cater to the way architecture is perceived: Your projects are bound to exist in the physical world (...why bother if not). So should be your explorations: In this studio, physical model iterations (aka 'working models') are valued above glossy finished models.

Work-Life Balance: I am in studio every class day from 1:10 to 6:00 PM, occasionally longer, very rarely on the weekend. I expect the same from you: not less, but also not more. You should relax in the evenings and recharge over the weekend. Don't 'borrow' time from studio for other classes. Don't slack. Show up. Contribute.

Your Well-being: Your instructor ranks your mental and physical well-being above academic success. As much as I will be persistent when I sense empty reasons excusing lack of progress, I will encourage you to make healthy choices when life (...or work) gets in the way.

AREAS OF INTEREST

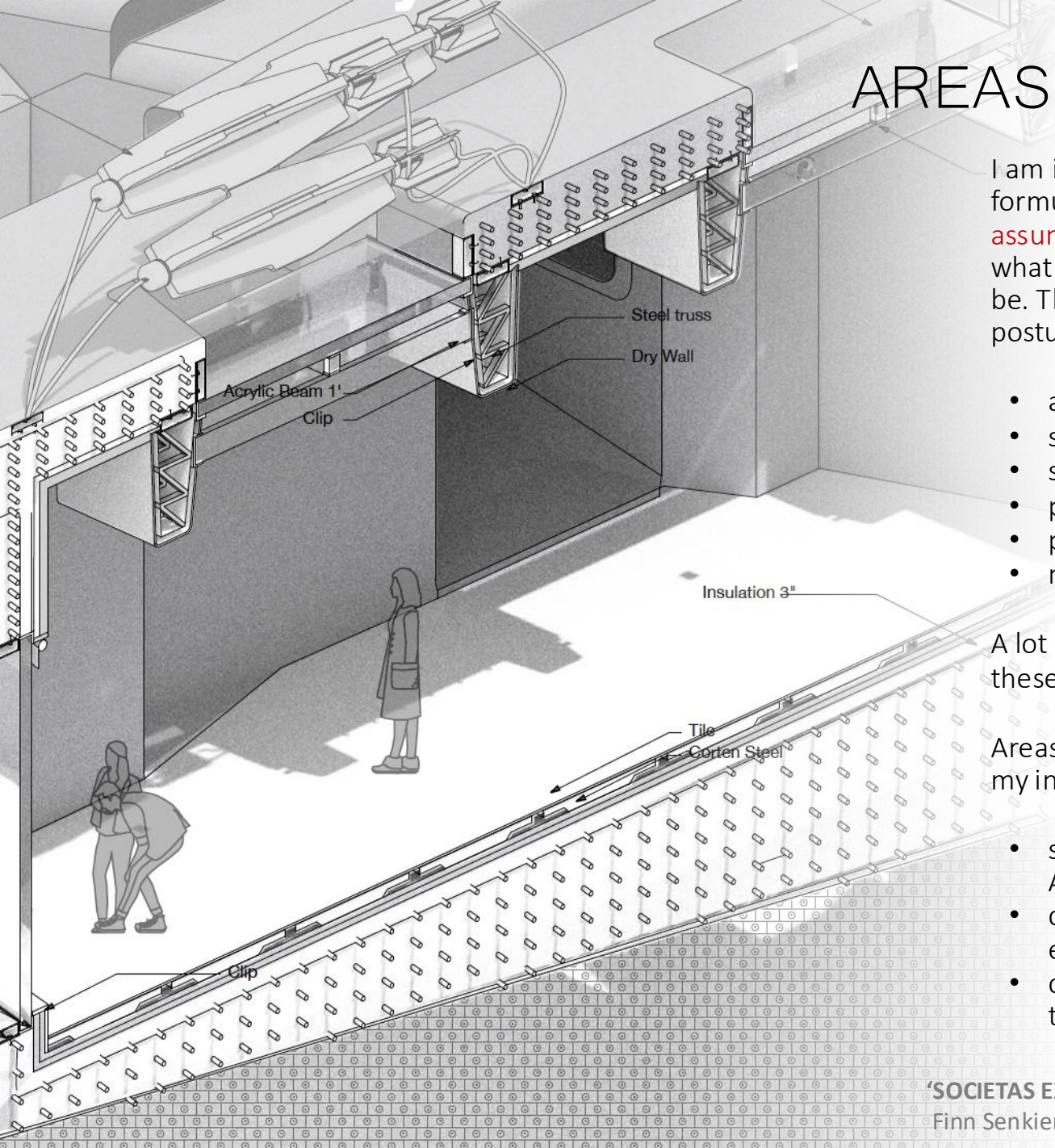
I am interested in thesis proposals that formulate the need for **Architecture to assume stewardship**, independent of what the global context and scale may be. Thesis proposals in my studio postulate that Architecture needs to:

- accept diversity as necessity
- serve the many, not the few
- shape liminal contexts
- promote resiliency
- preserve resources
- mitigate inequality

A lot of exciting ideas can unfold under these principles.

Areas of research where you may find my insights **less helpful** include:

- spatial concepts for a post-Anthropocene world,
- design of non-physical or ephemeral objects,
- design without a sense of tectonics.



FALL STUDIO

Vellum Design Competition: As a studio, we will explore how design connects to fabrication. Your object may or may not relate to your thesis. Piece of advice: Stay modest in size.

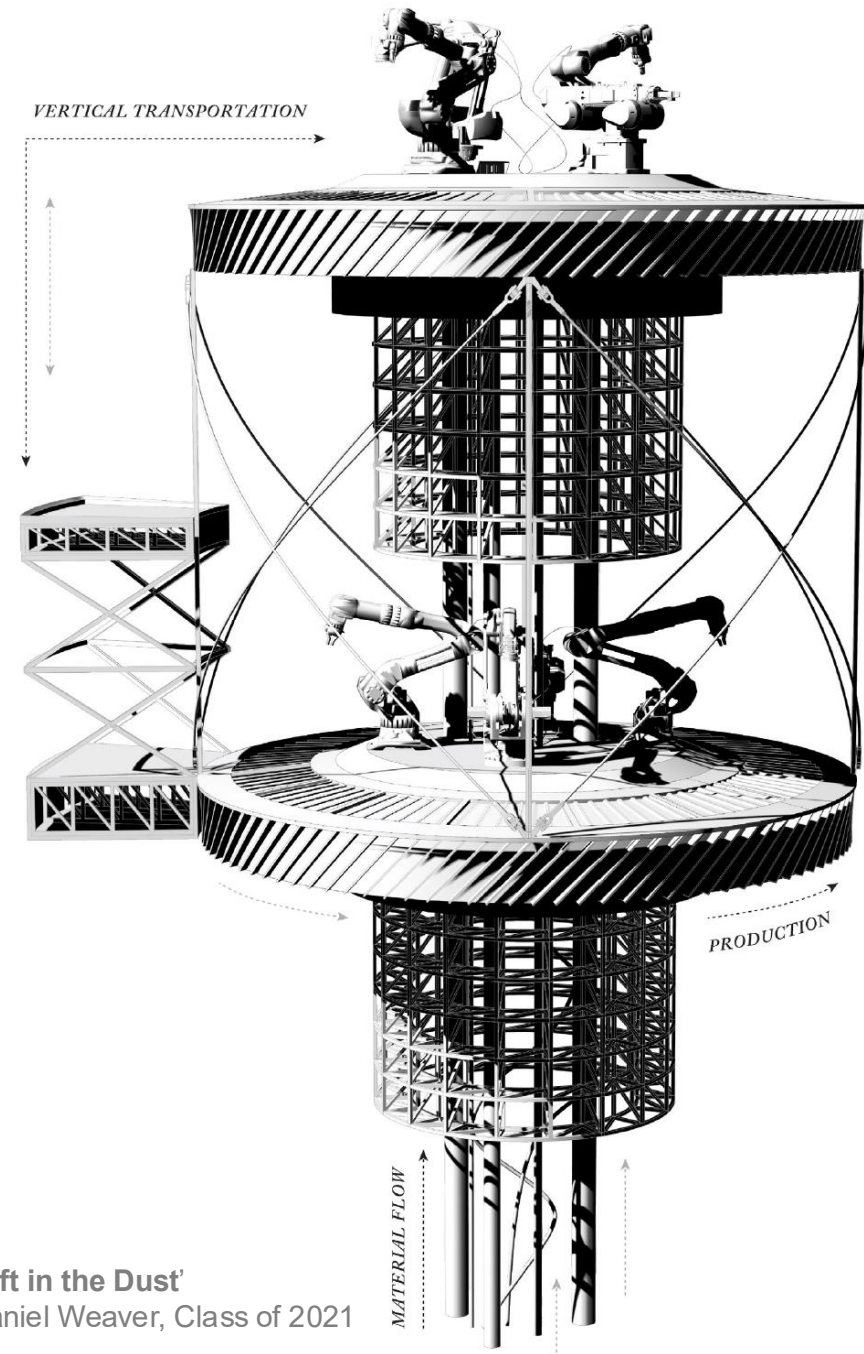
General Research: A series of selected reading and media will inform your quest for a suitable thesis project. Please expect a fair amount of reading, writing, TED talks, and discussions to sharpen your architectural wit.

Thesis Book: You will start compiling of your research and design a publishing format draft. Throughout the year, you will add and edit your book for final release at the end on Spring.

5th Year Abstract Show: ...happening some time in Fall

Thesis Research: To hit the ground running in Winter, you need to finalize a project brief that defines parameters and design objectives for your thesis project: Without this roadmap you will get lost.

Travel: I propose / offer an optional field trip in Fall. If the studio agrees (aiming for 80% participation) we travel and explore together for a week.



'Left in the Dust'
Daniel Weaver, Class of 2021

FALL SEMINAR



In addition to ARCH-481, the studio will meet in Fall Quarter for the **research seminar ARCH 492 on Fridays morning**. That is a tough time slot, given that Thursday is the new Friday. Here is how it worked with previous studios:

We start around 8:45 AM with an optional **breakfast**. Well caffeinated, we embark into two hours are of critical thinking and contrasting viewpoints, arriving at a position that aligns with your professional and ethical values.

While reading is required in preparation, class time will be mostly used for **discussions (plenum, small groups) and presentations**. As the quarter progresses, you will shift attention to self-selected sources in support of your thesis.

If you don't slack, you will end the quarter with you General Writing Requirement (**GWR**) fulfilled, your architectural senses sharpened, and substantial research on your area of interest under your belt.

WINTER STUDIO

Regular Check-ins: Throughout the quarter, you will receive critiques in various formats:

- Power Critiques are swift and short: In less than an hour, we review all projects and get feedback for each project.
- Group Critiques cater to a group of 3-4 students with relevant topic overlaps.
- Desk Critiques are tailored to your thesis and are one-on-one

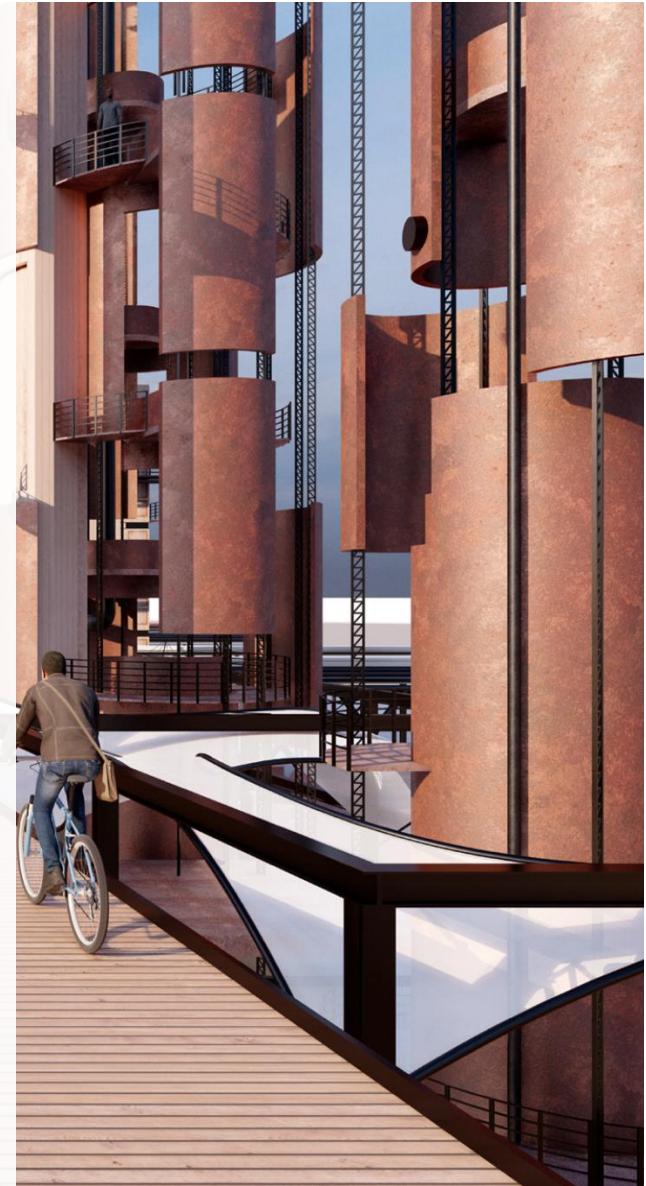
Section Show: Around week 4, you will participate in another 5th-year show case, exploring a cross- sectional aspect of your design proposal. This is a great opportunity to examine where your project stands in comparison to your peer group.

Thesis Book updates document and keep track your thesis progress.

Qualifying Review: At the end of Winter Quarter, there is a qualifying review where the entire fifth year faculty review all 160 students. What can I say? It is demanding. You better deliver...

'City Reclaimed'

Saul Serrano, Class of 2022



SPRING STUDIO

03 | SPIRITUAL GREETINGS



02 | PERMANENCE FROM WITHIN



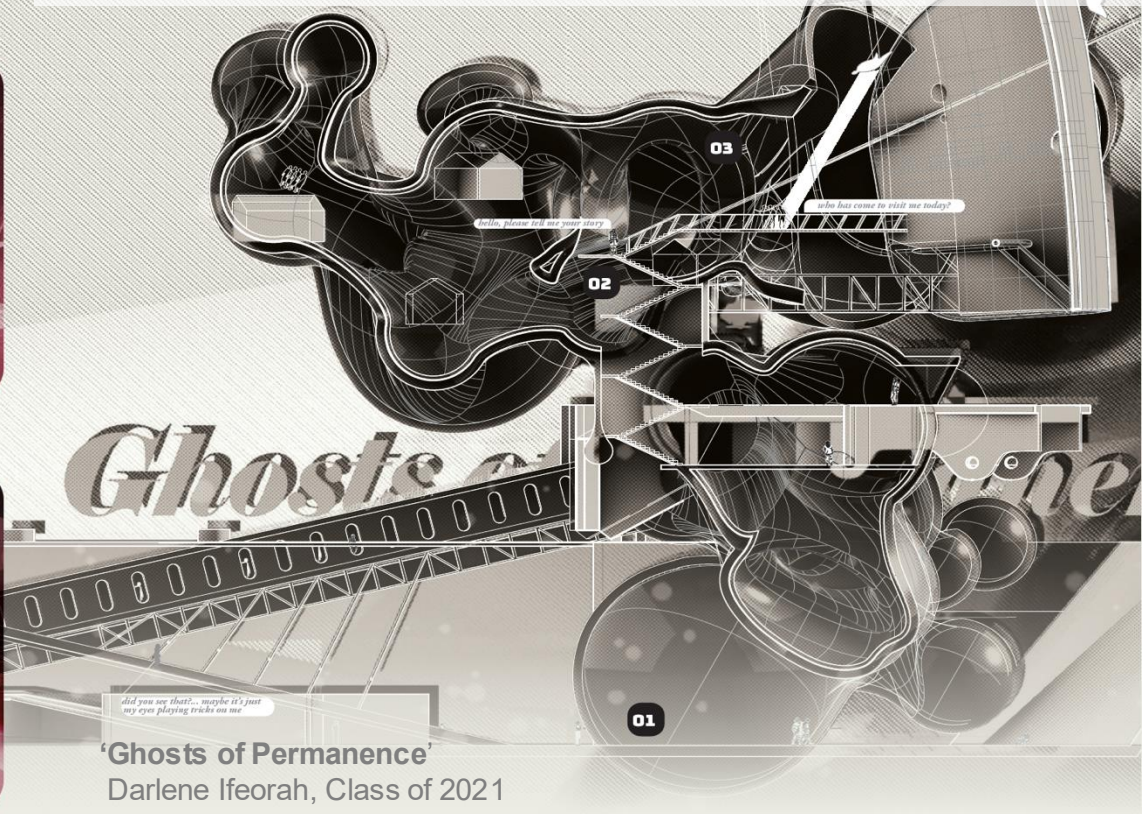
01 | LEARN ABOUT VILLAGERS



Detail Show: Scheduled in week 3, this show gets you moving after the Spring Break hiatus. You focus on a key element: that one crucial thing, the success of which makes your project fail or prevail.

Thesis Representation: You will fine-tune your argument and determine the best way to communicate your thesis.

Thesis Book: At the end of the Quarter, you finalize your booklet and submit it for print. Very soon, this book will be one of the most tangible results of your time at Cal Poly. Make it count.



STUDIO FINALE

As a studio, you will shape how the year wraps up: What will our show look like? Should we host your families for a reception in studio? You decide, I help.



Studio Show: Around 8th week of Spring Quarter, there is a studio show, usually in a gallery space on Campus or – if you are up for it – at a downtown venue. Good time to reflect on both, your work and the group that you spent most of your time with over the past 9 months.

Final Review: In finals week, all thesis projects will be reviewed by external critics, celebrating your work while giving you a reality check with an outside perspective.

Open Studio: Just before graduation weekend, all studios are open (...and hopefully safe and clean) for parents to visit.

INSTRUCTOR PECULIARITIES

Few things about me, so you know what to expect:

German: Born, raised, and educated in a country, whose native folks are not particularly famous for being sensitive, my feedback rarely starts with *"I really appreciate how you ..."*.

Builder: Trained as a carpenter, I enjoy building. Figuring out how to assemble a thing is integral part of designing it.

Architect: I am licensed in Germany and started the process for California. The photo shows a project that I did at K+H Architekten. When I am not teaching, I run the SLO Office of Roesling Nakamura Terada Architects.

How I see you: After you spent four years in college, you would - in most other professions - be on your first job by now. That is exactly how I will treat you: As professionals: I expect you to be self-motivated, put effort in, and show progress. You are the project architect. I will be your consultant.



Bauhaus University Weimar, Germany
K+H Architects, Stuttgart

A faded, light-colored image of a handgun, specifically a semi-automatic pistol, is visible in the background. The handgun is oriented horizontally, with the barrel pointing to the right. The slide, grip, and trigger area are clearly visible, though the details are softened due to the low opacity.

QUESTIONS?

Feel free to reach out
over the Summer:

akilling@calpoly.edu