

Design xChange

Almost every *thing* produced today is created by and for a global market. The pleasures of total access, however, are complemented by another aspect of globalization: a totalizing "culture" – the commodified, corporate air we breathe. Yet homogenization is never complete. The world of *designed things* – from objects to concepts of production – comprises processes in which specific histories, personal decisions, local codes, materials and information systems (not to mention specificities of topography, demography and climate) are embedded in forms and outcomes. The traditional local/global binary is useful, but no longer accurate: today, design resides in the local and the global *at the same time*. This simultaneity is the basis for Studio X: Istanbul, *Design xChange*.

Since the Seljuk period in the 11th century, commerce and craft were often based in the *Han*, a trading post, meeting place, warehouse, inn and small production center. In Istanbul, several were built in Fatih (the peninsula, home to Topkapi Palace), and are still used today, some in tourist fashion, others waiting restoration or redevelopment. Hansas were usually near bazaars where their products might be sold; for example, the Buyuk Valide Han (mostly mid-17th century construction) is near the Kapali Carsi, the Grand Bazaar. *Design xChange* extends the traditional Han into the future with an eye to the social performance of its economic activities.

Design xChange will be a collective (institution?) for design production. It operates somewhere between museum and factory, Etsy and Amazon, Berlin's Tacheles art squat and MoMA's PS1, an event space and a bazaar; between the particular and the general, it is programmatically parametric. Pending student research and analyses, *Design xChange* may include operations such as art studios, craft (work)shops, printing shops, light industry, galleries, classrooms, meeting rooms, auditoria or offices. Its productions may range from materials to images, woolens to websites, services to platforms, necklaces to NGOs.

The site is in Galata on the shoreline near the junction of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. Currently home to the Istanbul Modern Museum, warehouses and a ferry landing, the site is subject to considerable development pressure. The site abuts the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and the GSAPP Studio X is across the street. Also in need of attention is rapidly-changing Beyoglu, the district which extends uphill from the waterfront towards Taksim Square, where a 2013 shopping center proposal generated intense protests. The relations projected by students to institutions, organizations, and social groups here and throughout the city are vital.

The studio will travel to Istanbul during the week before Spring Break. In the 6 weeks before the trip, students will: conduct research into complementary programmatic and formal examples; survey the site, the district and the region; create a conceptual model of conditions and uses of particular interest, and create several site planning and architectural scenarios. A introductory bibliography will be provided.