

GSAPP Columbia University Advanced Design Studio Spring 2015
Joint Studio in Architecture and Development

Critics:

Laurie Hawkinson, Leigha Dennis (Architecture)

Vishaan Chakrabarti, Dana Getman (Urbanism)

NYC – Barcelona

Speculating Models for Collective Urbanism

Joint Studio in Architecture + Urbanism



Introduction

While societies globally are experiencing various stages of transformation, the United States and Europe have found themselves in a seemingly unshakable malaise since the beginning of the twenty first century. Mired in economic inequality, wage stagnation, housing crises, social disinvestment, crippling debt, and sclerotic national governments, these societies have increasingly looked to their cities for corrective action. A prime example is the recent election of progressive mayoral administrations in New York and Barcelona; both have made the creation of affordable housing and workspace central to their respective agendas. As an example, the two administrations have begun collaboration on a joint “competition” to compare the means by which both cities can deliver innovative forms of affordable housing.

Inspired by these efforts, but not duplicative of them, the agenda for this studio is to produce implementable design proposals for two specific sites in New York and Barcelona, with emphasis on envisioning new models of collective living and working – Collective Urbanism – that is economically accessible for current and future residents. Students will speculate through large-scale or small-scale interventions that may enable new forms of energy production, public policy, engineering, transportation or other drivers to create new platforms for advanced urbanism.

Background and Site

The studio will begin with an examination of global models for collective urbanism. What defines “affordable”? What defines “urban”? What, if any, are the latent environmental, economic, or social values of these imperatives? Students should consider the evolution of public policy towards housing, which through the course of the twentieth century transformed from a government-built, mono-use notion of “public housing” to our current models of “affordable housing.” Questions of program, mixed-use, and the future of urbanism beyond the sole issue of housing will be paramount.

Students will begin the studio working with a prominent site on the Brooklyn waterfront, Pier 7 south of Brooklyn Bridge Park, where new housing, open space, and infrastructure are emergent. Working in teams, students will develop and envision these new forms of Collective Urbanism until the Barcelona trip in March, where we will meet with city officials, designers, developers and other professionals to assess models currently under consideration there. A parallel site in Barcelona will be investigated in an effort to compare and contrast urban strategies.

Following the trip, students will transpose their design propositions for the New York site to the Barcelona site, which is similar in scale, but differs drastically in context and meaning. The site in Barcelona is a large “panopticon” prison that is surrounded by a thriving urban context. The government is currently considering redevelopment of the facility. Students can propose to redevelop and/or demolish all or portions of the site. The point of the transposition is to explore questions of form and policy through juxtaposition.

Format

This studio will be joined by Vishaan Chakrabarti and Dana Getman. Development students will join Architecture students, where together they will speculate on future Models for Collective Urbanism. Students from all programs should anticipate an immersive interdisciplinary environment that will result in either joint or individual projects at the culmination of the studio.

The studio will meet Monday and Thursday 1-6 PM, and will be joined by GSAPP Development students on Thursday afternoons for a weekly seminar.

The seminar gives an opportunity to meet and discuss with the Development students along with invited guests over the course of the semester – covering topics on specific issues relevant to global cities like New York and Barcelona, on collective space, on new types of living and working models, among other issues.

The goal of the Architecture studio in working together with the Development students will be to propose *new models for form, policy, and economies that together produce Collective Urbanism*. Teamwork is encouraged; and each project is viewed as a kind of thesis, where Architecture students together with their Development partners will ask directed questions concerning the potential for development strategies.

Speculating

Speculation will frame the work this semester as we consider the nature of ***taking a very large risk***.

Speculation by definition is both the process of thinking or meditating on a subject, a judgment, conclusion, *opinion, or theory* reached by conjecture. It is also an investment involving higher than normal risk in order to obtain a higher than normal return (not strictly monetarily).

Speculation may involve taking large risks especially with respect to making predictions for the future, and gambling, in the hopes of making huge gains (again, not strictly monetary) **speculating on Work + Live + Play in Collective Space**.

Collective Urbanism

Collective – Collective is our term for shared and public space. Collective space is to be considered a critical piece of **infrastructure** to enable live + work + play. Collective space encompasses a variety of scales, and is an essential and strategic component for developing urbanism. Students will investigate and propose programs for their collective space strategy.

Live –The studio will consider the work being done under “Affordable NYC” for new smaller housing units (300 SF Micro units) as well as co-housing models, family housing models and potential others models developed by the students.

Work (*Incubator*) – Students will rethink the future of the workplace, and consider how work might inform their speculative models for collective urbanism. What form might this work take as the concept of work evolves? One example of a new form of work is an incubator, “a place or situation that permits or encourages the formation and development of new ideas” (definition, Webster’s Dictionary).

Modeling

We will make a lot of models, both conceptually and physically.

Students will develop and test new conceptual models for collective living and working using physical modeling as the primary mode of study and speculation. In this studio, research and design will be conducted from the onset. Research will not strictly operate as a collection of information; instead research will be performed and conducted as students test and experiment with formal and urban strategies.