

A4003.008: Core Studio III, Fall 2014
Studio Statement, Gauthier

CONCEPT

Housing in the near future is an opportunity to define and address change: more people, social and environmental requirements for denser urbanisms, and broader spectrums of inhabitants as life lengthens. Cities demand new housing types that support a variety of abilities, helping urban residents to maintain their independence and participate in their communities. To support greater well-being and longevity, the home environment demands microclimates programmed for exercise, accessibility, and healthy levels of light, air quality, sound, and temperature – ideally, with activities as both part of the circulation of the building and the city.

Modernist utopias are easily editorialized into caricatures of efficiency based on a paradoxical minimalist ideal of low-income families comprised of thirty-something tri-athletes. A lifestyle of discipline and rigor that caters to and celebrates the material order and clarity of architecture may add up to a luxury demanded by a fashion that is defined and characterized by form and circumstance and that relieves the burden of everyday decision-making. Is the smoothness and ease of luxury a constrained evolution of Modernism, and the only option of consumption-based systems? Or is there lurking on conceptual outskirts another option that is evolving from the thing as a counter-project to Nature to that of the thing being Nature?

If decision fatigue is a measurable condition supported by the data sets of entwined health and insurance industries – data sets that measure Pepsi, Coke and Mountain Dew products as taxing as those of Reynolds Tobacco – is not design's ability to define concepts of universality an opportunity to redefine housing for a real public with greater choice and accessibility? What is the research value in addressing these over-simplified extremes? What is the potential of design to serve, refine and experiment with concepts and constituents of Universal Housing with spatial proposals distilled from non-intuitive efficiencies of both life and lifestyle? In studio when anything, conceptually, formally, politically, and technologically is possible, it is our intention to address this burden of decisions by using the ever-evolving design tools and conventions to calibrate intuition and doubt as process metrics for making, validating and communicating the potential of an architecture that promotes and facilitates an intellectual participation or greater control of the built environment.

PRECEDENT

Page Street Housing Project, London. Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens, 1928-30