

Capital (in)Fluence:

Russian Capital Immigration in London



Russian Ruble Currency



Silvertown Quay in London's Royal Docks

"The citizen is an unstable subject. So is the immigrant, the irregular... [citizenship] is an incompletely theorized contract between the state and the subject. In that instability there are possibilities, both good and bad."

- Saskia Sassen

Objective:

The Global Cities and Architecture studio is open to all 3rd year M.Arch or AAD students. This studio, Capital (in)Fluence, will explore architecture's role in global financial networks. As architects are increasingly tasked to design cities, the design methods of architecture—rather than urban design or planning—offer a way to rethink the role of architects in a rapidly urbanizing world. The unprecedented growth and change in global cities demands architecture to reengage with the city, not by designing iconic imagery, but with the *quickness, precision, and concepts* of the architecture discipline. These qualities do not lie within the traditional urban master plan, but instead in the notion of "architectural urbanism". The studio will address the essential issues confronting global cities by designing at an architectural scale in order to generate urban strategies, resulting in a critical "*reverse master plan*" process.

Perhaps the most significant force reshaping global cities today is the flow of foreign financial capital into urban real estate markets. The Capital (in)Fluence studio will analyze the flow of "immigration capital" between two global *capitals*—Moscow and London—to generate *experimental building design* strategies. This vast transfer of Russian capital, accompanied by 150,000 Russian expatriates over 12 years, has found safe haven in London's real estate, financial, media, and art markets. This large scale immigration of Russian citizens with their financial capital has been made possible by British "tier 1" visas— residency provided for those who invest £1mil—while transforming entire neighborhoods in London. The studio will explore the architectural and urban futures for the Silvertown Quay development in London's Royal Docks. Students will propose architectural scale projects; in order to define the urban influence that global "immigration capital" has on an increasingly urbanized London.

Project Description:

Working in groups or individually, the studio will be conducted as a form of design research—in which research arguments are defined by design proposals. This format will allow students to develop their own design research, guided by individual approaches to define architectural and urban areas actively transformed by foreign capital. Each project's definition of "capital immigration" will be guided by the Global Cities and Architecture program's research themes—which range from food to transportation to energy. The studio will include two project sites—design research for a small site in Moscow while the main project will be in London's Silvertown Quay. The Moscow project will be a "proof of concept" for the design proposal in Silvertown Quay.

Silvertown Quay is a waterfront "enterprise zone" in east London, slated to become London's third international business center. The architectural proposals for Silvertown Quay will be defined by the design research—it may be a building, a group of buildings, a network of global "brand pavilions", a multimodal train station, or a transport bridge. The studio will produce a diverse set of experimental building projects that will inform individual design methodologies for "reverse master plans." This process will reverse the typical flow of the master plan; instead of designing from the generic to the specific, students will design architecturally specific proposals that transform the nature of the "generic" master plan. The question of "immigration capital" and its influences—architecturally, socially, and politically—will be researched in Moscow and experimented at both architectural and urban scales in London.

(in)Fluence Symposium and Studio Travel:

The Capital Influence studio will travel to both Moscow and London. In Moscow, students will be part of a GSAPP sponsored symposium, "(in)Fluence." The four day symposium will be organized around the studio's theme of influence—after all, architecture has always been about influence but even more so with global networks. The symposium will occur in Moscow's three architecture schools—Strelka, Moscow Architecture Institute (Markhi), and the Moscow School of Architecture (MARCH)—also measuring their influence upon each other. Following the Moscow trip, travel to London will allow for the site visit as well as meetings with local officials, architects and other experts. *Travel to Moscow will occur from October 3rd to 8th. Students will then travel to London from October 8th to 14th.*

Program :

Each group or student must develop a programmatic ambition that identifies opportunities within their individual design research and the site of Silvertown Quay. There will be two global programs in the studio. The Moscow program, a bank branch of the future, will require students to design for global capital immigration. The bank branch of the future will envision physical manifestations of the financial network between Moscow to London. The main studio program, for London's Silvertown Quay, will be defined by each student based on their design research for the Moscow bank branch of the future. Students will be limited to develop architectural scale programs for a portion of the Silvertown Quay site.

Site:

Each group or student will develop their design research and proposal in two global capitals—Moscow and London. The site for the bank branch of the future project will be near the Studio X Moscow pop-up facility. The movement of people and capital between global cities is the stated mission of the internationally focused Silvertown Quay development. The London site will be a portion of the overall 62 acre Silvertown Quay development—each project will need to define its own site within the larger development. Students will be required to design the spatial and virtual site relationships between Moscow and London—in the form of architectural proposals and a "reverse master plan."

Schedule:**Project 01A: Immigration Capital Research (10%)**

(Review on September 15th; 1 week)

Preliminary research of Russian immigration capital will be conducted on an individual basis. Each student will analyze how Russian immigration capital navigates the global financial system and influences both capitals—Moscow and London. The research must be iteratively explored for their potentials in defining unique approaches to “immigration capital.”

Project 01B: Moscow Bank Branch of Future (10%)

(Review on October 1st; 2 ½ weeks)

Groups (or individuals) will translate their preliminary research into a design proposal for a bank branch of the future. This will require a design argument about capital flight out of Moscow and possible futures of the Russian financial system. After the project review, students will travel to Moscow for the (in)Fluence symposium and continue their travel research in London. Presentation of their work will be made to local architects while the studio is in London.

Studio Travel

(Moscow, October 3^d – 8th; London, October 8th–14th)

Project 02: Mid-review (30%)

(Mid-review on October 29th, 2 weeks)

Each group or individual will present at the mid-review their Moscow design research and process for designing a portion of London’s Silvertown Quay. The iterations must clearly define the project’s architectural argument relative to both site and program.

Project 03 (10%)

(Pre-final review on November 24th)

Project 04 (40%)

(Final review week of December 1st, Date TBD)

Grading Policy:

In general, grading for the semester will proceed as follows:

30%	Material presented at the mid-review
40%	Material presented at final review
30%	Development of the work through the semester

Grades will be given in relation to the student’s ability to meet the course deadlines, deliverables and course objectives. Students are entitled to one unexcused absence. Further unexcused absence(s) will result in the lowering of your final grade by one grade. Three unexcused absences are grounds for failure. Absences will be excused in accordance with university policy and will require a note from a physician. Please notify your professor in advance if you know that you will not attend class for any reason.

Studio References:

1. Burdett, Ricky and Sudjic, Deyan, eds. “London” in *The Endless City*, Phaidon, 2011.
2. Sassen, Saskia. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton University Press, 2006.
3. Sloterdijk, Peter. *In the World Interior of Capital*, Polity, 2013.