

Columbia University
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
Spring Term 2015 Advanced Studio V
Studio instructed by ALA Architects, Helsinki: Juho Grönholm, Antti Nousjoki, Janne Teräsvirta, Samuli Woolston

Venue

Building a sense of community

STUDIO OVERVIEW

The intention of the studio is to study the role of public buildings in emerging or transitional communities.

Most people in the world live in locations far from fully formed urban centers. The architectural potentials of their social spaces are in need of an updated design investigation.

The students should analyze the actual need for public space in contemporary communities and what kind of architecture supports the fulfillment those needs. We should challenge the notion of building high quality meeting places and cultural venues only in permanent settings. We should also avoid the tired clichés of nomadic, modular solutions and fantasies of walking cities.

Questions of re-use and lifespan adaptability are equally relevant in all new buildings, and should not be used as arguments to downgrade the ambition level or architectural intensity of buildings in emerging or transitional communities.

Each student should follow the design and research process outlined below. The studio is scheduled so that every other week allows for intense discussions, collaborations and co-working with one of the ALA partners present in New York, and every other week the focus is on developing material as outlined in the schedule, with the assistance and guidance of a studio assistant.

The format of working should be a developing set of horizontal A3 PDF's produced throughout the duration of the studio to form an ad-hoc book including the full story of each project. The report should be a truthful documentation of the process, with emphasis on content, ideas and information over perfectionist presentation.

Recommended way of working is producing exploded isometric collages of digital and physical models overlaid with written and abstract graphic information.



STEP 1: SITE SELECTION & RESEARCH

Dates: 23.1. - 2.2.

Output: PDF presentation, max. 20 pages

Each student should come up with an interesting and relevant site in an emerging or transitional community outside the normal architectural comfort zones of the world, and present clear and concise arguments on their background for the selection.

Selected community should be analyzed and diagnosed with a focused interest on issues relevant to adding a public building in it. Avoid long, general descriptions and focus on key statements related to the topic, which will serve as useful background for the future design steps.

Examples of sites:

- Mono-functional residential suburbs
- Fracking towns of US / Canada
- Refugee camps
- Military bases
- Chinese boom cities
- Remote tourist destinations
- Unplanned urban areas such as mega-city slums



STEP 2: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Dates: 3.2. - 16.2.

Output: PDF presentation, max. 20 pages (continuing the Step 1 presentation)

Based on the site selection analysis, the students program their buildings with a mix of functionality and with the help of studio instructors define the capacities and performance targets, along with square meters and other numeral criteria relevant to the selected program (etc. number of seats, free height, etc.)

The building should provide the community at least with the following:

- spaces for local amateur performances & rehearsals
- venues for professional touring groups realistically available in the area, if any
- a base for festivals of different scales and topics
- a physical meeting place for all community members
- online connection & facilities to use it for study, work & recreation
- protection from climate

Additional parameters should be added according to the needs and potentials of the selected site and community. The actual size of the building is also left to the student's discretion. What is important in this phase is to make (and argue for) decisions about the functional targets of the project.



STEP 3: INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPT & MID TERM REVIEW

Review dates 27.2. and 2.3. (TBC)

Output: Fluent verbal presentation with slide show telling the story so far, PDF presentation of max. 60 pages total.

The students should formulate a design concept and summarize it verbally and graphically in a presentation continuing from the first two steps.

The design concept should be based on a clear, thought-out statement of intent emerging from the potentials of the selected site and program.

Inspiration can be found from questions like:

- What is built as permanent, what is rentable & updateable equipment?
- What is mobile, how and why it moves?
- What is the building called, should it be branded?
- How is the project financed? Does it generate profit? Is it cheap or expensive?
- Is the project quick to build or a long, gradual process?
- How will the users understand & appreciate the character & identity of the design?
- How does the building adapt to changes in use and context?

STEP 4: TRAVEL WEEK

Dates: 8.3. – 14.3.

Studio will travel to Amman, Jordan and research the conditions at Zaatari refugee camp and other local communities with the help of GSAPP Studio X team at Amman.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaatari_refugee_camp



STEP 5: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Dates: 20.3. – 28.4.

Output: Completed book & presentation for the final review.

The aim is to develop the initial concept into a realistic yet inspired schematic design and to present the building as a functional entity in the chosen context,

Working with section and plan drawings as well as digital and physical models combined into isometric and perspective view collages, the students should develop the physical and spatial qualities of the project and to consider the materiality and structural properties of the design.

After developing a coherent design scheme, the student should run a simulation on how the design performs. Each student should select one key characteristic of their design and find a way to test how the design performs in relation to that. Potential simulation subjects are:

- Wind conditions
- Solar conditions inside and / or outside
- Energy consumption / production
- Visibility in the landscape
- People movement analysis: functionality, egress
- Durability of a detail / surface

STEP 6: FINAL REVIEW

Dates: 28.4. – 29.4. (to be confirmed)

The students present their work to studio instructors, faculty and visiting critics, going through the design and research process with emphasis on highlighting the innovations, ideas and observations gathered along the way.

The studio will hopefully produce a collection of architectural innovations, ideas and observations which are useful the global architectural discourse.

VISITING EXPERTS

- Theatre technical consultant (from Arup NYC or TPC)
- Visual identity designer Teemu Suviala (Kokoro & Moi)
- Touring performance group manager / specialist (Cirque de Soleil or similar)
- UN Habitat program specialist Hans Park