

## **PLASTIC and ELASTIC (the MUSEUM)**

Columbia University  
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation  
Advanced Studio VI, Spring 2014  
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The studio project this semester will reside at the intersection of the urban realm and the space of culture. As the interface between architecture and the city, and between the public realm and the private interior, occur within the thickness and across the surface of enclosure, the studio will explore the architectural possibilities of a hybrid condition that stretches between a taught two dimensional envelop and a sculptural three dimensional articulated mass... plastic and elastic here is not intended to be taken literally as an aesthetic or physical quality but rather describes a terrain that enables multiple kinds of exchanges and experiences through shared and overlapping territory.

### **Approach:**

The studio will be driven from 3 intertwined areas of investigations

### **Form and Surface**

On a formal and tectonic level students will generate conceptual models based on the analysis and transformation of selected buildings that exemplify the convergence the two main trajectories of modernism. The first being an architecture focused on technical virtuosity and efficiency, of lightness and thin skins: shells, membranes, curtain walls or cladding; overlaid, stretched, wrapped, or hung from an assembly of structural and/or planar elements (systems such as space frames, geodesics, columns and slabs, posts and beams etc. The second, rooted in early experiments with concrete, resulted in radical transformations of existing building types from a previous era such as the villa, church, monastery and eventually institutional and cultural buildings. This second trajectory having evolved away from the pursuit of lightness, transparency and minimal elegance exemplified by late modern the steel and glass structures resulted in a more massive and sculptural approach, a radically different form of expression that was equally if not more compelling. Today the legacies of these two approaches have converged as sophisticated tools now enabled complex surfaces and sculptural forms to be conceived and realized in a variety of cutting edge materials and techniques of assemblies. The student projects will be explorations of one or more aspects of this convergence.

### **Urbanism**

While the building envelop carries with it ideological, aesthetic, political and technological intentions the a priori existence of the zoning envelop is a critical protagonist in the determination of the intersection between the spheres of urbanism and architecture. The students will critique and engage with the mechanism of zoning and in particular the vehicles of air rights and incentives. To counter an urbanism too often rendered banal by virtue of infinite expanses of

taught building skins that are seamless and increasingly flat, a goal of the studio is to 'stretch' the limits of surface and enclosure in order to create volume and space. To facilitate this a radical zoning mandate will be adopted that privileges horizontal expansion over the vertical. The straightjacket of the optimized vertical extrusion will be jettisoned in favor of harvesting air rights directly above the adjacent public realm. Here our zoning is intended to encourage ambitious permutations, daring cantilevers, tectonic projections and sculpted protrusions that extend outward from the site boundary to disrupt the placidity of the public domain.

### **Program**

A highly articulated building form and enclosure that transgresses boundaries also serves to create an interiority that intersects and overlaps with the urban through the manipulated plane of enclosure. The program for the site will be a public cultural venue for the visual arts. The students' conceptual formal studies will be used to critique the typologies of the museum, gallery and kunsthalle. 'Plastic and elastic' refers not only to a reconfigured (and perhaps reconfigurable) program as well as boundary condition but also to the spatiality of the interior spaces that will serve to challenge the orthodoxy of the white box and other museological conventions. The studio project, provisionally titled the Plastic and Elastic Museum, will be located on the current site of Studio-X Istanbul. It is intended to replace the existing 10 storey building that overlooks the Bosphorus and sits across from the port and various cultural facilities that house the Art Biennale, the Design Biennale and various art fairs. It is of course intended that the program of the Plastic and Elastic Museum will engage these events that occur a city wide scale.

The studio will travel to Istanbul and Cappadocia the week of March 10th.