Critics:
Galia Solomonoff
Amy Maresko

RIO, IDENTI-CITY
Producing Identity driven Architecture

If one is to talk about identity and cities, Rio de Janeiro shows up high on the list. It is hard to think of Rio without invoking images of Ipanema Beach, Burle Marx's sidewalks, Oscar Niemeyer Niteroi's Museum, Pao de Azucar colossal Christ, or a crowded Carnival shimmering dance… Like a singular character, Rio as a city possesses all of the elements of an attractor, but also the thrilling potential of danger and engulfing quest.

Fareed Zakaria cautions us that our largest problems are the product not of our failure but of our success. In the world of capital, like in nature, what works spreads relentlessly. Architects, politicians, planners, and developers attempt to safely reproduce the urban structures that worked in New York, Paris or Barcelona: landmarks like the Highline, the Tate, the Guggenheim, the sense of place in the West Village, La Rambla or Montparnasse. Yet the formulas that gave us these localized interventions are often elusive or insufficient, as every urban success has a specific layering of old and new, local and global that produced a certain ambiance and scheduled effect.

In *Generic City* (1993), Koolhaas describes a future city that is successfully dense yet indistinct. In this scenario, people have blended beyond recognizable racial traces; cities have copied each other's salient traits; all territories, regardless of geographic or climatic challenges, have been conquered at a relentless pace producing self similar cities all over the globe. In this narrative the generic city thrives, yet upon arrival could be confused with any other. The transit hubs are seamless, density is triumphant, and work ethic is prevalent. Koolhaas positions this scenario as an aspiration yet also as a cautionary tale.

We are proposing to redesign the **Moinho Fluminense** site in Rio. The questions that arise are:

- Are we to propose iconicity and identity as productive counterparts to density and capital expansion?
- What of the existing shall be kept? How much, if any, can be added?
- How can diversity and democratic processes be encouraged, protected and maintained?
- Can cities provide a more productive and stable identity and overtake nationalism or ethnic pride?

Format:

Team research and design– January 22 to March 3, 2013
Team or Individual projects – March 3 to May 1, 2013

The agenda for the studio is to produce an architectural design proposal to transform the **Moinho Fluminense site**, a former factory into a dense **Art** district with a residential and transit component. We will look at Miami's Art District, New York's Whitney-Highline expansion and London's Tate urban transformations as precedents.

The goal is to arrive at proposals that are conceptual, strategic, and quantifiable, where questions of economy and democratic equity play in parallel. The aim is to first become familiar with the complexity of creating design proposals for this key and central Rio site and next to produce a feasible proposal for such a site that integrates lots of "new" with some of "old".

Studio format shall be as follows:
- The studio will meet on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 2 to 6 pm
- Wednesdays 2 to 4 pm we shall follow a seminar type meeting and discuss, develop arguments and thesis, design proposals and matrixes of development.
- Teamwork is encouraged for the first half of the semester—until March 3—and optional for the second part of the term for the final project. Individual projects may develop and depart from team research at any point.

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Rio Site:

The studio proposes the **Moinho Fluminense** as a site within a macro-economical scheme of the city of Rio and the *"Statute of the City"* created by its government to foster democratic and efficient growth. We shall look for direct correlations in the application of architectural parameters, development, and sustainable growth. While architecture is certainly not solely responsible, it is at the epicenter of any expanding economy or ambitious state and undoubtedly instrumental and relevant for growth. The current environmental/energy challenges -and the solutions to it--are fully intertwined with the building and development industries. No one can envision a solution to environmental challenges without planning for the cities that support these changes. The studio shall employ a cross-disciplinary work method to create an integral and sustainable model of urban form able to deliver economically prosperous, formally progressive, and environmentally robust cities.

One of the theses of the studio is that identity emerges from culture; at the same time culture is fueled by economy, which thrives in the generic. Any problem, even world hunger can be viewed as a design challenge. The intention to solve a problem demands reallocation of territories and resources to produce the needed supply. The thesis is that within us we hold the technical and philosophical underpinnings necessary to build the world we prioritize as "better," and that design is simply an allocation of such priorities. If the world is to be considered as a giant spreadsheet of resources then the formula we are seeking is one that mobilizes only the capital and energy needed while rewarding cooperation and curbing the excesses from within, all the while following the key laws of nature.

- Lottery: January 22, 2014
- First studio session: January 24, 2:00-4:00pm
- Delivery of research Phase 1: February 17
- Midterm: March 10
- Trip to Rio: March 17-21
- Final: May 1, 2014

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