



artist: Tara Donovan – *Untitled (Mylar)*

We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become “*dividuals*,” and masses, samples, data, markets, or “*banks*.” Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold in as a numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies.

Gilles Deleuze, Postscript on Societies of Control

dataBANK_im_material/architecture

Banks store money and valuables. They also operate as sites for the exchange of money. Each threshold—façade, ATM, teller window, vault—fashions a link between bank, money, and customer. Because banks are dynamic networks of exchange, a range of services, financial products, and people flow through its real and virtual spaces. In the West during the Renaissance, bankers cultivated currency networks from an object of value in the form of measured quantities of gold/silver and its representation in the form of the bank note or coin. The architecture of the banking institution formed around this circuit, symbolized by the vault that stored the real assets, while the banknotes circulated their institutional value. The delinking of monetary value from the international gold standard in the early 1970s not only severed the connection between currency and its material value, but it also severed the representation (banknote) and its referent (gold). The rise of neo-liberal banking policies and practices have widened this gap exponentially whereby financial transactions such as collateralized debt obligations (CDO's) drift far afield from the material things (food) and processes (cooking it) that fulfill our basic human and social needs. The time/space of the circuits of financial exchange first encompassed by the 14th century bank has been expanded and accelerated. Today's transnational banking concerns operate on a global scale, while financial powerhouses such as Goldman Sachs have reduced the rate of financial exchange—high frequency trading—to profitable milliseconds through the use of computer algorithms. Today's bank building, particularly the headquarters, images the architectural icon, which can stand for the transnational brand.

bank: *_noun.* A sum to draw upon; store of things for future use, a reserve supply: spec. of blood for transfusion, tissue for grafting
data: *_noun.* an item of information; *pl.* of datum - immediately apprehended by or presented to the mind or senses
databank: *_noun.* a repository of information, data, things, blood for transfusion, tissue for grafting or the senses

The computerization of all facets of everyday life means that we produce large quantities of information. We create a trail of data through our most mundane acts—swiping our Metrocard, posting photographs on FB, searching Google, shopping with a credit card, filing our tax forms, giving blood at a lab, providing fingerscans at the border, and so on. The same terminology that was once reserved for banks—vaults, walls, breaches, master keys—is now common parlance for securing our virtual transactions and identities. In the U.S. most of us no longer manufacture goods instead we produce data. And for some—businesses, investors, researchers, and hackers—our data holds value. How will a new paradigm of banking—the **dataBANK**—create an innovative institution that stores our biometric data and information, which include our personal memories, histories, and other traces of our daily existence? If banks increasingly store more data, what new physical spaces will have to be created that can engender meaningful and productive social relations between banks, and customers, information and users, the institution and its urban community?

This core studio will explore the bank in its twenty first century context. We will design an institution that merges a community owned bank providing banking services and personal data storage. Like a credit union, **dataBANK** will draw its members primarily from downtown Brooklyn and nearby neighborhood's residents and workers. Offering data storage, **dataBANK** will also offer services to a global network of on-line virtual clients who will store a range of information—including personal data, biometric data, genomic material, and other artifacts. Over the course of the semester, the studio's architectural projects will investigate how the program and spaces of the **dataBANK** make visible the material and immaterial exchanges between data, bodies, and society.

The conceptual grounding for the semester's project will evolve through three iterative stages: the first phase begins with what we call the "object lesson" that explores material research and fabrication methods. The second phase conducts a precedent study of banks combined with a network analysis of local/global banking. Further programming and photographic site analysis will round out the third phase. Armed with this arsenal of techniques for researching, testing, and analyzing, you will develop your version of the **dataBANK**. Every project will have a conceptual foundation that relates key socio-cultural conditions of contemporary life with architectural concepts and design methods. At every phase, the studio will work in three dimensions (physical and digital models), which will afford the opportunity for material and structural exploration throughout the project's development. These material investigations, which include the existing conditions of the site, will provide a kind of resistance eliciting creative intelligence to develop concepts, forms, spaces, and details. We will also make productive use of two dimensions by way of drawing, diagramming and data visualization. This will allow the studio to map and draw the local/global networks and spatial flows that will determine the character of each project. Experts in data/biometrics and architecture will share their knowledge and resources with the studio.

Curiosity drives one to pay attention to one's world, and as one tries to make sense of it, causes one to linger on some particular feature that suddenly seems to stick out as odd, or beautiful, or strangely hard to explain.

Dr. Denis G. Pelli, Psychologist and Neural Scientist
"What is Observation? James Turrell Skyspace Installation at PS1"

The intellectual grounding of the studio will be structured through lectures, discussions, readings, and tutorials; these group debates will allow each student to craft his/her own position relative to the larger agenda of Core II Studio. Architecture is by its very nature a site of human exchange and the creation of it is a social act. Therefore, everything this semester will be contextualized within a social sphere of practices, ideas, and events. Architecture is also an ethical act that requires a high level of intellectual interrogation and sound reasoning. On an individual basis, you will utilize the semester to develop the underpinnings of *your* architectural practice. By definition "to practice" entails the carrying out of an idea or theory; it is a praxis, performance, execution, and achievement. To hone a productive practice necessitates commitment and discipline. To achieve this goal, we require punctual completion of exercises, arrival to all studio events in a timely manner, attention given at all discussions and reviews, and respect for the work of your classmates and others. This means that all mediums of distraction need to be turned off or put away at reviews and while working at your desk so that the requisite focus can be given to cultivating a meaningful creative practice.

Friday 01.24.14

Lecture 2-4pm:

"Object Lesson"

Meet in studio space at 2pm sharp (please do not be late), we will move to [place TBD] for a lecture and discussion.

Please bring notebook, sketchbook, or pen and paper to take notes

Please print out required reading Denis Pelli, ["What is Observation? James Turrell Skyspace Installation at PS1"](#)

Museum visit 4-6pm:

William Kentridge, [Refusal of Time](#) at Metropolitan Museum of Art 100 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street

Please bring your CU ID and Metrocard for bus and subway transportation.