

## THE ORDINARY

This course examines the notion of the *ordinary*, and the ways in which it has been exploited as a site of enquiry in the architectural debate, particularly from the mid-1950s to the present. Structured upon a series of projects dealing with the scrutiny of so-called *existing conditions*—from Alison and Peter Smithson's Bethnal Green to Aldo van Eyck's Dogonland, from Reyner Banham's Los Angeles to Robert Venturi's and Denise Scott Brown's Las Vegas, from Rem Koolhaas's Singapore to Atelier Bow-Wow's Tokyo—this course interrogates the ways in which architecture has, by examining the ordinary, dealt with emergent and seemingly irreducible urban phenomena, as well as has by the same token constructed a peculiar practice of architectural theory. This practice arguably entails the identification, scrutiny and documentation of an existing city—a city not preceded by a theory, yet whose built evidence potentially amounts to a theory—which is in turn addressed as a critical repository for the disclosure of new architectures or new urbanisms. By focusing on its episodes of invention, this course ultimately constructs the genealogy of such architectural practice, and by the same token questions to what extent this has become a received idea in contemporary architecture culture.