

METAMORPHIC



Morphe: form

Morphology: the study of form and structure

Metamorphosis: the transmutation of form and structure

This studio explores the experimental possibilities of metamorphosis, the transformative invention of spatial form as it is manifest in and through social and cultural formations.

We will utilize one of the world's most legendary collections of cultural form and transformation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as a site to explore new forms of curatorial and informational space-making. With the recent development of many of New York's primary cultural institutions, like Renzo Piano's Morgan Library/Museum and Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Lincoln Center, the Met is prime for a contemporary evolution.

For the first part of the semester we will experiment with the ways digital visualization in museum settings may provide groundbreaking opportunities to expand the application and accessibility of new informational systems. At the scale of display architecture, the museum environment is particularly geared to evolve ways that these technologies can provide interpretative information and multi-media visualization as the viewer looks through fixed and mobile screens at artifacts, models, paintings, or period rooms. Your project focuses on one of the Museum's diverse collections, which include: The American Wing; Arms and Armor; Arts of Africa; Asian Art, Drawings and Prints; Egyptian Art; European Sculpture and Decorative Arts; Greek and Roman Arts; Islamic Art; Modern and Contemporary Art; Musical Instruments; and Photographs. Already imminent in each artifact in all these collections are deep cultural informational networks that your architecture can draw forth with new spatial and temporal relations.

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Each of the Met's collections pose distinct opportunities to configure and evolve more engaging uses of both technologies and tectonics — as curatorial systems within and between the diverse collections and the public spaces of the museum (cafes, circulation, gift shops, lobbies), but also as interpretative interface membranes between interior and exterior environments.

So for the second part of the semester, your experiments now develop and evolve to the building scale. Your chosen collection and its informational membranes, having already expanded into the public spaces, will expand out to the surrounding areas of Central Park (which right now the building completely ignores) or out toward Fifth Avenue or tower up into the skyline. You will metamorphize the Met through a new major addition to the museum. The original neo-Gothic building was built in 1888 along the eastern edge of Central Park by the Park's co-designer Calvert Vaux, with subsequent building campaigns in 1902 with Richard Morris Hunt's neoclassical facade and the 1971-1991 late modern expansion by Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo. Each of these building projects envisioned and projected an idea of a museum as a form of culture. And now with their contemporary rooftop installations of the Starn Twins' Big Bambú and Tomás Saraceno's Cloud City, the Met seems posed again to project outward. This studio will be the next campaign to envision the future expansion of the Metropolitan Museum, to envision a future transformational history of culture.