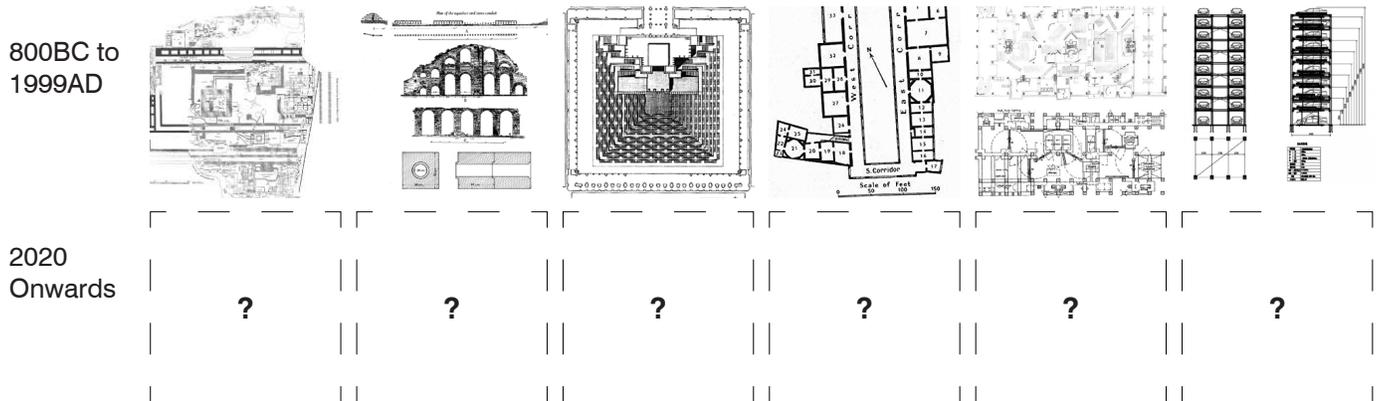


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“It is as much about what it does as about what it looks like.”



**CONCEPT AND “ THE NEW TYPE OF... ”
 New programs for the 21st Century**

Problem/Hypothesis

We will reset.

There is little that generates as much consensus amidst our discipline as the desire to re-ground architecture as a cultural tool: to fight against the linear process where architecture is a mere product of our social structures, and, instead, to think about it as a retroactive, dialectic practice initiated by society, with the power to effect/affect the very society that produced it. This questioning becomes crucial, first, in a time where global politics are a looming chaos and second, in a moment where many architects have claimed that we could take the leading course in changing everything... but, in practice, we are naive regarding the sources where our mandate really derives from.

We are skeptical vis-à-vis the capacity of architecture to mold the society to come, partly because the architectural project ends up responding to enormous faceless clients and commissioners’ dictates. Perhaps, because “to address the notion of the program, today is to enter a forbidden field, a field that architectural ideologies have consciously banished from decades.” Our Fall 2019 Studio takes up the challenge of the apparently forbidden paths for architects and reopens the question of program (i.e. activity) not only as an architectural concern that can trigger new architectural types and appearances but also as an emancipation tool from veiled control and convenience.

Background

We will look back.

Manhattan has always been known as a laboratory where the ongoing testing of the metropolitan lifestyle has played an active role in many architectural mutations. Its “neutral” grid has witnessed intense architectural moments, part of them, due to the advent and combination of different activities and technologies. The studio embraces the incessant mutability of the city, focuses on its impending needs and questions what are the happenings that can establish new links, new connections to public use, social relations and so on, that can reframe architecture and its cultural relevance.

To start, the students - paired in groups - will look at historical new types/programs that span from the Agora (10th -8th Centuries BC, Greece), the Library (285-246 BC, Alexandria), the Viaduct (Ancient Rome, Roman Empire), the Pompeii Thermal Baths (64 AD, Roman Empire), the Chand Boari (8th Century, India), the Uffizi Galleries (1560, Florence) to the 20th Century Parking Garage. This preliminary exercise in order to start the conversation about how the initiation of new activities have shaped architectural types and/or vice versa.

Project

We will look forward.

Following this conversation, each group of students will be assigned a major theoretical framework:

- The political
- The environmental
- The social
- The infrastructural
- The recreational
- The educational

Based on the contemporary challenges that these backgrounds raise, each of the groups will propose an *unnamed* program someplace in a generic Manhattan block. The six new programs will all be weaved by an underground component conjunctively design by the studio. We will explore how program can regulate architecture's relationship with society, how space contribute to it not only-but also how it can challenge it.

We will think about what architecture does. We will think about an effect.

Yet, we will think about an affect. We will think about what architecture looks like.

Considering the new civic modalities that have moved political tactics away from party-line ideologies to favor alternative mechanisms such as trends, movements, and other affect-driven political forms, the different affects a building can elicit have become a major point of interest in the discipline's discourse and a powerful interstice for transformative processes. Consequently, we will explore theoretical concerns about how abstract, intangible concepts become active, tangible materials.

Eventually, each of these new programs will need to be named.

Reading List

And, before going to bed, we will read.

- Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*, Monacelli Press, New York, 1994
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(Prepared by Valeria Paez Cala)