Ancient Spirit Modern Mind - Huu-ay-aht Community Cultural Centre
ARCH 501/520/540 – John Bass, UBC SALA – jbass@sala.ubc.ca

Field of Inquiry
The motto of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations provides the conceptual framework for the studio. The pairing of “ancient spirit” with a “modern mind” is front and centre in their public-facing and online presence. We will respect that aim and search for what it produces architecturally.

Putting this idea into practice, the Community Cultural Centre (CCC) at the Huu-ay-aht village of Anacola is both part of a tourism plan and a way to transmit knowledge between generations. The Huu-ay-aht are negotiating the repatriation of many artifacts, including two large poles and many smaller objects. How these artifacts will be housed in and active agents of the CCC will be significant technical and creative issues of the studio.

In parallel to these plans, the Huu-ay-aht are also developing resource capacity via a community forest and sawmill with kiln-drying facilities. They are involved in reconciliation negotiations with Western Forest Products, a major timber/lumber producer on Vancouver Island. We will focus on the intersection of this wood-centred material culture and its developing infrastructure.

Schedule
The studio is organized in two parts: 1/ a five-week research and design exercise that develops a small but complex element of the project to a high degree of specificity, and 2/ the elaboration of that element into an eight-week design project.

Learning Objectives
Students will resolve the organization of the modest (5000 sf) program, site orientation and (urban) design, life safety, basic material, and technical systems, and universal accessibility standards.

Site
The gently sloping site is in a developing part of Anacola, carved out of the lush coastal rainforest of Vancouver Island. We will explore how the CCC can strengthen existing, casual connections to two adjacent public buildings to the west and south. Also part of the studio’s site design activity will be how the CCC can anticipate connections to a large open space for sports and community gatherings and a new 20-unit housing district being planned to the northeast. There are also potentially significant south-facing ocean views of Pachena Bay, especially from an elevated position.

Program
The CCC functional program is modest, and organizing it a straightforward process. There are two major parts: 1/ a entry-level artifact exhibit and artist workspace; 2/ a second-floor space for Elders’ and a multi-purpose room/daycare. There is of course also the vertical (spatial and physical) connection between them.

The focus of the first exercise is the meta-program. Can, and if so, how does a building facilitate the transmission of knowledge? How does this question apply in the context of an Indigenous culture that has occupied the same geography for millennia? Where does a design sit along a spectrum from the technical to the cultural?

We’ll begin by assembling a collection of Nuu-chah-nulth / Huu-ay-aht artifacts currently located in museums but potentially repatriated. We’ll catalogue them according to material, use, and fabrication method, etc. We will explore how to creatively and conceptually link one or many of these artifacts to the building’s spaces and their users, including tourists and residents, Huu-ay-aht Elders and children.

In both exercises, the modest size of the program provides an opportunity to explore and develop in some depth a range of scales of building elements (corners, projections, stairs, thresholds, entries, openings, surfaces, cabinetry, etc.) that are embedded in it. How the building extends into the landscape, meets the sky or the ground, how a wall turns a corner, will also be subjects throughout the studio.

Community Engagement
Students in the studio will complete the TCPS Core 2 tutorial on research ethics and produce a positionality statement. Via Zoom, we will have several opportunities to engage with members of the Huu-ay-aht / Anacola community and others who consult with or work for them. These sessions will provide local knowledge and insight and help ground your work. Unfortunately, it is not possible to travel to Huu-ay-aht at this time.
The studio embraces the idea of entanglements, that complex web of relationships between us and all things through the exploration and development of an outdoor farm school. The entanglements are many - old and young, outside and inside, farm and water, soil, sunlight, shadow, air, plants, insects, animals. The outdoor farm school brings school children and retired folks together to grow, tend, cook, and share food. The settings for these activities encourages an architecture that invites the unexpected or unforeseen, spaces activated at varying times by the warmth of the sun, a light summer breeze, or the scent of flowers in bloom. David Leatherbarrow writes

“When the building is freed from technological and aesthetic intentionalities, we discover its lateral connections to an environmental and social milieu that are not of anyone’s making, still less designed or planned. And it is precisely these connections that animate its “performativity,” even if they cause the building’s work to resist both conceptual mastery and exhaustive description. The point to be stressed is the building’s eccentricity, its existance outside itself, for its behaviour testifies to a constitutional weakness at its center, a negativity at its heart, because it must wait for its circumstances to give it what it lacks - light, air, human events. Still, what the environment offers is always somewhat different from what was expected. The building’s internal disequalibrium obliges it to accept into its makeup conditions over which it has no control.” from ‘Architecture Oriented Otherwise’, chapter 2. Unscripted Performances, page 62

The studio is speculative, yet takes its point of departure from the UBC Farm Intergenerational Landed Learning Project, which teams cross generations of school children, elderly, and university students to farm sustainably. The projects will be situated at UBC Farm plus take into consideration the adjacent broader context of Wesbrook Place, a growing hub of accommodations, retail, community centre, and secondary school. The neighbourhood plan for Westbrook Place calls for a future elementary school, which we will reimagine as the outdoor farm school.

The entanglements are set around occupiable territories at three scales of room, detail, building.

a1. threshold - 2.5 weeks
a2. covering - 2.5 weeks
b. entanglements - 8 weeks

Individual work for the first project, with either individual or teams of two for the remaining.

Guests will join us for reviews.

grow, tend, cook, share thresholds
Gando Primary School 2001/ Diebedo Francis Kere
ventilated covering
Dominus Winery 1997/ Herzog & deMeuron
entanglements of stone, shadow, light

led by Joanne Gates Architect AIBC  adjunct professor SALA  jgates@sala.ubc.ca  Gates-Suter Architects Inc.  www.gatessuter.ca
Space as Transition: Material as Expression

These two very general statements of intent will be exercised in a complex urban setting situated in central Vancouver. An overall encouragement will be for the use of sectional studies as an essential tool in strategic thinking.

The term will consist of three one-week introductory projects, running in conjunction with a series of short lectures provided for all four sections. The remainder of the term will be focused on the design of a single, free-standing building of moderate scale and complexity.

In all cases, the projects are located in or adjacent to the existing block of buildings between Main Street and Station street and between Prior and National. Apart from being a block of extraordinary – even unique – formation, the block is within the urban precinct that surrounds the proposed new St. Paul’s Hospital. This huge project will put both predictable and unforeseen pressures on its surroundings, but also brings with it the potential for an entire repertoire of new programmes – both central and tangential to those included in the hospital itself.

The first three ‘sketch’ exercises will be under the respective headings of ‘threshold and entry’, ‘topography and strategy’ and ‘structure and enclosure’. In each case the dimensional constraints of the site will be precise, but the programme less so, encouraging the exercises to be explorative in nature. The content and logic discovered in these first projects will be directly engaged with the formulation of the final assignment.

The final and much more thorough project will entail a free-standing building located in the landscape that will emerge between the existing block and the proposed hospital complex. In this case the programme, including required areas and certain adjacencies, will be specified while the precise location and determination of siting will be at the discretion of individual designers. This flexibility in part occurs as a potential model for the ensuing scope of subsequent building proposals.

While the current hospital masterplan documents will certainly be observed, it is not the intention of the studio to simply ‘flesh out’ those organizational diagrams but rather to consider the nature of urbanity that might be prompted by such an enormous piece of critical infrastructure. In so doing, it would be hoped that some form of transition between the institution and the fabric of the city might be identified and given form.

While current circumstances prevent many in the studio from directly visiting the site, the early stage of hospital planning and the schematic nature of the existing block should allow a determined and refined interrogation of ‘site’ alongside the design proposals themselves.

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SPORK: adventures into the liminal

UBC Spring 2021, Arch 501/540
led by Thena Tak, ttak@sala.ubc.ca
P1: between two things, 3 weeks
P2: between two other things, 6 weeks

Across
2. Bull’s head, man’s body
4. Strung between two trees
6. Ruler of The Upside Down in ST
7. Mad snake hair
10. Nolan’s bookshelf as a dimensional portal
12. Translucent beings, neither living nor dead
14. Between a truck and a car
16. Slush-fest of both land and water
17. Urban gaps
18. Between two-way roads

Down
1. Place to de-shoe
3. Is it black and blue or gold and white?
5. The Little...
8. Sleeping thoughts
9. Between the sidewalk and the front door
11. The awkward pre-adult
13. The time spoon and fork hit it off with fork
15. A haircut that is both short and long
17. Not quite, but close