UBC SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE +
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
THESIS REVIEWS
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Wayne and William White Engineering Design Centre
2345 East Mall
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Humankind possesses an inherent instinct to build, and an ambition to pursue beyond what we know and understand. As such, we are on the cusp of arguably the most exciting phase of exploration in human history. As technology advances and humankind’s horizons for exploration expand, eventual manned missions to Mars are inevitable. Thus far, the conversation surrounding future missions plans has predominantly been between engineers and scientists, where robustness, feasibility, security and safety are the main drivers for design. While embracing the rigors of space science and engineering is paramount to our success on another planet, this project seeks to propose an efficient, safe and productive manned research base on Mars which explores the inclusion of human need, enjoyment and well being throughout, and strikes a critical balance between the pleasure of built space and technical constraint on this hostile planet.
Planning, policy and design have neglected to strategically address informal settlements, now home to one third of the world’s population and commonly subjected to inadequate housing, and infrastructure. These communities have naturally grown for centuries, developing after colonization, slavery, industrialization and now capitalism. These settlements can be recognized today as their own townships - a city within a city, disconnected from the commodity driven market of urban centers and the associated social constructs.

Specific to Trinidad and Tobago, the social, political and physical divide between the formal and informal have heightened as squatter communities are increasingly at risk of eviction as a result of urbanization and lucrative investment opportunities. This thesis therefore presents an alternative to current clearance proposals by blurring the boundary of these communities and bridging social disparities through historical and cultural traditions of the Steel Pan.

Sara Stevens · Thena Tak · Nicholas Waissbluth
Architecture is imbued with a natalist fixation that causes designers to situate their buildings in the static world of the present with no considerations for the dynamic world of the future they will actually live in. This project is a response to the contradictory trends toward both limiting energy consumption and constructing a disposable building stock. Architects can minimize environmental impact by considering the effect that details, materials selection, and building systems have on initial resource consumption, longevity, adaptability, and recyclability.

This project seeks to exemplify a working methodology for architects to ‘future proof’ their buildings. In this mixed-use development, each piece of program operates on a different timescale. Classrooms, amenity spaces, and residences are projected to have different future requirements and therefore each strikes a different balance between strength and adaptability. Not only is building longevity good for the environment, it also provides value to owners for much longer and can offset the impact of demolition and new construction where a typical building would no longer meet their needs.
The design intent of this thesis is to explore how the relationship between architecture and the forces that shape it may evolve over our upcoming careers.

*The year is 2048.*
Younger adults in need of long-term residential care face extremely limited housing options. In fact, it’s not uncommon for young people to end up in homes designed for seniors and end-of-life care. This situation can be extremely disturbing, depressing, and isolating. Younger people have unique needs that require specialized care and bespoke architectural solutions. This project will address the latter, suggesting a mixed-use building typology specially suited to younger adults - one built around lively communal space, peer-group social interaction, access to on-site therapeutic amenities, and contact with the healing effects of nature.
What does it mean to dwell in wilderness?

The definition of such a place is contested, as is its history, meaning, and location, yet we are compelled to seek it out. It is experienced simultaneously as spectacle, commodity, and convenience. This project seeks to reposition the ontology of the user from that of the unspoiled wilderness landscape to that of the anthro-wilderness landscape; to embrace the human nature of our interactions with such landscapes. While not everything is built in wilderness, everything is built of wilderness. Through highlighting the processes of building, making, and dwelling in such landscapes, by viewing it not as other and apart but as within and in-part, we can reconstruct a relationship of being and becoming in not just wilderness landscapes, but all landscapes.

KEVIN ISHERWOOD

of Place, of Wilderness

Joe Dahmen · James Huemoeller · Kees Lokman · Sherry McKay
The contemporary post-war typology of housing has failed to accommodate multigenerational cohabitation despite the fact that a fifth of the U.S. population lives in such a way. This typology enforces the idea of living in nuclear family units and has weakened ties between generations. On top of this, families are leaving cities for suburbs causing an imbalance in age groups.

In light of this, this thesis will propose a new model for multigenerational housing through social connectivity between family members and across age groups. As a test case, the thesis will use San Francisco’s vernacular corner buildings to explore a new model of multigenerational housing and offer a family of adaptable solutions. A secondary focus will be creating subcommunities for varying degrees of social interactions among residents.

Allison Holden-Pope · Bill Pechet · Inge Roecker
This thesis explores the ways in which architecture and design can positively contribute to the interactive relationship between artist and audience, through transparency and accessibility to create a building that fosters a shared community. The project proposed is a creative center focused on fostering a sense of community between artists and the public in the rural setting of Vancouver, to facilitate circumstances for artists to experience, reflect, and explore new means of their practice and to provide conditions that stimulate the dialogue between art and life.

ZHAOLIN LI
Art-on-Granville Creative Center
Reuse of ECUAD North Building

Joe Dahmen · Michael Henderson · Leslie Van Duzer
VIVIAN LIM

Artist studios in the public realm

“The artist-run space of the future is a mushroom, delicate yet deadly...at its core, is a formidable network, sometimes unseen and other times visible. A network, much like the rhizomatic structure of fungi, encompassing neither a beginning nor an end, but always a middle from which it grows and overspills.” - Institute of Applied Aesthetics

This thesis seeks to redefine the future of artist space as mighty urban tool to resolve sociopolitical disparity that often emerges within the master planning process of Vancouver. The informal and often hidden artist space remain underrepresented in urban areas. The proposed strategy will attempt to reposition it as a more public and catalyzing force.

The integration of artists spaces in a densely populated area increases the spontaneity of engagement between the public and artists’ user, either in progress or in the form of curated art viewings. The resulting urban typology aims to provide an ecosystem of cultural spaces that can foster user heuristic experiences, sparking their cognitive ability to imagine and nurture inspirations between the artists and their environment.

Greg Borowski · Sherry McKay · Bill Pechet
Political and economic forces in the city are strangling out any efforts made by designers to revive the public realm and resist the steady progression towards a totally privatized—here framed as domesticated—urban fabric. It is only through the agonistic encounters inherent to public spaces that an understanding of difference, which is essential to life in a shared environment, may emerge as common. By looking to areas beyond the immediate city, where the same forces present fewer spatial constraints, and through a framework of vacant sites that are temporarily removed from the flows of development capital, this project proposes the design of six experimental programs with a pervading goal of inciting confrontation. Communal engagement between dynamic and disparate cultural groups in a rural bathhouse/art gallery or a “safe lot” for vehicular residents of the city becomes a means to embrace difference and restore the public realm.
Façades are a manifestation of the design essence of buildings and a driver for their energy efficiency. The almost exclusive use of glazing in Vancouver’s façades has been a distinguishing architectural design form of the Vancouverism urban planning model. While this form may maximize views for a limited number of units in each tower, it compromises buildings’ energy efficiency, occupancy comfort and privacy for urban facing units, and diminishes aesthetic design innovation in the City’s architectural scene.

This project evaluates the energy efficiency and occupancy comfort and privacy vulnerabilities of the façade of a Vancouverism style condominium building in Vancouver’s False Creek North. Through ‘re-skinning’ the buildings façade, the project demonstrates how architectural risk and aesthetic design innovation enhances occupancy privacy, reduces overheating, increases control over climate management, and improves occupants’ access to views. The project’s façade design consists of metal and features rippling, moire and plated effects. The project challenges Vancouver’s current architectural fixation with glass and exemplifies how architecture can further Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Plan objective of “reducing energy use in existing buildings by 20% over 2007 levels”.

Helia Rashedi

Enhancing Vancouver’s Residential Livability with Optimization to Glazed Façade Utility

AnnaLisa Meyboom · Martin Nielsen · Adam Rysanek
Many cities have been unable to provide an adequate amount or quality of housing for all inhabitants. In Vancouver, land speculation has made it difficult to create affordable homes for all. On top of this, the current market-driven typologies do not prioritize the complexity and functionality of community, the diversity of Vancouver’s inhabitants, or the opportunity to densify within single-family zones currently occupying 80% of the land.

Densifying the 80% looks to recreate the low-rise multi-family housing typology to provide for age and class inclusivity, to design outdoor spaces between that foster a multitude of connections; and to establish a starting point for the densification of single-family neighbourhoods. The project will highlight the connections between the city, neighbourhood, community and building through pathways, transitions and thresholds. It will emphasize the opportunities of designing a community around a school’s needs by creating efficient and collaborative spaces. It will provide an example of how to densify single-family zones in a gentle manner, and design a community with more consideration on exterior space and unit livability.

Marianne Amodio · Sherry McKay · Sara Stevens
Afghanistan has been at war now for nearly four decades, leaving a devastating toll on the built environment, economy and social fabric of the state. For many countries that have experienced conflict, a recovering economy will lead to a better standard of living for its citizens. This begins with the reconstruction of the built environment and basic infrastructure, providing access to jobs, education, healthcare, security, and shared sense of place.

This thesis focuses on how existing and proposed rail lines can take on a restorative role in rural and urban contexts along the Harirud River, in the province of Herat, Afghanistan. In the past, trade routes connected people and cultures, providing a path of relative safety. Today, there is a lack of exchange within Afghanistan and from Afghanistan to international markets. The proposed rail lines and infrastructure within this project aim to connect both rural and urban people to greater economic opportunity through reliable access to transportation, electricity, and safety. This will in turn allow people to increase the value of their product exports, create jobs, and reconnect to international trade markets.

FARWA SADIQ-ZADAHA

The Harirud Market
Restorative Infrastructure in Afghanistan

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Fionn Byrne · Michael Leckie · AnnaLisa Meyboom
In a narrative of Vancouver’s Wreck (Ulksen) Beach, Beach Bodies synthesizes historical events and projected futures to call attention to the vast networks and local actors that coalesce to shape our “natural” landscapes and their potential embodiments in a new era. The project positions the beach as the site of confluence for numerous interrelated material flows -- namely those of sand, timber, and plastic -- and unearths their residual cultural and spatial impacts. Beach Bodies is a celebration of all that is transgressive, and seeks to shift our understanding of what constitutes a natural and authentic body.
Belgrade’s fragmented body of architecture emerged as a result of the shifting political and cultural conditions throughout its history. Its perpetual mediation between a wide variety of contradictory demands and influences generated a cultural and architectural layering. Within the interstices of these formal layers, informal programs developed. The government’s recent push for modernization has taken on a blank-slate approach; wiping out entire historic neighbourhoods and with it, these informal in-between spaces. The redevelopment induced gentrification, and above all, neglects the significance of the existing built environment; how its erasure can impact inhabitants’ collective memory and identity.

A city, in many ways, is a palimpsest. It is built-up of a collection of memories that are inscribed and re-inscribed not only in the physical sense, but in relation to the human psyche. This thesis project seeks to demonstrate that through the application of varying scales of culturally-informed adaptive reuse strategies, architecture can preserve the memory associated with a site, in addition to generating an empowered space for local, informal intervention.

Cameron Koroluk · Sherry McKay · Thena Tak