Why make, unmake, and remake?

MAKING
the act of bringing forms, concepts, & structures into existence

UNMAKING
the process of taking constructions, preconceptions, & institutions apart in order to dissect, question, or dismantle

REMAKING
the practice of creating architectures, re-conceptions, & systems anew through techniques of making and unmaking
In the beginning, I was taught to make: I created ideas and forms, often iteratively, and largely intuitively.
This school uses the CBJ Snyder scissor stair—the existing means of egress within the structure—as a starting point for creating a new meandering landscape of play between the existing H-plan wings. The scissor stair interweaves two paths—a private one for younger students, as well as a more public and upper level student path—throughout the new addition, creating a mid-block connection underneath.

This K-8 public school aims for a play-based, child-directed education to sustain and grow students’ inherent love of learning. Not only does a play-based education support children’s social and emotional development, purposeful play engages students and allows them to take an active role in their learning. These types of learning have also been shown to better support children from high-poverty families, better preparing them later on in life—and given that a significant portion of children in this district are living below the poverty level, this school aims to better support this socio-economically diverse group of students. This happens through the educational curriculum, additional programming, and the playscapes.
SCISSOR STAIRS & THEIR LANDINGS FORM THE CENTRAL ATRIUM’S SOCIAL SPACES

EACH STAIR TRANSFORMS THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING TO BECOME ALTERNATIVE, PLAYFUL MEANS OF VERTICAL TRANSPORTATION

CAFE SEATING & LEARNING WINGS
LEVEL 3
THE GYMNASIUM STAIR CHANGES FORM TO SUPPORT PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES
A PLAY-FILLED MID-BLOCK CONNECTION

ROOF GARDEN
LEVEL 7
H-PLAN WINGS RETAIN ORIGINAL BRICK LOAD-BEARING WALLS & CONCRETE FLOORING WITH STEEL STRUCTURE

THE ADDITION USES DIFFERENT OPACITIES OF GLASS FACADE, ALONG WITH CLT & GLULAM WOOD STRUCTURE

PLAN DETAIL AT EXISTING COLUMN

SECTION DETAIL AT CONCRETE & WOOD FLOOR TRANSITION

SECTION DETAIL AT EXISTING & NEW COLUMNS
CLIMBING BOOKSHELF

STAIR FORMS POKE INTO LEARNING WINGS TO FORM EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPES

LEARNING LANDSCAPE
TILING

Transitional Geometries
Fall 2021 / Instructor: Joshua Jordan

This project explores two modules inspired by spinning tops, tessellations, and columns. It was formed through processes of silicone mold-making and casting.
Making A Public Space

Vertical Sidewalk

Core I Studio: Broadway Stories / Agency-Space
Fall 2019 / Critic: Jaffer Kolb

This exercise aims to propose new forms of public space along the Washington Heights neighborhood of Broadway by building upon the functions and sites of two New York City public agencies.

This project in particular looks to intersect the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation with the Department of Consumer & Worker Protection by proposing a network of tree nurseries and retail incubators for small, minority & women-owned businesses. These two departments were chosen because they are both integral to the infrastructure of the Washington Heights pedestrian neighborhood. The Department of Parks & Recreation currently operates reforestation projects to improve and bring biodiversity into the urban experience, while the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection has focused on studies, such as gender-biased product pricing studies, to protect consumers of diverse incomes; unfortunately, however, they have a less outstanding track record when it comes to supporting small business owners.

The project addresses these goals and concerns by creating vertical extensions of sidewalks on existing DCWP parking sites to support the combined nursery and small retail programs. The form, explored in more detail on 165th Street, is derived from the ramping of parking garage structures: the path elevates and becomes an easily accessible extension of the pedestrian streetscape to activate the small businesses along the route.
A FORM DERIVED FROM PARKING STRUCTURES

EXISTING SITE BUILDINGS
A PUSH & PULL: SOIL POCKETS

LIGHT WELLS
EXTENSION OF TREE NURSERY FUNCTIONS

PUBLIC/PRIVATE STAIR: AN EXTENSION OF THE SIDEWALK

1:1 STAIR MODEL
Then came the inner critic: no longer satisfied with making, I had to question everything. What are the social, economic, and political contexts surrounding each project? How does the building industry exacerbate existing inequities? Can architecture dismantle systems instead of assembling them? It was therefore necessary to unmake architecture through reading, writing, modeling, drawing, and designing.
There is an unfortunate architectural story that begins with thirty-three high rises constructed in the 1950s: initially, they were hailed as a triumph of rational design that could create housing for the poor and solve urban problems of the time. A mere two decades later in 1972, however, they were demolished for having deteriorated into an uninsurable state: the project was more than half vacant, there was little to no maintenance on the buildings, criminal activity fostered, and the structures had fallen into disrepair. Many are familiar with the rise and fall of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project. Designed by Minoru Yamasaki of Hellmuth, Yamasaki & Leinweber, it was made possible by the United States Housing Act of 1949, and was built to support St. Louis’s urban redevelopment and slum clearance initiatives. Many accepted its unfortunate history, but whether it was a story of architectural failure or befitting the death of High Modernism as well. From Yamasaki of Hellmuth, Yamasaki & Leinweber, it was made possible by the United States Housing Act of 1949, and was built to support St. Louis’s urban redevelopment and slum clearance initiatives. Many accepted its unfortunate history, but whether it was a story of architectural failure or befitting the death of High Modernism as well. From Yamasaki’s perspective, Pruitt-Igoe, completed between 1954 and 1959, was made to house the waiting population of the city’s “right” people. It was designed in accordance with the 1949 U.S. Housing Act, which, given the site’s history as low-rises and a public park. Aside from housing, but for architectural historian Charles Jencks, it represented the death of High Modernism as well. This idea that the pure architectural fact was later debunked in Katharine Bristol’s “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth.” Bristol better understood the project’s deterioration as a complex amalgamation of numerous destructive factors, including the economic, social, and political conditions of St. Louis. Other writers have since followed suit, such as Lowry’s: “The Pruitt-Igoe Project,” the project impacted its residents. An examination of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project reveals that this is in fact an architectural story—not one in which the architectural design is at fault for all regrettable outcomes, but one in which institutional racism and architectural systems are deeply entangled with institutional racism.

How Pruitt-Igoe and prevailing critiques of Modernism had reinforced messages of structural racism.

Continued discourse on this subject is imperative. After all, no architectural work exists within a vacuum—this one in particular overlapped with the Civil Rights Movement and a Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregated public housing. What was once a project with “one-third of the housing meant for whites [Pruitt] and two-thirds meant for African Americans [Igoe]” became 98 percent African American. It would therefore be an act of willful ignorance not to examine how Pruitt-Igoe was affected by inherent racial structures of power in America, as well as how the project impacted its residents.

This study then, aims to further examine the role of structural racism in the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project. It takes cues from Birmingham’s work to define the framework for examination. It then discusses the way that structural racism was intertwined with Pruitt-Igoe during its planning process, operation, and after its demolition. Moreover, a closer look at the critiques, including Jencks’s famous declaration, as well as other accounts, uncovers the dangers of pinpointing the built architectural as the principal point of failure. And investigating the different phases of the Pruitt-Igoe project reveals that this is in fact an architectural story—not one in which the architectural design is at fault for all regrettable outcomes, but one in which institutional racism and architectural systems are deeply entangled with institutional racism.
critical to note that in the grand scheme of St. Louis’s postwar redevelopment programs, these “public housing projects” were connected to the unwanted sites in the heart of the slums.13 Housing researcher and historian Alexander von Hoffman further elaborates on this theory, noting that “much of the civic anxiety about the spread of slums concerned the influx of African American migrants from the rural South... The city planner proposed to the mayor that building large apartments for Black residents would prevent the African American population from spreading to white neighborhoods.”13 Slum clearance was evidently not driven by a concern for citizens’ wellness. Such efforts were tied to a desire for racial containment, allowing the DeSoto-Carr project to become more crowded to distill where Black communities were permitted to live. These plans for confinement were a racial iniquity that contributed to systems of structural racism at the time.

The planning for DeSoto-Carr became slightly less segregated beginning in 1951, when the St. Louis Housing Authority (SLHA) decided to build the Wendell Oliver Pruitt Homes for Black residents and the William L. Igoe Apartments for white residents.14 Pruitt-Igoe was originally designed as an all-white housing project.16 Moreover, as late as 1968, the SLHA did not allow African American families to live in a previously middle income project.17 In the mid-19th century, tenants who could not afford it had to leave the area, leading to overcrowding and the one segregated public housing program.18 When the SLHA raised rent in order to cover maintenance costs, urban segregationist architecture was beyond the purview of this paper. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to note the difference in quality between the segregated version of Pruitt-Igoe and the one featured it, claiming it would change the future of public housing design.15 Setting the record straight, Friedman argues that the American public housing programs after the Great Depression were originally conceived as programs for the submerged middle class—those who were previously middle income. In the mid-19th century, however, when that class no longer needed the programs, public housing [was] inherited by a new constituency of Below-income urban Negro, and as a result, the program [became] less popular politically.19 It is in this way that national politics, fueled by racist agendas, contributed to the financial issues that impaired Yamasaki’s design. It is in this way that national politics, fueled by racist agendas, contributed to the financial issues that impaired Yamasaki’s design.

The architectural planning of Pruitt-Igoe was therefore not a process that was innocently detached from the forces of structural racism plaguing the United States. The operation of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project was similarly devoid of funding. When it was first completed, these financial problems were not so noticeable; just four years later, however, the building conditions started to deteriorate. Under the 1949 Housing Act, the SLHA was required to fund Pruitt-Igoe’s maintenance using only tenant rent payments. This became a problem because of declining occupancy rates: postwar demographic trends in St. Louis eventually allowed for more African American migrants to live in the city, lowering the numbers away from Pruitt-Igoe. With rising maintenance costs and diminishing occupancy rates, the Housing Authority could hardly administer basic repairs on the poorly-constructed project. Moreover, it was problematic that maintenance funds depended on rent because Pruitt-Igoe increasingly housed the poorest of the Black population, and residents had “an annual median income of $2,454 and a family including, on average, a mother and 4.28 children.”20 This unfortunate cycle of low-income tenants, diminishing occupancy, and funding troubles were indeed linked to poverty—therefore, some might argue that this was not a race issue. It would be ignorant, however, to deny the racial and poverty-alleviating effects of segregationist federal housing policies from 1910 to 1960 reveal that they led to an increasing racial wealth gap between white and Black households.21 These policies, which confined Black families to substandard housing were “intentionally established by federal policymakers during the 20th century to imperil the black community in perpetuity.”22 Because race and income were (and continue to be) so intertwined, it is evident that the financial troubles that plagued Pruitt-Igoe were linked to the systemic racism deeply embedded in America’s policies. Additionally, despite residents’ rent not covering maintenance costs, an increase in rent was counterproductive as well: when the SLHA raised rent in the early 1950s, tenants who could not afford it had to leave the development in order to afford basic repairs and maintenance.23 Undoubtedly, such rent hikes would have been hard to justify, too, given the continuous deterioration of Pruitt-Igoe. Moreover, as late as 1968, the SLHA did not

RESEARCH ON EXCLUSIONARY AND SEGREGATIONIST FEDERAL HOUSING POLICIES FROM 1910 TO 1960 REVEAL THAT THEY LED TO AN INCREASING RACIAL WEALTH GAP BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK HOUSEHOLDS.
These injustices were made more apparent in various testimonies from those who visited the site as well as those who inhabited Pruitt-Igoe. Sociologist Lee Rainwater conducted a three-year study to understand the project, looking at tenant concerns, physical deterioration, and other issues. During this time, he pinpointed a number of maintenance headaches such as dangerous and frequently out-of-order elevators, trash and broken glass, pests and rodent infestations, and public urination. The obstacles facing these residents were not simply mere inconveniences: additional documents from previous tenants noted that “accidents have occurred when tenants opened an elevator door, stepped into a nonexistent car, and fell down the shaft.” All attempts to request maintenance for hazardous conditions were often ignored due to an inadequately-sized staff, leaving requests for hazardous conditions were often ignored due to an inadequately-sized staff, leaving residents to face the danger of falls from a lack of gallery window screens and glassless window frames, or burns from a lack of insulation on steam pipes. Pruitt-Igoe evidently failed to provide a proper shelter for its inhabitants. Instead, the SLHA communicated, through its neglect, that these residents were not worth the efforts required to provide adequate housing. This devaluing of residents’ wellness extended to a lack of support against crime. The SLHA was especially unhelpful: for over a decade, tenants were charged for lack of support against crime. The SLHA was especially unhelpful: for over a decade, tenants were charged for the damage to their property even when they were victims of a crime. For example, when bullets broke one resident’s windows, the SLHA required the resident to compensate for the repairs; the bill was $78.00. By burdening the already low-income residents with unwarranted charges that typical apartment dwellers would not have to bear, the authorities at Pruitt-Igoe further contributed to the issues of poverty that encumbered their tenants. Such policies were antithetical to gaining equity for the Black community. The constant failure to protect the community from crime, Pruitt-Igoe and St. Louis law enforcement fell incredibly short. The SLHA only assigned two guards to secure the entire thirty-block region in a twenty-four-hour day and residents reported that these guards would either show up late in response to disturbance calls, or ignore them altogether. City police officers made themselves noticeably absent as well, allowing many who were largely nonresidents to commit crimes without fear of detection—thus exacerbating the problem. Residents were therefore terrified to leave their apartments after dark, and those who stayed inside were disturbed by loitering adolescents. One interpretation for why law enforcement failed to protect Pruitt-Igoe residents could be an indifference to the well-being of poor Black families. Another interpretation is that police officers were disproportionally afraid of Black communities and crime within those communities. Both explanations point to racially problematic thinking on the part of St. Louis law enforcement. The latter seems more plausible, given that eventually, mail carriers and retail outlets refused to deliver to the Pruitt-Igoe neighborhood as well. There were even misconceptions of Pruitt-Igoe residents as dangerous and criminal: “the St. Louis Globe Democrat, the local newspaper, so regularly referred to criminal offenses in the downtown area as ‘Pruitt-Igoe crimes’ that the term became the local code-word for African-American.” The conflation of these two terms suggests a clear stigmatization against the residents living at Pruitt-Igoe. Additionally, such willful neglect of their safety reveals the way St. Louis institutions disregarded Black families in public housing. There were also critics who suggested that the high-rise buildings should have been designed for more defensible public space to decrease crime. This Black community was merely ignored by numerous critics. Pruitt-Igoe’s high-rise neighbors were regularly higher than crime rates in Pruitt-Igoe. A study on crime in St. Louis public housing developments in the 1970s showed that crime rates were not significantly higher, even in large housing projects, compared to the citywide average. Regardless, the suggestion of creating defensible space is a form of victim blaming. It implies that this population—a Black, low-income group—inevitably brings criminal behavior that must be opposed through architectural design. Such reasoning ignores the fact that crime is often a consequence of various forms of oppression, and in this case, systemic racism and economic injustices. Sociologists studying Pruitt-Igoe understood violence to be an unfortunate adaptive strategy in circumstances of desperation and in response to the extreme stresses of deprivation or threat. In addition, SLHA policies contributed to a lack of community and safety in Pruitt-Igoe. The Housing Authority rewarded tenants who informed on the crimes or activities of others, but ‘the most commonly reported crimes in Pruitt-Igoe were having income (which included receiving gifts) or living with one’s husband.’ Because these largely innocuous actions could be discovered by acquaintances, it is unsurprising that many residents avoided relationships with non-family members. Such behavior contributed to an untrusting, suspicious environment that failed to cultivate a community of residents who could help one another. These policies therefore did a disservice to tenants and their well-being by assuming a culture of crime—an assumption entangled in structural racism.
Another disservice effected by the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project during the time of its operation was the isolation and containment of its residents. The site itself was poorly located because, similar to many slum clearance-related housing projects, the area itself was poorly located because, similar to many slum clearance and slum clearance in St. Louis had extinguished many existing city blocks. Pruitt-Igoe was severely physically disconnected from the greater city community. It was apparently not even linked to the community via sidewalks or public transit, which were available to the disconnected from the greater city community. It was apparently not even linked to the community via sidewalks or public transit, which were available to the disconnect...
his own involvement in the project, he also appeared to blame Pruitt-Igoe’s deterioration on the tenants when he stated in 1968, “I never thought people could be that destructive.” The most famous critique after the demolition came from Charles Jencks’s The Language of Post Modern Architecture, in which he linked Pruitt-Igoe’s demise to the end of Modern architecture. Jencks described the project as embodying the “most progressive ideas of CIAM...and it won an award from the American Institute of Architects when it was designed in 1951.” He then characterized the buildings as elegant constructions with sun, space, and greenery, as well as play spaces and amenities. But according to Jencks, the reason that the Modern style failed despite its excellent execution here was that the poor Black residents of Pruitt-Igoe could not have a sophisticated understanding of architectural space the way that educated architects could; therefore, Modernism could not properly serve the poor. This characterization of Pruitt-Igoe misrepresents both the multifaceted factors leading to its downfall and the design accomplishments achieved by the project.

For instance, the project was never award-winning—Jencks confused Pruitt-Igoe with a different Hellmuth, Yamazaki, and Leinweber public housing project that did win a St. Louis American Institute of Architects award (the John J Cochran Gardens project). And contrary to Jencks’s statement, the design of Pruitt-Igoe has also been described as running “counter to the recommendations of CIAM.” Pruitt-Igoe buildings were really just stacks of apartments, with neither roof terraces nor common areas at ground level. Jencks also failed to realize that most of the gallery greenery, play spaces, and amenities were trimmed from the design early on, and the outdoor areas were simply uninviting parking lots with patchy lawns.

Moreover, in Birmingham’s view, the cheaply constructed Pruitt-Igoe can hardly be referred to as High Modernism. Indeed, when looking at the Chicago lakefront apartment towers by Mies, with their stunning curtain walls, Italian marble, and perfect steel beams, the image and quality of Pruitt-Igoe cannot compare. Jencks’s criticisms are therefore problematic in several ways. First, they minimize the intellect of the residents and further negative stereotypes, suggesting that they could not read the architecture; evidently, the residents understood the architecture to be low quality, among other issues. Secondly, they imply that well-designed Modern spaces cannot support poor Black populations, when in reality it was a complex amalgamation of low-quality construction and many other factors that failed Pruitt-Igoe’s residents. This impedes efforts to bring better-quality architecture to low-income Black communities. Finally, Jencks’s focus on architectural design minimizes the other forces of institutional racism and economic oppression that were instrumental to Pruitt-Igoe’s eventual demolition.

The planning, operation, and critique of the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project were thus unmistakably convoluted by and contributors to structural racism in the United States. The lesson here is that architectural projects and entire architectural systems do not exist without the same racial contexts that permeate into the rest of our culture. A focus on design—and only design—is truly myopic, and can lead to architectural systems that are complicit in reinforcing structural racism. Broader understandings of socio-political, economic, and cultural structures are imperative for architects and critics who intend to be a part of the solution.
DRAWING THE GAP HOUSE

Seminar of Section
Spring 2022 / Instructor: Marc Tsurumaki

This hybrid section questions the singular angle of the traditional section perspective—it uses perspective to communicate the interior private, domestic spaces, while employing projection to represent the outdoor and public zones of the shared dwelling.
The following exercise looks at Sou Fujimoto’s House NA—a custom residence constructed for a Tokyo couple—through a conceptual model. The model explores the idea behind House NA—creating a nomadic space through varied levels akin to the branches of a tree—while distilling the house down to its floor plates and connections to analyze circulation.
UNMAKING

OWNERSHIP

DESIGNING A

SEED COMMONS

Adv IV Studio: Dark Rurality
Spring 2021 / Critic: Jerome Haferd

The Seed Commons aims to support the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust in their efforts toward land and food sovereignty by introducing programs protecting seed sovereignty for BIPOC farmers in the Hudson Valley. Seed sovereignty across the US is threatened by corporate privatization of seeds, as well as seed contamination and insidious litigation practices by monopolizing corporations. The seed commons aims to combat this. This project is about moving away from capitalist, ownership-based models toward commoning models of stewardship in order to imagine new ways of existing outside of commodity consumption. And to do this, the project transitions the existing site north of Hudson, NY—which contains three department stores, a typology that is becoming obsolete—into a seed commons to support BIPOC farmers of the land trust. The northern building becomes housing for seed stewards, the central building transforms into a seed library, exchange, and greenhouse space to support BIPOC farmers of the NEFOC land trust, and the southern building opens up to become a bee garden to attract and protect pollinators.
From Extractivism to Commoning: The project moves away from Extractivism—in which land is seen as individual property—toward a system of stewardship, commoning, and a deep reciprocity between people and the land. Commoning is a way of living based on sharing and collectively managing common resources in a way that ensures their renewal, focusing on sustenance instead of capitalist pressures of creating artificial scarcity and maximizing surplus.

Seed Sovereignty: Seed keeping practices have existed in Black and Indigenous communities for a long time, and continues to persevere despite industrial farming methods. When enslaved Africans were forcibly taken away from their lands, they began the practice of braiding precious seeds into their hair, engaging in an act of resistance. And many indigenous seed-keepers today aim to reunite Indigenous communities with their ancestral seeds, both for sustenance and as a way to preserve ancestral culture and storytelling. However, seed sovereignty across the US is threatened by corporate privatization of seeds, as well as seed contamination and insidious litigation practices by monopolizing corporations. Heirloom and other open-pollinated seeds are under threat of dwindling seed biodiversity as well, due to current farming practices.
A PROTECTED SPACE FOR GROWING SEEDLINGS FROM HEIRLOOM & OPEN-POLLINATED SEEDS THAT SELECTIVELY OPENS FOR AIR CIRCULATION

THE ENCLOSURE OPENS UP FOR MORE MATURE PLANTS AND POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY HABITATS
SEED HARVESTING & EXCHANGE SPACE

THE SEED LIBRARY IS BURIED UNDER THE EARTH OVER TIME TO CREATE A PROTECTED, COOLED SPACE FOR SEED STORAGE.
One cannot stop at simply dismantling architecture. Using these prior tools, I aimed to develop my practice anew: making was informed by unmaking, again in iterative cycles. The resulting projects thus answer different architectural questions. They redefine the scope of the architectural process. They re-imagine the socio-political contexts that allow alternative structures to exist. They re-think economic relationships in order to introduce other models for co-existing.
REMAKING A MICRO — MACRO COMMUNITY

Core III Studio: Living In-Between
Fall 2020 / Critic: Annie Barrett
Collaborator: Gizem Karagoz
2020 Buell Center Paris Prize Finalist

A Micro-Macro Community aims to cultivate a more equitable and environmentally resilient approach to housing communities. In order to align with and achieve the OneNYC Climate Change Policy, the project challenges existing metrics of housing value—ones that elevate a property’s exchange value above its use value—to introduce a new holistic framework: one that encompasses environmental, social, and economic resilience. Because these three issues are heavily intertwined and interdependent, our proposal responds to climate, economic, and social vulnerabilities in the Melrose community of the South Bronx through a combined program, policy, and spatial approach.

This approach allows on-site participatory activities to generate social, environmental, and economic capital—all of which feed into community resilience. By generating this capital, the community can achieve a rent-to-own model by supporting low-income residents through an incremental process of ownership.

The project rethinks economic frameworks for affordable housing in order to build community, creating a collective response to displacement and climate change.
Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) happen during and after heavy rains, when New York City’s sewer system becomes overloaded.
Diagram of the main issues in Melrose & the corresponding design responses:

- **Environmental Vulnerability**: Urban Heat Island Effect
- **Social Vulnerability**: Displacement & an Intergenerational Community
- **Economic Vulnerability**: Issues of Equity & Long-Term Affordability

**Spatial Resilience**

- **Structures**: To Address Heat Water / Vegetation / Shade
- **Participatory Community Activities**: Alternative Value Generation
- **Rent-to-Ownership Housing Model**: Tenant-Owning Cooperative for Community Stability

**Environmental Value**

- **Social Value**
- **Economic Value**

**Environmental Resilience**

- **Social Resilience**
- **Economic Resilience**

The aim is to design spaces that help residents build various types of capital, supporting a rent-to-own process.

The diagram highlights various aspects such as green and blue roofs, adaptable frameworks, and micro-communities, each contributing to the overall resilience strategies.
CHANGING MICRO-COMMUNITY CONFIGURATIONS

Each unit’s kitchen opens up to communal space, fostering shared responsibilities of domestic care.
THE EXTERNAL STEEL SCAFFOLDING SYSTEM CONNECTS THE MICRO-COMMUNITY TO THE LARGER MACRO-COMMUNITY

The units’ movable internal partitions allow for flexibility & openness.

Mass timber structure and biodrainage brick tile facades support the project’s environmental ambitions.
A connection to the Bronx Documentary Center (BDC) in-between spaces support the BDC’s network of screenings.

The community market increases entrepreneurial access and allows residents to play an active role in creating their local retail landscape.
Remaking Land Ownership

Re-Reverberations

Adv V Studio: Post-Plantation Futures
Fall 2021 / Critic: Mabel O. Wilson
Collaborator: Abriannah Aiken

Re-Reverberations is a set of spatial interventions along the Cross-Bronx Expressway that speculates on moving toward a future beyond property. Because the construction of the expressway reverberated the plantation logics of enclosure and dispossession throughout the Bronx, our project introduces a re-reverberation of land autonomy, caretaking, food sovereignty, and community re-connection.

In recognition that the Cross-Bronx continues to sit on unceded Munsee Lenape territory, we take cues from Indigenous knowledge systems to re-establish that humans are not separate from nor conquerors of the land. In order to return agency back to the earth in a context of hypercapitalism, our process dismantles the highway and slowly turns it back into shared spaces juxtaposing constructed and grown landscapes. During this process, a network of quaking aspens—a species that clones itself along a single root system—will be planted on the former highway, and then deeded ownership of themselves. As they grow, they can reclaim the land for the earth, and subsequent community-led architectures focused on mutual aid can restitch the Bronx back together. These systems of healing can then re-reverberate outward to support an abolitionist repair led by the land and its caretakers.
High-Poverty Zones in the Bronx
90 Years After Redlining

Disinvestment: Decreasing City Services
Results of Disinvestment
Increased Calls for Policing
Increased Police Violence
CONCEPTUAL MODELS EXPLORING THE SCARS OF THE CROSS-BRONX, AS WELL AS POTENTIALS PROCESSES FOR REPAIR

STITCH: EASTBURN AVENUE

INFILL: INWOOD AVENUE
A HYBRID SITE PLAN-MODEL OF THE QUAKING ASPEN NETWORK AND ITS Roots. BY DEEDING OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND TO THE ADVENTITIOUS TREE-ROOT SYSTEM, THE PROJECT HEALS THE AIR & SOIL, WHILE CREATING A PROCESS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE LAND OWNERSHIP—ONE IN WHICH LAND BELONGS TO THE EARTH.
1: PRESENT DAY CROSS-BRONX & EASTBURN AVENUE

2: SOIL REMEDIATION

3: ADDITIONAL SOIL & ORGANIC MATTER

4: COMMUNITY FARMING PLOTS

5: STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORKS & INITIAL ASPEN-PLANTING

6: BUILDING COMMUNITY SPACES & ASPEN GROWTH

7: STITCH: NORTH-SOUTH PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

8: STITCH: EAST-WEST PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
URBAN FARMING PLOTS TO SUPPORT EXISTING BRONX MUTUAL AID GROUPS IN PROJECTS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

AS THE QUAKING ASPENS EXPAND OUTWARD, NEIGHBORS CAN ELECT TO REMOVE ASPHALT FOR SMALL GARDENS, PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN TRANSFORMING THEIR STREETS
This project proposes an alternative to Manhattan blocks shaped by private, individual ownership, and imagines a process toward commoning and collective care practices that can emerge at the scale of the block. The proposal examines a phased formation of a library model for sharing goods, services, and spaces that are often privatized—more specifically, it creates three libraries of domesticities (housing, caretaking practices, and objects) that take shape on a block in South Harlem.

Because different neighborhood residents have different needs—economic vulnerabilities, social dependencies, material requirements—the libraries comprise multiple overlapping bubbles of sharing communities. Funded by members’ contributions and taxes, the libraries loan out objects, caretaking services, and domestic spaces, with borrowing periods that are dependent on the item type and based on community agreements.

The proposal is phased to allow the libraries to form with minimal interventions. These interventions grow over time, adaptively reusing existing buildings and transforming the streetscape. In this way, these libraries of domesticities can alter the shape of the Manhattan block by dismantling property systems through architectural form and challenging the present-day privatization of all things domestic.
HARLEM: 75 YEAR LIFE-EXPECTANCY
NYC: 81 YEAR LIFE-EXPECTANCY
UPPER EAST SIDE: 85 YR
MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS: 80 YR
UPPER WEST SIDE: 84 YR
EAST HARLEM: 76 YR
PRIVATE: VEHICLES, APARTMENTS
SEMI-PUBLIC: STORES, OFFICES, SHARED APARTMENT AMENITIES
PUBLIC / SHARED: PARKS, ROADS, SIDEWALKS
PRIVATEIZATION HAS AWAY OF UNDERMINING COLLECTIVE CARE. BY TURNING US INTO RIVAL CONSUMERS OF OUR PUBLIC GOODS, LEAVING US WITH A SOCIETY THAT'S LESS LIKE THE LOCAL LIBRARY AND MORE LIKE BLACK FRIDAY.
DONALD COHEN & ALLEN MIKAELIAN, THE PRIVATIZATION OF EVERYTHING

ERODING CAPITALISM*
CAPITALIST MARKET ACTIVITIES
MARKET FAILURES: SPACES & CRACKS WITHIN CAPITALISM
CAPITALISM: AN AMORPHOUS BLOB THAT ENDS OPPOSITION & DIFFERENCE

PRIVATE / COLLECTIVE
PUBLIC / PUBLIC
PRIVATE:
PRIVATE:
PRIVATE:
SEMI-PUBLIC:
SEMI-PUBLIC:
SEMI-PUBLIC:
PUBLIC / SHARED:
PUBLIC / SHARED:
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W 111TH ST & ADAM CLAYTON POWELL TODAY: A PUBLIC-DOMESTIC BINARY

ESTABLISH THE LIBRARY OF HOUSING & THE NEW INDIVIDUAL UNIT: SLEEPING, LIVING, AND BATHROOM SPACE

LIBRARIES SPILL OUT ONTO THE STREETSCAPE

THE LIBRARY OF OBJECTS CAN BECOME A SPACE TO BROWSE THROUGH AND PLAY IN
FULLY CONDITIONED INDIVIDUAL UNITS

PARTIALLY CONDITIONED AND UNCONDITIONED SHARED LIBRARY SPACES

INTERIOR SPACES THAT ARE FULLY OPEN TO OUTDOOR AIR & CROSS VENTILATION

THE LIBRARIES’ MATERIALITY TAKES ON SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXISTING ARCHITECTURE, WITH RECYCLED CONCRETE PATHS, REUSED BRICKS, AS WELL AS COLORFUL METAL RAILINGS REFERRING TO THE EXISTING FIRE ESCAPES.

THE ENCLOSED CARETAKING LIBRARY STRUCTURES ON THE FORMER ROAD BRING IN CLEAR GLAZING PANELS THAT OPEN UP IN WARMER WEATHER.

ENCLOSED EXTENSIONS AND BRIDGES OF THE HOUSING LIBRARY ARE CLAD IN MODERATELY MIRRORED GLAZING THAT CAN REFLECT THE EXISTING ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALITY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AS WELL AS REFLECT A BIT MORE LIGHT INTO THE NARROW LIGHT WELLS.
And that is why I make, unmake, and remake.