

Advance VI MTh 1:30-6:30 (F 3-5 113 Avery)
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Office hours: By appointment only

Introduction and Studio objectives

When I sat down to write the syllabus for this studio, I asked myself, what is the relevant topic to teach when each of you will go on to a myriad of fields and practices that vary vastly in medium, context, scale and agency? Some of you will learn to detail curtain walls or bathroom millwork, some will be pulling research together or writing grant proposals for non-profit initiatives, others may become the “architect on staff” for an engineering or fabrication company. What brings us together in this discipline called “architecture” is often the passion for placing matter in space and seeing new spatial orders having a positive effect on us. What specifically brings this group together in GSAPP is our shared interest in the diversity of that matter and the complexity of the effects, even by the simplest interventions.

The materials available are often quite simple. Wood, concrete, steel, glass, brick and sometimes composites can generate a kaleidoscopic array of expressions and aesthetics that construct the narratives and organize the relationships between the parcels and components of our cities. Wood being of the vernacular, steel is lightweight and industrial, glass facilitates transparency, concrete announces the civic, and brick often reminds us of the humanistic and regional. In the post-global, post-industrial architectural practice, the fluidity with which we are able to apply and push these materials to very different uses is a unique pleasure. Timber construction can reach mid-rise heights, glass can be structural, steel can be mass-customized, and so on and so forth.



In this studio, we will take brick as our material, and seek new expressions and forms for it in the city. Brick - a relatively quiet material – has dominated New York’s cityscape as the structure, envelope and infill for low to mid-rise buildings, and was favored by Robert Moses in many of his civic projects. Brick is economical; it can be fabricated with local clays, and manipulated easily by hand, without big machinery or specialized skills. It is versatile in its assemblage, creating forms that vary from Louis Kahn’s pure geometries to Alvar Aalto’s fluid

curves. It can be monumental as used by Wang Shu, or ethereal as often applied by Peter Zumthor. Brick is on the streets of many metropolises as informal structures, ingeniously invented by the migrant population, to whom sculpting the earth for our needs is still an immediate skill.



We will read the history of the city through the stories of this material, and connect to a vast reservoir of developments embedded in other cultures and contexts. We will travel to Mumbai, where paradoxical urban conditions are rubbing against each other constantly and both modern visions and make-shift interventions are trying to take grasp. Also a familiar building material in India, brick belongs to both the rulers that plan the city and the hands of the people who build them. Our findings and research there, are to alter the stagnant imagery of our own brick structures. Lastly, we will work with a local mason to build prototypes and deliver a manual for a collection of inventions/interventions. From small objects that provide local amenities to large infrastructures that deal with a stretch of waterfront, these brick structures will become the alibi for breaking free from brick's anachronistic presence today.



'If you think of Brick, you say to Brick, 'What do you want, Brick?' And Brick says to you, 'I like an Arch.' And if you say to Brick, 'Look, arches are expensive, and I can use a concrete lintel over you. What do you think of that, Brick?' Brick says, 'I like an Arch.' And it's important, you see, that you honor the material that you use. [...] You can only do it if you honor the brick and glorify the brick instead of shortchanging it." Louis Kahn.

Schedule

Week	Topic
1 01.20/01.22	Lottery / Studio Intro
2 01.25/01.28	Precedents Presentation (group work) / Meet Harry (field work, TA)
3 02.01/02.04	Work with Harry (field work, TA) / Pin-up
4 02/08/02.11	Design
5 02.15/02.18	Design
6 02.22/02.25	Design
7 02.29/03.03	Midterm Review
8 03.07/03.10	Kinne Week / Midterm Review in Mumbai
9 03.14/03.17	Spring Break
10 03.21/03.24	Design (TA)
11 03.28/03.31	Design
12 04.04/04.07	Competition / Client Review
13 04.11/04.14	Field Preparation (group 1) / Exhibition Design (group 2)
14 04.18/04.21	Work with Harry (field work) / Exhibition Design (group work)
15 04.25/04.28	Work with Harry (field work) / Exhibition Design (group work) (TA)
16 05.02/05.05	Final Review