Architecture as a mediator
Narratives for grounding
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This year I have experienced different scenarios that have expanded my understanding of architecture, operating as transcalar, and at the same time as a recurring self-interrogation of my position within the settings in which I exist. Beyond a book or a collection of architectural drawings, this is part of an exploration of architecture as a mediator that operates within the entanglements of individual stories of humans and more-than-humans towards a shared existence. Therefore, each chapter enacts different architecture’s engagements, where it is part of networks of caring, support spaces of dialogue and negotiation, rearticulate ways bodies relate and compose our individual narratives.
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Normalizing Networks of Interdependencies
AAD Entagled Studio

Instructed by Ignacio Galan
Infrastructures for the Countercollapse
In Collaboration with Shikang Ding and Abriannah Aiken
Networks of care are embedded within the spatial boundaries of our society. But, not everyone has equitable access to this network - some do not have a nuclear family to rely on, some do not have access to medical care due to their immigration status, and some are oppressed by spatial accessibility limitations.

We challenge binaries between ability/disability, those assisted and those that assist and instead highlight networks of interdependencies, as well as provide spatial resources that promote racial justice. Through upending hierarchical structures of healthcare, the expansion of spaces of commoning, and the mobilization of care, we visualize a future with equitable access to networks of normalized assistance for all people.

In this way, our approach followed characters and their stories that are part of the daily life routines of the site, such as immigrant residents, the disability community, and women who help make up East Harlem, and the individuals overlap with these identities as an entry point to account for the formal and informal welfare that permeates to set the current networks of care.
We have taken East Harlem as a platform to rehearse this approach, and started our research following individuals involved in the current neighborhood’s networks of care.

Building on these stories, structural struggles, and the existing networks of assistance exemplify a site within which to imagine a counter collapse of the welfare state.
Our first intervention responds to the hierarchies and exclusions of the current system of healthcare.

An infrastructure of vehicles called **Mobile Care Units** will mobilize programs already carried out by organizations focused on providing assistance to people who are not included in the current healthcare system (such as immigrants).

We envision new scenarios where local initiatives can hold checkups and pedagogic activities in a new regime of caring and assistance.
Care Units constantly are distributed throughout the community with a diversity of mediators. They contribute to a radical change in the cultural perception, transforming the ways in which children imagine assistance vehicles.
From an abolitionist perspective, one could imagine these vehicles completely substituting the role of police cars.

An indoor space in the apartment ground floor, where group sessions and individual counseling can be supported by the organization.

The programming of the units is open to organizations focused on providing access to care.
Health has been a method of exclusion, with accessibility to healthy food options unavailable to most. The Center for Food Access is part of an expansion to food accessibility a social justice that compliments current systems within East Harlem. We aim to spatially connect and expand current functions to food access through a distributed effort of garden and multi-functional Center.

The transformation of rooftops is connected to a more radical re-thinking of housing, challenging isolationism and lack of access to communal space. Housing renovations integrate communal ground floors and activated rooftop gardens to promote inclusive housing for all people to give and receive assistance.

Through Centers for Food Access and Communal Housing typologies, we challenge forms of exclusions, isolated spatial bodies, and centralized health services. We imagine this normalization of assistance in East Harlem working in solidarity with the projects of existing organizations to create radical spatial solutions.
GrowNYC and other organizations have the opportunity to manage the building’s nursery, composting and educational facilities. The Center also acts as a socializer that changes the community’s perception on nutrition and can shift how even children imagine the cityscape.
Hope Community will mediate between residents, government and architects. Newspaper, flyers, brochures allow the community to hear about the project. The proposal claims the importance of challenging current ownership paradigms.
nother ground floor configuration could be a space of communal creativity and entrepreneurship. Here, there is a workshop and co-operative shop. Carpenter Michael and doll maker Mercedes can sell what they create to the community.

Through the introduction of rooftop gardens, this culture can emanate from indoors all the way to individual households.

People can interact in communal space on their floors, creating neighbor networks of care.
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Disappearing Queer Spaces
QSAPP
By Student Organization Queer Students, of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation
As part of this academic year, I was part of the QSAAP student organization that produced a book that explores individuals and spaces that have fostered queer activism and have been part of the lived experiences of Queer People in Harlem, in the context of the Harlem Renaissance.

Widely acknowledged for liberating opportunities to express identity in the Black community, the Harlem Renaissance was unequivocally important for the queer community, as well. The movement included racial acceptance but also extended further to encapsulate a welcoming exploration of gender and sexuality.

We aim to spatially visualize and recount the role the built environment and built space has had in Harlem’s queer history – whether these are bars, clubs, social or domestic spaces. Aiming to preserve the memory and spatiality of this heritage.
A NIGHT - CLUB - MAP
OF THE
Renaissance
Queer Harlem

networks of interdependencies
architecture as a mediator

disappearing queer spaces
3

Sandtown

Entanglements

Points Unknown

Instructed by Juan Saldarriaga and Michael Krisch

Supported by Lauren Tierney

In Collaboration with Leon Duval and Haotong Xia
In 2015, the Sandtown-Winchester' citizen Freddy Gray was arrested and later killed by the police creating a massive social outbreak, firstly on a city scale and later on a national scale, and placing a point of attention in the neighborhood of Sandtown. Today, as a structural and unsolved problem, the community of Sandtown is dealing with a frightening food desert, where poor quality and availability worsen the residents’ current problems and especially damage their health, adding more troubles to a place full of them.

Today it’s easily possible to see the decay of the neighborhood in the high percentage of vacant building density; a high percentage of working-age residents unemployed; high rate of community population incarcerated; a low average household income; but especially in the high percentage of area covered by food desert, which is complemented by an insufficient provision of healthy food among the existing markets and grocery stores.
sandtown entanglements

Grocery Stores
sandtown entanglements
Infrastructures of mediation in East Harlem
Advanced Studio V

Instructed by Juan Herreros
Typological Corrections
In Collaboration with Leon Duval and Rocio Crosetto
The Wagner Houses are located in a highly complex area with overlapping situations full of typologies, structures, and social and environmental threats. These situations and threats create for the East Harlem area a fragmented archipelago of disconnected moments like many NYCHA projects related to the maintenance and neglect of institutions.

By analyzing different situations and assemblages that happen in the daily routines throughout East Harlem, the architectural approach will work in solidarity with the human and more-than-human actors involved in the local.

The project keeps the original structure and part of the facades to respond to the reuse of infrastructures. However, new typologies are designed to address not only the unique diversity of households but also the idiosyncrasy that a place like East Harlem has. In this way, the project will connect the existing local social structures with changes in the disposition and organization of the building.
Carwashing in the streets

Spontaneous playground
infrastructures of mediation

Outside TV gatherings

Community Gardens
outside living-room to watch telenovelas

Chess competitions
Collective Gardens

Asado and BBQ meetings
Spaces of negotiation and shared existence

What if the riverfront becomes a beach for encounters and social realm

infrastructures of mediation

imaginaires of architecture devices that mediate relationships between actors
Instead a human centered approach, the architectures mediate.
Ground floor as an arena of exchange

Communal Center Spaces
Instead corridors, there are performative areas

Spaces for the unexpected
infrastructures of mediation

New ways to get vitamin D

New Year’s Eve
Flexibility in the architectural elements

Typologies for housing to non-nuclear families
architecture as a mediator

infrastructures of mediation

Curtains

Devices of constant invasions
Typical module

Different configurations of programs
The domesticity is understood as a living process.
5

More-than-human Integrations
Rethinking BIM

Instructed by Mark Green
Revit + Grasshopper + Rhino
In Collaboration with Daniela Beraun
A facade intervention that came from looking at how the AT&T building did not relate to humans (is windowless, with oversized ventilation ducts as the only recognizable facade element). Our intent with this project was to take the next step and convert the building into an inhabitable building for more-than-human species.

We created a three dimensional facade that was able to host solitary bees and migrating birds.

Each panel is a 3D grid that has a series of components: a bird or bee home and a planter.

Each component will be affected by a particular data set. The bird homes will rotate so as to avoid direct wind directly, the planter dimension will be defined to maximize solar radiation, the bee homes will be associated with the planters (so that if the planter is bigger, the home matches its position).
Bee homes that support the proliferation of flower to be pollinated
Birds shelters that change planters size depending on radiation
We want to reverse engineer the process of designing a facade. Instead of collecting climate data so that the facade could react to it, we will collect data of the ideal environment for these non-human species, and modify the facade to achieve that ecosystem conditions.

Replacing the facade with something that would function as an artifact to allow the environmental conditions in a post occupation context
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Mechanisms and Bodies
Advanced Studio VI

Instructed by Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano
Makergraph
It was a sunny day in June 2003: during my school break, I was with my dad in a scrap deposit looking for plates, engines, and steel pipes. It was a particular landscape where hundreds of small pieces made large mountains possible. It was fascinating to see how they were stacked one by one, piece by piece. My curiosity made me go to find the specific pieces that were crucial later for my father.

Back in his workshop, the process began: materials placed on his workstation, tools organized by size, and the multiplicity of joints involved in the creation of something unexpected. After hours of manipulation by hand and digging inside his head, he created an artifact, an object made of objects, an assamblage made of thoughts a machine made of mechanisms, a body made of parts.

Since then, I strongly believe in an approach of doing things not focused on the final product, but the relationships that enact all the thoughts, beliefs and questions we have. In this way, instead of making things, I mediate between all the mechanisms involved in the construction of our surroundings, our meanings, and our bodies.
This is an exercise of self-knowledge, a situated practice of understanding how I operate within the entanglements I am part of.

I interrogated my body as a way to deconstruct myself and understand my trans-relationship with the environment.

It has been an opportunity to situate myself in a setting of intimacy but in a critical-looking scenario.

This is a project scale-complex
mechanisms and bodies

Umbrella Section

Umbrella Top View
mechanisms and bodies

architecture as a mediator

mechanisms and bodies
Section of Wings

Section of screws and nuts
architecture as a mediator

mechanisms and bodies
Section of Fabric and Torso

Detail of Nails and Joints that create a Fabric
An umbrella that hides the intimacy of our thoughts

A backpack that aggravates the physical pain of the body
Mechanisms and Bodies
A method for making
architecture as a mediator

mechanisms and bodies
mechanisms and bodies

architecture as a mediator

An Umbrella that protects and exposes

The emerging urban microtopographies of housing will take advantage of the rise of urban microtopographies, in which small, dense buildings will be common. This will create new formative landscapes and spaces for urban life. In this way, the urban will become a new formative landscape that will be formed from one space to another, from one use to another, from one type to another.

architecture as a mediator
A Conversation to Understand my Roots
Independent Study

Directed by Andrés Jaque
In Collaboration with my mother Adriana Ganan
During the last semester in GSAPP, I have researched and worked in the structuring of ethnographic activities to exchange individual narratives in specific situations that account for the multi-scalar factors that determined the situation of the Embera Chami today in Colombia.

This proposal is based on a personal process that I have had with my mother, an indigenous woman from the Emberá Chamí Reservation of San Lorenzo who lived through the process of deculturalization and strong denial of her past, where through unstructured conversations, we have been able to generate a space of horizontal and mutual construction to understand how our identity intertwines with the other agents of our context and enact our realities.

By zoom calls and storytelling activities, we have developed methodologies of sharing
a conversation to understand my roots

Possession of Sory Mildonia Morales as Governor of San Lorenzo indigenous reservation, 2022

Series of canes, For the Embera Chami people, the cane is wisdom and is the spiritual legacy from which one comes, Indigenous Guardians of San Lorenzo, 2019.
After collecting stories of everyday life in different forms, such as drawings, oral narratives, photographs, or recipes, in collaboration with my mother, we expanded the ethnographic content of each of us as a way to deeply account for the built environment, the settings and the agents where we mobilize and construct our collective memory.

I do not intend to embody the voice of those people who have had to deal with systematic displacement and oblivion, nor to be a conclusive manifesto of how the Emberá Chamí population had to go through a process of cultural disintegration, but rather, this study aims to promote spaces and provide tools to foster day-by-day conversations about the entanglements and structures have impacted the individuality and identity of the Indigenous Reservation and their meanings.
architecture as a mediator

a conversation to understand my roots