is it all civic?
housing and beyond...

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This exploration began as a probe into the civic reality of Ghana, utilizing news, books, food, podcast, music, and poetry as a collection of sources in which we viewed, or mapped, the city of Accra. This project began as a rejection of a traditional cartographic approach to urban understanding, and instead deployed a series of readings over research, response over representation. Our understanding of Accra was accelerated by our first hand experience in the Country during a week long trip where we engaged with local artists, and submerged in a gradient of local experiences. How do we approach an architectural project in a country in which we are geographically and culturally detached from the civic reality? Where do we get agency, and how do we give agency? The conclusion of this semester is framed as a first edition, of publication, of approach, of project. The ideas presented in this work are meant to be appropriated, iterated, and adopted to living space as civic space. How can we mine the civic from the conditions of familial tenancy that has framed a way of living in the neighborhood of La, in Accra, oriented around collective maintenance, and obligatory care of neighbor, and neighborhood. How does this care shift into the new paradigm of tenant living in La, and in the global discussion of co-living when the scope of civic desire leans towards increased privatization? We have designed conditions, ranging from architectural, spatial, relational, and conceptual, that instigate the interaction of co-living, co-laboring, and collective maintenance, where the familial relationship of living has given way to intimate adjacency with strangers. These conditions, or moments, are structured through the lenses of ownership, maintenance, infrastructure, material, and space. Do you care for something because you own it? Or do you feel ownership over space once you care for something that was never explicitly yours? How can we extend our spheres of privatization and ownership to form blurred boundaries of what you maintain, and what you become a beneficiary of? This project is a series of hypotheses, test beds, claims, and counter-claims that interrogate how we live with each other, and how the civic negotiation infiltrates the intimate corners of daily life, imagining new forms of living.
we all experience different civic spaces differently but how would they affect our behavior?
how does our behavior affect civic space?
space as a product of activities and behaviors

various infrastructure

how do the different civic spaces define temporalities and permanence

how to represent interaction?
when the architecture is taken away how the spatial relationships change?

spatial nuance

transparency degrees of depth

how do sovereignty, identity and access play out in civic spaces
the fragility that comes with that

questions of access, exclusion and ownership
but to retreat to idealism but these are all forms of negotiation

make either analytical or spatial tools
projective

how to accelerate or transform a space to make it more civic?

degrees of visibility

how are national identities define civic behaviors and how we would act in stateless spaces

creating a civic space without the governance of state

our liminal experiences of moving between civic spaces and how they shape our identities

how to map and understand a space without the top down approach if possible
decolonize research methodologies and flipping the approach

how to respond rather than represent - perception

how does a memory become a story that becomes a civic behavior

how to initiate a dialogue
and create new relationships for civic and cultural identities that our beyond ours

how to design spaces that are deciding not to be either/or

methods vs final goals of civic spaces

state and its tools

negotiate identity

electrical grid as the proxy of development

post-colonial landscapes of west Africa

how to add the complexities of identities into the planned cities

emergence - enabling the possibilities of things to come together
how to decolonize minds and identities and why cant we imagine the fantastic future

save for final discussion- for mario

day to day micro negotiations that shape our civic behaviors

how to facilitate emergence and build stories around the notion of civic
leaving home

life fitted in 46 kg and a carry on - again

hoping for a window seat

he asks my destination, US

did you have to remove your hijab? he asks looking at my American passport

cold sweat coming down my forehead

no I chose,

I hear the stamp, another inked impression on my Iranian passport that I left, that I have made it

24 hours of suspension

Anything to declare?
Pistachios? Persian carpet? She says with a smile while looking through my luggage

no, thinking only if I could fit home in a carpet

Welcome back home she says
what if we look at mapping as a horizontal reading vs. research
when the outcome becomes movement beyond spatial specificity based on
first hand experiences
news, poem, art, food, podcast, music
balance, bury, accumulate, stain, entwine, infiltrate
how do we re-institute gestures of co-living when the familiar tie is no longer present?

what are these new prototypes of living?

tenant communalism vs tenant individualism

cataloging the courtyard, the mass, and alleys, the streets to identify potential activation of communal space framing the concept of co-living and civic care through instigating interaction by way of space, material, infrastructure, object, and labor post familial ownership and occupancy
CONDITION OF AGGREGATION EXPAND OWNERSHIP THROUGH MAKING

CONDITION OF GARDEN PLOTS - INDIVIDUALLY GROWN, COLLECTIVELY USED, AGGREGATED

CONDITION OF WATER GUTTER IN ADJACENCY TO EXTERIOR UNIT WALLS - UNIT TO COURT YARD, UNIT TO WATER, UNIT TO ALLEY

CONDITION OF OPERABLE WALL, OWNERSHIP IN THE ALLEY - UNIT TO UNIT, UNIT TO ALLEY

CONDITION OF CONNECTED UTILITY COMMONS UNIT TO UNIT, UNIT TO COURTYARD

CONDITION OF GARDEN WATER FEEDS THE SOIL BETWEEN UNITS
Visual Agreements, is an active test bed for how creative space is taken, re-taken, passed down with every alteration, where a new author takes ownership of a once blank canvas. The project was conceived from a question about how people invest and maintain civic space when there is an aspect of craft and care involved.

In the core of a bustling architecture building, the Visual Agreements installation becomes the central hub for students to display their work for physical and digital publication, while negotiating how they overwrite and interact with all the work that came before them. This installation is a growing group of students, faculty, passersby, challenging themselves to no longer work with a blank canvas, but with a frame filled with the work of every creative mind that came before them. The work is forcefully collaborative, undoubtedly civic. Every section is a negotiation, with history, and with the future of civic display.
The block between 151st and 152nd streets in Bronx is very rich in both culture and resources. How can we re-imagine this block while connecting to the existing infrastructure and the cultural presence of Bronx Documentary Center and the community feel of the garden across the documentary center? By connecting the two streets we are creating a passage while connecting the garden to the site.

The programs are extensions of the existing infrastructure such as gallery space, art/photography studio that can be both after school programs for kids in the neighborhood schools and adults.

The vertical and horizontal connections (the cores) from the street to our public programs are surrounded by gardens with floating in-between spaces for housing. We are adding 85 new multi-generational residential units as well as 20 artist studio and a gallery space attached to the Bronx documentary center. The Bronx greeted us with vibrant stoops. We learned how these stoops have been a big part of the resiliency of this neighborhood during last year’s pandemic.

So we decided to amplify this stoop culture into our site. As we thought about the stoop and core systems, we designed our own core system with opportunities for lingering and connecting.

The existing cores are replaced with new cores while creating a platform for new and existing MEP equipment. We refer to the system provided as stoop to core to stoop.
The programs are extensions of the existing infrastructure such as gallery space, art/photography studio that can be both after school programs for kids in the neighborhood schools and adults.

The vertical and horizontal connections (the cores) from the street to our public programs are surrounded by gardens with floating in-between spaces for housing.
TYPICAL 3 BR UNIT
TOTAL AREA 950 SQFT
COMMON AREA 420 SQFT
MASTER BEDROOM 120 SQFT
BEDROOM 80 SQFT
BATHROOM 55 SQFT
HALF BATH 25 SQFT
The Catskills have served the wealthy escaping the city in search of sanctuarity-ness for many decades. It has famously and historically been a space of hospitality, flooded with resorts, short term rentals, casinos, and yoga retreats. The amenity spaces in the Catskills emphasize the over-commercialized sense of sanctuary and wilderness as well as the exploitation of the workers and nature. The new Resorts World Casino stands on the site of the old Concord Hotel which was formerly a resort that was part of the Borscht Belt. The site has resulted in the Casino and Resort which is disconnected from the already manufactured nature. This moment in time challenges the Vegas style casino and how the Catskills are depicted by the Hudson River School and the notion of wilderness. Instead of reversing what was done in the past decade we propose to decompose the existing facility and landscape. There is a decomposition where humans are triggering the growth and habitation of the non-human species and creating a new ecosystem. By taking away pieces of the building, and re-purposing material, the human interventions can allow for non-human events to take place. Furthermore this is a speculative approach of how after an abrupt closure of the Casino and Resort, a deep time decomposition can be an alternative to the typical notion of demolition. Challenging the previous notion of the Catskills and how it may be depicted, will bring opportunity for human intervention that can trigger non-human species to co-habitat the building to create a new sense of sublime.
YES she is happy!

She is going to the “Forever Wild” Catskills

Get your keys today

summers & winters
can healthcare facilities be civic for everyone?

broadway medical center extension plaza
studio core 1 | broadway stories
fall 2020
critic: Josh Uhl

The plaza functions as a hybrid extension of the sidewalk; it provides formal waiting spaces and promotes inclusion by reducing digital redlining and introducing tele-health spaces. This space is multi-functional, it can transform into an extension of the existing medical center, providing infrastructure for testing, treatment, and vaccination during a health crisis or pandemic such as COVID-19.
How does memory play a role in evolution of civic spaces?

How do we keep the memory of P.S. 64 while moving forward? This proposal for the new P.S. 64 is based on the premise that the essence of education is outside of the typical classroom, where the students are engaged with their community. In the new P.S. 64, the traditional classrooms are kept in the partially modified original building while the new annex functions as the heart of the school. The annex provides students with a learning environment through engagement and interaction with their city and community; it connects the school to the community through the visual arts and music. In the art and music studios, gallery, and auditorium, students are both the performers and artists as well as the audience and viewers. The annex is a symbol of moving forward from old to new, shown by the evolution of the vault to an archway and the dichotomy between rigid and light.
ruins in the desert
visual studies | techniques of the ultrareal
spring 2022

critic: Phillip Crupi

collaborators: Chi Chi Wakabayashi
Yueyue Su

This project was an exploration in rendering and pushing the limits of renders into reality. We explored sand, water, stone and metal and created a scene in the middle of the desert that has ruins from different eras.
as civic as museums are supposed to be, they operate in the most non-civic way. can this be changed?

Excluded from the definition of American and, conversely, excluded from Whitney’s collection of American artists, this post-plantation collective creates a space for the excluded, the harmed, the non-American, the other.

Specifically, our project establishes a collective of extra-territorial trans-local campuses in order to create a network that promotes the experience and expertise of the communities that have been exploited and harmed through the imperialist actions of Whitney’s donors and board members.

These campuses are scattered throughout the city’s parks nearby where these displaced communities live in the NYC area. Funded by Whitney’s donors and board of trustees in collaboration with NYC parks and the specific organizations related to each community, the art and knowledge created is brought back to the Whitney’s peripheral sites to be showcased and oppose Whitney’s expansion in the Meatpacking district.
The Plantation Lexicon guided our research as we sought to uncover the systems of power and oppression within the Whitney, the maintenance of the Plantation Logic within the contemporary museum. The interconnectivity of ideas, people, and processes of the Plantation Logic manifested in the interconnectivity of the ideas of “American” present at the Whitney, the people within the board, and the processes of curation.

The Whitney highlights and re-enforces the definition of American, of belonging, an exclusionary practice rooted in extraction and violence that assigns inclusion to a select few that serve these practices.

Despite the Biennials' fabrication of conversation surrounding US colonial history and its implications today, the Museum itself replicates these processes as it is funded by a Board of Trustees comprised of investors and owners in companies that produce military equipment for American presence and intervention internationally. It is funded through and founded on the extraction of resources and weaponization of America and its allies (the American-adjacent), at the expense of those considered outside of these definitions. Such distinctions between American and non-American are illustrated in the Biennials curation of countries to be included within each shows' definition of American.

The Whitney has become an enclosure for the sifting and shifting of who gets to be American

As the Museum accepts monetary and material donations from these members, it too becomes a participant in these systems of extraction. In contrast, our project imagines a collective funded by Whitney, through the donors and board members, that benefits the communities that their military investments impact. Rather than accepting the monetary donations from the donors for the purpose of image laundering, it re-invests these contributions as repair.

Of these board members, Warren Kanders owns and operates the multi-billion dollar weapons manufacturer, Safariland, the point of protest for the 2019 Biennials. Kanders with a net worth of $700M has donated $10M from 2006 to 2019 to the Whitney which is less than 1.5% of his worth. We think that Kanders resignation in 2019 is a great start in decolonizing the Whitney but it is not enough.

Rather than for the benefit of the donors and museum, Kanders and the Whitney must reinvest this money in causes devoted to care, healing, and justice for those directly impacted by Kander’s products: the individuals, groups, and movements harmed by the armed violence of states. Kanders products have harmed many from Palestine, Mexico, Puerto Rico and even locally here in the US.

This system of repair becomes the collective of campuses devoted to fostering and promoting the experience and expertise of communities like these.
As a case study, we focused on Little Palestine, an area in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn where most Palestinians live in NYC—a community directly and continuously impacted by the Warren Kanders' Safari I AND operations.

As imagined by the collective, the project partners with existing organizations fostering art and education for this population. For this community in particular, this includes Pal Art, Within Our Lifetime, the Question of Funding, and For Freedoms. Pal Art promotes Palestinian artists and increases high quality creative content on Palestine. For Freedoms is an artist collective with an aim for transformative connection and collective liberation of immigrant communities that seeks infinite expansion. Within our lifetime is a Palestinian-led community organization that has been building the movement for Palestine in NYC since 2015. Their goal is to resist the violence of the U.S. empire at home and abroad and resist the U.S. imperialism. The Question of Funding is a collective of cultural community organizers from Palestine. It aims to rethink the economy of funding and how it affects cultural production both in Palestine and the world to resist the physical and geographical boundaries in Palestine and beyond.
the gummy chair
building science & technology elective
1:1 crafting and fabrication of details
fall 2022

critic: Zachary Mulitauaopele
collaboration: Maclane Regan

The building of this chair started with the idea of how a wall or a totem can become more connecting than dividing. The chair can be adjusted in three positions — from a bench to a one-person chair. Several explorations of Kerf bending techniques were tested and practiced until the zig zag method was successfully operated on one piece of wood. The back of the seat was added as part of the failed Kerf bending exercises.

All the blocks are created from recycled material left at the shop. Casted in left over resin. One block in particular is casted candy and gummy bear as a citric to the seriousness of building and exploration of everyday object as building material.
The hug is an exploration of a temporary inflatable that is more than an inflatable. How can a 12x12x12 space can be a hub for comfort, rest and engagement on Columbia university campus. The hug was designed with the ergonomic of different bodies in mind. From a child to an adult, everyone at any hour of the day can sit or play at the hug with an instant feeling of ease. The users can charge their phone from PV charged batteries and play music on a provided speaker. The feedback from users have been overwhelmingly positive with one caveat that they wished that the hug was installed earlier and permanently.
arrive on campus Saturday
bring all materials to side carts
lay out tarp
unpack and lay out the inflatable onto tarp
plug it in
half inflated so the zippers stay open for the air to leave
people go inside to install the lights
wire cutters, wire strippers, zip ties, scissors, duct tape
test the lights
inflate
attach PVs
zip ties
ropes
connect cables to PV, thread through cable sleeve
zip ties
ten inflate halfway
connect cables to battery
10 ft iPhone cables x3
speaker cable
android cable
remove tarp from underneath
place sandbags in position
place in plastic bins
attach the disco ball carabiner
make sure all the zippers that won't be reachable are closed
inflated the whole thing
roll arm with foam and zip closed foam beads
tape trash bag to hold foam inside
attach pillows, styrofoam beads in trash bags
ropes
little metal loops
lay out entry tarp
tape ground pathway
color tape on pavement
gravel on dirt
where do we put our names?
how does care instigate civic?
do you care for something because you own it? or do you feel ownership
over something once you care for it?
from compound houses in Ghana to housing in the Bronx
can cores, gardens, and spaces in between become more civic?
what does civic mean for non-humans?
can healthcare facilities be civic for everyone?
how does memory play a role in evolution of civic spaces?
as civic as museums are supposed to be, they operate in the most non-civic
way. can this be changed?
civic in all scales, from the city to housing to a chair!
can temporal nature of a structure add more civic qualities?

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