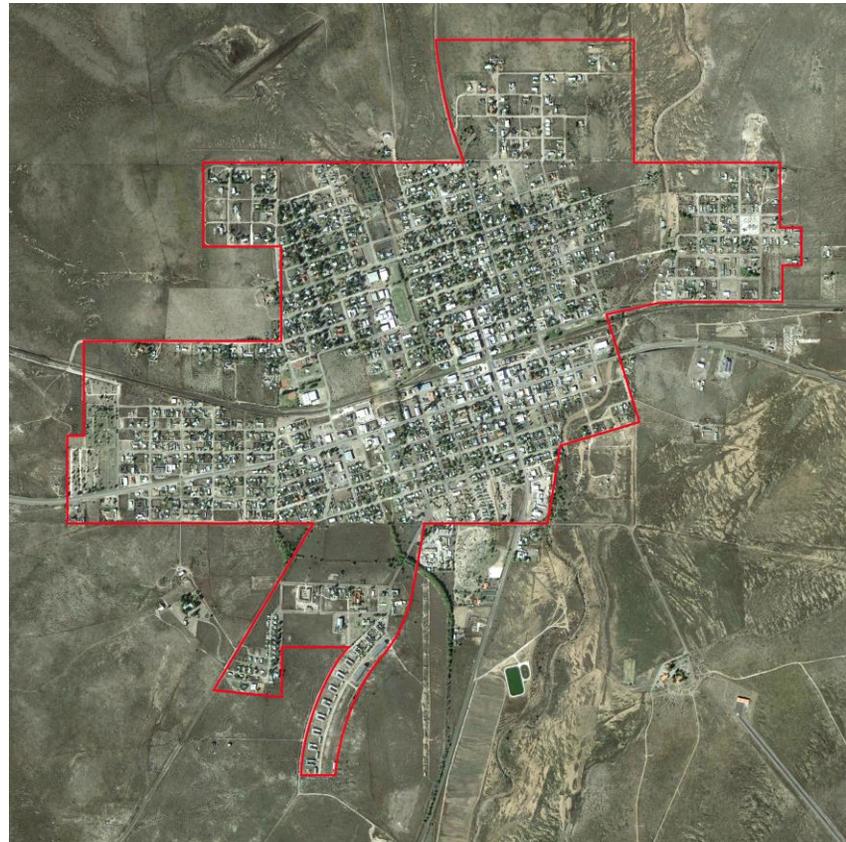


ARTS + LEISURE



Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York



Marfa, Texas

“The very newspaper which many of us read is an amalgam of categories. Aside from global, national and metropolitan news, there’s sports, science, business, etc.; and on Sundays there’s art and leisure.”

Arts & Leisure

This last coupling is an oldie but goody that neatly perpetuates the conventional gap between the fine arts and the so-called popular culture. Or, in other words what is “high” and what is “low”. Art is obviously art, right? And sometimes theater is art, but sometimes it’s just a lot of escapist hullabaloo, right? Dance is art. TV and movies are leisure, I guess. But what about “the cinema”, that high-toned and serious activity? Pop has got to be leisure. Recordings can be art in their inception and leisure in their reception. Music is a little bit of both, depending on the music. Antiques can be either art or pop in their creation, but their collection is highly serious leisure. And where does architecture fit in, with its careful collapse of form into function?”

(Until 2016 The New York Times called its Culture Section of the newspaper “Arts + Leisure”)
Kruger, Barbara, “Arts and Leisures”, Remote Control,
(MIT Press 1993)

The agenda for this studio is to produce real possible future designs for this New York City site, envisioning new forms of venues for culture and urbanism - beyond work - for NYC dwellers. Students will speculate with large-scale and small-scale drivers that may enable environmental resiliency, public policy, technology, transportation, etc.

Sites: Unlikely Pairings

This studio will study two very different sites – one, the city of Marfa Texas and the other the Brooklyn Navy Yard. These two sites share similar phenomenon of once being thriving places for work at the turn of the century and then for reasons of military withdrawal and ecological circumstances (drought and flood); both experienced sudden and catastrophic decline.

Marfa Texas

The history of Marfa, Texas, the county seat for Presidio County, is one shared by many West Texas towns—a cycle of boom and bust initiated by the railroad that made its way through the town in the late 19th century. Marfa initially served as a stop between San Antonio and El Paso, but ranchers soon leveraged the railroad’s potential to establish the town as a hub for wool, mohair, and cattle. The 20th century also saw a military presence develop in Marfa, since the town’s proximity to the border provided an outpost location to monitor the Mexican Revolution. The first bust was the wholesale withdrawal of military operations from the area soon after World War II, the second, the crippling seven-year drought in the 1950’s that decimated the ranching industry.

Today, this small border city is no longer what it once was; and despite its remote location; Marfa has become a cultural venue for all forms of contemporary art, performance, film, and dance.

Brooklyn Navy Yard

The Brooklyn Navy Yard is also no longer a vestige of what it once was. Instead, the Yard has become emblematic of how New York will adapt and transform toward the future. Its core mission - “to build and diversify our city’s employment base”—is essential not only to foster growth, but to promote types of growth that are broadly more socially equitable and more ecologically conscious.

In the last few decades the geography of New York City has transformed in ways that are unrecognizable. Who would have imagined twenty years ago a city in which people regularly lived and worked in Brooklyn, yet visited Midtown only once every six months? In fact, most workers no longer commute into a central business district.

In some ways, Brooklyn has taken the lead in re-defining New York today.

With a critical eye, this studio will look at what the Brooklyn Navy Yard can learn from Marfa as a re-defined place for the display and presentation of contemporary art (and leisure).

Studio Framework

On Speculation

Speculation will frame the work this semester as we consider the nature of taking a very large risk. Speculation, by definition is both the process of thinking or meditating on a subject, a judgment, conclusion, opinion, or theory reached by conjecture – as well as – an investment involving higher than normal risk in order to obtain a higher than normal return (not strictly monetarily).

Speculation may involve taking large risks especially with respect to making predictions for the future, and gambling, in the hopes of making huge gains (again, not strictly monetary).

On Collective Urbanism

Collective – Collective is our term for shared and public space. Collective space is to be considered a critical piece of infrastructure to enable work and leisure. Collective space encompasses a variety of scales, and is an essential and strategic component for developing urbanism. Students will investigate and propose programs for their collective space strategy.

On Work + Leisure

Students will consider how Work + Leisure might inform their speculative models for collective urbanism. What kinds of spaces are available or may be developed or uncovered for the display of art, for viewing performance or film? What form do these spaces of leisure take as the concept of work evolves?

On Modeling

We will make a lot of models, both conceptual and physical. Students will develop and test new conceptual models on the future of leisure using physical modeling as the primary mode of study and speculation. In this studio, research and design will be conducted from the onset. Research will not strictly operate as a collection of information; instead research will be performed and conducted as students test and experiment with formal and urban strategies.

On Drawing

It is important to consider “all media as dead media”, as Alex Galloway suggests. As architects construct futures, we might avoid capitalist realist representations, to instead participate in a process of recombining material and representational motifs—those that are not restricted to current technologies, which are inherently and already aging. This studio will develop thoughtful and critical representational techniques, ideally reflecting our subject matter—informing and informed by the concept.

We will also be mindful of the full breadth of presentation composition. This includes typesetting, copy editing (no typos), and testing various formats to effectively communicate our ideas.

Travel: Marfa Texas and Brooklyn

The studio will travel to Marfa Texas September 20-24. We will visit both the Chinati Foundation and The Judd Foundation (The Studio and The Block). We will also make several trips and tours of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, across the East River.

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