

5/26/2017

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# INTERIM URBANISM

## HABITATION OF THE CITY

### Introduction

On June 17th 2016, the New York State legislature passed a bill to ban Airbnb advertisements attempting to curtail the likelihood of the already illegal temporary sharing of homes and joining the growing list of global locations that prohibit the practice, as some housing advocates claim that as much as 10% of the available housing stock of the city was being usurped by “strangers.” While the controversy only elicited a more evolved form of the enterprise, with a newly branded community engagement and disaster remedy division as well as its own urban planning and design production unit<sup>1</sup>, the debates around the fate of the newfound industry highlights the complexities in the issues in different modes of inhabiting the city. Under the logics of a post-08 demographic economy<sup>2</sup> and with persisting political and economic instabilities and inequalities at the global scale, the increased mobility - both voluntary and forced- and related formats of living challenge the familiar notions of the ownership of the city and its inhabitants.

As a part of the on-going research and studio series “Interim Urbanism,” the studio will consider the architecture of *the stay*, a working term that acknowledges the underexplored concept of a genre of architecture and urbanism that describes a spectrum of temporary habitation in all of its forms and intricacies. From the make-shift homes of refugees to the fragile autonomy of homeless Tent Cities, permanence and belonging are suspended and pursued at once. Sometimes as fortified as the “commune” of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel or as fleeting as the instant families found at the shared kitchens of We-Live or Common, the spaces of *the stay* are often disposable, yet necessary utopias. Generic and fascinating as Portman’s atriums<sup>3</sup>, and flamboyant and logical as roadside motels, the stay is politics *and* biopolitics where delegates mingle and nations are presented, and where the promiscuity of work and life surface to Krakauer’s content.<sup>4</sup> The stay is interior urbanism *and* state monumentalism. The stay is “in the meantime.”

### Approaches

Aiming beyond the fascinations with the delights and limitations of the assumed ephemerality, the studio’s goal is to reconsider the architecture of temporal habitation as a context *and* an instrument to reshape the city. While tethered to the realism of living but inspired by the prospect of the continued journey, the propositions of the temporal stay have often provoked experimentations and projections for new visions for the city. From the participatory mobility of Yona Friedman’s Spatial City to the extreme nomadology of Constant Nieuwenhuys’ New Babylon, from radical idealisms of government sanctioned squats in

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<sup>1</sup> See Airbnb’s description of their new programs that reconceptualize their strategies in light of the new legal restrictions. <https://www.airbnbaction.com/>. <https://www.airbnb.com/disaster-response>, <http://www.samara.airbnb.com>

<sup>2</sup> Carmichael argues that the economic crisis which affected the finances and other expectations of millennials significantly, also influenced a shift in values, creating the potential for a new sharing economy away from individual ownership. Carmichael, Matt. *Buyographics: How Demographic and Economic Changes Will Reinvent the Way Marketers Reach Consumers*, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Jameson assesses the dystopian nature of Portman’s Bonaventure Hotel in his essay, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Also see Koolhaas, Rem. “Atlanta.” In *S,M,L,XL*. New York, N.Y.: Monacelli Press, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Krakauer, Siegfried, and Thomas Y. Levin. “Hotel Lobby.” In *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

Holland to the endlessly networked and emancipated Supersurfaces of Happy Islands, the new notions of the city, its citizens, and their ways of living, both dystopic and utopic are articulated through the evolving notions of domesticity and privacy, and the premise of movements that responds to or triggers impending yet uncertain changes. Participating in the continuing discourse and recognizing the genre's pertinence in the context of current political and societal realities and prevalent technological optimism, the studio will engage the potentials in architecture of temporal habitation through a set of projects diverse in concept, location, and scale, and consider new ideas and formats of collectivity in the the contemporary milieu.

The studio will start with a research and analysis effort through a review of relevant discourse and an overview of both historic and contemporary temporal habitations and the related typologies through readings and surveys. Following the initial overview, fact based investigations on selected topics or examples with focused research and analytic documentations will instigate the individuated agendas of the design projects to be set forth in the next phase. Initiating the design phase, students will be asked to define a set number of project trajectories and outline basic framework, potential strategies, and the site(s) of interest pertinent to each project. Taking advantage of the infinite programmatic and demographic complexity of the New York metropolitan area, the studio will utilize New York City and its extended territories as a subject of investigation and a testing ground.

The design work, revised through an iterative process in response to the ongoing investigations and dialogue within the studio, will be developed articulating the rationales and impact at multiple scales, geographies, and time frames regardless of the projects' physical bounds. The emphasis of the studio is on the production of rigorously articulated architectural propositions that each engages the critical inquiry of the studio topic with a distinctive thesis.

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