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RE:invest BANKS

The first thing you need to know about banks is that they are everywhere. A certain type of bank; The ones you know from almost every intersection.

Process

The studio will investigate a different type of bank. We will define new categories, values, and economies. We will research it's meaning and develop architectural typologies to realize our investigations.

This will happen through all scales, tools and technologies available. The studio will tap into all modes of digital and analog representations available to us as Architects.

Think of the studio as a *Maker Box* of ideas and space.



Illustration by Victor Juhasz

Conspiracy theorists of the world, believers in the hidden hands of the Rothschilds and the Masons and the Illuminati, we skeptics owe you an apology. You were right. The players may be a little different, but your basic premise is correct: The world is a rigged game. We found this out in recent months, when a series of related corruption stories spilled out of the financial sector, suggesting the world's largest banks may be fixing the prices of, well, just about everything; see Matt Taibbi in RS 04.25.

Kick-off

The world's most powerful investment bank is a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money. In fact, the history of the recent financial crisis, which doubles as a history of the rapid decline and fall of the suddenly swindled dry American empire, reads like a Who's Who of investment banks graduates.

The bank's unprecedented reach and power have enabled it to turn all of America (and Europe) into a giant pump-and-dump scam, manipulating whole economic sectors for years at a time, moving the dice game as this or that market collapses, and all the time gorging itself on the unseen costs that are breaking families everywhere—rising consumer credit rates, half-eaten pension funds, mass layoffs, future taxes to pay off bailouts. All that money that you're losing, it's going somewhere, and in both a literal and a figurative sense, Banks are where it's going.

Today

Banks own oil tankers, run airports and control huge quantities of coal, natural gas, heating oil, electric power and precious metals. They likewise can now be found exerting direct control over the supply of a whole galaxy of raw materials crucial to world industry and to society in general, including everything from food products to metals like zinc, copper, tin, nickel and, most infamously thanks to a recent high-profile scandal, aluminum.

But banks aren't just buying stuff, they're buying whole industrial processes. They're buying oil that's still in the ground, the tankers that move it across the sea, the refineries that turn it into fuel, and the pipelines that bring it to your home. Then, just for kicks, they're also betting on the timing and efficiency of these same industrial processes in the financial markets – buying and selling oil stocks on the stock exchange, oil futures on the futures market, swaps on the swaps market, etc.

Allowing one company to control the supply of crucial physical commodities, and also trade in the financial products that might be related to those markets, is an open invitation to commit mass manipulation. (Christoph a. Kumpusch over Matt Taibbi in RS 1082-1083)

Opportunities

Value is less and less “visible” and ever more experience based. This goes from the currencies we are using – think goods and gold to Apple Pay - to an ever more shared economy. Space, if not architecture becomes ever more important as a place where we share those experiences. So many of today's values live not at the opposite ends of the spectrum—the physical space or cyber space, but the in-between. Spaces become places where we collect physical experiences – or receive them – rather than where we do things. We want to look at the manufacturing end of both, space and place. The studio will explore this physical space – a bank of experiences.

When digital meetings or video conferencing was first introduced, business travel was deemed dead. Research shows, however, that the business travel segment has been rising more than any other. Why? Since it has become so easy to participate in meetings around the globe digitally and from one's smart phone, it has become ever more special to show up in person. And – one cannot Email a “handshake” or the cultural equivalent of it.

We can seemingly be anywhere at anytime, meeting everybody; and in fact do this multiple times at the same times. The Physical of place and space, sound and light, ideas and ideals is what this studio's banks will capitalize on.

They will materialize ideas in form of space – Architecture as it's very own currency.

The Architect as Economist

Banks and value are not necessarily the same; Members of the studio will develop their own value system and typology.

Possible categorizations are the

- .] Doppelgänger Bank,
- .] Barter Bank,
- .] Cryonics Bank,
- .] Ponzi Bank,
- .] Future Power Bank,
- .] Resource Bank and the
- .] Memory Bank.