

## DRAFT V1

### Convergence Space

Re-visiting the Social Condenser 20 years into the internet

Columbia University, GSAPP

Advanced Studio V, Fall 2017

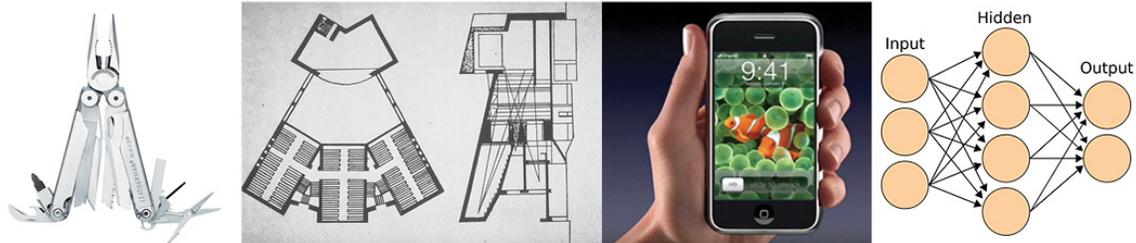
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When we think about **space**, we have only looked at its containers. As if space itself is invisible, all theory for the production of space is based on an obsessive preoccupation with its opposite: substance and objects, i.e., architecture. Architects could never explain space; Junkspace is our punishment for their mystifications. OK, let's talk about space then.

Rem Koolhaas, *Junk-Space*

"**Convergence** is a deep integration of knowledge, tools, and all relevant activities of human activity to allow society to answer new questions to change the respective physical or social ecosystem. Such changes in the respective ecosystem open new trends, pathways, and opportunities in the following divergent phase of the process."

Wikipedia

### SUMMARY

We will investigate the contemporary culture of Convergence through spatial and cultural analysis. From this research, we will design a new typology of collective space converging varied programs—co-living, co-working, workshops, library, park, exhibition, commercial, etc. into a neighborhood contained inside a building. The site is in Redhook, New York.

### CONVERGENCE SPACE

When Rem Koolhaas wrote *Junk Space* in 2001, only 55% of Americans used the internet. The first iPhone, a prime specimen of technological convergence, was still 6 years away. Like *Junk Space*, *Convergence Space* is not an new invention, it is a speculative description of a spatial ideology that already exists. Looking to architectural history, it is arguable that Convergence was a spatial concept before it became a technological one. Going back as far as the 19th century, concepts like the Phalanstere proposed a convergence of living spaces, communal spaces, and work spaces that would unlock the potential of its inhabitants. Similarly, the concept of the Social Condenser that emerged from the Russian constructivist movement sought to liberate the worker through a collaborative and integrated work-live lifestyle. In these utopian projects, architectural typologies also served as spatial manifestations of a social contract between its inhabitants and a broader ideology. In contemporary western culture, the social contract is linked to the values of the market place rather than a politically determined ideology. This studio will explore the possibilities for space to enable new social contracts that leverage the values of the market through an ethos of convergence.

If Junk Space was the “fallout” of modernism as it spread across the globe, then Convergence Space is a desire for space to re-concentrate experience to produce moments of coherence within accelerating complexity and chaos. In other words, Convergence Space is the milieu of interaction in which networks of meaning, expertise and knowledge overlap through the lived experience of individuals. As the concept of convergence cycles back through architecture from other disciplines, how was the value of space changed? What do we desire from space now 20 years into the internet? What should we converge to create a new way of living?

## **PROGRAM**

Today, the City faces a moment in time that will define its future for decades to come. Worldwide economic forces, questions of equity, **the whole idea of what is a neighborhood**, and dramatic climate change will drive and transform New York City regardless. Each is a given. The question becomes, can each one of these questions be answered in a way that creates an equitable, sustainable and resilient city.

AECOM, SouthWest Brooklyn Study, 2016

### **A Neighborhood in a Building - Open Architecture Not Big Architecture**

The studio will explore how a single building can contain an open-ended, open-source neighborhood with a mixture of collective programs including co-living, co-working, workshops, library, park, exhibition, commercial, etc. We will depart from recent micro-living projects in New York (eg. Carmel Place, West 57th) and the co-living models like (eg. We-Live, Lighting Society, etc.) to imagine more extreme convergence of collective programs which question and challenge the system of values which currently govern the development of the city.

### **Between an Intentional Community and a Social Condenser**

Looking back to the 19th and 20th century, this studio will draw on two distinct types of convergence space that continue to have relevance for contemporary culture, the Social Condenser and the Intentional Community. The re-emerging popularity in co-living spaces is both a reaction to the increasing cost of living in NY as much as a broader cultural desire for new forms sociability.

## **SITE - REDHOOK**

The site of the project will be located in Redhook, the area of South West Brooklyn under immense development pressure to accommodate some of the projected 3 million new residence in New York by 2040. As development moves increasing toward the outer boroughs, the opportunity to re-think the convergence of living, working, and socializing are immense.

## **STUDIO METHODOLOGY**

This studio will ask its students to embrace the ever-expanding realm of the architect—as designer, researcher, strategist, social scientist, graphic designer, and salesman. Assignments aim to create a continuous feedback loop between cultural speculation and design production informed by our architectural expertise. We will be particularly focused on the development of precise and evocative narratives that engage disciplinary issues as well as broad cultural trends. Using the medium of the book/zine/deck, students will cumulatively develop their arguments (conceptually, architecturally, graphically) across the semester. Students are encouraged to test new representation and narrative techniques to converge disparate data, concepts and intuitions.

Students can work individually or in groups. The studio will progress through 4 major phases:

*Research (3 Weeks)* Beginning with research into Convergence culture draw from precedents in technology, media, science, etc. while looking into architectural history for typologies of convergence. In parallel, students will study typologies of urban social condensers, intentional communities while generating formal strategies and tectonics to potentially apply within their own projects.

### *Glossary*

From this research we will produce a glossary of working definitions (see attached work-in-progress)

*Concept and Design Studies (3 weeks)* Building upon the research of the first phase, students will construct a narrative for a Convergence Space located in Red Hook, New York. Students will bounce between the conceptual framework of the community and formal/organizational strategies of the site and New York as an interconnected network. Students are encouraged to design through models, iteratively and rapidly.

*Design Development (5 weeks)* For mid-review and ¾ review, students will generate a fully composed proposal through a model and a book.

*Refine + Production (3 weeks)* Following ¾ Review, students will have a coherent design proposal and argument. In the final weeks of the studio, students will refine their design through the production of a large-scale model and a final printed book. Final deliverables will focus on a large-scale model and a book.

## Schedule

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 9/7   | Thurs First Studio - 2pm, Location TBD |
| 10/26 | Mid Review                             |
| 11/20 | 3/4 Review                             |
| 12/12 | Final Review                           |

\*A detailed schedule will be provided on the first studio meeting.

## References

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Florida, Richard *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class—and What We Can Do About It*, 2017. Basic Books.

### Junk Space

<https://www.readingdesign.org/junkspace>

### Convergence Culture

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological\\_convergence#cite\\_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_convergence#cite_note-1)

[http://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/what-architects-should-know-about-convergence\\_o](http://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/what-architects-should-know-about-convergence_o)

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### Ritual

<https://www.ribbonfarm.com/2015/01/08/ritual-and-the-consciousness-monoculture/>

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## Disciplinary Issues

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Somol, Robert. "Green Dots 101." *Hunch: The Berlage Institute Report* 11 (Winter 2006/7): 28–37.

## **Theory**

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Deleuze, Gilles *Post-Script on a Control Society*

Latour, Bruno *Actor Network Theory*

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Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

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Rancière, Jacques *The Politics of Aesthetics*

Fisher, Mark. *The Weird and the Eerie*. London: Repeater Books, 2016.

Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

## **CONVERGENCE SPACE GLOSSARY - *WORK-IN-PROGRESS***

As a studio we will develop a glossary of observations which describe the characteristics of Convergence Space. From this glossary we will gain an expansive understanding of our contemporary spatial paradigm and architectures agency within it.

### **Aesthetics**

In convergence space, all aesthetic effects are social.

### **Alchemy**

In convergence space, coherence is mined like a precious metal in an alchemist's laboratory.

### **Age**

In convergence space, everyone is in youth-mode, even your grandparents.

### **Architecture School**

In convergence space, architecture school is an aggregator of ideas not an originator of ideas.

### **Attention**

In convergence space, attention is like a conductive material.

### **Brain Damage**

Convergence space is like an intensive care unit for the brain damage that is caused by relentless connectivity.

### **Burning Man**

In convergence space, the techno-transcendent and the primitive-spiritual co-exist.

### **Chaos**

In convergence space, "there are no safe harbours left, only the comparative safety of the open ocean."

### **Circulation**

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### **Complexity**

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### **Content**

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### **Collectivity**

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### **Currency**

In convergence space, artists launch crypto-currency to subsidize their rent.

### **Distribution Centers**

In convergence space, everything shows up at your door

### **Efficiency**

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### **Extreme Present**

In convergence space, everyone is talking about the future but can never escape the "extreme-present"

### **Domestic**

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**Food**

In convergence space, all food is more alive and organic than you are.

**Figure Field**

[In convergence space...](#)

**Furniture**

In convergence space, furniture and gym equipment are indistinguishable.

**Genetics**

In convergence space, you have nightmares about your children altering their own genetic code as an act of teenage rebellion.

**Gestalt**

[In convergence space...](#)

**High Performance Mysticism**

In convergence space high performance is integrated with new age mysticism, think Yulex meets Himalayan Salt.

**Hobbies**

In convergence space, entrepreneurs and tech culture read Jane Jacobs and Christopher Alexander.

**Human Resources**

In convergence space, Shamanism is the new HR department.

**Investment**

In convergence space, "reasons-to-investment" are always aligned with your chakras.

**Knowledge**

In convergence space, metrics and intuition are indistinguishable.

**Lifestyle**

In convergence space, you can't tell if you are working, exercising, socializing, or in group therapy.

**Management**

In convergence space, Chaos Magic is the most viable management strategy.

**Materiality**

In convergence space materiality is a form of content.

**Morphology**

In convergence space is like a delta continually merging and form-finding, a fluvial morphology.

**Neighborhood**

...

**Network Effects**

In convergence space, network effects are everywhere but barely perceptible.

**Nature**

In convergence space, nature is not only inside the building it is inside of you.

**Online/Offline**

In convergence space, online transforms offline...which may or may not transform online

### **Open-Source**

...

### **Optimism**

In convergence space, opportunity and optimism still exists in the face of an apocalyptic future.

### **Politics**

In convergence space, you realize that Junk Space predicted Trump.

### **Post-typological**

Convergence space is post-typological, it exist between typologies rather than being one.

(In the way that "third space" or the Iphone is a typology defined between other typologies. EG. iphone became it's own typology)

### **Productivity**

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### **Professionalism**

In convergence space, the boundaries of "professionalism" are intentionally put at risk.

### **Reality**

In convergence space, fiction is not opposed to the real.

### **Ritual**

In convergence space, ritual counteract cognitive dissonance and our awareness of time.

### **Sacred**

In convergence space, spirituality is pre-condition for all actions and intentions.

### **Scale**

In convergence space, scale is not determined by the size or a room but the number of IT hook-ups.

### **Sharing**

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### **Supplements**

In convergence space, psychedelics are the new amplifier of productivity.

### **Terrazzo**

In convergence space, every designer has their own custom terrazzo pattern.

### **Tectonics**

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### **The Architect**

In convergence space the architect is a shaman.

### **Time**

In convergence space, time is a factor of proximity.

### **Transparency**

In convergence space, transparency is not literal nor phenomenological, it is informational.

**Vacation**

In convergence space, you can't tell if you are on group vacation or part of a crypto-currency think tank.

**Value**

In convergence space, memes and crypto-currency exist in the same system of value.

**Weird**

In convergence space, things get weird and then become normal increasingly quickly