

NAHYUN HWANG, DAVID EUGIN MOON STUDIO

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 unit¹, the debates around the fate of the newfound industry bring attention to the complexities of the issues around the alternative modes of inhabiting the city practiced by an ever growing global citizenry.

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”² of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel or as fleeting as the instant families found at the shared kitchen of We-Live or Common, the spaces of *the stay* are disposable yet necessary utopias. Generic and fascinating as the Portman’s Atriums³, 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 content⁴. The stay is interior urbanism and state monumentalism. The stay is “in the meantime.” Under the logics of a post-08 demographic economy⁵ and with persisting political and economic instabilities and inequalities at the global scale, the increased mobility - both voluntary and necessitated- and related formats of living challenge the familiar notions of the ownership of the city and its habitation.

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

¹ See Airbnb’s description of their new programs that reconceptualize their strategies in light of the new legal restrictions.
<http://samara.airbnb.com>

² Koolhaas, Rem. “The Lives of a Block: The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and the Empire State Building.” In *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997. p.132-151

³ Frederick Jameson assesses the dystopian nature of Portman’s Bonaventure hotel in his essay, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

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

⁵ 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.

realism of living but inspired by the implications of the continued journey, the propositions of the temporal stay often provoked and implemented experimentations and projections for the visions for the future city. From the participatory mobility of Spatial City to the extreme nomadology of Constant Nieuwenhuys' New Babylon, from radical idealisms of sanctioned squats to the endlessly networked and emancipated Supersurface of "Happy Islands," the new notion of the city, its citizens, and their ways of lives, both dystopic and utopic were made legible through the premise of movements and unplanned yet impending changes. Participating in the continuing discourse while recognizing the parallels in the current political and societal realities and technological optimism, the studio will engage the potentials in architecture of temporal habitation broadly explored through a set of projects diverse in concept, location, and scale and the forms of temporary occupation evolving to respond to new ideals of the collectivity, productivity, and domesticity in the context of the contemporary city.

The studio will start with a research and analysis effort - a review of relevant discourse and research on the topic of the historic and current temporal habitations and the related spatial typologies, followed by fact based investigations and analysis of selected topics and examples through the production of analytic drawings, which will instigate the individuated agendas of the design projects to be set forth in the next phase. Initiating the design phase, the 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. 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 and time frames. The emphasis of the studio is on the rigorous development of research and projects throughout the semester, each engaging the critical inquiry of the studio topic with a distinctive thesis.

Off-Site Excursions

Off-site studio activities arranged for research, documentation, and exploration of the existing forms of *the stay* include selected activities from: a day "stay" at a We-Live type co-living space, a talk by Associate Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, Sean Anderson and a visit at MoMa for the upcoming exhibition "Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter," a studio day at the Ace Hotel lobby, Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space "Squat NYC" tour, Urban rooftop camping at Bivouac NYC with artist Thomas Stevenson, the Waldorf Astoria Bars, and a visit to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) New York "New Roots" Farm or Brooklyn Grange asylum seekers' farm.

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