

The Housing Studio: Different States of Housing

FLOW: A Thousand Ways to Enter

GSAPP Architecture

Core III Studio Fall 2015

Mario Gooden, Professor of Practice

and Carson Smuts, Assistant Professor Adjunct



*A Thousand Ways to Enter, (2008 – 2011), Loris Greaud, Film Still,
Yvon Lambert, Paris, The Pace Gallery, New York*

*...There are thousands of ways to access the zone through which all belief is suspended and one confronts a Freudian unconscious desire to extend drawing into space and to endow space with meaning. "Cellar Door is a laboratory of forms trying no longer to pit reality against hallucinatory fantasy, like and 'experimental fiction' rubbing the interior space of the psyche against the physical parameters of technology".
The Cellar Door, Loris Greaud, Exhibition Catalog, 2011ⁱ*

*"I feel that the balance between fiction and reality has changed significantly in the past decades. Increasingly their roles are versed."ⁱⁱ
J.G. Ballard, 1995*

The sensual architectural reality is not experienced as an abstract object already transformed by consciousness, but as an immediate and concrete human activity: as a praxis with all its subjectivity. Bernard Tschumi, The Architectural Paradox p.28-29.ⁱⁱⁱ

Questions of Flow

"Considering the city as a dynamic complex system places emphasis on the interactions and connectivity of the flows through its infrastructures, and of the feedbacks and critical thresholds that drive the emergence of new spaces and urban morphologies that are animated by new modalities of culture." (Michael Weinstock from *System City: Infrastructure and the Spaces of Flows*). Within this condition, cities can be seen as an emergent phenomena that exhibit characteristics of complex systems, are embedded within the systems of the climate and ecology, have cultural systems informed by history and geography, have infrastructures that provide services to cities, and have reciprocal interactions between them at a variety of spatial, temporal and organizational scales. Yet, these flows operate not only at the local scale but also within connecting points of globalization and the emerging global housing market. Flows of capital, labor, goods, commodities, energy, waste, and data all impact the domestic body whose movement and migration patterns not only map and record these flows but also insinuates the question of what does it mean to dwell? Within this context can the architecture of housing remain static or fixed? What is its response when any of its streams are interrupted?

Questions of Affordability

The U.S. housing market crash that began in 2006 and culminated in 2008 with the global financial market crash may one day be noted with an asterisk in the history of real estate development in New York City. Six years later, today's real estate values in New York City are at record highs. Encouraged by zoning law changes during the Bloomberg administration, real estate development has led to increased property values throughout the five boroughs. In particular, increased values in Manhattan neighborhoods have steadily crept north from Tribeca and Greenwich Village, to Chelsea, to the Upper West Side and into Harlem. Today, young affluent white professional families and singles are just as likely to live in Harlem as Park Slope, Brooklyn. Increasingly, the long time population and businesses of the area can no longer afford to remain. Such gentrification is not only occurring in upper Manhattan but it is also occurring geometrically within neighborhoods that epitomized the real estate boom of the late 2000s.

Questions of affordability are exacerbated by the widening income disparity among New York City residents. According to a 2014 study of local income trends by the Brookings Institution, a high-income family in New York City might earn nearly 15 times more than what a low-income family earns with the average income of those wealthy

FLOW: A Thousand Ways to Enter

GSAPP Architecture

Core III Studio Fall 2015

Mario Gooden, Professor of Practice

and Carson Smuts, Assistant Professor Adjunct

families in the 95th percentile being approximately \$225,000 per year. Furthermore the New York housing market has increasingly become part of the global housing market as international buyers not only purchase luxury housing and investment properties in throughout Manhattan but foreign buyers also seek investments in the city's outer boroughs.

While private / public initiatives like the Housing Marketplace Plan, first outlined in 2002 and the New York 80 /20 Housing program being leveraged by Mayor DeBlasio to create new policy models for the development of affordable housing, income mixing in order to provide for deconcentrations of poverty, and the creation of new populations in desirable locations throughout the city the results such initiatives have been mixed at best as the disparities between wealthy and poor New Yorkers has significantly increased over the past decade. Furthermore, the design of most of the new housing has not much progressed beyond the stigmatized typologies or image based morphologies. Yet context is defined not only by morphology but also by the politics of space, socio-cultural relationships, and technology. For example, how might the design of a housing proposal in the Bronx between two transport flows engage the full discourse of context?

Questions of Space

The abstraction of data and the rational play of language versus the experiences of the senses is an inadequate confrontation of the mind and body dialectic that is often pursued in the design of housing. However, "the Interior Space" of J.G. Ballard for which he adopted in his 1962 article "Which Way to Inner Space" was not just a path towards fantasy and freeing oneself of the clichés of futurology but it offers a radical solution for liberating oneself from preconceptions of the limits of architecture and opens up the possibilities of architecture.

In *The Architectural Paradox: Questions of Space*, Tschumi states "... the paradox is not about the impossibility of perceiving both architectural concept (the six faces of the cube) and real space at the same time, but about the impossibility of questioning the nature of space at the same time making or experiencing a real space." In space the translation of the concept, the overcoming of the abstraction in reality, involves the dissolution of the dialectic and an incomplete statement. The effect of the great battles of social progress is obliterated and so is the security of archetypes. Hence, this opens up the possibility for new questions of space and for the pleasures of architecture.

ⁱ Loris Greaud, *The Cellar Door*, Exhibition Catalog, 2008 – 2011, Yvon Lambert, Paris, The Pace Gallery, New York.

ⁱⁱ J. G. Ballard. *Crash*. Introduction to the French translation (1995). Originally published New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bernard Tschumi, "The Architectural Paradox," from *Questions of Space*. New Edition. London: Architectural Association, 1990 pp. 28-29.