



*New York after Hurricane Sandy.* Iwan Baan. 2012

## **METROPOLIS. ADVANCED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AS ARENAS OF URBANITIES**

Directed by Andrés Jaque  
TA. Xiaoxi Chen

Workshop Instructors:

Oskar Arnorsson, Erik Carver, Benedict Clouette, Samuel Stewart-Halevy, Ife Vanable, Caitlin Blanchfield, Elliott Sturtevant, Alireza Karbasioun.

Architecture contributes to shaping the terrain of what is possible, it takes part in the ongoing disputes realities happen by, it occupies the front page of news outlets as an unavoidable player in the regulation of current modes of existence.

As a foundational component of the AAD Summer Semester, the Metropolis Seminar constitutes an 8-week program intended to explore, examine, and inquire about the ways in which architectural devices gain relevance in the making of contemporary societies. The program will look at the forms of urbanity and citizenship that emerge from the intersection of technologies, environments, modes of accountability, and forms of subject-making currently at stake. It will recognize architecture as a rich ecosystem of alternative, diverse, and often confronting positions.

The main goal of the seminar is to immerse post-professional AAD students in a critical environment in which they can rapidly be exposed to some of the controversies fueling contemporary architectural criticality, and to provide them with the possibility, references, and tools to develop complex analyses through which they will be capable of maximizing the critical reach of their work.

Classes are composed of weekly *lecture and debate* sessions and *workshops*.

#### The Lecture and Debate Sessions:

Each lecture will address one *arena*. Each arena brings to the seminar an ongoing discussion through which architectural, scientific, artistic, and activist practices interact with societies at large (or become societies themselves so to say) and a number of different positions that have emerged in the field of architectural design to intervene them. These are arenas in which collective challenges—such as climate change, interspecies relationships, the articulation of on-offline interaction, or the accountability of planetary infrastructures—participate in diverse modes of architectural practices. Each mobilizes alternative notions, premises, and propositions. In all cases, lectures will be structured through a significant number of existing cases of designed architectural devices.

Lectures will be followed by a debate in which the whole AAD class will participate. Students are given the opportunity each week to engage as a class by discussing together the role architecture plays in the making of contemporary societies.

*Sessions will take place every Friday 4-7 pm, at Wood Auditorium.  
Attendance to all sessions is required.*

#### Workshops:

Run in smaller groups, the workshops will prompt students to sequentially develop three 500 word essays analyzing the ways existing architectures—selected by each student out of a list of New York architectures proposed by the program—participate in both disciplinary and non-disciplinary controversies, as well as the way both spaces of polemic articulate connections, dependencies and transferences.

#### List of New York Architectures:

1. Newton Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant. Richard Olcott and James Polshek (Ennead Architects) (2017).
2. MoMA. Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone (1939), Philip Johnson (1951, 1953, 1964), Cesar Pelli (1984), Yoshio Taniguchi (2004-2006), Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Gensler (2019).
3. 432 Park Avenue. Rafael Vinoly Architects, Deborah Berke Partners and DBOX (2016).
4. High Line. DS+R, James Corner-Field Operations, Piet Oudolf, Pentagram (2009-2014).
5. Whitney Museum of American Arts. Renzo Piano Building Workshop (2015).
6. Housing Works. Housing Works (1990).
7. Sugar Hill Development. David Adjaye Associates (2014)
8. Governors Island Park and Public Space Master Plan. West 8 (2016).
9. Freshkills Park. James Corner-Field Operations (2010-)
10. Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk. Army Corps of Engineers, NYC Parks (2012 post-Sandy).
11. North River Wastewater Treatment Plant (1993).
12. Public Hotel. Herzog & De Meuron (2017).
13. Barclays Center. Ellerbe Becket (AECOM) and SHoP Architects (2012).
14. Cedar Groove Beach, Staten Island (2018).
15. One World Trade Center or Freedom Tower. David Childs, Daniel Libeskind, SOM (2014-2015).
16. Liberty Suit in The Standard High Line. Ennead Architects (2010)
17. Whole Foods Market, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 24<sup>th</sup> St (2010).
18. Trump Tower. Der Scutt and Poor, Swanke, Hayden & Connell (1983).
19. 56 Leonard St. Herzog & De Meuron (2016).
20. Time Warner Center. David Childs, Mustafa Kemal Abadam, SOM Architects (2003).
21. Pier 57. Emil Praeger, Madigan Hyland (1954).
22. A/D/O. nArchitects (2016).
23. Vagelos Education Center, Columbia University. Diller Scofidio & Renfro (2016).
24. The Billion Oyster Project. New York Harbour Foundation.
25. 34<sup>th</sup> Street-Hudson Yards NY Subway Station (On the IRT Flushing Line). Metropolitan Transportation Authority (2015).
26. Redevelopment of Dominos Sugar Refinery (2025).
27. The Link at 731 Lexington Office Bloomberg L.P. Cesar Pelli & Associates (2004).
28. WTC Transportation Hub. Santiago Calatrava (2016).
29. C-Squat. (1980s).
30. W57. BIG (2016).

The workshops will provide students with the tools to develop complex arguments on how the selected architecture participates in larger dialogs as a way to detect and describe in detail the forms of citizenship each architectural device promotes and which ones it confronts.

Students will submit a conclusive 1,500 words essay, that will be publicly presented in a special session on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, and submitted in its final version on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Sessions will take place every Friday 11-1 pm.  
Attendance to all sessions is required.*

### Writing Assignment:

The writing assignment of the METROPOLIS Seminar consist on 3 500-word pieces constructing a critical account of the tensions resulting of confronting:

- The personal experience of the student when visiting or inhabiting a building, selected by each student from a list of 30 NY-controversial-buildings provided by the seminar.
- The way it has been analyzed and discussed in architectural reviews and outlet, paying special attention to the controversies and divides it has/is part of and to the evolution of those controversies, and to the participation of the building in those controversies.
- The way it has been analyzed and discussed in non-architectural reviews and media, paying special attention to the controversies and divides it has/is part of and to the evolution of those controversies, and to the participation of the building in those controversies.

The students are encouraged to work following 5 principles:

1. A 'material perspective' (as it has been described in the tradition of Studies of Science and Technology). By 'material perspective' the seminar therefor means to give priority to the actual materiality of the architectural devices they deal with and not that much to their symbolic, poetical, metaphorical or phenomenological values.
2. The seminar will not give priority to the intentions of the architects, but rather to the design decisions the architectural devices exist by.
3. We won't look to architectural devices as fix objects, resulting from the solidification of specific architect's sensitivities, inclinations or preferences. We will rather analyze buildings as complex material trajectories, where initial design, accidents, multiple interferences, evolutions, mistakes gain agency in the capacity to inscribe their effects in the device.
4. We will focus on the way architectural devices have an agency of their own through their material specificity, and we will use controversies as opportunities where those forms of politics architectural designs perform constitute itself and render themselves trackable.

As a final assignment, the students will present a 1,500 word piece, where the main contributions to the field their previous pieces comprise will be articulated together. An extract from this piece will be presented in a public reading on July 27, and the final submission of the piece will be August 10.

## Writing Workshops:

The program will be developed in collaboration with Columbia University Writing Center. The Writing Center will provide optional weekly workshops to all AAD students, assisting them in the development of their essays and providing tools for students to increase their writing skills.

## Calendar:

### Week 1.

Introduction by Andrés Jaque: Arenas of Design. Methodology and Calendar.  
Workshop by Susan Mendelsohn (Columbia University Writing Center)

### Week 2.

Turning Infrastructures Accountable

### Week 3.

(No Lecture)

### Week 4.

Interspecies Contracts

### Week 5.

Material Circulations

### Week 6.

Changing Climates

### Week 7.

On/Offline

### Week 8.

For-/Non-Profit, Publicness, Welfare, Space and Capital, Commons

### Week 9.

Public Reading of extracts of extracts from all final essays

### August 10

3+1 Final Essay Due

