

Ethics

Schools of ethics in Western philosophy can be divided, very roughly, into three sorts. The first, drawing on the work of Aristotle, holds that the virtues (such as justice, charity, and generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit both the person possessing them and that person's society. The second, defended particularly by Kant, makes the concept of duty central to morality: humans are bound, from a knowledge of their duty as rational beings, to obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings. Thirdly, utilitarianism asserts that the guiding principle of conduct should be the greatest happiness or benefit of the greatest number.

Space as Ethical Catalyst

For most of the history of architecture, buildings have provided the space for religious ritual, personal refuge and collective community in the form of temples, churches, mosques, etc. At their best they have also provided the experiential, metaphorical and ontological platforms for discussions and contemplation of our humanity and our place in the world.

As is all too familiar, and for good reason, the erosion of formal religious institutional authority has accelerated over the past 50 years. Theological rigidity, radicalization, politicization, scandal and general societal secularization have all contributed to the decline of formal religious practice. Many would say that the increasing narcissism of western society has accelerated this trend. The result is, in eschewing traditional religious platforms, people are left without a community identity or forum for conversation about larger issues of our lives.

We, as a collective, have lost the art of moral and ethical practice in every day life. Mass, call to prayer, shabat—the regular reminders of a quest for meaning, or a greater good beyond our day-to-day concerns.

The need for this sense of belonging to a collective pursuit is still a fundamental human need and manifests itself in allegiance to sports teams, political parties, and various clubs and associations. The meteoric rise of online communities can be attributed as much to emotional need as to technological availability. The search for belonging, the desire to take part in a discussion of the ideas, ideals and ethics of our time are unsated.

In our time of moral crisis, when lies are labeled “non truth” or “alternative facts” to make them more palatable, when it is becoming mainstream to espouse divisive, discriminatory, racist and nationalist ideals, and when violence is asserting its presence more and more around the world—a question may be raised as to what role architecture can play in redirecting a conversation of morality, ethics and societal ideals.

This studio will posit an architectural response to the crisis of ethics in the world today. I believe architecture, and specifically visceral spatial and sensory experience, can play an inspirational, propositional and provocative role in this issue. **We will attempt to create architecture that will bring people together, to create an active platform for thinking and action.** Space that inspires the mind and moves the soul.

In doing so, **we will also address the fundamental question of the role of built space in social inspiration and cultural action.**

Purpose

The more time I spend in the practice of architecture, the less interested I am in the application and intent of design, whether as a formal or symbolic exercise, to the point where I disdain the word and subject. **What interests me is what architecture serves**, and what ideas, concepts, space and landscape can architecture elevate and amplify with its physical presence and uniquely visceral voice. To that end, focusing the vehicle of architecture on the subject of contemporary ethical practice, in an endeavor to see what it can offer, is of utmost importance. I believe that architecture can elevate and inform this conversation. And it is of utmost importance to the world today, to our greater shared humanity.

Morality

(from Latin: *mōrālis*, lit. ‘manner, character, proper behavior’) is the differentiation of intentions, decisions and actions between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. [1] Morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it can derive from a standard that a person believes should be universal.[2] Morality may also be specifically synonymous with “goodness” or “rightness”.

Program Sketch

This building may be seen as a catalyst for conversation and contemplation. A place of learning, dialogue and training in a chosen discipline or spiritual practice. And foremost, the intention is to create a place of inspiration, interaction and profound experience. The program must generally engage some form of all the elements listed below. It can be platonic: an open non-associative architectural platform. Or, you may model this new institution after any theological, scientific, natural or shamanic model of spiritual investigation you are inspired by and wish to bring into the conversation.

Spaces for Refuge:

A Place Away

- providing time and space apart
- offering safety for thought and questions
- a platform for expansion

Spaces for Gathering:

finding & cultivating community

- collective identity
- what brings people together
- accessing support of all kinds

Spaces for Education:

accessing information

- respect and reverence for scholarship—akin to the great monastic libraries
- enhancing critical thinking, sharpening tools of discernment
- providing accessible and inclusive spaces of learning

Spaces for Exhibition:

presentation of ideas re above.

- spoken word: readings, lectures, panels, symposia
- visual expression
- musical performance
- movement / performance art

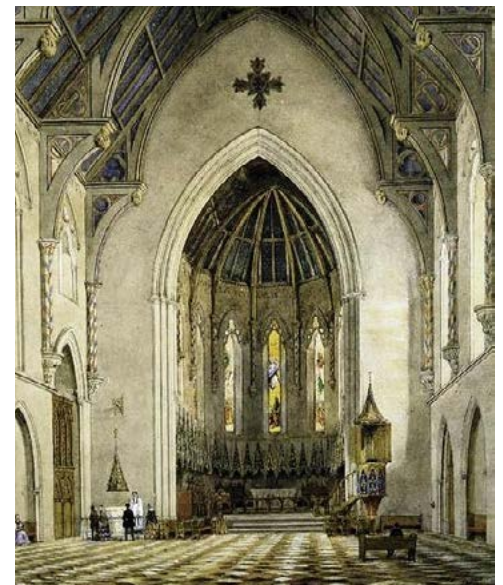
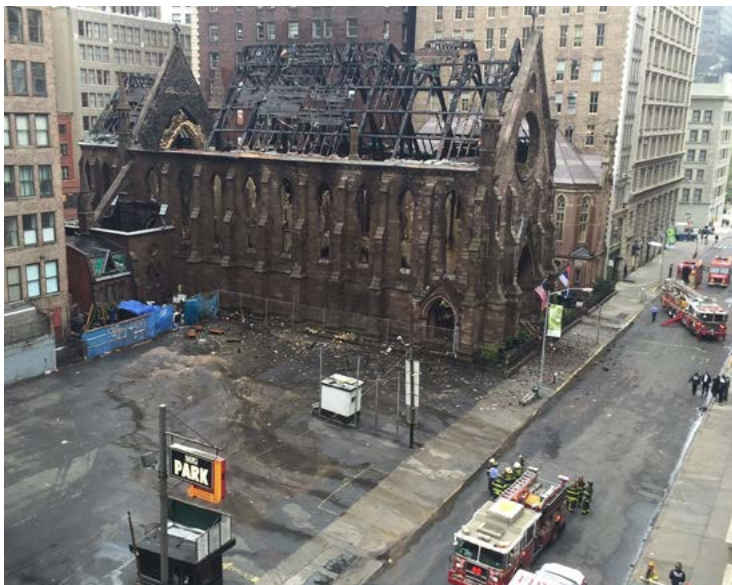
Spaces for Landscape:

- The project must include an intentional landscape / garden / court.

Site & Form

The proposed site is the former Trinity Chapel Complex located at 15 W 25th Avenue in Manhattan, between Broadway and Avenue of the Americas. The stone and hammerbeam trussed chapel was designed by Richard Upjohn and completed in 1855. Formerly the home parish of the uptown, Episcopal elite of New York, the church featured prominently in the social life of the Gilded Age and continued to be a focal point until the onset of World War I. Edith Wharton, who was married in Trinity Chapel, chronicled this era, its places and personae in her 1920 novel *The Age of Innocence*. As the district changed, and its base of support continued to migrate northward, the church and ancillary buildings were transferred to the Serbian Orthodox Church, and was re-christened as the Cathedral of St-Sava in 1944. On May 1, 2016, the Cathedral was almost completely destroyed by a fire, only hours after the completion of Easter services. An adjacent Parish House and Clergy House were not damaged in the blaze. Funds are being raised for restoration, however, current plans underway need not factor in to your design proposal.

Along with these elements, a large surface lot immediately to the west of the church walls may also be incorporated as part of the project site. Additional edits, insertions, alterations of the streetscape and extensions into nearby Madison Square / Madison Square Park will also be considered.



Historical Building Types

The following are useful building/institutional types for research and analysis:

- Churches, chapels, temples
- Monasteries
- Theological schools / ecumenical centers
- New age centers / retreats
- Confraternities / benevolent organizations
- Holy spaces
- Sacred precincts
- Pilgrimage sites

Studio Guests & Site Visits

To offer further insights and inspiration, we plan to hold conversations with theologians, religious leaders and writers who actively engage in these concerns. We may also visit some sites of significance, inspiration and precedent in the city and region as studio time allows.

Readings

Students are encouraged to read broadly on the ideals of spiritual space and religious experience, the philosophy of ethics and morality, as well as the spaces of activism in history. The list below is a beginning. I would love your suggestions.

1. Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912), in *Kandinsky Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Da Capo Press, 1982), Part I About General Aesthetic, pp. 127-153 (A. General: Introduction; Movement; Spiritual Turning Point; The Pyramid)

2. Jacques Maritain, "Art and Scholasticism" (Art et Scholastique, 1920) in *Art and Scholasticism with Other Essays* (Paperback edition, Kessinger Publishing, 2007), pp.5-27 (*The Schoolmen and the Theory of Art; The Speculative Order and the Practical Order; Making and Doing; Art an Intellectual Virtue*).

3. M.-A. Couturier, *Sacred Art*, texts selected by Dominique de Menil and Pie Duployé, translation by Granger Ryan (Univ of Texas, 1983): "Secular Art, Sacred Art (1950): For the Eyes; Purity"; "To the Great Men, The Great Works (1950); "Ronchamp (1953)" pp. 13-39 and pp. 153-157.

4. "Introduction to the Couturier Collection at Yale: The Significance of the Collection" *The Father M.-A. Couturier Papers at Yale, Archival Register* compiled by Joan Weber, (Yale, June 1994) pp. 1-5.

5. Claude Meinberg, "The New Churches of Europe" *The Furrow*, vol. 8 no. 6 (June 1957) pp. 364-372.

6. Richard Kieckhefer, "Introduction" and "The First Factor: Spatial Dynamics," *Theology in Stone* (New York: Oxford Univ Press, 2004), pp. 3-63.

7. Vincent Scully, "The Earth, the Temple, and Today" in *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture*, ed. K. Britton, (Yale: 2010).

8. James F. White, "Principles of Liturgical Architecture" in *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations* (Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 26-51.

9. "The Baha'i House of Worship," "Design and Construction" and "Lotus and Other Design Highlights," in *Lotus in Concrete ECC Construction*, quarterly journal of L&T, special edition on the Lotus Temple, reprint c. 1990(?)

10. Report on John Pawson's "St. Moritz Church" in *Architectural Record*, May 2014

11. Fariborz Sahba, "Faith and Form: Contemporary Space for Pilgrimage and Worship" in *Constructing the Ineffable*, pp. 170-182.

12. Tadao Ando, "Towards New Horizons in Architecture" 1991 (It can be accessed at: <https://610f13.wordpress.com/2013/10/29/1140/>)

13. Alexander Nagel's *Medieval Modern* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2012)
Chapter 18 "Cathedral Thinking" pp. 241-248
Chapter 19 "Instead of Cathedrals, Machines for Living" pp. 248-263

14. Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Architecture of Time" in *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, (1951) pp. 2-10

15. Mohammed Arkoun, "Spirituality and Architecture" in *Architecture Beyond Architecture*, eds. Cynthia C. Davidson, Ismail Serageldin (1995), pp. 16-20.

16. Juhani Pallasmaa's essay "Toward a Synthetic Functionalism" from Reed's *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism*

17. Peter Eisenman, "Is there a Religious Space for the 21st Century?" in *Constructing the Ineffable*, ed. K. Britton, (Yale School of Architecture: New Haven, 2010) pp. 202-216.

18. Gropius, Walter. 'Address to the Students 1919', in *Hans M. Wingler, The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969, page 36.

19. Friedman, Alice T. *American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. (Last Chapter on Frank Lloyd Wright's Beth Shalom Synagogue).

20. Walker, Stuart. 'Design and Spirituality: Material Culture for A Wisdom Economy', *Design Issues*, 2013 29:3, 89-107.

21. Zepp, Ira, *The New Religious Spaces of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as ceremonial Space*, 1997, Chapter 3, The Shopping mall as Sacred Space.

22. Pahl, Jon. *Shopping Malls and Other Sacred Spaces: Putting God in Place*. Wipf & Stock, 2008.

23. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 1957, Chapter 1, 'Sacred Spaces and Making the world Sacred'.

24. Belden Lane, "Giving Voice to Place: Three Models for Understanding American Sacred Space," *Religion and American Culture*, Vol 11.,no.1 (Winter 2001): 58-82.

25. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

26. Selected text from John Ruskin's *the Seven Lamps of Architecture, (the 'Nature of the Gothic)*, in Adamson, Glenn, the Craft Reader, 2010.

27. Marvin Trachtenberg, "Suger's Miracles, Branner's Bourges: Reflections on "Gothic Architecture" as Medieval Modernism, *Gesta* 39 (2000), pp. 183-20.

28. Pelkonen, Eeva-Liisa and Albrecht, Donald, eds. *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, the Chapter on the Miller Chapel and on the MIT chapel.

29. Upton, Dell, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Virginia*. New York, 1986.

30. Schwarz, Rudolf. *The Church Incarnate: the Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*. Nabu Press, 2011.

31. *A Trittise on Human Nature* by David Hume

32. *The Leviathan* by Hobbes.

33. *The Chomsky-Foucault debate on Human Nature*

34. *The Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle

35. *Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth, or the Care of the Self*, by Michel Foucault

36. Adamson, Glenn. *Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

37. Brody, David. *Housekeeping by Design Hotels and Labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Readings (cont.)

38. Smith, Cynthia E.. *By the People: Designing a Better America*. New York: Cooper Hewitt Museum, 2017.

39. Park, Lisa Sun-Hee. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York :New York University Press, 2011.

40. Zerelli, Nora, Christoph Korner, Wolfram Putz, Lars Krückeberg. *Architecture Activism*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2016.

41. O'Donohue, John. *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*. New York: Perennial, 2005.

42. James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Free ebook download (<https://www.amazon.com/Varieties-Religious-Experience-Study-Nature-ebook/dp/B0082Z598S/?tag=braipick-20>)

43. Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998.

44. Sontag, Susan. "An Argument about Beauty." *Daedalus*, vol. 134, no. 4, 2005, pp. 208–213. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20028023.

45. Morley, Simon, Ed. *The Sublime*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

46. Knott, Kim. *Geography Space and the Sacred*, in *J. Himmels (Ed.) The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (2nd Edition), London/New York: Routledge. 2010. Pp. 476-491.

47. George Tanabe, "The Founding of Mount Koya and Kukai's Eternal Meditation," in *George Tanabe*, ed., *8 Religions of Japan in Practice*. Pp. 354-59. 1999.

48. Carl Ernst, "Vertical Pilgrimage and Interior Landscape in the Visionary Diary of Ruzbihan Baqli." *Muslim World* 88/2 , 998, Pp. 129-40.

49. Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

50. Brady, E. 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 1998): 139–147.

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52. Weinryb, Ittai. *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*. New York: Bard Graduate Center Press, 2018.

53. Smith, Jonathan Z. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992.

54. Longinus, Cassius. *On the Sublime*. 1890 translation of 10th century text, Ebook. (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17957/17957-h/17957-h.htm>).

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Articles

<https://www.archdaily.com/891984/is-religious-architecture-still-relevant>

<https://www.architectural-review.com/today/architecture-does-not-teach-us-what-the-sacred-is-but-it-may-touch-it-and-draw-others-to-it/10004570.article>

<https://www.metropolismag.com/ideas/preservation/whats-the-role-of-sacred-architecture-in-our-cities/>

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1977/05/23/forms-under-light> "Forms Under Light," New Yorker, On Philip Johnson's Tower of Hope

Possible Guest Speakers

Glenn Adamson, Former. Director, Museum of Arts and Design — Discussions on Activism

Julia Watson, Horticulturalist / Spiritual Gardener (link to her firm: <https://www.studiorede.com/design>)

Mark Wunderlich, Poet (website: <http://markwunderlich.com/index.php>)

Schedule

A schedule will be distributed the first class.

Questions & Contact

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