

# ART HOUSE

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture FALL 2018  
A4105-14 Advanced Studio V – vPPR: Tatiana von Preussen, Catherine Pease (assisted by Jessica Reynolds and Julia Molloy)

## INTRODUCTION



Frieze Art Fair NYC by SO-IL

*Set on Randall's Island Park, the week-long event is an experiment in ephemeral placemaking: a flexible and open space for contemporary art in a natural context. The winding form of the tent echoes that of the shoreline, re-establishing a connection to the landscape. Its curves create a sculpture garden at one point, and wrap behind foliage to make way for a deck and food trucks at another. The lightweight tent fabric aids in creating a diffused light ideal for the display of art. The modularity of the tent allows the fair organizers to quickly assemble and reconfigure the space year after year.*  
<http://so-il.org/projects/frieze-art-fair>

For one week each year in May, the entire international art community lands on Randall's Island to buy, sell, collect, invest, review, observe, consume, discuss and display art. Launched in 2012, Frieze New York is now considered New York's most important art fair, annually generating multi-million dollar revenues (a large booth costs a gallery \$125,000), contributing to New York's image as a global cultural capital. Hosted inside SO-IL's elegantly designed tent and more recently Universal Design Studio's "temporary town for art"<sup>1</sup>, Frieze is not only a commercial trade fair for gallerists, collectors and artists, but also a critical cultural event open to the general public as well – albeit at a price of \$48 a day – programmed with an array of talks, screenings, an outdoor sculpture park, special artist commissions, fringe and outreach events, and more. For the remaining 51 weeks of the year, there is barely a trace of the art world or any lasting investment for adjacent existing communities. Should art fairs, such as Frieze, be held accountable, beyond their temporary staging, to deliver permanent social and cultural infrastructure to strengthen the local community?

Today majority-owned by Hollywood entertainment, sports, and fashion company Endeavor, Frieze has moved since its inception from media (founded first as an art magazine in 1991 by Amanda Sharp and Matthew Slotover in the UK) to art fairs (Frieze Art Fair was launched in 2001 in London) and now potentially to... real estate. We will hijack and interrogate Frieze's unrealized 2016 "Frieze South Bronx" proposal by Marvel Architects, which envisaged an arts district in the South Bronx incorporating housing, art galleries, restaurants, artists' studios and collaborative workspace across 280 acres. The project was to be located in the industrial Port Morris and Mott Haven areas, currently consisting of municipal

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/05/03/universal-design-studio-erects-temporary-town-for-art-frieze-new-york/>

buildings, scrap metal facilities, and family-run manufacturers. It has less than 2600 residents, of which more than 40 percent live in poverty. Only 10 minutes north from Randall's Island, and not far from Gavin Brown's enterprise and Elizabeth Dee Gallery, does this area have the capacity and drive to be transformed like Soho in the 1970s and Chelsea in the 2000s into a vibrant art community? Can global brand art fairs become community developers and if so, what when wrong with Frieze's ambitious plan?<sup>2</sup> And how can the high end art scene live side by side one of the poorest communities of New York City?

*To ensure that artists continue to thrive and work in New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced in the 2015 State of the City Address a commitment to create 1,500 units of affordable housing and 500 units of artist workspaces for the cultural community over the next decade.*

*An inter-agency taskforce, including the Mayor's Office, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), Housing Preservation and Development, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) have begun to implement strategies for the equitable development of housing and workspace for artists. This initiative, known as Affordable Real Estate for Artists (AREA), will work with residents, real estate developers, cultural partners, housing agencies, and the philanthropic community to implement these goals.*

*NYC Department of Cultural Affairs: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcla/programs/area.page>*

Whilst the circumstances of the Frieze's failed plan have been buried, the studio will propose alternatives that embed art infrastructure into the community with both bottom-up and top-down strategies whilst also considering its relationship to the DCLA (New York City of Cultural Affairs) and Create NYC's Cultural Plan published in July 2017. By appropriating certain programmatic intentions of Frieze's brief, we will continue our investigation from last year into the potential of hybridizing places of art display and affordable housing for artists, on the premise that they are mutually interdependent for the production of art. We will propose mixed use hubs funded by Frieze combining permanent affordable housing for both existing local residents and artists, as well as art exhibition/event spaces run by the local community in affiliation with Frieze, which will be activated for fringe events during the fair. In order to succeed, the proposals must be financially sustainable and fully integrate into the community, consulting local stakeholders, and being able to control the inevitable waves of gentrification.

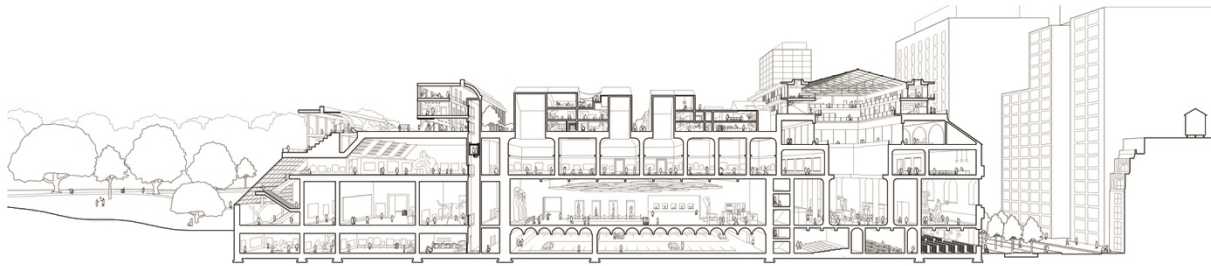
The studio will invite a number of curators, exhibition designers and artists to participate in guest crits and site visits. The unit will also be running in parallel to Brian Loughlin's MSRED studio, also based in Mott Haven and we will be able to share knowledge between the two studios. We will use geometry as a primary design tool, understanding how a specific formal language embodies a particular theoretical position. Physical model-making will be the key mode of representation in the studio. Over the course of the semester we will investigate hybrids of the domestic and the public, of culture and community and of production and consumption. We will tackle the social and cultural cost of international art fairs on their local contexts, focusing on the case study of Frieze New York and find opportunities for them to create permanent constructive urban legacies.

The studio is interested in new economic and financial models to provide affordable housing for artists. Is it the responsibility of private companies to provide this social function or should be left to the government? What is the role of philanthropy in relation to that of the State? Is the art fair a place of contemplation or a site of consumption filled with booths and cafes— and now housing too? What are the effects of the digital on the art fair and house? If each artwork creates a world of its own, then the display space is a world of many worlds, with capacity for endless new ones.

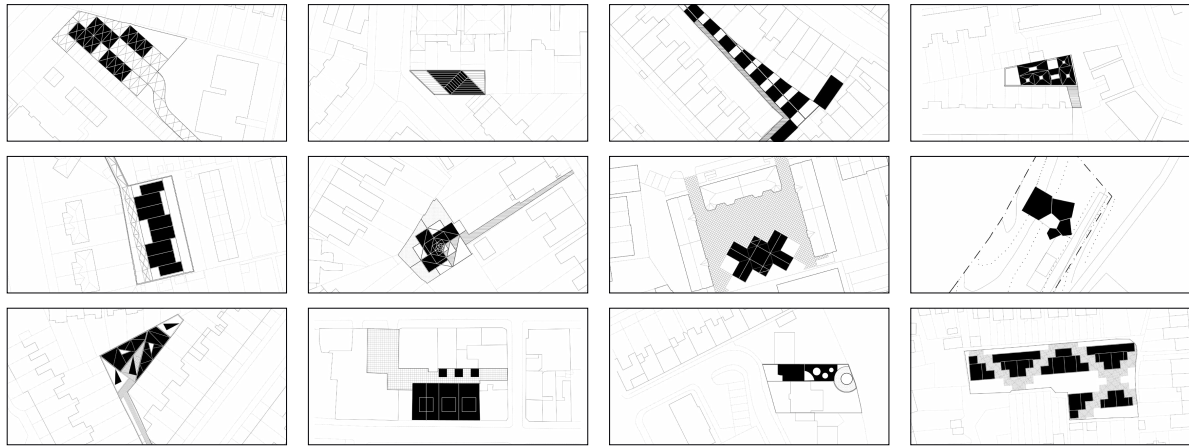
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<sup>2</sup> Is this a new trend? In September 2017, Art Basel launched the Art Basel Cities program in Buenos Aires, an initiative designed to "be an accelerator to propel cities' cultural and economic development in a significant way."

## METHODS AND APPROACHES



Artists' Housing on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum, Clifford Champion, GSAPP Fall 2017



Infill typologies, vPPR 2017

*For the last half century armies of architectural thinkers have been in search of an automatic writing, a methodology of design that would absolve them from the crime of building without authority – and only a very few have made peace with the absence of a secure source of authority and legitimacy for their formal decisions. .... The truth is, if you're not a formalist, you're probably just asleep.*

Judith Wolin, *ANY: Architecture New York No. 7/8, Form Work: Colin Rowe (1994), pp. 58-65*

*When taste conforms to the sensus communis the collective moral dimension of good survives, but when taste is expected to express individual freedom, we can only embrace the resulting plurality (or cacophony) of approaches and styles. Under these conditions, and beyond questions of utility and efficiency, it is as impossible to be bad as it is to be good in any universal (or even general) sense. This is an odd condition for geometry, whose value to architectural design had heretofore relied on apodictic clarity and consistency (often supplemented by cultural conventions, as in so-called scared geometry).*

Peter Carl, *Log 43, The Geometry Issue pp 121*

While we are all accountable for the language of the buildings that we design, we often try to attribute our architectural forms to client, context, program or computational accident. And yet, in an age of relativism, it appears impossible to justify any one architectural style, language or geometry, except in terms of taste: which is governed only by the glib value of the market.

We propose to make intensive investigations into how geometric systems or compositions, employed rigorously, even obsessively, at each scale of a building, can be used to discover new typologies: generating gradients of public and private space; creating unexpected relationships between different display and domesticity; producing distinct formal identities; and bringing to light hidden opportunities afforded by the site.

We will learn from the history of typology – from Quatremère de Quincy to Dogma – and at the same time we will employ aspects of the non-authorship of methods of the 1990s and 2000s, whose choreographed chance encounters and intentional happenstances we recognize as powerful creative tools, but while reclaiming our accountability as architects operating in the politically charged context of the South Bronx. Through rigour and obsession, we hope to empower new typological relationships with meaningful values beyond arbitrary, commercial taste.



Marina Abramovic Institute, OMA

We will be working along a block-wide strip that runs between the Harlem River and the East River. It is an area zoned for a mixture of residential and manufacturing uses, which could accommodate artists' making and display spaces alongside their living accommodation. In doing so the studio will take into consideration the rich history of art and dwelling: the display of art in domestic settings; the home as subject in the artwork; the house itself constituting the artwork; and artists residing inside the gallery.

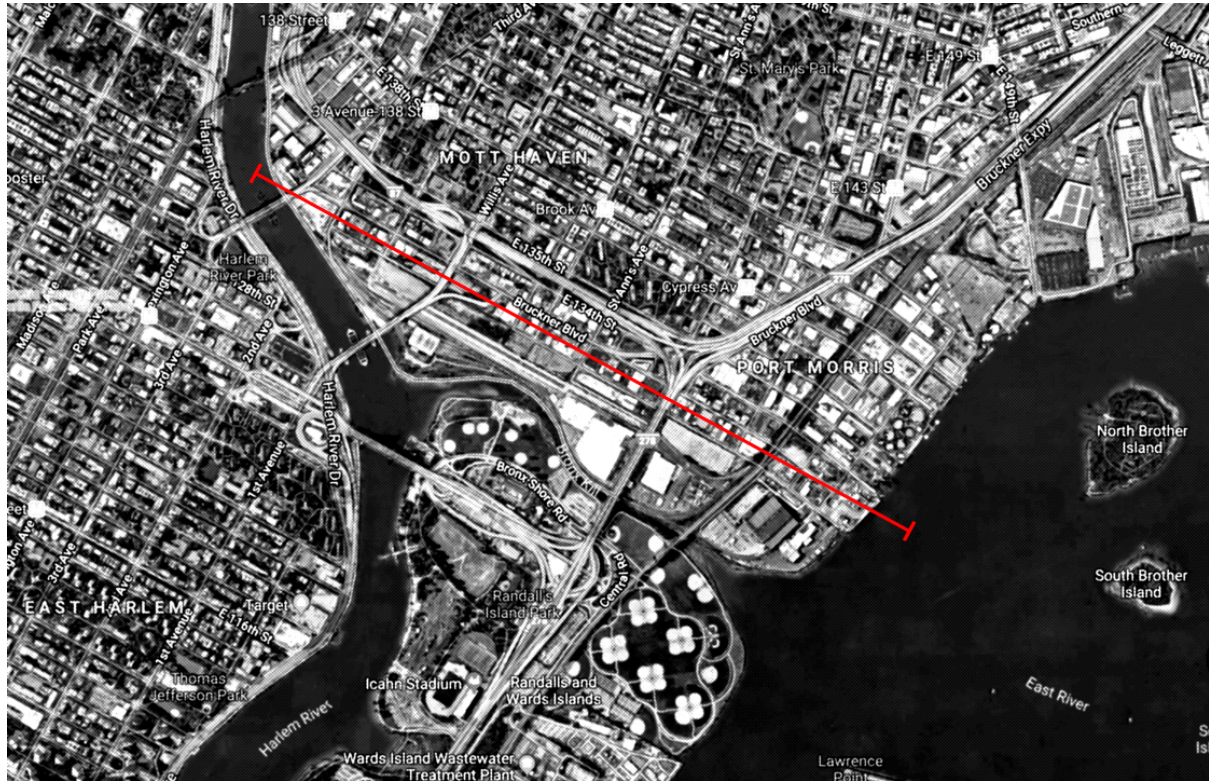
The house itself became artwork, in part as a critique of the commercial and institutional nature of galleries (with art fairs being the most extreme example of this) seen to instrumentalise artists (only recently embracing minority groups), so that many artists have looked elsewhere for sites of intervention. Examples include Gordon Matta-Clark's deconstructed suburban 'Splitting, and the Unmade House' (1974), and Rachel Whiteread's cast concrete 'House' (1993). The house was literally brought into the gallery in reconstructions such as Marcel Breuer's House in the Museum Garden (1949) at MOMA and later revisited in Barry Bergdoll's exhibition, 'Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling' (2008) at the same museum.

While the white cube is not an obvious place to call home, with its highly controlled environments and puritanical surfaces, many performance artists have inhabited display spaces overnight, such as Joseph Beuys's 'I like America and America Likes Me' (1974) where he spent three days in New York's Rene Block Gallery with a wild coyote, a felt blanket, 50 Wall Street Journals, walking stick and gloves. Others have approached living inside an art expo in a more straightforward fashion, such as 'Metavilla' by Exyzt for the French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, who occupied the pavilion day and night, and invited audiences to join them, to share a meal, lie down, take a bath.

In this brief, the focus is on the messy intersection of a display space and a home, where myriad dichotomies will play out between program and form, culture and commerce, ethics and aesthetics, art and architecture, life and art, interior and exterior, privacy and publicity, real and unreal. This complex interface constitutes the inbetween space of negotiation and sharing. It creates the potential for new types of living, new types of art display, and perhaps new types of art. Through precedent research, readings and art history, students will study the successes and failures of art fairs and community art spaces today, and how walls, windows, doors and floors divide and connect different inhabitants to create new opportunities for social encounters.



## COURSE STRUCTURE SUMMARY



Mott Haven, South Bronx Waterfront

The studio will be structured in the following parts. Research should be considered on-going with additional findings informing the complexity of the project. The final studio session of each section will take place in the form of pin-ups when students will have an opportunity to review and to share their outputs. Physical models will be the primary mode of representation. Selected readings will be discussed in parallel to studio work. Tutorials will be given by Tatiana von Preussen and Catherine Pease. They will be assisted by Julia Molloy on-site, and Jessica Reynolds off-site. Despite being a visiting studio, either Catherine or Tatiana will be present at every tutorial, except in the early site research week (week 1), when desk reviews will be given via skype and assisted on-site by Julia Molloy, a New York based collaborator of vPPR. Our studio runs parallel to Brian Loughlin's studio in the MSRED program, which is also based in Mott Haven, and there will be opportunities for knowledge exchange between programs.

### Part 1: ABSTRACT: INTRODUCTION TO GEOMETRY AND SITE (6-17 September)

Group site research: Students will be divided into four groups to carry out in-depth analysis of our site: a strip of land that cuts through Mott Haven, South Bronx.

Group outputs: 1) a physical sectional model/drawings of the site; 2) an urban and social history of the site including any relevant existing policies; 3) a history of art fairs and art expos, particularly Frieze art fair; 4) analysis of successful precedents that integrate art and the community.

Individual Geometry research: In parallel, students will analyse specific geometric typologies, interrogating the formal language and theoretical discourse of selected precedents, which will inform upcoming designs.

Individual outputs: Geometry/typology precedents booklet

### Part 2: BOOTH IN THE BRONX (17 September- 1 October)

Temporary intervention: Students will create a proposal for an art booth – based on the dimensions of a typical art fair booth – but located in the community, hosting fringe and outreach events for the duration of the Art Fair. Informed by our previous research into geometrical typologies, these folly-like additions to the urban landscape will provide a living accommodation for a specific Art Fair artist-in-residence and a small public space for art display and events. The objective is to investigate how particular geometries can affect specific relationships between art and dwelling, and art and the community.

Outputs: 1:10 model, photographs of model on site.

### QUARTER REVIEW

(1 October)



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#### FRIEZE SOUTH BRONX

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