

THURSDAYS 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. EST, Ware
Lounge

Christoph a. Kumpusch, PhD

THEATER OF A (NOT-SO-GLOBAL) INTERSPECIES

13
Weeks

"Any image that engages or requires the social and cultural experience of the viewer or the social and cultural experience of myself—any art that does that is a political image."¹

"The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater. It is in the city, the city as theater that humans more positive activities are formulated and worked out through conflicting cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant, culminations."²

FOCUS and GOAL >

WE ARE PRIVILEGED. Just reading this sentence makes you part of the 85% of the world population that is literate and the 20% that understands English. If you are reading this in print, you have spent around \$1,5 on this, which is a price only 20% of people (those earning more than 10 dollars a day) can afford. If you are reading an electronic version, you are among the 40% who have access to the internet. If you are reading this, you probably have a higher education, which is only available to an advantaged few. As you can see, this is not so global.

In New York / Paris, we suggest that all design is political.

A more inclusive approach and awareness of political responsibilities is critical in our work. In a time where the impact of space-making and its communication has increased exponentially, **we have more potential to reimagine and redefine our trajectory than ever before.** We can take on this challenge, recognizing and investigating how our biases and ideologies shape our work. This helps us begin to make an influence in a 'not so global' context after all.

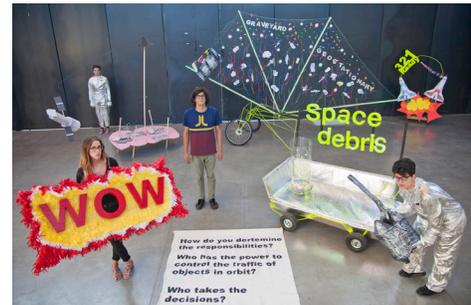
Known for its skyline but defined by the ground, New York is not a blank slate. We work within its existing framework, unraveling its reality in unprecedented ways, in order to then uncover transformative imaginaries and futurities. Our specific site – the exciting, dynamic and activated Washington Square Park – serves as an experimental laboratory for these endeavors. It exists as a point of incredible intersection. A multitude of realities are collapsed onto a small section of space and time, which makes way for unique moments of transcalar interaction among species, systems, and people from across the globe.

Our aim is to expand architecture's role to perform, communicate, and advocate as we consider both interspecies and non-human participants. The ground plane is our starting point for exploration. Rather than focusing on verticality and building up, we work into the ground and its many dimensions. We investigate its layers, simultaneously stretching and closing the gaps between its varied conditions. **We push this process by asking the hard, soft, exuberating and inspiring questions to unearth new ways of architectural thinking and making.**

We will be organized according to elements of imaginaries: **language and spatiality, color and contrast, image and movement, identity and advocacy, and performative bodies.** Our collection of archi(types) is not representative of every condition and challenge faced by the spatial realities of our globe and climate, but it is only the beginning. It will be an incredible point of departure, filled with limitless potential, of what we can contribute architecturally, spatially, and socially. It will open doors to infinite possibilities of a more inclusive world for all inhabitants our planet carries.



A *Conical Intersect*, Gordon Matta Clark, 1975



B *SUPERPOWERS OF TEN*, Andrés Jaque / Office for Political Innovation (Act 3, Scene 2), 2013-15, Architectural performance

1. Gaines, Charles. "The Entire History of Art is Political." Interview by Chi-sa Hughes. Vimeo, uploaded by Hammer Museum. 2015. <https://vimeo.com/116103053>

2. Lewis Mumford. *The Culture of Cities*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and, 1938.

SCENE
OVERVIEWS

Theater of a (not-so-global) Interspecies will progress through a series of three culminating scenes.

>> SCENE ONE (WEEKS 1-6)

Discourse: INVESTIGATION + EXPLORATION

The course will begin by investigating and working with[in] multiple interpretations of ground. We will explore and analyze the incredibly dynamic interactions, systems, relationships, politics, histories, and identities that exist at our site of Washington Square Park. Temporal encounters in the city create new associations as we imagine new ways of navigating the shifting ground.

New York City recently reached a record-breaking number of nearly 13 million flights. Top NYC attractions host nearly 360,000 pedestrians each day. As a point of departure, we will utilize a standard sized carry-on luggage as a physical proto-site for our urban context explorations and experimentations. We will work within these dimensions of no more than 56 cm x 36 cm x 23 cm. Just as with operating in the dense city itself, these constraints will push us to navigate a limited amount of space in innovative and limitless ways.

Your proto-site will be rigorously worked into/onto/out of throughout the first six weeks, and will ultimately serve as an archive of your experimental explorations.

>> SCENE TWO (WEEKS 7-9)

Discourse: INTERVENTIONS + SCALE

Our investigations revealed the multidimensional and transcalar relationships within our context. Moving forward, you will choose a specific scale as your next starting point for further analysis and intervention.

We engage variations of scale including the urban, intimate and infinite. They are absorbed and invented, appear and disappear:

- 1:100
- 1:25000
- 1:20
- 3:1
- 1:50
- 1:500
- 1:50000
- 2:1
- 1:1

• 1: ∞ ...INFINITY (∞), along with its symbol ∞, is not a number and it is not a place. There is no limit to its values. We then say that the values become infinite, or tend to infinity – a limit is a number.

There is no number that we can name.

>> SCENE THREE (WEEKS 10-13)

Discourse: ADVOCACY + PERFORMANCE

Our work is not neutral. We must acknowledge this and take a stance on the connections we draw between form, environment, performance and site.

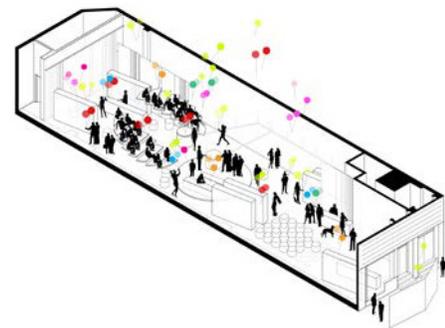
The culminating projects will reimagine methods of space-making and performance. Specifically chosen interspecies interactions, in the context of the ground at Washington Square Park, will act as the focus of your socio-political, cultural, infrastructural, and/or environmental advocacy.

Performance / pəˈfɔːr.məns

Etymology

<< perform (v.) + -ance (suffix)

1. a musical, dramatic, or other entertainment presented before an audience.
2. the act of performing a ceremony, play, piece of music, etc.
3. the execution or accomplishment of work, acts, feats, etc.
4. a particular action, deed, or proceeding.
5. an action or proceeding of an unusual or spectacular kind.
6. the act of performing.
7. the manner in which or the efficiency with which something reacts or fulfills its intended purpose.
8. Linguistics. the actual use of language in real situations, which may or may not fully reflect a speaker's competence, being subject to such nonlinguistic factors as inattention, distraction, memory lapses, fatigue, or emotional state.



C Performa 2015, Forward-slash (/)
ARCHITEKTUR, competition drawing 07

SCHEDULE

SCENE ONE

WEEK 1 [SEPTEMBER 07]

INTRODUCTIONS AND SYLLABUS

We will explore and tour of Washington Square Park with historian Justin Rivers, followed by our studios introduction.

> Post-Production: Photograph 10 interactions in Washington Square Park, thinking across human, interspecies and non-human relationships. Use these to develop your own vocabulary: a list of 10 verbs that describe what architecture and space could do for those interacting in it.

> Reading:

1. McKinnie, Michael. *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City* [Cultural Spaces]. University of Toronto Press, 2007.

WEEK 2 [SEPTEMBER 14]

LANGUAGE AND SPATIALITY // ORGANIZED ENERGY

We will each choose one of your verbs from the prior week and then conduct a series of equally timed drawings that represent the action: one of 1000 vectors, one of 100, one of 10 and one of 1. Think: density versus dexterity, notions of intent.

> Post-Production: Projected Drawing-Model. You will work into your proto-site and make "models" of these four drawings, using materials representative of lines, in an effort to see the depth of your construction and understand how action is organized. You can begin by considering whether you want your models to be rigid or fluid, if they will adjust to future interventions or exist in isolation, and how they relate to your proto-site.

> Readings:

1. Michael Graves. *Architecture and the Lost Art of Drawing* (New York Times, 1 September 2012).

2. Woods, Lebbeus, Peter Noever, Manuel De Landa, Anthony Vidler, and Christoph A. Kumpusch. *Lebbeus Woods: System Wien*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005.

WEEK 3 [SEPTEMBER 21]

IMAGE AND MOVEMENT // SPATIAL PERFORMANCE

NYC is always in motion – it is never static or still, especially not Washington Square Park. There is a constant energy as it is continuously shaped by the actions of its inhabitants and systems. This week, we will examine ways to reimagine the output or analysis of these performances.

> Post-Production: Graphic Recording of a Performance. Choose a performance to graphically measure or record in Washington Square Park, and identify who/what the participants are. Think of your proto-site as a stage to document the performance. Intervene/extract/add/alter your proto-site to become a tool that receives the performance as an input, and generates a graphic visualization of the performance as an output.

> Readings:

1. McAuley, Gay. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

2. Penz, François, and Andong Lu. *Urban Cinematics: Understanding Urban Phenomena through the Moving Image*. Bristol: Intellect, 2011.

WEEK 4 [SEPTEMBER 28]

IDENTITY AND ADVOCACY // GROUND UP

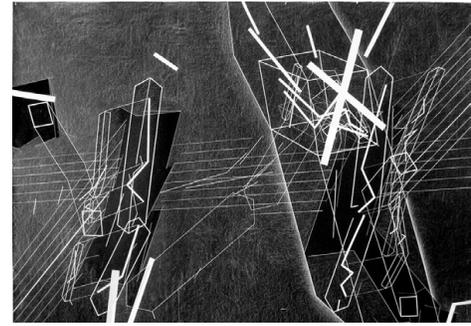
Class will begin with a visit to Washington Square Park Conservancy. We will then delve into potential interventions on the ground plane, analyzing the relationship to the surface and what it means to push in rather than solely build up. A focus will be on the multidimensional nature of the ground. We will also investigate the lens through which we are perceiving the site, becoming aware of how our interpretations differ as they are shaped by conscious and subconscious biases and ideologies.

> Post-Production: Working into your proto-site, produce a physical model that expresses an intervention to the ground plane. This should not be a literal illustration of the intervention, but a structured construction of a tectonic/spatial idea. Understand what, why, and for whom/what it is intervening. Consider your material selection, and how it impacts the reading of the model.

> Readings:

1. Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and, 1938.

2. Brown, T. L. 'Racialized Architectural Space: A Critical Understanding of its Production, Perception and Evaluation' *Architecture_MPS*, 2019.



D Lebbeus Woods, *Conflict Space 4*, 2006; crayon and acrylic on linen; 74 in. x 120 in; Collection SFMOMA

Interaction / ɪn(t)əˈræktʃən

Etymology

<< inter- (prefix) + action (n.)

1. reciprocal action, effect, or influence.

2. Physics.

a. the direct effect that one kind of particle has on another, in particular, in inducing the emission or absorption of one particle by another.

b. the mathematical expression that specifies the nature and strength of this effect.



E Béis x Barbie™ The Movie, *Luggage* Collection, 2023

SCHEDULE
CONT'D

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WEEK 5 [OCTOBER 05]

COLOR AND CONTRAST // (not so) SURFACE LEVEL

Building on last week, we will explore the ways your prototype visually situates itself as an object placed in/on/around the site. Your carry-on proto-site is becoming an object of its own.

When you go to retrieve your luggage from baggage claim, you want it to stand out. You might tie a bright ribbon on the handle, apply a strip of neon colored tape or use a bag that stands out on its own. With a carry-on that you keep by your side, though, an easily identifiable bag isn't a practical necessity but a matter of personal preference.

> Post-Production: Decide how you want your proto-site to visually exist as a module in the landscape of Washington Square Park. Does it weave into the urban fabric, becoming ingrained in its context? Does it stand out as a sight to see? Consider the consequences and impact of that decision. Alter the exterior of your carry-on in terms of materiality, color, figure-ground and/or shadow. Then create 3 simple figure-ground diagrams, 2-dimensional on paper, using color blocks (no lines) to represent the relationship your object has to its site.

>Readings:

1. Aristotle. *Poetics*. Dover Publications: New York, 1997.
2. Parkeharrison, Shana and Robert. *The Architect's Brother*. Twin Palms Publishers, 2010.

WEEK 6 [OCTOBER 12]

PERFORMATIVE BODIES // MID REVIEW

Mid review Presentations

> Post-Production: 3 WordJoints + Scale Selection. To help set your specific focus for future explorations, create 3 joints by combining a verb and noun from the provided list. Also select the scale you wish to operate within.

SCENE TWO

WEEK 7 [OCTOBER 19]

LANGUAGE AND SPATIALITY // WORDJOINTS

We will begin with a reflection of mid review, followed by a discussion about the direction for your WordJoints and scale section.

> Post-Production: Create one sketch or drawing for each of your word joints in relation to your scale selection. Incorporate these into a collage capturing the essence of your WordJoint. For the collage, use a ready-made or found text. The collage may use 4-400 layers. You may use the book directly as material or use layering, xeroxing, or scanning to produce the collage.

>Readings:

1. Mari, Anthony di and Nora Yoo. *Operative Design: A Catalog of Spatial Verbs*. BIS Publishers: 2012.
2. Kurgan, Laura. *Close up at a Distance Mapping, Technology, and Politics*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2013.

WEEK 8 [OCTOBER 26]

IMAGE AND MOVEMENT // REPRESENTATION IS BUILDING

The only way to see it is to build it. During this session, we will dive into a documentary on Christo and Jeanne-Claude. In response to your chosen scale, groups will be assigned to create temporary site specific installations around which you will present documentation during Week 9.

> Post-Production: Installation as Drawing. Focus on how your installation interacts with the ground and its surroundings. The length, width, and height dimensions must each be greater than the length of your arm span. Select a method of documentation – such as video, timelapse, or GIF – that best reveals these interactions and their relation over a short period of time.

>Readings:

1. Baldauf, Hans, Baker Goodwin, and Amy Reichert. *Perspecta 26: Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture*, *The Yale Architectural Journal*. New Haven, CT: Perspecta, 1990.
2. Weinstein, Beth. "Performance Space: Distributed v. Consolidated."



F *Marela Zacarias, Oulad Bou Sbaa, 2016*



G *The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment, Ilya Kabakov, 1985, Installation*



H *Hill of the Winds, Yona Friedman, 1990, Visualization model*

**SCHEDULE
CONT'D**



WEEK 9 [NOVEMBER 02]

COLOR AND CONTRAST // PREMISE-PROCESS-PRODUCTION

We will present and analyze last week's documented installations.

> Post-Production: Select one assignment that aligns closest to your interest of exploration. Re-define meaning, re-interpret, re-process and translate it using new media and in your selected scale. Experiment with different colors and contrasts, examining the shifts in sentiment and reception that they evoke.

>Readings:

1. Vidler, Anthony. "The Third Typology," from *Oppositions Reader, Selected Readings from A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture 1973-1984*.
2. Virgil Abloh. "Insert Complicated Title Here". Cambridge, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2018.

SCENE THREE

WEEK 10 [NOVEMBER 09]

IDENTITY AND ADVOCACY // INTENTION

This class will begin setting the stage for your final.

> Post-Production: Write 1-2 pages defining the focus of your final output. Explicitly state and work through the thesis of your project, your audience, and address who/ what you will be advocating for and why. Accompany your writing with a series of sketches/precedents/study models exploring what form your culminating project might take.

>Readings:

1. Dharmasiri, Kanchuka N. *Transgressing space and subverting hierarchies: a comparative analysis of street theatre groups in Sri Lanka, India, and the United States*. University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2014.
2. "CRASSH." *Performance and Subversion in Public Spaces* -. Accessed May 31, 2016. <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/26558>.

WEEK 11 [NOVEMBER 16]

PERFORMATIVE BODIES // PRODUCTION

We will continue working toward final review.

> Post-Production: Project/performance production.

>Readings:

1. Makeham, Paul. "Performing the City." *Theatre Research International* 30, no. 2 (2005): 150-60.
2. Woods, Lebbeus, and Christoph Kumpusch. *The Light Pavilion: By Lebbeus Woods and Christoph A. Kumpusch for the Sliced Porosity Block in Chengdu, China 2007-2012*. Zürich: Lars Müller, 2013.

WEEK 12 [NOVEMBER 23]

NO CLASS [FALL BREAK]

WEEK 13 [NOVEMBER 30]

FINAL REVIEW

WEEK 14/15

FINAL DELIVERY: LOG BOOK

GROUNDWORK >> INTRA PROJECT >> VISION

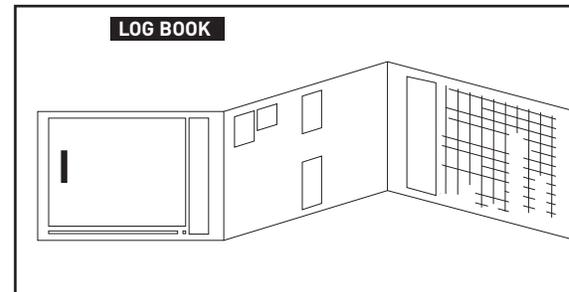
> Projects will be articulated in a final book / portfolio that dissects and showcases your work. Process, product and vision are highlighted through collections of research, diagrams, analyses, drawings, photographs and text.



I Washington Square Park Circa 1960-1969, Cars



J System Wien, Performance X, MAK Vienna, Oleg Solimenko / Christoph a. Kumpusch / Lebbeus Woods



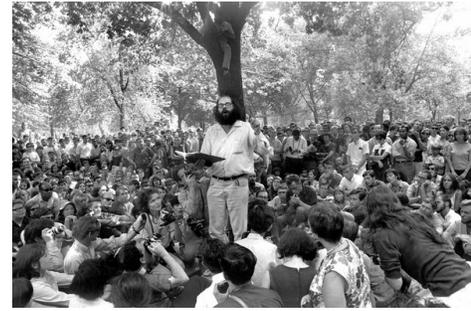
THEATER OF A
INTERSPECIES
BOOKSHELF



- Ruben Pater. *The Politics of Design*, BIS Publishers, 2016.
- Jaque, Andrés, et al., editors. *More than Human*, Het Nieuwe Instituut, January 2020.
- Anne Davidian and Laurent Jeanpierre. Sternberg Press , February 7, 2023.
- McKinnie, Michael. *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City (Cultural Spaces)*. University of Toronto Press, 2007.
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- Makeham, Paul. "Performing the City." *Theatre Research International* 30, no. 2 (2005): 150-60.
- Woods, Lebbeus, and Christoph Kumpusch. *The Light Pavilion: By Lebbeus Woods and Christoph A. Kumpusch for the Sliced Porosity Block in Chengdu, China 2007-2012*. Zürich: Lars Müller, 2013.



K The Light Pavilion, Lebbeus Woods + Christoph a. Kumpusch



L Poet Allen Ginsberg reading his work in Washington Square Park