

Protocols_of Repair

“...while in the Western world the act of repair aimed at simply restoring an original shape, in traditional cultures the repairs aimed further, towards the creation of a new aesthetics. For the West, repair was an illusion of reappropriation of the self, but for non-Western cultures the repair creates a new reality.”

Kader Attia, “Repair: Architecture, Reappropriation, and The Body Repaired”



Provocation:

The social fabric is frayed and in need of repair according to politicians, institutions, and the media. Joining the chorus, architects and urbanists proclaim that in many cities around the world the “urban fabric”—buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces—has deteriorated and is in need of repair. “Repair” implies return, to go back, to restore to an original condition. Is that a valid imperative for architects today?

Modernity’s investment in progress necessitated regimes of social improvement aimed at repairing (in some instances eliminating) subjects deemed “other,” “abject,” or “abnormal.” Architectural Modernism’s project adopted repair’s spatial analogues of renewal and redevelopment to displace or destroy communities deemed unlivable and undesirable. Cities have vacant lots, neighborhoods spliced by freeways and failed housing as residue of the great plans of urban renewal. In its wake it has produced a landscape of inequalities. Can a radical notion of “repair,” as the artist Kader Attia asks, create a new reality? How might architectural and urban protocols of repair create new aesthetics for places like New York City where social strife has destroyed communities and divided many parts of the city? Over the course of the semester, the studio will develop an understanding of how architecture can contribute to the discourse on redress, reparations, and civic restoration that have been reconceptualized, to many different ends, over the last decade.



Amanda Williams, "Crown Royal Bag," Color(ed) Theory Suite

Proposition (outline):

To transform these divided neighborhoods and urban landscapes over time new rules of engagement— **Protocols_of Repair**—need to be formulated and tested. Since the studio will attempt to unpack how racism and social discord is spatialized it is vital to take measure of its historical manifestations. The studio will begin the semester with a study of how *Art(s) of Repair* operate at various scales of intervention. The studio will analyze Jan Vormann’s “Dispatchwork,” Theaster Gates’s, “Rebuild,” Gunther Domenig’s “Stoplersteins,” 2 Chainz’s “Trap House” and Sam Durant’s “Scaffold.” How and why does, for instance, Alfredo Jaar’s, “Skoghall Konsthall” use the construction and opening of a new art gallery and its subsequent destruction by fire 24 hours later as a protocol of repair? How does Amanda Williams’s “Color(ed) Theory use consumer hues on foreclosed houses to highlight invisibility, urban dispossession, and gentrification?

Drawing from archival research at Avery Library, New York Public Library, New York Historical Society and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, among the possible sources, the studio will use the city as a laboratory to conceptualize radical protocols of repair. To understand resonant impact of social inequalities and injustices and material transformation on the city, the studio will work in teams to conduct research to map the divided city by studying events such as the dispossession of Seneca Village (Central Park), building of the Cross Bronx Expressway, the Stonewall Riots, Tompkin Square Park Riots, and other sites. Students will conceptualize techniques of repair by drawing cues from different practices of collage, assemblage, video and animation. Research in mapping the divided city’s historical injustices will be presented in the one-quarter review. Based on that research on the sites of the divided city, teams will next conceptualize and design protocols of repair in New York City for the midterm.

The remainder of the semester will focus on designing architectural interventions that manifest protocols into the world. Projects will test those protocols by imagining New York City in 2120. By using animation and video, final projects will narrativize and establish a cadence for how their protocols of repair incrementally change the city.



Pedagogy:

The studio is organized around a series of workshops and a trip to Atlanta, Georgia and Montgomery and Selma, Alabama. We will have workshops with artist/designer Lek Jeyifous of [Vigilism](#), and another one with artist [Torkwase Dyson](#), whose installation “1919: Black Water” will be on view at GSAPP’s Arthur Ross Gallery beginning 27 September 2019. To understand different strategies of intervention, we will meet with Joel Sanders of JSA to discuss their [“Non-Compliant Bodies”](#) project on gender, ableism and race, and the organizers of [For Freedoms](#) a national art project that reimagines citizenship through public art. Supplementing the studio, we will also have readings and group discussions on architecture’s intersection with violence, power, social inequalities and theories of repair such as reparations and restorative justice. Over the course of the semester, we will hone skills of argumentation—both verbal and visual (i.e. in your presentations) and focus on the art of storytelling in order to develop conceptual narratives for each project. The studio will also draw from and be in conversation with plans for an upcoming Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) on the related topic of repair/reparations.

Studio Travel (required) 20-22 September 2019:

As part of our research to understand histories of racial and social division, the studio will travel to the Atlanta, GA and Montgomery, AL to study the long history of how racial segregation and division take root in the built environment. We will visit the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama tour the [Memorial for Peace and Justice](#) (MASS Design) and attendant exhibition “The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration.” We will also visit Southern Poverty Law Center, Peachtree Plaza, and other important historical sites in Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma and Tuskegee. If you cannot travel on these dates, then this will not be an ideal choice for Studio V.