

NAHYUN HWANG, DAVID EUGIN MOON STUDIO  
(TEACHING ASSISTANT: RICARDO LLEDO SOUTO)

# LINES X CITIES

## ARCHITECTURE OF THE THOROUGHFARE

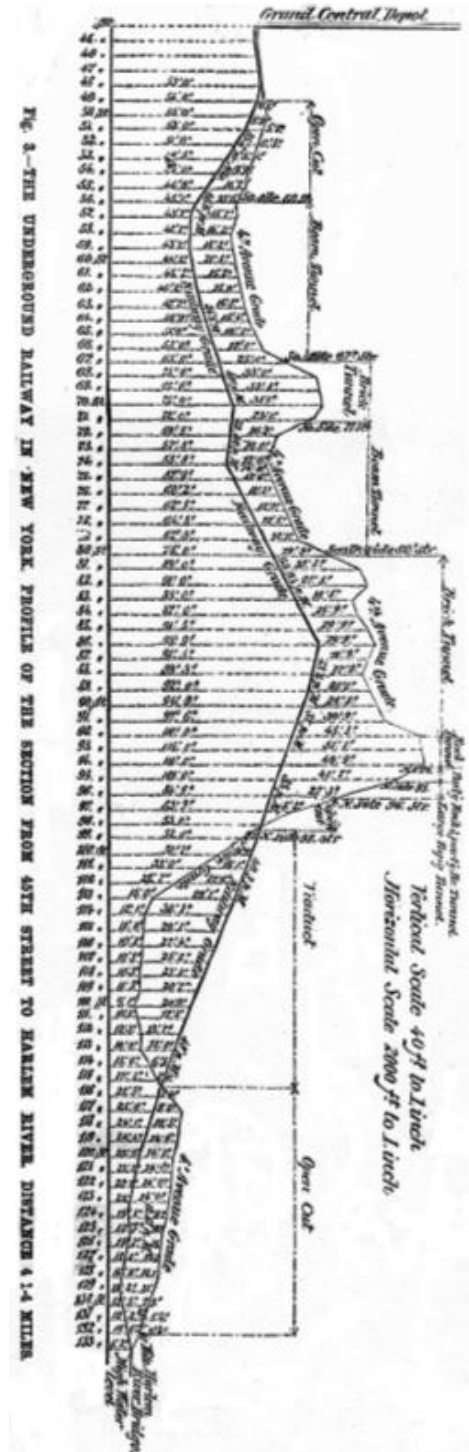
### Introduction

Throughout history, the relationship between the city and its supporting infrastructure has been a charged one. Simultaneously nurturing yet antagonistic, the tendencies of urban-scale linear infrastructures towards the city have been especially complex. At once organizing and participating in the larger network, infrastructures connects *and* fragment at the same time. A spatialized socio-political device built in the language of necessity and economy, infrastructure is an ideal apparatus of governance.

As a part of the on-going research and studio series "LINES X CITIES," the course will investigate the seemingly benign but potent architecture of and around urban arterial roads. The studio will seek the possibility of architecture that actively challenges the construct of pure utility, through a thorough morphological and programmatic investigation of the existing and transformed conditions, engaging Fourth Avenue in Manhattan (a.k.a. Park Avenue) as a testing ground and a site of projection. Commonly misconstrued as solely a stagnant boulevard of the affluent, the avenue is in fact a quietly charged line within the city. A carefully choreographed linear topology of submerged and elevated rail infrastructures, the avenue supports and controls the diverse forms of the commons such as Union Square, Grand Central Station, La Marqueta project, and a number of historic public housing blocks in neighborhoods of East Harlem and beyond, in addition to familiar spaces for corporate accumulation and institutional authority.

Taking advantage of the infinite programmatic and demographic complexity and the spatial politics of Park Avenue, the studio utilizes the thoroughfare and its extended territories as a subject of investigation and a testing ground. The hardbound island of Manhattan has been the most potent paradigmatic sites for architectural and urban explorations for the past centuries<sup>1</sup>. The city of the consummate grid and the muse to the *Manhattan Transcripts*, the *City of Captive Globe* is where infinite environments are constructed, and their ideals are maintained. Through allegorical urban blocks of the *Gotham City*, the metaphors

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion of Manhattan and Venice as paradigm islands, in Stoppani, Teresa, *Paradigm Islands: Manhattan and Venice. Discourses on Architecture and the City*, Abingon, Oxford: Routledge, 2010



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and metamorphosis of the city are conceptualized.<sup>2</sup> Manhattan obsessively “more interested in becoming than being” is also full of “unforeseen potential for conceiving a quite different notion of city.”<sup>3</sup>

Utilizing Park Avenue as a transect that cuts through the island’s most rooted mechanisms and familiar manifestations as well as its hidden and connected geographies, time frames, and potential transformations, the work aims to explore diverse notions of the common and the collective and their ever critical implications in the contemporary city. The goal of the studio is to suggest the possibility of bringing forward the alternative spatial structure, and thus, the behavior of the city, through the redefinition of the Architecture of the Thoroughfare.

### Approaches

As an advanced studio, the emphasis of the course is on the production of rigorously articulated research and architectural propositions that each engages the critical inquiry of the studio topics with a distinctive thesis and position. The course is structured as a series of interconnected research, analysis, and design assignments. While the semester can be summarized as follows, all works are considered reciprocally informed and simultaneously developed as much as possible.

The studio will start with a research and analysis effort through a brief review of relevant discourse and an overview of both historic and contemporary conditions of the sites around Park Avenue. Following the initial overview, fact based investigations with focused research and analytic documentations will instigate the individuated agendas of the design projects. Initiating the design phase, students will be asked to test and define project trajectories and potential strategies at specific zones along Park Avenue, articulating the rationales and impact at multiple scales, geographies, and time frames. Utilizing selected sites and instances as subjects of investigation and testing grounds, the studio will explore the architectural possibilities in each unique circumstance as well as in their interconnected and expanded contexts and capacities.

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<sup>2</sup> O.M. Ungers, Werner Goehner, Hans F. Kollhoff, and Arthur A. Ovaska, *The Urban Block and Gotham City: Metaphors & Metamorphosis: Two Concurrent Projects*, Cornell Summer Session in Ithaca NY, (1976)

<sup>3</sup> Emilio Ambasz, “Manhattan:Capital of the 20th Century.” In *The Universitas Project: Solutions for a Post-Technological Society*, edited by Emilio Ambasz. The Museum of Modern Art, 2006.

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