Almost 150 years ago, Ildefonso Cerdá published his opus, *Teoría general de la urbanización* [General Theory of Urbanization]. In this often rambling and polemical text, Cerdá devises a spatial system by which to reconstruct and build anew the cities of Europe. Radically simplified, this new template for life consists of two primary elements: infrastructure and dwellings. Lacking centrality, institutional representation and any legible urban form, what replaces the city is a logic. What is remarkable about this project is how Cerdá conceives of space, its organization and the architectural forms that inhabit it, to be constitutive of not only a new way for society to cohabit, but for an entirely new political and economic order to take root: spatial organization produces political form—a project of properly Utopian proportions. Today this order has, in less ideal ways, restructured the entire planet into a dense, multi-scalar web of urbanization whose limits, like those of its correlate, global capitalism, are as yet to manifest. Or are they?

This studio will revisit the site of Cerdá’s radical experiment, Barcelona’s *Eixample*, through the lens of domesticity. Just like Cerdá, we will recognize the inevitable politics that space, its organization and the architecture that populates it produces. However, the *Eixample* today stands far in excess of the pure rationality and regulation that Cerdá specified—a testament to the inexorability already present in nineteenth century capitalist urbanization and its uneven geographies. It will attempt to conceive of new domestic architecture by inventing spatial/formal methods of design that correlate to political-economic processes—creative destruction, strategic over-accumulation, tactical subtraction, abstraction, replication, scalar transformation, appropriation and so on. The ambition is to see architecture as not only form, order, material, cultural artifact and so on, but as a strategy: What if architectural knowledge, fully aware of its position of absolute compromise, can use this to a calculated end? What if, for architecture to open up new social and political realities that are unfolding already, it has also to adopt a strategic embrace of its status as an apparatus?

There will be a fair amount of research that underpins the design process along the way, but we will treat drawings and design exploration as a crucial component of this research. The final result of this studio will be an urban strategy articulated through a rigorous development of a set of architectural types. Group work is encouraged throughout as long as individual work remains legible.

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**Studio Title:** *Barcelona: The Limits of Urbanization* (tentative title)

**Project Location:** Barcelona

**Instructor:** Ross Exo Adams

**Trip:** none

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**Studio Title:** The technology and morphology of in-place Architecture: Neighborhood interventions

**Project Location:** Kigali, Rwanda

**Instructor:** Marwan Ghandour

Maybe it is possible to walk from farmland to high-rise office building in less than twenty minutes! Such is the condition of the urban environment in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, and one of the fastest growing urban centers in East Africa. Until recently, Kigali has been growing organically with minimal planning regulations, which created a diverse and interdependent environments for work and living that catered for the city’s growing population. The hilly geography of the city generated a particular urban morphology where major commercial and governmental developments are situated on the hilltops and continuous agricultural fields in the floodplain below. Various residential neighborhoods that range from high to low income inhabit the slopes between the hilltops and floodplain. In 2013, a new masterplan [http://masterplan2013.kigalicity.gov.rw/](http://masterplan2013.kigalicity.gov.rw/) that envisions Kigali as a future business center in the region was approved. The masterplan provided guidelines for urbanization using new zoning regulations that densify the center and relocates low income residents to make way for the new pristine large-scale buildings of the coming era. Currently the city is very busy building up the professional knowledge and the institutional infrastructure for its future controlled urbanization.

The 2013 masterplan is the outcome of a long process through which the post-genocide government in Rwanda has been investing in a modern urban infrastructure with a specific focus on the capital city of Kigali. This resulted in a highly maintained urban environment and a range of major capital projects such as a national conference center, new airport, and large commercial developments. These developments also resulted in relocations of few low-income neighborhoods marginalizing in some cases some impoverished urban communities. Recently, governmental and NGO programs are developing new strategies to empower communities through socially engaged architectural approaches that adopt sustainable urban development strategies. Within this context, this studio will study in-transition residential neighborhood in the city of Kigali, such as Agatare, Nyabisindo, Gikondo and Gatenga. The objective is to assess the living and spatial
conditions of these neighborhoods and propose architectural interventions that engage the geographical, social, economic and material particularities of the place.

These neighborhoods are mostly inhabited by low income families that maintained affordable living conditions in the city through low cost practices such as using homemade mud-brick for construction, developing private gardens for subsistence and living in close proximity to job locations (such as farmland, industry and business centers) that caters to the different family members. However, these neighborhoods are poorly maintained with inadequate infrastructure for transportation and sewage. While such neighborhoods constitute around 65% of the city fabric, their significance in the production of the city is not clearly understood. Working in collaboration with architecture students and faculty from the University of Rwanda in Kigali, the studio will develop a series of analytical tools and design strategies to propose building interventions that can upgrade the living conditions of these neighborhoods while reinforcing their significance within the urban conditions of the city. Individual projects may vary including developing residential typologies, community centers or infrastructural interventions. Projects should be designed comprehensively, which integrate programming, social practices, spatial quality, materials and construction detail.

The studio will include a two-week optional fieldtrip to Rwanda from November 14-29, 2015. The trip will include a one-week collaborative workshop with the faculty and students at the department of Architecture, the University of Rwanda. It will also include site visits to socially-conscious, low-impact contemporary architectural projects in various parts of the country. Such as buildings by MASS http://www.massdesigngroup.org/, Sharon Davis Design http://sharondavisdesign.com/, and Active Social Architecture http://www.activesocialarchitecture.com/. The trip will also include visits to a number of natural and cultural features of Rwanda http://www.african-parks.org/Park_2_Akagera.html; http://museum.gov.rw/index.php?id=29. A detailed program of the trip will be issued at the beginning of the fall semester.

The trip will cost a maximum of $3400 in fees (includes flight, accommodation, as well as group activities and transportation) and an estimated $500 out of pocket for personal expenses.

Studio Title: **Detroit: Culture Archive and Labor Chapel**
Project Location: **Detroit, MI**
Instructor: **Peter P. Goché**

This investigation will delve into material culture and integrative design practices in the production of a cultural archive and labor chapel to be conceived in the context of Detroit’s Milwaukee Junction (a post-industrial auto body manufacturing hub). An archive is an accumulation of historical records that have been selected for permanent or long-term preservation on grounds of their enduring cultural, historical, or evidentiary value. Following the site visit, we will select project teams and embark on our integrative design process. Each team inquiry will include the rehabilitation of an existing building along with the addition of a new labor chapel.

Taking inspiration from John Dewey’s “Art as Experience,” (Perigee Books, 1934) we will consider the otherwise invisible presence of an underlying cultural engagement with a work of art/architecture. In this analysis, Dewey encourages experimental intelligence through a study of the individual work of art/spatial construct as embedded in (and inextricable from) the experiences of a local culture. Correspondingly, we will cite Georges Perec’s “Species of Spaces” (Penguin Books, 1997) - a non-fiction work whereby Perec affirms his focus on the “infra-ordinary” – the banal habits, settings and events of which our lives almost entirely consist. This intersection of self and the world may well be the fundamental objective – shifting our focus to include the crafting of a composite entity as well as mastering its various material components of human making. The premise of this project is to position questions about latent desires within contemporary art and design practices as it relates to post-industrial culture on a global scale from an intensely local point of view in addition to producing a innovative architectural practice/proposal.

Logistics: Field trip to Detroit (est. $850 - 950) from Wednesday September 16th (noon) through Sunday September 20th. Students will be required to purchase their own round-trip airfare ticket. Departure time to be coordinated with other required course commitments including Arch 445. Students will provide all out-of-pocket expenses including, public transportation and event tickets. Group lodging in Detroit for 4 nights (in shared rooms) will be arranged by Department of Architecture. Tours to Cranbrook Academy of Art and other places within Detroit metro not on the public transportation route will be arranged by the Department of Architecture.
Improvisation, Surface, and Structure: The Altman School of Independent Film (ASIF)

Project Location: Kansas City, MO

Instructor: Mikesch Muecke

"Altman builds a Western town as one might build a castle in the air—and it’s inhabited."¹

In this studio we’ll develop a proposal for a School of Independent Film in Kansas City by considering the process of filmmaking as a metonym to architectural design. Both activities are team-dependent, highly complex, tend to be expensive, and require scripting, iterative editing, montage, spatial and temporal sequencing, sensory design, and a thorough knowledge of materiality.

The project is named after Robert Altman (1925-2006), an innovative and prolific independent filmmaker who rewrote cinematic genres with films such as M*A*S*H (war epic), Nashville (musical), McCabe and Mrs. Miller (Western), Brewster McCloud (fantasy), Short Cuts (literary short stories translated to film), The Long Goodbye (detective story), The Player (Hollywood movie producing), Cookie’s Fortune (comedy) and Gosford Park (whodunit), among many others. In opposition to mainstream Hollywood blockbusters, Altman’s movies tend to be anti-heroic, acerbic, and bitingly funny in their critique of American culture and society.

Making movies is both an improvisational and collaborative process (much like architecture): in Altman’s films screen time is often shared among many actors, denying movie stars their assumed privilege (paradoxically there are many stars in his films…). Rather than be passive receivers of mindless entertainment, he requires his audience to do analytic work in deciphering the scenes on the screen. His films often consist of a series of vignettes loosely linked in time/space where “meaning is achieved by lateral, diachronic juxtaposition, not by layers that can be penetrated.”² In other words, his movies are about meaningful surfaces, not unlike architecture, and of course the stuff that holds up those surfaces, like necessary structure.

Faced with Altman’s resistance to articulate a theory of his own work we’ll base the studio’s theoretical footings on writings about modern society, film, and specifically montage, consulting Sergei Eisenstein (Montage and Architecture), and others.

The semester is divided into three sections. During the first we’ll analyze several of Altman’s films by considering them as sites of critical production. In phase two we use these analyses to develop a program and site for the school in Kansas City, and in the third section the building emerges out of the films/site as a comprehensive architectural construct. There will be a field trip to Kansas City from September 17-19 using two ISU Vans (pending number of students in studio). Estimated field trip cost: $150/student.

Creative Placemaking

Project Location: Des Moines, Iowa

Instructors: Jessica Terrill and Brad Hartman

Creative Placemaking: An evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community’s interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place. Creative placemaking is a trendy thing, but within its broad definition much potential lies in both the cultural realm inherent to it and by tapping into the “creative class” people often working and living at the forefront of this movement.

The Client: Artists Larassa Kabel, Mat Greiner, Staci Nevinski, and Ben Easter, actively represented by multiple art galleries with national and international museum exhibitions, find Des Moines home. This group of artists, individually and combined into an emerging group, Chicken Tractor, currently and continually explore architectural options for expanding the cultural art scene in Des Moines. They have been coerced into (but quite enthusiastically) filling the role of semester-long clients. Students participating in this 401 studio will also draw, photograph, and use mixed media as individual design exercises as the semester’s work develops. The assigned exercises will be reviewed and discussed by the artists in project reviews either at the College of Design or likely in Des Moines galleries.

The Project Scope: This studio will explore creative placemaking and programmatic evolution through the development of a creative institution intrinsically required to evolve over time. Embedded within a complex

architectural project program will be the challenge of smart public art, design methodology unique to various artistic disciplines, and the sometimes daunting strain of evolutionary design applied to neighborhood revitalization.

The Program: The process begins with the analysis of three predetermined sites near downtown Des Moines. The institution itself will include housing for a short-term artist residency program, work spaces varied and unique to artists practicing multiple media forms, teaching space, and a public gallery and event space. Students must consider additional program spaces that respond to the needs and interests of their chosen site. As student designs develop, structural, mechanical, and electrical engineers, as well as landscape architects will provide desk crits and informal pin-up reviews. Formal reviews will include both architecture department faculty and practicing architects, as well as the artist “clients”.

The Field Trip: Many exciting days in Des Moines and one long day in Omaha. Along with Des Moines, the studio will travel to Seattle over the pre-arranged studio field trip dates (likely $750-950). Seattle has long been at the forefront of similar project/cultural types and tours are currently being arranged by local architects. The trip will be tour intensive. The Seattle Art Museum, principally the Olympic Sculpture Park, will be one of pre-arranged tours, as well as Seattle architecture firms. As previously noted, perplexing drawing and befuddling photography assignments will be an integral process and product of the Seattle field trip.