



# The Urban Studies Newsletter

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Edited by Emma Phillips and Dietrich Neumann

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2017 AND BEST OF LUCK !



## Farewell to Stefano Bloch

Stefano came to the program as a Mellon Postdoc four years ago, stayed on as a Presidential Fellow and had a profound impact on the entire program and countless students. His dynamic lectures (for instance his over popular course "Crime and the City" - it had to be capped at 400 students), his availability and helpfulness, his all around nice, welcoming and collegial personality introduced countless students to Urban Studies. In his years in Providence he and his students engaged in many ways with the city of Providence - be it through a project that looked at graffiti and crime, helping with the homeless count or planting sunflowers. Stefano has accepted a professorship at the University of Arizona, beginning in September. All the best and we will miss you, Stefano!!

## Ariana Martinez'17: From the Bronx to Brown & RISD

Ariana Martinez is graduating from the Brown | RISD Dual-Degree program with a B.A. in Urban Studies and a B.F.A. in sculpture. She currently lives in Bronx, New York, but spent her childhood moving frequently throughout the United States. These experiences in different cities and towns laid the foundation for her interest in space, place, and people.

Ariana has used her two academic disciplines as a way to think about and practice strategies for urban public engagement through arts, design, and cultural programs. This year, she worked as a research assistant with Rhode Island Public Radio and RISD's Digital+Media program to investigate how interactive technology and design approaches could help RIPR transcend traditional broadcasting to reach more diverse publics.

Ariana has been nominated for the Windgate Fellowship from the Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design for her design proposal, CIVIC Play, a children's toy which aims to teach spatial reasoning and simple architectural construction.

## Benjamin Davis'18: researching the Parisian suburbs

I am a second semester here at Brown. I just returned from a semester abroad, where I was a part of the Brown program in Paris, studying at the Sorbonne, one of the world's oldest universities. While in Paris, I took 2 courses in urban planning and geography, and 4 courses in French language. During my time in Paris, one of the courses I took was an urban planning workshop, where we would analyze different areas of Paris and the banlieues, or the suburban ring of towns surrounding the city. One of the semester projects was to create a diagnostic of one of these banlieues, Juvisy-sur-Orge, located 18 km south of Paris. Juvisy is known for its train station, which is the 4th busiest in the Paris-metro area. Currently, a new state-of-the-art train station is being built there, which was the reason this location was chosen for the project.

The project had two parts: a diagnostic of the town and a creative project. The

diagnostic comprised of several maps and passages that would explain the relation of Juvisy to the rest of France, the topography and geography of the town, public transportation and right of way in the town, a run-down of the new train station, a historical analysis mapping out changes throughout the years, as well as several other lenses of which we viewed the town through. My group found, from our analysis, that the town was split into three parts that were divided by the train station and tracks.

We had found that one of the three areas was blocked off from the other two, shown in the map in blue, and for our project we sought to find a way to reconnect it to the rest of the town. Our plan was to create a public green space located between the tracks that will help to draw people into the area and reconnect it to the rest of Juvisy.

This project required hours of hands-on field work, including meetings with people working in town hall, hand-drawings of different blocks in the town, taking head counts in major town arteries to gauge traffic, and much more. It was made all the more challenging that my group mates, the class professor, and most of the residents of Juvisy do not speak much English. However, this project was different than anything I had done yet in my time at Brown, and it certainly gave me a new and exciting look at urban planning in a European country, where the points of concern are wildly different than those in the U.S.

**"If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."**

Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (1964, published posthumously)



# Senior Capstones



**Paige Vance**  
Disrupting Dichotomies: Queering the Public/Private and Urban/Rural Through Lived Experience

My capstone explored the limitations of how the public/private and urban/rural dichotomies are used to conceptualize the city. Relying on queer theory, feminist theory, and the lived experience of LGBTQ and/or gender non-conforming people in cities and small towns, this capstone worked to challenge and destabilize these conceptual binaries and the structures of power that created and sustain them.

I will be spending the summer working on a farm in Missoula, Montana.



**Jessica Zambrano**  
Cardboard City

The past three years I have worked at CityArts, a youth arts organization in South Providence. I have helped to develop and teach their course Cardboard City both at CityArts and at Vartan Gregorian Elementary School (primarily teaching 8-10 year olds). In Cardboard City, youth design and construct their own city out of cardboard. Each time I have taught the course I have attempted to incorporate more city planning vocabulary and concepts, but these additions and edits to the curriculum have been minimal. For my Urban Studies capstone, I rewrote the Cardboard City curriculum used by CityArts to include zoning and transportation methods/regulations that I have learned in Downtown Development and Transportation. The final curriculum is geared toward older elementary school children (ages 8-10).

Post-graduation I am staying in Providence. I plan to work in the nonprofit sector, currently awaiting decisions from a few education-focused AmeriCorps programs.



**Elaine Wang**  
Forbidden Cities: A study of Beijing's (de)gated communities

This is a critical moment of change in China's urbanization trajectory. In the past thirty years, the Chinese urban model has adhered closely to modernist principles of urban planning, and taken the form of repetitive towers enclosed into gated superblocks, separated by wide, arterial streets. Though walls have a long history in China, this gated typology has been criticized for its homogeneity, car-centric nature, and sociospatial exclusivity—problems that threaten the livability of Chinese cities. As an effort to tackle these problems, recent design guidelines suggest the incremental phasing out of these gated communities. This capstone explored this alternative model, and its impact on public space. What are the effects of gating on social interaction and urban experi-

**"I have never felt salvation in nature. I love cities above all."**  
Michelangelo



Students In Prof. Neumann's seminar on the Jewelry District visiting the Manchester Street Power station



## Senior Honors Theses

### Eddie Mansius

Rails to Riches: An Historical Analysis How Growth Machine Politics Introduced Light Rail to the City of Charlotte



For his honors thesis, *Rails to Riches: An Historical Analysis of How Growth Machine Politics Introduced Light Rail to the City of Charlotte*, Eddie Mansius researched the political process and means by which land-based interests in his hometown Charlotte, North Carolina have shaped local development, particularly through the lens provided by the case study of the city’s incipient light rail system, the LYNX Blue Line. The project’s almost twenty-year history offers a compelling example for how a durable coalition of land-based interests controls the levers of policy in Charlotte, shaping in this case not only the local discourse surrounding transit, but also the hitherto outward direction of regional growth. Over the nineteen years since voters passed the Blue Line’s sales tax funding mechanism, this coalition has utilized two distinct narrative structures to justify the public investment in fixed-route transportation, each structure contingent upon

whether the public had direct control, through ballot measures, over the future of the project. The first discursive structure, utilized when voters could exercise their influence, framed transit as a universal good and a panacea to the city’s congestion woes. The second framing, however, justified the initiative through largely economic terms, theorizing the billions in private investment spurred by the line as a means of indirectly benefitting the population through augmentation of the city’s tax base. The unprecedented riots of September 2016, however, offer counterevidence to this theory, making manifest the underlying racial and economic tensions that the growth-coalition has ultimately failed to combat in its endorsement of transit as a means of economic development. After graduation, Eddie will be working as a Development Analyst at JBG Smith Properties in Washington, D.C.



Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory celebrates the inaugural run of the LYNX Blue Line on February 24th, 2007

### Madeleine Matsui

Urban Eyes: Examining the Development and State of Contemporary Video Surveillance in London

Madeleine wrote her senior thesis on the topic of video surveillance in London. The thesis explored the history and development of video surveillance, its implications related to crime, as well as how surveillance functions in the context of gentrification and urban redevelopment. After graduation, she will be moving to San Francisco where she will be working as a paralegal for a public interest law firm.

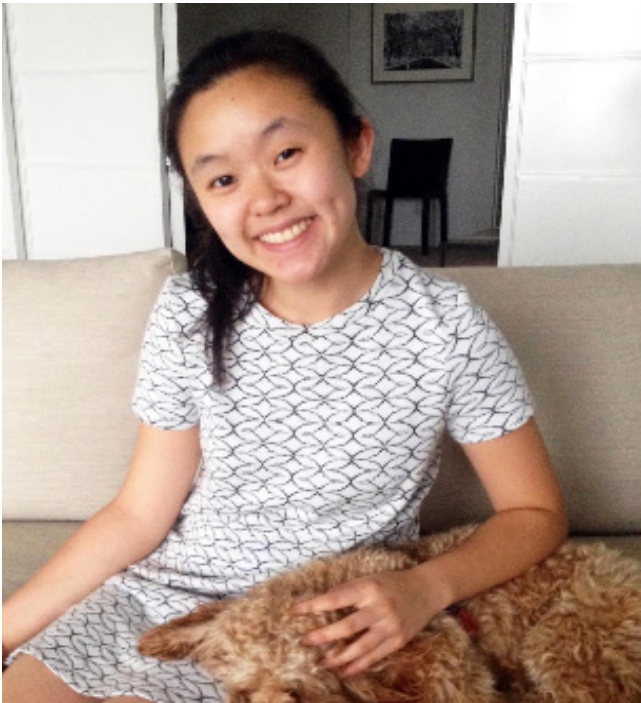
## Best Honors Thesis

### Ashley So

Reworking the Waterfront: Engaging Development, Preservation and Resilience at New York City’s South Street Seaport.

Few people think of South Street Seaport when they think of New York City, but without it there wouldn’t be the New York we know today. Tucked along the East River just south of the Brooklyn Bridge, South Street Seaport marks the location of New York’s founding port by the Dutch West India Company in 1625. During the 19th century, the Seaport became one of the world’s largest centers of trade and commerce; it was a global marketplace and a site of massive immigration. With the eventual decline of the shipping industry, however, much of the city’s waterfronts were abandoned. In the late 1960s, a group of preservationists led by maritime enthusiast Peter Stanford stepped in to save the Seaport from the growing development pressures in Lower Manhattan. Central to Stanford’s vision was a desire to return maritime functions to the shore to revive the Seaport’s “working waterfront.” My thesis attempts to understand what the “working waterfront” might mean for the Seaport in the 21st century. Over the last fifty years, developers, preservationists and planners have tried to establish the historic district’s identity within the context of a modernizing New York City. From the South Street Seaport Museum founder Peter Stanford’s initial visions for a “working waterfront” in 1968, to commercial developer James Rouse’s “festival

marketplace” concept during the 1980s, to the Howard Hughes Corporation’s retail, dining and entertainment-focused “Seaport District” that is currently unfolding, the neighborhood has undergone waves of revitalization in hopes of reestablishing itself as a vibrant center of downtown commerce. In many ways, they have failed to do so. Today, the challenges of balancing preservation and development are further exacerbated by the additional environmental pressures of flooding and sea-level rise, as demonstrated by the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. South Street Seaport’s rich and fascinating history was ideal for studying the intersections between development, preservation and resilience. In my thesis, I argue that for the Seaport to achieve a working waterfront today, it must be “working” in more than one sense of the word. Not only should the waterfront celebrate its historic maritime roots, as Stanford envisioned, it must allow for contemporary urban uses in a socially equitable way while being physically resilient to sea-level rise and flooding. Furthermore, I discuss ways in which the challenges of the waterfront present a unique opportunity for the Seaport can become a laboratory for 21st century urbanism and a showcase for new strategies in historic preservation, equitable development and coastal resiliency. Writing a thesis has been long, tiring and extremely challenging experience, but it has nonetheless been a rewarding one as well. I do not anticipate writing another 100-page paper any time soon, but I do hope to end up in New York City after graduation!



(c) Michael Picard



# In Conversation // Deborah Berke, Dean of Yale School of Architecture



Image Credit: Yale School of Architecture

*Deborah Berke is at once educator and practitioner. As Yale School of Architecture's first female dean she maintains her practice at Deborah Berke Partners. Her firm was recently selected to transform the Bayview Correctional Facility, a former women's prison, into a women's center. As this project tethered our conversation, it allowed Berke to unfurl conceptions of adaptive reuse, gender equity in envisioning the built environs, and the necessary future of collaboration.*

Interview by Emma Phillips '17

To begin, I'm wondering about the way in which there potential to integrate humanities and social sciences into architecture. If you could speak to your experiences either as the dean of Yale or formerly as a student at RISD, and by extension, the ways in which we can formulate a more holistic architectural education

I will preface my remarks by saying I love RISD, I am a loyal RISD alum, I am a huge fan of Brown University and have been for a really long time. I think this new undergraduate program is fantastic and a long time coming. I know it took the focused work of a lot of people. It goes one step towards the question you ask, which is less specifically about somebody in the humanities or social sciences, but more about the integration of a broad and good liberal arts education with a focused and strong design education. That's step one. That undergraduate education in architecture is not pre-professional so much as it is the discipline of the built environment and everything that incorporates.

Now I will say something I don't want you to interpret as negative. At a certain point an architect is not also a cultural anthropologist, a sociologist, a social worker, and trained in public health. The real way we need to be going about education, and this is as true at Yale in the graduate program as it is in the Brown-RISD undergraduate program, is to talk about the nature of collaborative, respectful, cross-disciplinary work where many voices come together. Architects as pretend sociologists, sociologists as pretend architects, is a really bad idea.

Do you have insight into how to create those cross disciplinary connections, or do they come organically and situational depending on the moment, the build site?

They do not come organically when the field is not watered and fertilized. They come organically when it is the focus and belief of individuals and institutions that it is their responsibility to do good work. Here at Yale there are a host of new deans that have started fairly recently. We are interested in inter-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary work and conversation, so we will make it possible for our students to have those opportunities, whether it is from the most pragmatic: of adjusting class schedules so you can take a class in architecture and take a class in public health if that is your interest, to the most profound, which is to have educators in the school who share this philosophy.

You touch briefly on something I would like to unfurl. The architect acting as a pseudo-sociologist, or a sociologist imitating an architect. How do you encourage people to be in pursuit of their expertise rather than undercutting themselves by attempting work they are unqualified to do?

I think familiarity should lead to respect and knowledge. If an architect takes a sociology course they have read enough material to know what it's about, and ideally they know who to call as they take on a project that requires that kind of input.

The Conversion Project of the Bayview Correctional Facility on West 20th is certainly explicitly gendered. In your position as dean, one that is emblematic of a larger groundswell of women attaining positions of power within the field and academy, do you feel a pull to focus on projects that explicitly center women's advancement or conversely, a hesitancy, as to not be reduced to a 'female architect' and have your work and legacy solely considered as that of an 'architect'?

That is a complicated question, and I would say, wouldn't it be nice if that were actually a problem? There are so few facilities and programs devoted to the betterment of women, that so far I have not been pigeonholed in that way.

I think a bigger problem for women in architecture is the traditional sexist pigeon holing. Which is, oh you're a woman you must only do interiors. Yes, there are many gifted women who do interiors because they want to. Nobody should assume a woman couldn't design a skyscraper or a hospital. So I am more concerned about dated stereotypes about what women are good at in architecture, than I am about being typecast as doing a job for women's buildings.

In fact when I was a trustee at a New York City all girls school and they were looking to hire an architect, part of my voice in the room, was to say, you know it should be a woman led firm or a woman partner who is the lead on this job, because it's an opportunity for you as an institution to show your students female role models.

In previous interviews, you've commented on loving life, and utilizing design as a portal through which to channel that vivacity. I'm curious, with the transformation of the Chelsea facility into a women's center, how you intend to forge a new moment that is in pursuit of a liveliness in a building that was originally constructed to explicitly imprison and necessarily convey a deprivation of life.

Further, adaptive reuse is a common thread in your practice. Will you incorporate the previous vestiges of the building as the use value shifts entirely? What do you perceive to be the implications of reclamation of a women's prison to uplift the very communities it once subjugated?

The question about the Bayview is even more complex because the building was originally built, in its first incarnation, to be a YMCA like facility for men who worked the shifts when New York had an active harbor, when the west side of Manhattan actually had piers with freight on them. It's also a building by Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon, who are very accomplished architects; they designed the empire state building. So the idea, in my mind, that buildings can have multiple lives, multiple purposes, is an important thing to note.

I'm sitting here in my office at Yale looking out at a church that is now the Repertory Theater. Buildings have embedded energy in terms of material and labor. They also have the memories of communities, both positive and negative. So when the memory of the community is negative, and justifiably so, the job of the architect is to work with the bones and the current mission to erase the negative history and rediscover, in the case of Bayview, the original dignity of what was once there. I have a particular interest in adaptive reuse projects because of these multiple levels of social and environmental responsibility. I love the fact that we're reversing the immediate history of Bayview, but respecting and building on, in the 21st century, the accomplished work of Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon. We're collaborating with dead guys in a good way.

You mentioned the distinction between the pragmatic and the profound, how do you balance on that precipice as the dean at Yale?

Every day is a giant puzzle, of little and big pieces, trying to address them all in some logical sequence where small, practical changes can do what they're meant to do, and large, profound content initiatives get the necessary attention sought and input from others that gives them staying power.

Is staying power an honoring of the urban fabric that already exists, the energy of a building's history? Or is it the pursuit of a newly rendered imagining of urban place that instead prioritizes the future communities frequenting space? And can you know if your building is successful in achieving those ends?

I don't think you do. You work your hardest. My husband asks me this. He's a doctor. At 6 weeks, 6 months, there are criteria; you replace somebody's shoulder. Can you raise your arm after a year straight over your head? Good, yes we have succeeded. You have no pain after six weeks? Good, yes we have succeeded.

I think both for architecture school graduates and the life of buildings, what is success, and when do you judge it, and by what criteria, is really difficult.

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# In Conversation // Shawn Hesse, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility

*Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility works for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities. ADPSR programs aim to raise professional and public awareness of critical social and environmental issues, further responsive design and planning, and honor persons and organizations whose work exemplifies social responsibility. Shawn Hesse, an architect at Emersion Design in Boston, serves on the board.*

*Interview by Emma Phillips '17*

How did you come to be on the board for ADPSR? From what I understand as your work and practice, there is a thread of social equity, how did that become your charge?

For me it's been an evolution of thinking. I've really been focused on sustainability, and I guess it's just been kind of a slow evolution.

The working definition that most people use to define sustainability is meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations to meet the needs of tomorrow. And I've just been realizing we're not doing the first part, so it's kind of troubling to feel like we're doing a really good job with the first part of the sentence when we haven't addressed the second part.

What I've been saying is that were not meeting today's needs, and really what we're doing is meeting today's wants in a way that allows future generations to meet their wants.

And how do you conceptualize today's needs?

When we look at society as a whole, there are a lot of inequitable outcomes. When you look at incarceration rates, when you look at health outcomes, when you look at wage gaps. So this kind of idea around social justice is a working platform to ask, what if we were in a society where there weren't inequitable outcomes?

Because really the reality is right now you can use race for a predictor for a slew of outcomes that have, or should have, nothing to do with race. Likelihood of being incarcerated, or getting asthma, or net wealth. And if we were really in an equitable society then you wouldn't be able to use race as a predictor for any of those things. The population is 20% African American, so the prison population should be 20% African American. That is not the case at all.

Emersion Design, the firm you work for outside of your work on the board, recently design the newest Cincinnati police station. To get at inequitable deliverables, I cannot pretend there isn't a link between police and solitary confinement, and I wonder how you reconcile navigating those two positions?

So it's a bit of a challenge. The Cincinnati police station that we just finished, in particular, had a really robust community outreach program. The Cincinnati police department has had a lot of problems, and following those problems, has actually received a lot of awards for trying to resolve those issues. It gets to the root of the question, at what point do you engage in a process in order to try to shift it, and at what point do you refuse to participate in the system? For me, it's not an easy answer. It is an easy answer when the work itself is intended to violate human rights. Execution chambers, solitary confinement. The Cincinnati police station has a giant community center, a giant community room, they have a robust community outreach design process where they incorporated the community. There's a lot of community artwork, so there is an opportunity to break down the barriers. And division that happen between police and community, and it can serve as a bridge. Whether its doing that or not is unknown or to be seen. It's not an easy answer.

After the design or architecture is over, is there any way to measure whether those community rooms or community engagement processes are actually being used?

I should also clarify, my involvement with ADPSR, is me as volunteer. My day job is my day job. Because emersion, I'm speaking on my own behalf, so I think the firm hasn't taken things to the same degree that I have, which is also part of reconciling.

That needs to happen or is ongoing. I think there certainly are metrics that could be tracked. You could look at community policing, incarceration rates and police shootings. As of right now I don't think that anyone is, but it's certainly a good idea.

I was recently speaking with Deborah Berke, about the intersection of architecture and social responsibility. She's redesigning a former women's prison in Chelsea to be transformed into a women's center. She said that she thinks it's dangerous for architects to pretend to be sociologist or sociologists to pretend to be architects. So how do you do this work of social equity but still maintain yourself as an architect and do what you do best?

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that's one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community engagement, because architects are not trained it that. So there's this kind of fundamental flaw where architecture is very insular, it's very homogenous, it's very white, it's very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it kind of responsibly is for the industry to make a robust effort to actually create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and not just pretend to. So that's a tough shift for an industry

I think if we were able to do that, at the very least it would create the opportunity to have a different perspective in the room by default, and to have somebody say, hey, you know what, maybe we should bring in somebody, fill in the blank .maybe we should ask somebody else about this.

The other challenge is that development is not happening within a silo within architecture. There's the architecture profession and then there's property developers, which is even more removed, and more disassociated from an ideal around diversity and inclusion than even the architecture profession. So there's that dynamic.

Working where you can start first. Architecture can start with the architecture profession.

I'm starting to find that tension in applying to urban planning graduate programs. Some of them have a real estate development track, and a community development track, and I think it's eerie that those are two distinct paths.

That's one of the other aspects of all of this work. When I was in school, and I first started getting involved, it was really centered on helping the rural poor. And then I started to kind of ...then my eyes were opened to the racial tensions of cities, and the racial divides of cities...and so I kind of dove right into that.

Now I'm seeing again that there's a need for both. There's a role for architecture and planning in both realms. You don't really hear of a rural planner. When you look at the cultural divide that's happening in the country, there's a huge swath of the country that's not thought about, not decided for

URBAN planning, right? It's not just rural planning, its community planning. It should



always be community planning.

When you come to that moment of realization, and you're in a firm that's very city centric, what do you do?

I mean, so there's Enterprise community partners, they're headquartered in Boston, but they have target communities throughout the country that they do work in. some of them are in rural parts of the country. They pay attention to this dynamic, the need to think about communities not just being in cities, not just being in urban centers. There's also the Rural Studio. That was one of my first exposures to the idea that architecture could actually do something to help people who need help, and now, after the work I'm doing with Rafael and ADPSR, its really solidifying the framework around human rights, because when you look at that framework, the un declaration for human rights basically every single one of them is an architectural need. Its education, its healthcare, its housing. That's it. Its community involvement. Public space, healthcare, housing, and education. Those are all architecturally dependent, or built environment dependent.

It does seem like there might be some tension between the day job-ness of architecture and having to make a living, and then being engaged in this project of social responsibility that is volunteer based. How do you use architecture as a change agent when your day job is not necessarily in direct pursuit of that ethos?

The reason that I'm at emersion is that I do get an outlet for it. ADPSR is explicitly an activist group, right? Its founded as an activist group. ADPSR is able to take positions those other organizations, even other nonprofits, like in the built environment space, can not really take, because of the dynamics of how they exist.

The reason I'm at emersion is because I do get the opportunity to push. For example I was working on a project for a university and was able to talk through a lot of social justice related topics, not in an activist voice, just in the simple act of creating space to have a conversation about cultural issues within the context of the project. So we're planning a major renovation, maybe there's an opportunity to reach out to the black lives matter student group and essentially use the project as just an excuse to open a dialogue. Hey we're working on this project, come in and talk with us on how you think we should be spending 60 million dollars. Or the divestment campaign that's on campus, the student group that's focused really on climate change. Whatever those groups may be. Opening up the space just based on those two examples created a different dynamic in the meeting. So there's suddenly a new conversation around stuff that was maybe off limits before. Wed been in four days worth of meetings and somebody at the end of the table hadn't said anything,

and she leaned in and asked, can we plan for a nursing room? Yes, we can do that. And then it kind of snowballed, another person says, you know, we did have a couple of students that are Muslim that are really upset that we didn't have a prayer room, maybe we should plan for a prayer room. That's a good idea too. And then somebody was like, you know, we really should have at least one unisex toilet on every floor. We should do that too.

Suddenly it created this space where it wasn't the same voice as an activist. It wasn't a protest, and it wasn't a ban, and it wasn't a statement. It just created the space to have a conversation about the stuff that normally doesn't happen.

My last question is this: you touched on the city as a space of replicated divisions, whether that be racial or economic. This might be too stark of a question, but after working as an architect do you think that architecture has the potential to start to get at those questions?

I think we have to be careful. When we talk about architecture and its role in social justice issues, because I think there is a tendency to want to go back to a utopian worldview, where architecture as the physical artifact can solve these problems. I don't think that's true. I think that architecture can exacerbate really bad problems, but I don't know that I agree that the physical artifact is capable of solving them. The process that is used to create the physical artifact definitely can. When you think about the way the firm operates, you think about the culture of the firm, culture of the practice, culture of the industry, and the level of engagement in terms of reaching out to the community and involving other professions, and the people that know about public health, and community engagement, and sociology, and in the end, the physical artifact may or may not change. The building may not be any different. Maybe you have an extra 120 square feet that's designated as a prayer room instead of an office. At the end of the day it's not like it changes it in that degree. Certainly there are other examples, like an execution chamber. Of course that would change if we all just said we're not going to do that anymore. The reasons that is a good starting place with the ethics of architecture, is frankly because it should be pretty clear. Stated intention, and then when you start to get to some of the other topics, it starts to get less clear, it starts to get a little muddy and grey and conflicted and it starts to get pretty blurry as to what my responsibility in all of this is. Returning to your first question. So I think that's why it's really important to acknowledge the physical stuff, there's a conversation to be had in pretty much every project. Were not going to solve poverty by putting an arch instead of a pitch.



## Urban Studies Bus Tours

17.3.2017

### Portable Providence: Mobile & Prefabricated Structures and the Spaces they Create

The tour focused on the History of Prefabrication in Providence. We first looked at the 1874 Elizabeth Building at 100 North Main Street (architects: Stone & Carpenter) and learned about its remarkable cast iron front, manufactured in Providence at the "Builders Iron Foundry." The tour then moved on to the Modern Diner at 364 East Ave and then stopped at the Box Office at 480 Harris, a remarkable structure made from Shipping

Containers by architect Peter Case. The tour concluded with a visit at the Steel Yard, which turned out to be the old location of the Builders Iron Foundry with which we had started our tour. Along the way we discussed the history of prefabrication in architecture, its impact on the urban landscape and the roles of designer and client. (Led by Itohan Osayimwese, History of Art and Architecture, affiliated with Urban Studies).



24.3.2017

### Urban Renewal in Providence

This tour visited several sites where modernist planners in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s looked to remake the Providence downtown and nearby neighborhoods, hoping to reclaim so-called "blighted" areas. It also considered the history of these places, their successes and failures, and how they work or don't work today in a rejuvenating city. (Led by Associate Professor Samuel Zipp, Urban Studies and American Studies).



7. 4. 2017

### Public Schools in Providence

Public schools are situated in a larger physical, institutional, and socio-economic context. Providence's schools reflect the communities' diverse income, racial, ethnic cultural, and governing characteristics. This tour pro-

vided an opportunity to look at a small sample of public schools from a broader perspective. (Led by Professor Kenneth Wong, Urban Studies and Education).





# Events

## Solitary Confinement: Inhumanity in Rhode Island

Reception  
March 10, 2017

Architect Shawn Hesse (emersion DESIGN, Boston) spoke about the role architects can play in resisting social injustice, and Morgan Grefe (executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Society) touched on the stories prison museums tell about race. This was the closing reception for "Solitary Confinement," the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage's exhibition on the use, abuse and experience of solitary confinement

## Gentrification and Urban Revitalization

Panel  
Monday, March 20, 2017

During an era in which so many cities have undergone rapid urbanization and heralded processes of urban renaissance, in what ways can these forces be reconciled with the needs of existing communities? What is gentrification and what tools exist to curb its most pernicious effects? Through the complimentary perspectives of professionals across sectors, attendees were presented with the tools by which to craft a better understanding of both the gentrification process and the effects it has on stakeholders in urban communities.

## Abundant Access: Public Transport as an Instrument of Freedom

Lecture  
Thursday, March 16, 2017

Jarrett Walker spoke about how transit can be simple, if we focus first on the underlying geometry that all transit technologies share, and that the forces that cause transit to succeed or fail often go unexamined in today's transit debates. For architects, urban designers, housing and development professionals, transit is key to building successful cities, yet its essential task and the keys to its success are not always clear. In this engaging lecture Walker lead us beyond some of the distractions that sometimes dominate transit debates, to an understanding of public transit's core power: to give people freedom.

## Women Making Place: Graffiti, Street Art, and Public Murals

Artist Presentation, Discussion, and Q&A  
March 22, 2017

Renowned graffiti artists AM and Petal discussed what it means to participate in the graf world on both the east and west coasts. While showcasing their work, they touched on issues of what it means to be a woman engaging in large-scale aesthetic alterations, and the significance of their work in a traditionally male dominated field.

AM is a New York based interdisciplinary artist working in the mediums of painting, installations, murals, and socially engaged art. Her work explores the inner connectedness of individuals and community using the duals lens of empathy and compassion. Alice aims to inspire creative expression in the sense of shared humanity through art. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at the Museum of the city of New York, the national museum of women in the arts, the un women in contemporary art museum in DC, and she's been commissioned as a mural artist for projects in Tel Aviv, Berlin, and across the United States. She holds a BFA from Parsons School of Design and was an instructor at school of visual arts in 2015. Her book project will be released this summer.

Petal 1 is a legendary Los Angeles based graffiti artist, muralist, educator and activist. She paints as part of the Danger Bees collective with fellow legendary graffiti artist Blossom. This discussion was moderated by Malana Krongelb and the artists were introduced by Stefano Bloch

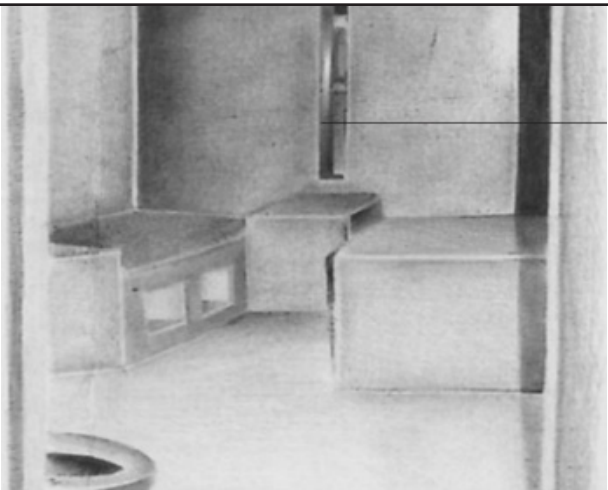
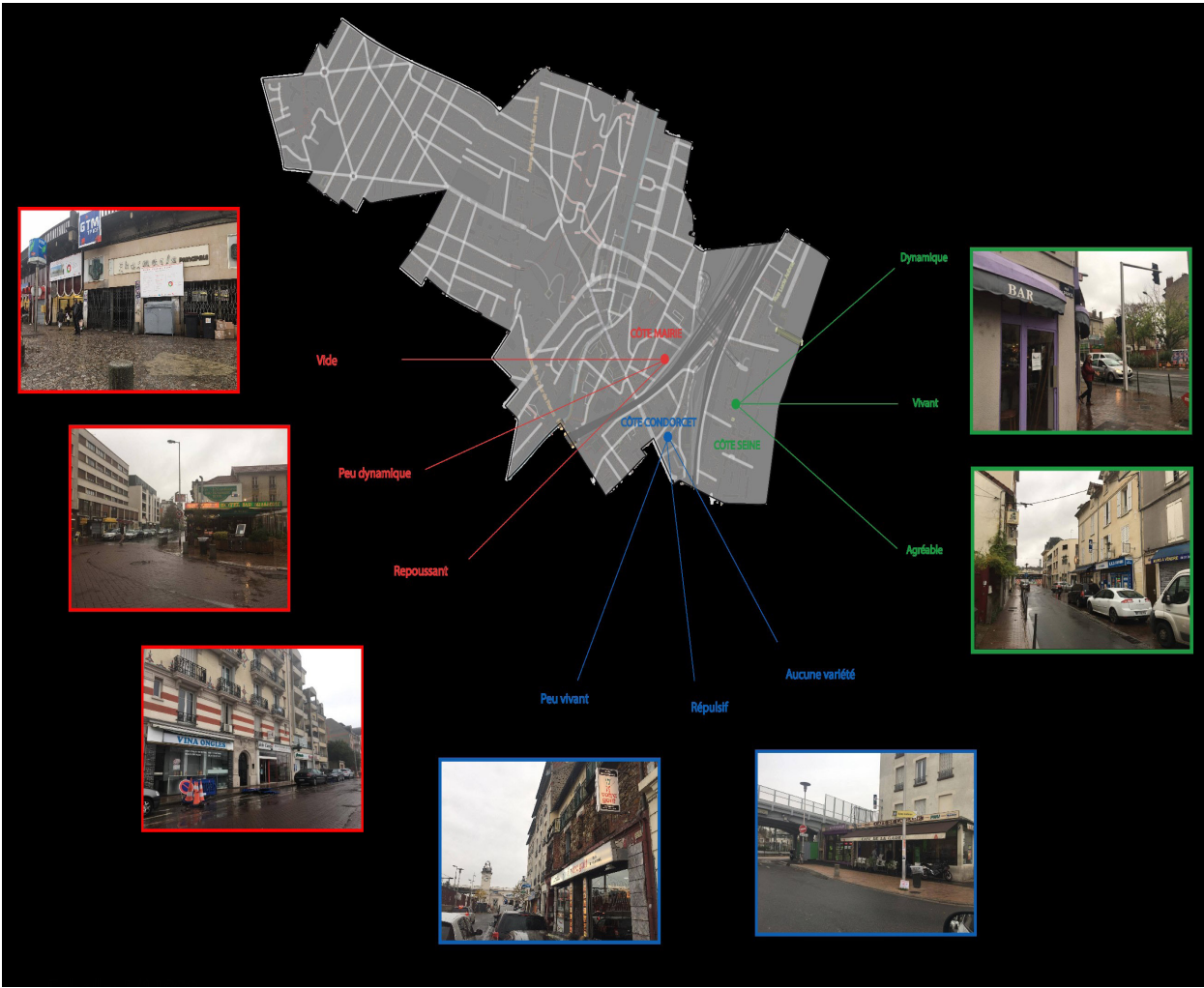


Image: Billy Sell, Corcoran State Prison, California



AM ▲ & Petal 1 ▼



Benjamin Davis at Frank Gehry's Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. On the left, his study of Parisian suburbs. (see page 1)



Spring 2017 Courses

Senior Capstones

URBN 1200: The United States Metropolis, 1945-2000

Samuel Zipp

This lecture and discussion course provided students with an introduction to the history, politics, and culture of United States cities and suburbs from the end of World War II to the close of the twentieth century. Readings were drawn from recent work in the political, social, and cultural history of U.S. cities as well as primary sources rooted in the period under study. This year, Professor Samuel Zipp published and co-edited volume of the writings of the urbanist Jane Jacobs. *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs*, which came out in October from Random House in the US and Canada, and will shortly be available in the UK, China, and Japan. The book was a collaboration between Samuel Zipp and Nathan

Storring, a graduate of the public humanities program at Brown who works at the Project for Public Spaces in New York. The book features essays, interviews, speeches, and even one poem from the 1930s to the 2000s, the entire span of Jacobs' long career as a writer and thinker about cities, economics and morals. They have been doing events for the book in Providence and in Toronto and New York, Jacobs's two homes. Otherwise, Professor Zipp has been serving on the board of DownCity Design here in Providence, working on his book project on Wendell Willkie and internationalism during World War II, and teaching the urban theory seminar and this US Metropolis class.

URBN 1500: Understanding the City Through Data

Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz

Cities are complex systems, but luckily there are lots of data and analysis techniques to make sense of them. In this project-based course, students conducted a variety of data analysis

techniques that are commonly used and essential in urban studies. The case studies were selected from humanities, social sciences, and real-life urban problems.

URBN 1870T: Transportation: An Urban Planning Perspective

Robert Azar

This seminar explored how urban planners in the U.S. plan for and around various transportation networks. Students examined how these networks are designed and funded, which modes get priority over others, and ultimately how transportation

shapes the built environment. Real world examples of plans and projects from Providence and Rhode Island were used throughout the course. Important concepts were illustrated through field trips and guest speakers.

URBN 1870U: Critical Urban Theory

Stephano Bloch

In this seminar students closely read and applied critical theory to thinking about urban formations and inherent socio-spatial inequalities and forms of everyday representation in a contemporary US context. More broadly, students became familiar with geographical thought com-

ing out of the social sciences and humanities that advances the decidedly spatial perspective that the majority of social, economic, political, and environmental problems and their potential solutions are urban-based.



Robert Lee: Exploring Pokémon GO's Potential

Location-based augmented reality mobile games, a rapidly growing category, have huge unrealized potential to change how we interact with each other and our environments. Pokémon GO has unintentionally created societal benefits on a large scale, such as boosting physical exercise, community building and civic engagement. However, these benefits could be further maximized by making them primary objectives in the game design process, rather than just positive externalities. This paper collates existing studies to demonstrate the effect that Pokémon GO has had on its players and society at large, and then proposes changes to the game's design and mechanics that would enhance these benefits. I'll be moving to San Francisco to work with Salt Partners, a small team developing and investing in emerging concepts and exceptional teams in the food and beverage industry. In other words, starting and running restaurants.



Sarah Lucenti: Coding Los Angeles

This capstone looked at the ways in which the utilitarian area code system that was meant to make calls more efficient allowed people to create group identities based off the three-digit code preceding their phone numbers.



Ethan Blake: Environmental Resilience in Seattle

For Kurt Teichert's class, Environmental Stewardship and Resilience in Urban Systems, groups studied a specific city's environmental policy and foresight in relation to each week's topic. For my capstone, I individually studied an additional city, Seattle.



Rosanna Lederhausen: Guerrilla Gardening

This capstone grew out of an interest in what we eat and how we interact with the larger food system, I explored the impact of urban agriculture by focusing on guerilla gardening as a manifestation of rebellion against the current food systems (or lack thereof) at hand. After graduation I hope to work as a design consultant in either Chicago or New York.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/urban-studies/courses>