Alice Jia Li Song
Selected Work Sample 2021

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Museums have the power to orient the public, they make visible what has been seen but not looked at. Yet behind the pristine white walls of these museums is the power to conceal, they cloak the internal machinery of the museum which runs on exchanges of capital and legitimacy while its hermetic seal works to protect and disconnect its artifacts from their provenance and external environment. How can architecture draw attention to these hidden mechanisms if not reveal them?

C.A.R.E., Center for Art and Research in Energy, is a new cultural institution in the heart of Lisbon. It repositions three key organizations: the EDP Foundation, a non-profit subsidiary of the national Portuguese electric company; Central Tejo, a former power station converted into a present-day heritage museum; and MAAT, the newest contemporary art museum of Lisbon. By revealing and realigning their relationship, art and science can be positioned closely together to tackle the energy crisis which is both profoundly social and cultural.

Furthermore, as the new entry point to the Electricity Museum, C.A.R.E. seeks to expand beyond the static and didactic nature of the heritage museum. It will also provide the space much needed for the storage and access to EDP’s collection of archival documents and historical artifacts.
The institution believes that in addition to typical public facing programs such as exhibition and education space, giving access to programs that reveal the processes of work which happen at the institution will give legibility to the mechanisms of the institution.
Top: Section depicting programmatic boxes which puncture through all levels of the museum. Bottom: Open gallery roof. Opposite: Flow diagrams.
**East Boston Groundworks**  
MIT Architecture, Fall 2020  
Advised by Rania Ghosn

Walk for East Boston: Groundworks for a Better Commons is a walking tour event hosted by the ICA Watershed that takes visitors through three stops along the East Boston Greenway. This proposal looks at the Corridor Enhancement Zone in East Boston, a buffer zone between the residential and industrial and commercial areas of the city. In other words, a large swatch of underutilized leftover land. The thread of the Greenway is reconceived as a food system in which adjacent underutilized land in the Corridor Enhancement Zone underneath the highway is used for food growth, composting, and food preparation. These activities take advantage of a property in transition to productively look after underserved communities that lack green space and healthy food options.

Local, city, and state-level organizations will be needed to bring forward a long-term community project -- this project calls for the collaboration of Eastie Farms, ICA Boston, and MassCreative.

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Bottom: Site located on the Tagus River. Opposite, top: View of the entry, facing the “billboard” facade and workyard. Opposite, bottom: Frissure of the hanging bar which serves the educational programming (left) and artists’ space (right).
Stop 1: The Remediation Gardens

Before food growth can begin on site, the soil must be revitalized to push out potential pollutants and contaminants from the surrounding urban infrastructure. Phytoremediation is a strategy of planting that uses species such as sunflowers or ginkgo tree for soil remediation. On the ground, patches of planter boxes can begin to grow produce as the soil undergoes remediation.

The vertical structure which runs along the highway serves as a buffer between the highway and the ground, and an also be thought of as the green billboard of East Boston. Seasonally, the plantings in the vertical structure will be able to take advantage of its height to pollinate other open spaces around East Boston, a form of guerilla greening.

Stop 2: The Compost Gardens

The Compost Gardens sit in-between two on-ramps and below a longspan highway structure. Here, compost is built up on the outer edges of the highway eventually building up a sizable compost wall. Animals and microorganisms will be able to reclaim this environment as processes of composting occurs on site. On the interior, topsoil can be laid on top of the compost to grow nutrient-demanding produce such as tomatoes, cabbages, or zucchinis. This site will dismantle a human-centric logic in citymaking to include non-human agents.

Stop 3: The Foodway

The Foodway is the culminating point of the walking tour. The site, wedged between two highways, will act as a distribution center for all cultivated food and material matters — harvested food, seeds, and composting soil will be distributed to the community. During the summer and fall season, raw and prepared food will be distributed at the foodway. It is also a space to gather and celebrate the community. During the winter, the structure becomes an outdoor storage and tucks away any leftovers from harvesting for future use. This final site will make visible the various under-represented communities in East Boston and to claim a right to the city.
The design of The New Y on Coney Island began by calibrating activities and programs typically produced by the Y to fit the local demographic. Coney Island is a neighborhood that is home to an aging population and younger families, with two retirement homes and two public schools within 4 blocks of the site. The context called for a democratic form, geometries and their resultant systems which open up the possibility of an expansive and continuous space that is non-hierarchical. We can imagine stitching together a tapestry of recreational, cultural, and community-oriented programs to create new programmatic adjacencies and relationships.

What are the possibilities when there is an overlapping of programs or an expansion of flexible programs? And on the hand, what does it mean to create division and privacy in a free space? What is the basis of creating enclosure and what are the limits? The New Y seeks to provide spaces for the community, a recreational space for people of all ages to gather under one roof.

Below: Selected study models from the semester. Opposite: One of the entry points along the facade.
A mat building plan which weaves together programs of different spatial needs and accommodations.
Opposite: Running Track. Top and Bottom: 3/32" = 1'-0" Model
The Pleasure of Ruins
University of Waterloo, Fall 2015
Advised by Lorenzo Pignatti, collaboration with Mina Vedut

What is it about ruins which captivate our imagination? The half-brokenness, the uncovering, the allure of the past? Ruins are both a historic concern and a contemporary one. The construction of the new piazza surrounding Porta Asinaria in Rome brings this idea alive and does not treat ancient artifacts as museum pieces which are protected and isolated, rather as scenes to be incorporated into the visitor’s experience. The piazza will use elements which invoke the tantalizing mystery of the ruin without recreating or reconstructing it. Walkways with steps, walls of half-height, spaces half sunken will contribute to the dynamic experience of the expansive site.

The piazza draws on historical monuments and architecture of the site to create functions and spaces for the present. Most notably the new aqueduct, which runs from the eastern end of the site and culminates at the Piranesi Museum, is inspired by the river which ran through the site in Ancient Rome.

Below: Compilation of historical icons near the surrounding site. Bottom: Analysis of historical icons. Opposite: Strategic additive and subtractive method to create plane of site.
Site Plan

Piranesi Museum
1. Entry Catwalk
2. Observatory
3. Open-air Museum
4. Reflecting Pool
5. Occupiable Roof
6. Museum Building
7. Colonades

Outdoor Park
A. Porta Asinaria
B. Steps to Piazza di San Giovanni
C. Monument Garden
D. New Piazza
E. Aqueduct
F. Temporary Market
G. Horticulture Terraces
H. Food Hall
I. Eating Pavilions
J. Stone Pine Path
K. Path to Museum
Chaffy, Sukkah x Detroit
Detroit Design Month, September 2019
Collaboration with Edward Wang & Ronnie Kataki

A sukkah is an inherently paradoxical construction. A shelter designed to be impermanent and exposed to the elements, the sukkah is a reminder of the precarious and fragile life of our bodies within the world. In response to this charged premise, our proposal is a temporary structure that embraces the idea of openness by dissolving the idea of the wall itself. Composed of thousands of suspended thatch bundles, the continuous wall is at once exposed and protective, solid and transparent, fixed and always moving.

With its hairy, flaxen shell, the sukkah hides an intimate space of rest, one where celebrants may peek out while being obscured by sheaves of thatch. The interior is meant to provide a moment of multisensory repose. The sound and smell of the rippling thatch walls and the interplay of light and shadow underneath the bamboo ceiling allow visitors to reset from the auditory, olfactory, and visual stimuli of the outside world.

Below: Axonometric drawing indicating materials used. Opposite: Photo of built project on site.

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Below: Axonometric drawing indicating materials used. Opposite: Photo of built project on site.
Kearny Point is home to a 130-acre former shipyard, Kearny Point, in New Jersey. Numerous warships set sail from the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company on the Hackensack River. And after tours in areas like the South Pacific and Korea, famous vessels were sliced up and sold as scrap here, too. In 2016, Hugo Neu commissioned WXY Studio to begin a revitalization project that would convert the site into a mixed-use industrial park. Beginning with Building 78 and the Annex, the campus is undergoing a transformation to attract new tenants to this growing innovation district. The adaptive reuse of the former maritime industry buildings into multi-tenant artisanal manufacturing hubs, includes building design and development, façade and lighting, interior finishes, layout consulting, and final master planning proposals.

The design of the project was paid particular attention to the physical and programmatic vulnerabilities of the site. Sea level rise and storms are imminent and put the site at risk; commerce, work, and labor are transforming at a rapid pace. How can we design a site that is transformative? What can this space offer to its tenants which would be different from its Brooklyn counter-parts?
Bladerunner Research Project, 3XN, Copenhagen
Research Project, Internship, 2015
Led by Kasper Guldager Jensen & Morten Norman Lund

BladeRunner is a collaborative research project between computer and math engineers, a concrete manufacturer, and a team of architects (3XN). The vision of this project is to revolutionize the construction industry by facilitating the production of advanced organic forms in architecture at price levels comparable to that of standard construction.

BladeRunner will introduce the use of robotic cells for rapid production of non-standard concrete molds in Expanded Polystyrene (EPS). In Danish as well as international construction the degree of architectonic projects with advanced geometry is rapidly growing and thus the demand for technologies that can enhance the architects’ design without increasing the construction budget.

As part of the architectural team, I assisted with the submission of RobArch research paper as well as contributing to the study of various architectural forms to the compatibility of the technology of the hotblade and hotwire.

A. Analyze existing geometry
B. Segmentation of geometry
C. Cut foam - various arm movements
Imprint, MIT Architecture Department Publication
Editorial & Design Team 2020
Led by Nicholas de Monchaux & Miko McGinty

Imprint is a publication is a collective document that makes space for every student who chooses to participate that privileges breadth and inclusion. It is a material trace that documents the Department of Architecture over the course of one semester. Each issue encapsulates current critical and creative work produced across discipline groups and formats.

The first issue, Imprint 01, is a handshake—a first impression—that is simultaneously a memory. This inaugural issue, conceived of during a dispersed and mostly virtual semester, relies on a future commitment to transform it into an ongoing archive. Even though the Department is currently untethered to a single place, building or region, Imprint 01 is a reflection of a place in time. Collecting and binding together work from all five branches of the school allows us a vantage point that had remained inaccessible even when our hallways and studios were full of energy and conversation. It is a partial portrait of people illustrated through their work. Admittedly, our peers cannot be fully encompassed through the pages of this book, but still this issue is a purposeful supplement to the many interactions transmitted through the blue light of our screens. Sprinkled throughout this issue are traces of our usual circumstances, but more importantly and in spite of everything, Imprint 01 is an impression of what we have built together.
Household is the space of living, dwelling. It is the space of domesticity, the space of love. The household is “the topography of our intimate being” - Gaston Bachelard

When we think household, we think family (of course sometimes with distinctions between the two: certain households are for orphans or seniors...). So the typical model is the nuclear family which typically includes a married couple and their children—nuclear means heart/core: the family as the nucleus of society. The primary unit of analysis. For other groups, it’s the individual or the nation... Diverse forms for living have existed throughout time and space and we are interested in the parallels, the commonalities. In patterns that endure or recur over time, and across geographies.

For the exhibition, we propose this question: How does architecture, across time and space, allow for certain modes of subjectivity? Architecture, which enables certain forms of subjectivity, is itself influenced by larger socioeconomic conditions and political realities... We are starting with the architecture, however. We hope that this type of investigation would invite the viewer to reflect on the external conditions... the exteriority versus the interiority of the problem of the house. So moving from the realm of feelings (the interior) to the external world – the conditions under which households have been established.

The tower house in Yemen, this typology that was born of the need for defense. But once this form was put in place, it survived and defied time and changes in technology and social and political conditions. People lived and adjusted to this architectural form. Historically, and to this day, nomadic Mongolian tribes of the central Asian Steppe live in yurts. The yurt, this circular tent with a domed roof, covered with layers of felt. Yurts traditionally have been hand made but today they’re factory produced. People have not abandoned this architectural form and the style of the living that it has shaped, despite emerging technologies. So starting with the architecture in order to examine conditions of sharing. How will we live together? How does architecture allow us to do that? The emphasis is on sharing. And “living together,” per the biennale’s theme.