The Garden of Earthly Delights
A social condenser of contemporary pleasures

“Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said. 'One can't believe impossible things.' I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.’” –Lewis Carrol

STUDIO OVERVIEW
The conceptual scenery for the studio is the famous triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch. Three main scenes linked by a common denominator, sin, create an ambiguous and enigmatic world composed of multiple narratives and micro and macro readings. Like the painting, the studio is placed in an intermediate zone between fantasy and reality, the critical and the imaginative, the concrete and the invented. Students will create a series of intrusions of the fantastic world into the actual world, questioning some of the conventions found in contemporary ‘everyday’ life. The studio seeks to propose architectural alternatives to the current society and urban environment by bringing back the positive spirit of transformation, dominant in the architectural scene of the 60s and 70s and believing even in “impossible things”.
Students will propose a garden of earthly delights for the 21st century in New York providing new opportunities for the real and a testing ground for the imagined and designing four interlinked and progressive projects: An inventory of pleasures (1), two pleasure devices (2), an institute of pleasures (3) and a garden orchestrating all the previous challenges (4). Deconstructing the design process into four design challenges—pleasures, devices, institute, and garden—the studio attempts to break down the multiple considerations that come into play when designing. It moves from the micro- to the macro-scale, understood as the design quantity and complexity of relationships. Each of these parts uses different design methodology to assist students in developing and articulating their own architectural positions.

The architecture proposed in this studio will be dynamic, interactive, and adaptable to the varying needs and desires of the individual and society. While in conventional architecture the viewer is a passive visitor, the studio proposes to generate a ‘stage/set’ architecture where the viewer is part of the work, and accomplice to the action; the built objects and buildings become participants of the event playing a significant role in the plot; and the city becomes the place that produces and facilitates performances and actions.

Social condenser, unexpectedness, openness, tactics for thought and drawing are the five main ideas that articulate the general pedagogical approach of this design studio. It will re-examine a set of precedents, positions, strategies, projects, ideas, processes, etc. providing a practical and theoretical foundation for design research and useful spectrum of possible suggestions and alternatives. Students will be urged to be open to alternative ways of approaching and thinking architecture, engaging connections with other disciplines.

The studio looks beyond representing architecture as the relevance and autonomy of drawing as a language to facilitate the creation of a personal and expressive yet generic and comprehensible language. The studio asks students to create architecture through drawing.

Bernard Tschumi | Parc de La Villette | 1987

**DESIGN PROCESS**

The studio proposes to collaboratively complete the design of a social condenser of contemporary pleasures designing four interlinked and progressive projects:

A. *Inventory of Pleasures*: the first project investigates the idea of pleasure in our society. Focusing on the activity of the garden, it requires the invention of a visual inventory of contemporary 'pleasures.' Students individually will design, describe and categorize a set of twelve pleasures using a drawn 'story.'

B. *Pleasure Device*: The second step pays special attention to space; the spatial materialization and performance of some of those pleasures and situations. The explorations will take the
form of two apparatus or interactive social machines at the scale of the body assisting in experimenting the pleasures.

C. **Institute of Pleasures**: Students progress from individual to group work to create an institute to facilitate a group of pleasures at the scale of the city. Students are challenged to create a “laboratory of pleasure,” which is to be guided by the strategy of “cross-programming” defined by B. Tschumi (using a given spatial configuration for a program that is not intended for it.)

D. **Garden Script** orchestrating all the previous challenges: The intent of the studio’s last project, the garden script, is to create a scheme for a garden of contemporary pleasures not simply as an architectural design but mostly as a set of tactical proposal to derive the maximum benefit from the implantation of the previous work on a real site in Manhattan. Students will create the script for the garden, the general strategies, tactics and concepts that frame the mode of action of the garden.

In parallel with these four projects, students will generate a set of images, impressions, projections and views of the proposed world.

**Site**: The proposals will transform the world of an outdoor space in New York into a garden of contemporary pleasures. The specific site for the garden will be provided in Week 7 at the beginning of project 3: The institute of pleasures.

Some of the design strategies that we will test in the studio for approaching the design process are: collage; unexpected and new relations between context, content and concept; interactions between spaces and programs: reciprocity, indifference and conflict; neoplastic procedures; abstraction; diagramming; thinking in images; layering and separation; new associations; interdisciplinary connections; appropriation; performance; drawing; etc.

Weekly tasks will be prescribed for each studio session. Those tasks will involve a broad range of media and varied conceptual/programmatic approaches. Specific deliverables for weekly tasks will be notified during studio sessions.

**RESEARCH AND CONCEPTUAL BASIS**

In 1765, Abbé Laugier wrote: “whoever knows how to design a park well will have no difficulty in tracing the plan for the building of a city according to its given area and situation.” Inspired by this thought, the ultimate goal of the studio is not only to design a garden but also to generate a framework for students to experiment and explore some of the vehicles of contemporary architecture such as openness, vagueness, uncertainty, versatility, incompleteness, anticipation, chance, disorder, or decontextualization.

The general pedagogical approach of this design studio is articulated around five main ideas: social condenser, unexpectedness, openness, tactics for thought, and drawing.

**Social Condenser**

[Social Condenser:] Programmatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference, unprecedented events. –Rem Koolhaas
The conscious desire to incorporate and integrate the social dimension into architecture begins in the early 1920s and stems from the Russian constructivist movement, under the notion of a “social condenser” which aimed to influence the behaviour of society and transform social habits through architecture. If the constructivists emphasized the social role of architecture, Rem Koolhaas, in the Parc de la Villette, re-activated the concept, underscoring the programmatic component of it which was described as an intense program—the intersection and interference of multiple activities upon a void or vacant terrain.

In this regard, the “Garden of Earthly Delights studio” understands the stimulating garden and world, created by Bosch, as a depiction of a fifteenth-century social condenser from both social and programmatic perspectives. The idea of sin, as an excess of pleasure or the fragility and ephemeral nature of happiness and delight in the sinful desires, which are ambiguously conveyed in the painting, provide an excellent framework to embrace critical thinking from different lenses. Egg-shelters, tree-tents, flower-canopies, transparent capsules, giant inhabitable mussels and lobsters, palaces, animal boats, mobile pods, blimp fishes, killer-ears, and so on provide an endless imaginative repertoire of artefacts and spatial suggestions. At the same time, the richness and range of characters, men and women of assorted races, animals, fantastic beasts, demi-humans, and over-scaled creatures performing countless and provocative activities, both individually and in groups, are an incredible visual stimulus to generate a diverse spectrum of architectural approaches which are in line with some of the social challenges of our time in terms of space and program.

Unexpected relations in architecture

You put together two things that have not been put together before. And the world is changed. People may not notice at the time but doesn’t matter. The world has been changed nonetheless. – Julian Barnes

In his book Architecture and Disjunction, Bernard Tschumi states that we need “to consider the architect first as a formulator, an inventor of relations.” The attention of the studio is placed on the strategies and mechanisms that break the logic of discourse to the point of transformation, which allows the search for unpredictable relations between the concept, content and context in architecture. By operating the transgression of the relationships between form, event, body, subject, matter and/or space, students will learn to put “things” together that have not been put together before, aiming to enrich the creative spectrum. The notions of ‘decontextualization’, ‘deviation’, ‘disjunction’ and ‘conflict’ in architecture will be the subject of investigation.

Deviations. The action of departing from an established course or accepted standard. Deviations of what is expected, far from the anticipated and common modes.
Decontextualization. Out of context. Divergence. To take an element from its usual context and put it in a completely different one changing/transforming its original meaning.

Disjunction. The act of disjoining or condition of being disjoined; separation, disunion. A lack of correspondence or consistency.

Conflict. Most relations, of course, are more complex. You can also sleep in the kitchen. And fight and love. Such shifts are not without meaning. [...] Bernard Tschumi.

Open Architecture

When a work offers a multitude of intentions, a plurality of meaning, and above all a wide variety of different ways of being understood and appreciated, then under these conditions we can only conclude that it is of vital interest and that it is a pure expression of personality. – Umberto Eco

Eco’s words on the notion of the open work, characteristic of modern artistic production, summarizes one of the intended goals of this pedagogy: the ability to accomplish and generate a certain level of interpretative openness and ambiguity in the studio production.

Thinking architecture

The architect paradigm vanishes, the aim is not so much to build objects but to construct society. – Pedro Pitarch

Alberto Pérez-Gómez has urged that the architectural education should focus not on solutions, but tactics for thought’ nurtured through creative dialogue and critical debate. This studio aims to cultivate some of these tactics for thinking architecture, to best prepare future architects to think and act well ‘even in an emergency. Students are urged to be open to alternative ways of approaching and thinking about architecture in connections with other disciplines, such as literature, music, sculpture, film, dance, land art, conceptual art, etc.

The Drawing Bazaar

To draw is to select, to select is to interpret, and to interpret is to propose. – Ignasi de Solà Morales

The pedagogical framework and methodology of the studio do not distinguish drawing from design. The production of the studio rests on the concept of hybrid open drawing: a collage of techniques will
be explored during the design process, orthogonal and oblique projections, paraline drawings, diagrams, sketches, collages, ready-mades, models, diptychs and triptychs, snapshots, assemblages, prototypes, videos, animations, essays, graphic novels, etc. Drawing will be employed just as much as a generative tool used to act as a communication and persuasion device.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Every week, there will be a short presentation showing a set of precedents, positions, strategies, projects, ideas, processes references, projects to provide a practical as well as theoretical foundation for the design research and useful speculation. Periodical readings will be assigned throughout the semester. Other resources such as films, videos and artwork will also be recommended and provided. All students will continue the research initiated in the studio, read and understand the suggested material for their incorporation/discussion in the design proposals they put forward.


TASKS AND REFERENCES BY PROJECT

A. Pleasures (Individual)

READINGS:


- Chapter one, “Coney Island: The Technology of the Fantastic”

FILMS:

- A Clockwork Orange by Stanley Kubrick, 1971

TASKS:
A1. Warming up
A2. Deviations
A3. Section Diagrams

B. Pleasure Device at the scale of the body (Individual)

READINGS:

FILMS:

TASKS:
- B1. Readymade Pleasure Devices
- B2. Mechanisms

C. Institute of Pleasures (Group work)

READINGS:

DOCUMENTARY:
- *Institute of Isolation* by Lucy McRae, 2016.

TASKS:
- C1. Cross-programming Collages
- C2. Line and 3d Explorations

D. The Garden Script (Individual)

READINGS:

SUGGEST READING:
  - Chapter two, “The Double Life of Utopia: The Skyscraper”

TASKS:
- D1. Thinking in images
- D2. Tactical proposals
- D3. The Script
ACADEMIC AND WEEKLY SCHEDULE
Note: schedule below is subject to revision through the duration of the semester.

INTRODUCTION
Thu AUG 29  First day of class (Lottery and general presentation)
5:00 pm. Convocation, Aaron Davis Hall

W1
Mon SEP 02  NO CLASS
Thur SEP 05  Presentation Project A: The Catalogue of Pleasures

W2
Mon SEP 09  Studio
The Catalogue of Pleasures A02
Thu SEP 12  Studio
The Catalogue of Pleasures A03

W3
Mon SEP 16  Studio
The Catalogue of Pleasures A04
Thu SEP 19  Studio
The Catalogue of Pleasures A05

W4
Mon SEP 23  Studio
Final Submission Project A: The Catalogue of Pleasures
Presentation Project B: Body Device
Thu SEP 26  Studio
The Body Device B01
5:30 pm. Sciame Lecture: Maria Fullaondo, Rm 107

W5
Mon SEP 30  NO CLASS
Thu OCT 03  Studio
The Body Device B02
5:30 pm. Sciame Lecture: Deborah Berke, Rm 107

W6
Mon OCT 07  Studio
The Body Device B03
Thu OCT 10  Studio
The Body Devices B04
5:30 pm. Sciame Lecture: Rahul Mehrotra with Filip Decorte, Rm 107

W7
Mon OCT 14  NO CLASS- Columbus Day
Wed OCT 16  Monday Schedule Studio
Final Submission Project B: The Body Device
Presentation Project c: The Institute of Pleasures: documentation
5:30 pm. Max Bond Lecture: Zena Howard, moderator Mabel Wilson, The New School

Thu OCT 17
Studio
The Institute of Pleasures C01

W8
Mon OCT 21
Studio
The Institute of Pleasures C02
Thu OCT 24
Studio
The Institute of Pleasures C03
5:30pm. Sciame Lecture: Jean-Pierre Pranlas-Descours, Rm 107

W9
Mon OCT 28
Studio
The Institute of Pleasures C04
Thu OCT 31
Studio
The Institute of Pleasures C05

W10
Mon NOV 04
Studio
Final Submission Project C: The Institute of Pleasures
Presentation Project D: The Garden Script
Thu NOV 07
Studio
The Garden Script D01
5:30 pm. Sciame Lecture: Hävard Breivik and Saskia Sassen, Rm 107

W11
Mon NOV 11
Studio
The Garden Script D02
Thu NOV 14
Studio
The Garden Script D03
6:00pm. Habana 500 colloquium, Rm 107

W12
Mon NOV 18
Studio
The Garden Script D04
Thu NOV 21
Studio
The Garden Script D05

W13
Mon NOV 25
Studio
The Garden Script D06
Thu NOV 28
NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

W14
Mon DEC 02
Studio
The Garden Script D07
Thu DEC 05
Studio
The Garden Script D08
GRADING/ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND STUDIO CULTURE

Course Expectations:

- That students will develop a high level of independent thought and rigor and a willingness to go beyond both basic project requirements and their own perceived limits and abilities.
- That students will successfully complete all project requirements. No make-up or postponed project submissions will be accepted except in the case of medical emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances. Excused absences and project delays must be officially cleared by professor in advance in order to be considered valid.

Methods of Assessment:

- Attendance and participation in class discussions: 20%
- Project development in response to semester schedule: 50%
- Project presentation, completion and resolution: 30%

Note: The Research component of the studio will be weighed more heavily in assessment of graduate student work and class performance.

Key areas of Grading Assessment:

- Studio performance & work habits: Ability to respond to studio criticism & discourse in a consistent & clear manner throughout the course of the semester as demonstrated in the evolution and development of design work.
- Clarity of representation & mastery of media: Ability to utilize both digital and manual drawing and model-making techniques to precisely and creatively represent architectural ideas.
- Pre-design: Ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project that includes such tasks as: an assessment of client and user needs; an inventory of spaces and their requirements; an analysis of site conditions (including existing buildings); a review of the relevant building codes and standards, including relevant sustainability requirements, and an assessment of their implications for the project; and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria.
- Research: Understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process.
- Integrated evaluations and decision-making design process: Ability to demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project. This demonstration includes problem identification, setting evaluative criteria, analyzing solutions, and predicting the effectiveness of implementation.
- Attendance: Consistent level of preparation and on-time presence for each studio class and scheduled evening lectures.
- Portfolio: Completion of portfolio as directed by coordinator and attendance at all scheduled portfolio related events.

Grading Criteria:

A (+/-) Work meets all requirements and exceeds them. Presentations are virtually flawless, complete, and
finely detailed. Work exhibits professional, “museum quality” level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor. Work shows evidence of intense struggle to go beyond expectations, and beyond the student’s own perceived limits of their abilities.

B (+/-) Work meets all requirements. Presentations are complete and finely detailed. Work exhibits professional level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor.

C (+/-) Work meets minimum requirements. While presentations may be complete, student has struggled to develop an individual design process and/or is lacking in craft or design resolution.

D (+/) Work is below minimum requirements. Presentations are incomplete, student has struggled to develop an individual design process and/or is lacking in craft or design resolution.

F Work is well below minimum requirements. Student does not develop adequate design process, and/or does not finish work on time.

INC Grades of “incomplete” are not given under any circumstances unless there is evidence of a medical or personal emergency. In such cases, instructor and student develop a contract to complete work by a specified date, as per CCNY policy. Classes / work missed due to illness must be explained with a physician’s note.

Notes:  
C is the lowest passing grade for M.Arch I and M.Arch II students. No D grades are given to graduate students. Working in teams does not guarantee the same grade for each team member; grades are based on a range of criteria for each student.

For more information on grading guidelines and other CCNY policies and procedures, consult the current CCNY academic bulletins: https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/registrar/bulletins

Office Hours:  
Office hours are set by appointment. If a student needs to speak in private with a studio critic they must email in advance to request a meeting time. Students may seek office hour appointments to discuss any matters of concern including personal, private matters and general inquiries about course related work, grading, assessment and content.

Probation & Dismissal: for program specific information related to grades, academic standing, probation and dismissal, please see your program academic advisors:  
B.Arch: Michael Miller mmliller@ccny.cuny.edu  
Amy Daniel adaniel@ccny.cuny.edu  
M.Arch: Hannah Borgeson hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu

Studio Culture:  
Working in the studio is mandatory. Studio culture is an important part of an architectural education. Please see the Spitzer School of Architecture Studio Culture Policy, which can be accessed on the SSA website here: https://ssa.ccny.cuny.edu/about/policies/.

Absence & Lateness:  
Arriving more than ten minutes late to class will constitute an absence. Two unexcused absences will result in
a whole letter grade deduction from a final grade; more than four will result in a failing grade. It is expected that all students will participate in all scheduled working, midterm and final reviews and contribute constructively to the discussion.

Absences due to Religious Observances:
Students who will miss any class sessions, exams, presentations, trips, or the like due to a religious observance should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate adjustments for observance needs can be implemented. This could include an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement that is missed because of an absence due to a religious observance on any particular day or days.

Noise Policy:
The studio environment should be a quiet and respectful place where all students can work and think in peace. At no time may students play music out loud in studio, even at a low volume. If you desire to listen to music, either during class hours or after hours, headphones are a requirement. Conversations must also be kept to a reasonable volume to respect classmates and those students in adjacent studios.

Readings & Journals:
Students are expected to keep a journal or sketchbook throughout the duration of studio to document their thought process & take notes of any texts, books, terms or references that are mentioned by either the studio critic or fellow classmates and to selectively follow up on these and any other assigned readings before the next class.

Academic Integrity:
As a student you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects the ethical ideas of the profession of architecture. Any act of academic dishonesty not only raises questions about an individual's fitness to practice architecture, but also demeans the academic environment in which it occurred. Giving or receiving aid in examinations, and plagiarism are a violation of an assumed trust between the school and the student. Plagiarism, i.e. the presentation as one's own work of words, drawings, ideas and opinions of someone else, is a serious instance of academic dishonesty in the context as cheating on examinations. The submission of any piece of work (written, drawn, built, or photocopied) is assumed by the school to guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are literally the student’s own, executed by the student. All assignments must be the student’s original work. Any copying, even short excerpts, from another book, article, or Internet source, published or unpublished, without proper attribution will result in automatic failure of the entire course.

The CCNY Academic Integrity Policy: https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/about/integrity
For citations, the Chicago Manual of Style is recommended:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

AccessAbility Center (Student Disability Services):
The AccessAbility center (AAC) facilitates equal access and coordinates reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and support services for City College students with disabilities while preserving the integrity of academic standards. Students who have self-identified with AAC to receive accommodations should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. (North Academic Center 1/218; 212-650-5913 or 212-650-6910 for TTY/TTD). https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/accessability

Library:
The school’s library is a shared resource that is necessary supplement to all research and design work. Please direct questions to the library staff or the Architecture Librarian Nilda Sanchez: nsanchez@ccny.cuny.edu

NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board):
The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is the sole agency authorized to accredit US professional degree programs in architecture. Since most state registration boards in the United States require any applicant for licensure to have graduated from a NAAB-accredited program, obtaining such a degree is an essential aspect of preparing for the professional practice of architecture. While graduation from a NAAB-accredited program does not assure registration, the accrediting process is intended to verify that each accredited program substantially meets those standards that, as a whole, comprise an appropriate education for an architect.

More specifically, the NAAB requires an accredited program to produce graduates who: are competent in a range of intellectual, spatial, technical, and interpersonal skills; understand the historical, socio-cultural, and environmental context of architecture; are able to solve architectural design problems, including the integration of technical systems and health and safety requirements; and comprehend architects’ roles and responsibilities in society.

The following student performance criteria from the 2014 NAAB Conditions are addressed in this course:

**Realm B: Building Practices, Technical Skills, And Knowledge.** Graduates from NAAB-accredited programs must be able to comprehend the technical aspects of design, systems, and materials and be able to apply that comprehension to architectural solutions. In addition, the impact of such decisions on the environment must be well considered.

**B.1 Pre-Design:** ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project that includes an assessment of client and user needs; an inventory of spaces and their requirements; an analysis of site conditions (including existing buildings); a review of the relevant building codes and standards, including relevant sustainability requirements, and an assessment of their implications for the project; and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria.

**Realm C: Integrated Architectural Solutions.** Graduates from NAAB-accredited programs must be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to synthesize a wide range of variables into an integrated design solution.

**C.1 Research:** understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process.

**C.2 Integrated Evaluations and Decision-Making Design Process:** ability to demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project. This demonstration includes problem identification, setting evaluative criteria, analyzing solutions, and predicting the effectiveness of implementation.

*Students should consult the NAAB website www.naab.org for additional information regarding student performance criteria and all other conditions for accreditation.*

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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