Pittsburgh Memory, Romare Bearden, 1964

Dark Form :
The Bronx Museum Expansion
*this studio is a DMU (Dark Matter University) affiliated course.

OVERVIEW

The Bronx Museum, a center of art and culture for fifty years in New York's predominantly Black and LatinX borough, is both a storied landmark to culture and somewhat of a paradox : an institution of "high art", showcasing world-renowned artists while remaining deeply connected to the low income and marginalized community which it calls home. New York City Economic Development Corp (NYCEDC) has recently released plans and a call to expand and renovate the museum, beginning with a new South Wing atrium, effectively a new "front door" to the museum and entry to the collection it houses. The constraints of the site and structurally limited resources set up a nearly impossible problem when framed in the terms of standard architectural form. Thus, the success of the expansion may have to be framed on different terms than the traditionally iconic or heroic deployment of space or tectonics.

This architectural problem will serve as a pretext to unlock and explore two themes related to the pursuit of a new disciplinary paradigm :
1- the notion of Dark Form
2- the notion of the Institution

Existing South Atrium, Bronx Museum of the Arts, corner of Grand Concourse & E 165th streets

SITE - BRONX MUSEUM AS NEW CIVIC IMAGINARY

The 1988 expansion was designed by Castro-Blanco, Piscioneri & Feder, who renovated the building exterior with black granite and metal, added large continuous "ribbon windows" on the facade, and built a three-story glass atrium at one of the corners, which serves as the museum lobby. The 1988 design has been described as "awkward"[11] and **"darksome"**[14] *with "cramped balconies" and a cornerside entrance that give it a "suburban mall" feel.[11] It has also been criticized due to its lack of exhibition space…"*

Is there an alternate reading of the museum that might render these "flaws" as virtues, or at least qualities to be re-considered? This space demands us to question our disciplinary assumptions and the episteme of architecture itself.

At stake in this studio and the question of the museum is the entire performance of 'going to view art'. What happens when all of those words become operative, and when this entire volume becomes the people's space, negating the boundary between civilized institution and vernacular neighborhood or street (life).

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In 1987, the museum gained attention for two high-profile exhibitions: a career retrospective of African American artist Romare Bearden[26] and a presentation of the then-evolving school of computer-generated art.[27] More recent exhibitions have included the 2006 presentation "Tropicalia: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture"[15] and the 2008 overview of street-level photography by Jamel Shabazz, a Harlem-based artist.[28]

Furthermore, the Bronx itself, as a living breathing entity is our protagonist to connect and manifest in the form and program : the forms of practice (spatial, visual, urban) that flourish and are inherent to the Bronx are part of Dark Form... (rethink the formal project through blackness/brownness/otherness)

You're At Home, Jacolby Satterwhite, Pioneer Works, 2019 (photo : Dan Bradica)

DARK FORM - THE BRONX AS A DISCIPLINARY AND URBAN OUTSIDERSHIP

"Dark Matter is not the opposite of matter, it is matter that behaves differently"

Just as much of the Bronx and its inhabitants operate outside "mainstream" / hegemonic economic markets, aesthetic forms of expression, and notions of public space, the challenge and provocation of an architecture that is of this borough challenges the normative toolset of the architect and, possibly, of precedent and architectonic form itself. Might there be another framework for understanding and establishing space not rooted in compositional principles outlined by the Renaissance or Enlightenment episteme? Can we look to marginalized histories and give language to under-rehearsed capacities of architecture, space-making, and even geometry to articulate a project?

We will draw upon ideas developed in previous courses, in particular Dark Polarity Studio at GSAPP examining Washington Heights and Fugitive Practice at Yale//Howard.

Aspects of Dark From we may explore include :
- Ancestral Practice(s), Junky Systems, Informality, Improvisation, Co-production, Hybridity, Layering, Contamination, Encoding, (Re)Appropriation, Re-Use, Refusal, and others.

Day's End, Gordon Matta Clark, Pier 52, 1975 (Alvin Baltrop, photographer)

APPROACH

The studio will unfold in two parts, but the final project will be understood as a full body of work that synthesizes these two segments.

Part 1 : Dark Form, will consist of a series of exercises and research with the objective for each student or pair to develop a critical methodology, hypothesis, and approach to producing (Dark) Form. The exercises to help us along will include the following:
-Ancestral / Aesthetic Practice
-Site Engagement
-Artist / Protagonist Study - engage specific artist or practice, living and non-living/historical

Part 2 : The Institution - each student or pair proposes a new institutional model, that includes the spatial proposal for the expansion and/or exhibition design / configuration / pedagogy. This will challenge us to open up or subvert the idea of the Institution while working on this institution and within the discipline(s) of architecture, art, and urban design, etc.

We will visit the site alone and as a group, and engage numerous Protagonists in our work, including architects currently producing proposals for the expansion as well as museum affiliates. Disciplinary protagonists we may work with in the studio include Black and Brown cultural producers such as Torkwase Dyson, whose theory of Black Compositional Thought[1] offers one parallel discourse of geometry and architectural form as understood through networks of liberation, the movement of bodies, and the degradation of the environment.

Additional protagonists include:
- Historic
    - Gordon Matta Clark, Romare Bearden, Alvin Baltrop, Tats Cru, street vendors, everyday people
- Contemporary
    - Torkwase Dyson, Felix Ciprian, Dexter Ciprian, Abigail DeVille, Sarah Sze, Alan Ruiz, Jacolby Satterwite, Curry Hackett, and others
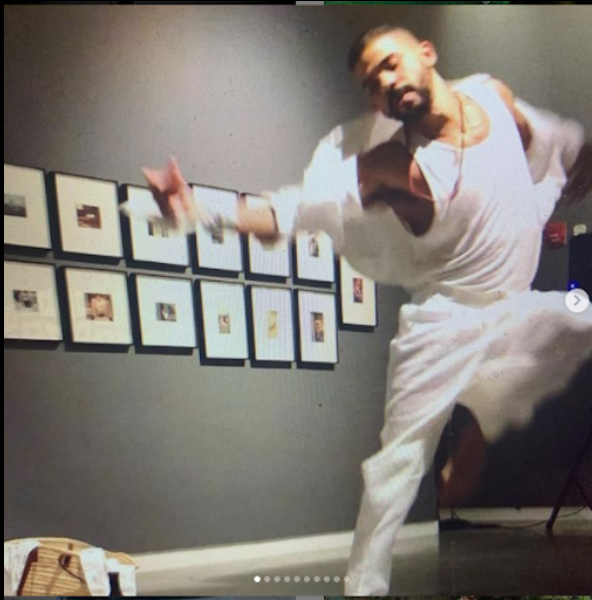
Felix Ciprian (artist), *Survival and Desire* (performance), Bronx Museum, 2019, and *Ancestro*, Bronx, 2019

PROGRAM

The primary "program" or brief for the studio will primarily be to produce a body of work that demonstrates an approach, hypothesis, and method of Dark Form.

The building-based component of this brief includes proposing an expansion or re-imagining of the Bronx Museum's South Atrium, which also includes a revised or reimagined exhibition and curatorial framework for at least some of the galleries, including the new south Atrium.

- Community Engagement Scheme
- (New) South Entrance Concept and Design
- Stair and Egress (South Entrance)
- Street and Facade Concept / Design
- Circulation / Movement Concept and Design
- Programming Concept and Design
- Exhibition Concept and Design
- Roof Concept and Design

The form that this output may take may include :
- drawings,
- models,
- performance,
- multi-media exhibition,
- community engagement, etc.

Dexter Ciprian, Pa Comida Perdia, Barriga Perdia, 2019

READINGS / BIBLIOGRAPHY (in progress)

Yusoff, Kathryn, *A Billion Black Anthroprocenes Or None*, U. of Minnesota Press, 2018
McEwen, Mitch, *Dysbeing* (lecture), Princeton, 2021
McEwen, Mitch and Haferd, Jerome, *Junky Systems* (lecture / panel), Sci-Arc, 2020
Gooden, Mario, *Dark Space,* Columbia Books, 2016
Torkwase Dyson with Mabel Wilson, "Black Compositional Thought", *1919 : Black Water,* (Exhibition Catalogue), 2019
Galison, Peter*, Black Holes : The Edge of All We Know* (film), Sandbox Films, 2020
Hartman, Saidya and Moten, Fred, "The Black Outdoors", speaker series, Duke University
Haferd, Jerome, "An Archaeology of Architecture : The Harlem African Burial Ground", *Log 48*
Bates, Lisa, (S. Towne, C. Jordan, K. Lelliott) "Race and Spatial Imaginary : Planning Otherwise*"*, 2018
Jencks, Charles, and Nathan Silver. *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation.* London, England: MIT Press, 2013. Print.
Sohan, Vanessa Kraemer. "'But a Quilt Is More': Recontextualizing the Discourse(s) of the Gee's Bend Quilts." *College English*, vol. 77, no. 4, 2015, pp. 294–316. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24240050. Accessed 28 Oct. 2020.
Christian Werthmann and Jessica Bridger. *Metropolis Nonformal*
Dizzy Gilespie. *To Be or Not to Bop*
Cupers, Kenny, "The Invention of Indigenous Architecture". *Race and Modern Architecture.*
Cooke, Sekou. "3D Turntables: Humanizing Architectural Technology Through Hip-Hop". *TAD Journal.*
Marie Brown, Adrienne, *Emergent Strategy*, 2017

Dexter Ciprian,

WEEKLY SCHEDULE, M/TH 2:00-5:50pm
Note: schedule below is subject to revision through the duration of the semester.
"Remote" days are in noted with an "R"

W1
Th   08.26 **- R**   **LOTTERY via ZOOM @ 12pm, followed by first studio meeting, including**
                          Hour SSA
                          Convocation @ 5:30pm

W2
Mon 08.30   Studio
Th   09.02   Studio (remote/hybrid TBD)

W3
Mon 09.06   College Closed (Labor Day), no classes scheduled
Th   09.09 **- R**   **Dark Matter University *Talking Race* Learn-In, 230p-5p**

W4
Mon 09.13   Pin up #1
Th   09.16   No classes scheduled

W5
Mon 09.20   Site Visit (group)
Th   09.23   Studio

W6
Mon 09.27   Studio
Th   09.30 **- R**   Studio

W7
Mon 10.04   Studio
Th   10.07   Studio

W8
Mon 10.11   College Closed (Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day); no class
Th   10.14 **- R**   Studio

W9
Mon 10.18   Studio
Th   10.21   **Mid-semester assessments &** *Hour SSA*

W10
Mon 10.25   Studio
Th   10.28 **- R**   Studio

W11
Mon 11.01   Studio
Th   11.04   Studio

W12
Mon 11.08   Studio
Th   11.11 **- R**   **ADVANCED STUDIO SHARING via Zoom, @ 2:00-3:30pm**; Studio

W13
Mon 11.15   Studio
Th   11.18   Studio

W14
Mon 11.22   Studio
Th   11.25   College Closed (Thanksgiving); no class

W15
Mon 11.29   Studio
Th   12.02 **- R**   Studio

W16
Mon 12.06   Studio

REVIEWS
Wed 12.08   Advanced Studio reviews, session 1
Fri   12.10   Advanced Studio reviews, session 2
Tu   12.14   End of Semester Assessment (faculty only)

FINALS
Th   12.16   Final Class Meeting, **Exit interviews**
Mon 12.20   Student Portfolios due for: SSA/CCNY Archive, etc. as directed by instructor

Mon 12.27   Final Grade Submission Deadline

FINALS WEEK
Mon 12.14   Final Class Meeting, **Exit interviews**
Th   12.17   Student Portfolios due for: SSA/CCNY Archive, etc. as directed by instructor

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 to be considered valid.

Community Agreement:
- During the first full studio meeting, the professor will make time for an *Hour SSA* session for a supportive open discussion among students.
- Studio members will work *together* to create a community agreement for interacting together over the semester. Definition: "A consensus on what every person in our group needs from each other and commits to each other in order to feel safe, supported, open, productive and trusting… so that we can do our best work."
https://www.nationalequityproject.org/tools/developing-community-agreements
- *Hour SSA* will be repeated at the middle of the semester.

Methods of Assessment:
- Attendance and participation in class discussions and other activities: 10%
- Project development in response to semester schedule: 60%
- Project presentation, level of 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, in cases where graduate students are enrolled in the studio.

Key areas of Grading Assessment:
- **Studio performance & work habits:** Ability to respond to studio discourse & feedback in a consistent & clear manner throughout 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 final portfolio or collection of studio work as directed by instructor and/or 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 ambition and effort 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. Deadlines are missed. While presentations may be somewhat 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.

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 and/or 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.S. Arch students. D is the lowest passing grade for B. Arch students. No C- or D grades may be 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 individual 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:
Each studio faculty member schedules 30 regular office hours over the semester, as posted at the top of the syllabus. If a student needs to speak in private with a studio critic, they should ask or email in advance to request a specific 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:
Undergrad: Michael Miller mmiller@ccny.cuny.edu
                    Amy Daniel adaniel@ccny.cuny.edu
Graduate: Hannah Borgeson hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu

Studio Culture:
Working collaboratively and respectfully on studio assignments, with and alongside others, is an expectation in studio. Studio culture is an important part of an architectural education, and it extends to expectations for Faculty and the School's Administration as well. 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 discussions.

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.

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 as serious an instance of academic dishonesty in this 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). For further information, go to http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/accessability/ or email disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu

Health And Wellness Support:
City College's Office of Health and Wellness Services offers free and confidential counseling. Contact: Health and Wellness Services, Marshak Science Building, room J-15: counseling@ccny.cuny.edu.
Gender Based Violence Resources
City College has resources to support you if you have experienced sexual violence, intimate partner/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, harassment or stalking. For confidential support,

you can contact the Student Psychological Counselor: Confidential Advocate at (212) 650-8905 or the Gender Resources Program at (212) 650-8222. If you would like to report sexual misconduct, you can contact the Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator, Diana Cuozzo, at 212-650- 7330 or dcuozzo@ccny.cuny.edu. If there is an emergency on campus, you can call Public Safety at 212-650-777 and off campus call 911. Https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/affirmativeaction

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-Rodriguez: 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.

Alan Ruiz, Necker Screen (installation), Bronx Museum of the Arts, 2011

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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