



## Projections for the Urban Night: A Film-based Exploration in the Design Studio

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# Projections for the Urban Night

## A Film-based Exploration in the Design Studio

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Film inspires the spatial and societal imaginations of architects and urban designers, and thus, design teachers have long been experimenting with films, filmic techniques, and filmmaking in the studio. Building on the course design and student output of an undergraduate architectural design studio entitled *Projections for the Urban Night*, this essay aims to demonstrate how film can be utilized as a pedagogical tool to examine the built environment and for imagining possible futures. The studio drew upon cinematic techniques of collage, storyboarding, physical model animation, and film essays for the development of individual proposals. Based on a discussion of student projects, the essay makes an argument for film to serve as more than representation, highlighting its potential as instigator for what to design.

The essay begins with a review and analysis of past experiments, examining how architects, urban designers, and design teachers have invoked film in relation to design. Contemporary pedagogic experiments using film tend to display an enchantment with the application of technology and digital media at the expense of critical reflections on the ideological frameworks that undergird the designs. The essay then moves on to the discussion of the specific studio in which the focus on the technological aspect was circumvented by asking students to develop scenarios for the near-future commoning of the urban night—drawing on the interdisciplinary research area of “Night Studies.” This discussion is supported by references to students’ explorations and the essay argues that the thematic intervention, asking students to design for the night, to develop programs that take into consideration social and physical activity after dark, opened up new possibilities to critique hegemonic practices.

**Keywords:** architecture, education

### Film in Design and Pedagogy

The primary interest in film within spatial disciplines is perceptual. Here, Walter Benjamin's analogy between the reception of film and architecture is foundational to scholarly interpretations. Benjamin contrasts the attention characteristic in the reception of a work of art such as a painting to that of distraction in which we experience buildings as we move through them, or as we watch moving images. He explains,

Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. ... In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art. This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction. ... Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise.<sup>1</sup>

While the built environment is typically received, to use Benjamin's words, "in a state of distraction" as is film, exploratory tools for its design, production, and representation, namely plans, sections, perspectival views, have traditionally been static, two-dimensional. Architects design using media of attention to represent media received in distraction. What if film is the medium through which we design architecture? Film captures the built environment in time, simulating human perception; it has certain advantages because of its affective (pre-emotional, pre-intellectual) capacity and time-based nature, which means meaning is created in time,

non-textually and through montage. A second interest is experiential. Through film, we can learn about built environments we have not experienced firsthand, or about how the same built environment can be experienced differently according to the subject positions of the viewers or "users." A third interest is that film is one of the most effective mediums to disseminate and promote designed objects, especially modern architecture, to mass audiences.

How have designers and design teachers used film? Modernist architects and urban designers alluded to the "cinematographic" as a representational mode, if not film itself; modern environments demanded new modes of representation.<sup>2</sup> Several scholars trace the cinematic imagination in urban design back to the work of urban scholars Gordon Cullen, Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, and Philip Thiel.<sup>3</sup> Townscape Studies assumed a pedestrian's experience in advocating for sketches of "serial vision." Those working on the car-oriented urbanism of American cities would turn to films shot from the car. It was in this spirit that Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Stephen Izenour used film in their study of Las Vegas in their famous Yale University urban design studio (1972). The (post)modern fragmented city was experienced mainly from the windshield of the car and film was particularly suited to studying it.<sup>4</sup> A much more widely known use of film is William Whyte's *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*.<sup>5</sup> "Ethnographic" film making was previously used in anthropological research to document remote Indigenous groups and as a way of understanding different cultures. Whyte turned this practice on its head by looking at the most "familiar" places, plazas in New York City, using time-lapse photography, and dissecting them as if he was studying an alien culture. Whyte's focus was the relationship between human behavior and the built environment, and the understanding of use over time afforded by film was

game changing. Architects and urban designers often study film, use film techniques, and engage in filmmaking today to document and discover all sorts of new information about their assigned or chosen sites.

In the world of speculative design practice and education, there are a number of architects and architecture groups who have used filmmaking as a projective tool. Members of Superstudio produced 8- and 16-mm films using their collages, hand-drawn storyboards, found footage, and model footage in futuristic "what if" scenarios.<sup>6</sup> Bernard Tschumi famously used storyboards for his *Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–1981) where, inspired by Eisenstein's film scripts, he coupled drawings with photographs to explore the relationship between space and its use. Ray and Charles Eames pioneered the making of educational and experimental films and multi-screen projections as part of their design practice. From our current day, Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio have been using film, CCTV cameras, and projections to create architectural art installations. Again, from our present day and in the North American context, LA-based Liam Young presents himself as a speculative architect who uses film to tell stories.

UK-based schools have provided the most substantial intellectual home for the endeavor to use film in design teaching. Irene Sunwoo's work on the history of the Architectural Association (AA) reveals that faculty in the school started experimenting with the introduction of various media including film and video in teaching architecture in the early 1970s under the visionary directorship of Alvin Boyarsky, with Archigram members Dennis Crompton and David Greene taking on leading roles in teaching.<sup>7</sup> Pascal Schöning's Diploma Unit 3 was one of the most famous and longest-active (1991–2008) diploma film units to date. Schöning and his students explored what he termed "cinematic architecture," which he defined as "...

the complete transformation of solid state materialistic architecture into an energised ever-changing process of illuminated and enlightening event-appearances...<sup>8</sup> Building on phenomenological theory, Deleuze's cinema books, and a repertoire of classic art house films such as Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, memory was the focus of the unit. Further, the choice of sites, for example Hiroshima (1995) and Sarajevo (1997), was politically charged. In addition to nighttime projections on building facades as part of public events, the film-based methodology developed in the unit treated existing cinema films as "raw" material; students typically reedited such "found footage" into new original film essays.<sup>9</sup> This is not a methodology that eventually seeped outside the unit over to the former students' careers—possibly due to copyright issues. Today, film units at the AA, the Bartlett, or the RCA typically use physical or digital models in impressive animated digital films.<sup>10</sup>

Film continues to appeal to architectural and urban designers and teachers in a variety of design stages. While a comprehensive review is beyond the focus of this article, a survey of a dozen publications on pedagogical experiments with film in design teaching between 1994 and 2019 reveals many different kinds of methodologies and a divergent, eclectic list of theoretical sources.<sup>11</sup> Most commonly, however, digital film is used as a presentation tool, after the design process, to convey the haptic quality of designed spaces.

### Scenarios

The Projections for the Urban Night studio posed the following question: How can architecture support or help imagine assembly at nighttime? The studio sought to create new political and spatial narratives, and architectural imaginaries, to envisage alternative near-futures by questioning the present in which we live. In other words, the students were asked to create fictions, speculations—the working term we utilized in the

studio was "scenarios." "Speculative design" has been popularized and deployed in the past decade but has been criticized for creating dystopian visions, for its celebration of technology, and for being in the service of corporate capitalism.<sup>12</sup> Deliberately distancing ourselves from such aspects of speculative design, the students were encouraged to propose visions that didn't rely on capital-intensive or yet-to-be-invented technologies but to rely on the imagined political will of a coalition of actors they identified in the public sphere ranging from citizen groups to municipal agencies. Methodologically, the studio drew on the cinematic techniques utilized by the avant-garde groups of the 1960s, in particular Superstudio. Deliverables included: 1) a key collage to determine the focus of the projects; 2) a storyboard representing time-based programmatic proposals as a cinematic sequence; 3) a large model augmented by sound and projections to be displayed at a public exhibition; and 4) an essay film, a self-reflective short documentary film depiction of the project, drawing from previous research production.

### Thematic Intervention:

#### The Urban Night

Based on the insights of the emerging field of Night Studies, the studio approached the night as a space with its own set of residents, visitors, and workers. The night has traditionally been associated with freedom from the state's and dominant society's surveillance and control from the point of citizens. For example, nightclubs and bars are vital spaces for community-building and social sustainability of marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ community. From the perspective of rulers and governments, on the other hand, the night has historically been associated with nonproductive activity, transgression, and even challenge to authority. Most of such transgression took the form of drinking, leisure, and enjoyment, activities not considered productive.

The histories of premodern cities are replete with laws trying to control the nighttime movement of individuals in the city, at times imposing curfews.<sup>13</sup> The municipal infrastructural illumination of cities in the modern era was implemented primarily to control the night and expand economic activity into the dark hours of the day. Today, nighttime economy is increasingly regulated, and thus nighttime activity is encouraged as part of tourism. Nighttime illumination is used to enhance the perception of safety and security—and notably, architecture illumination design and projection art on prominent public buildings and in centrally located urban spaces is used for aesthetic effects and place-marketing.

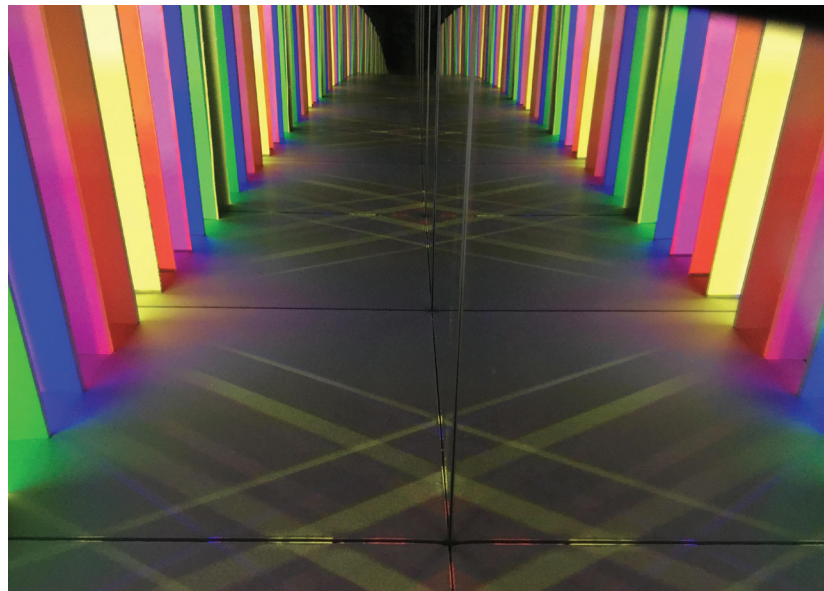
Night Studies has emerged as an interdisciplinary area of its own and architecture and urban design scholars are also contributing to the research.<sup>14</sup> The new forms of civil protest in the past decade, for example, in New York (Zucotti, Occupy), Madrid (15-M, Indignados), Istanbul (Gezi), Paris (night debut), and most recently, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests were, in many cities, marked by the festive use of the night to gather in assemblies. One of the most memorable sites of nighttime protest assembly during the 2020 BLM protests was activated by the projection of the image of George Floyd and other Black figures by artist Dustin Klein on the base of the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>15</sup> All these creative uses of public spaces after dark renewed scholarly interest in the social and political potentials of the night. In addition to such sporadic and overtly political events as civil protests, the nighttime is appealing to graffiti artists, skateboarders, traceurs, and cyclists who may not contribute to the nighttime economy as consumers or service providers.<sup>16</sup> As Lusi Morhayim argues, such assemblies and nighttime activities take up spaces designed for exchange value (profit) and transform them into spaces with use value.<sup>17</sup>

The idea of treating the urban night as a form of urban commons, proposed by Lucía Jalón Oyarzun, is a productive notion for architects and urban designers.<sup>18</sup> Historically, commons were shared and negotiated territories; commons belong to everybody and nobody. The current theorizations of urban commons and the social act of “commoning” have emerged as forms of anticapitalist critique and political activism against the wave of increased privatizations, policing, and spatial controlling of city life. While the origins of the commons are based on territory, current formulations have emphasized social activity and organization. In proposing to “site” the studio projects at night and assembly as program, the goal was to think about how architectural interventions can animate and activate public spaces for their use value and can potentially turn them into commons, even if temporarily. Within the scope of the urban night, that is, time-as-site, the students had to identify their own geographic settings and develop original scenarios that would enable public assembly.

#### Nighttime Projections, Temporary Architectures, and Public Assembly

Outside the realm of movie theaters and venues for performance arts, temporary architectural interventions at building scale which house non-theatrical projections for public assembly have been designed and constructed for international expositions. The Philips Pavilion by Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis for the Brussels Expo in 1958 may be the most famous. Such buildings were usually designed for interior projections and did not rely upon the time of day for entry. The Cineroleum (2010) by the collective Assemblé in London is another precedent and one presented to the studio. This temporary installation was for the nighttime assembly of citizens into an alternative public.

Described as “self-initiated,” the Cineroleum reused an abandoned gas station as a makeshift cinema to point to the potential of nearly 4,000



**Figure 1.** Projection mapping on a three-sided cube installed with mirrors. (Kaloyan Kalev and Lisa Vo.)

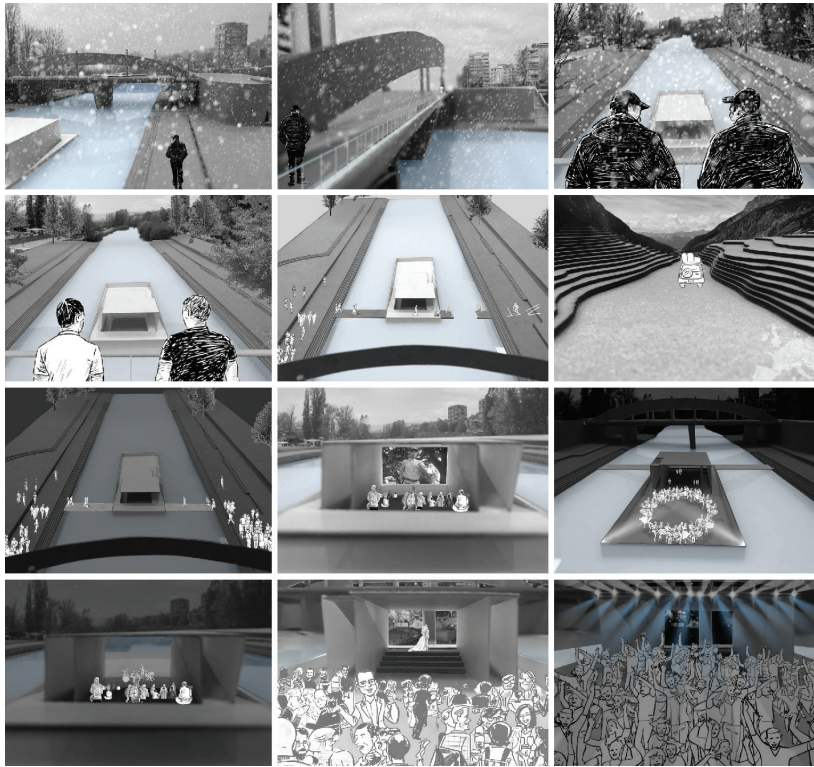
empty gas stations across England. Using donated and reclaimed materials, it was built by volunteers, alongside the designers, to create and celebrate public assembly around the program of filmgoing.<sup>19</sup> The optimism of this project lies in its projection of a future, where oil and all its extractive infrastructure and economy is obsolete. As a result, designers will then need to repurpose oil’s obsolete architectures. The Cineroleum design is a low-tech solution that recycles images and materials. Further, the project does not assume a pregiven group of users but actively produces its own audience and makes community. And finally, it proposes an intervention the sole function of which is enjoyment outside a consumer-service provider relationship.

Another example that inspired the students was the projection-based work of Krzysztof Wodiczko. Starting in the 1990s, with new powerful projectors, computer, and sensors, a new generation of artists began using projections and projection mapping in their works at an urban scale. Wodiczko’s public projections on building facades, with still images at first and later involving video and sound, have

particularly been pioneering because of his political content and agenda.<sup>20</sup> Urban projections are still used for tactical and artistic purposes.<sup>21</sup> They have, however, also been incorporated widely today into place marketing schemes, to expand economic activity into the nighttime in city centers such as Montreal. With this awareness, most of the student projects also shied away from proposing light projections on building facades, but approached the topic of inhabiting the night with inventiveness, as the examples will show.

The students were encouraged to propose programs that were inspired by but did not verbatim repeat the examples they were introduced to. In fact, when viewed in the context of contemporary art practice, the Cineroleum may not be that unique. Temporary cinema has emerged in the last decade as a public art project. Maeve Connolly argues temporary cinemas are but among a number of strategies where artworks style themselves after social spaces to create spaces where viewers can interact and can potentially create new publics.<sup>22</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud identified this approach to art as “Relational Aesthetics” in the 1990s.<sup>23</sup>





**Figure 2.** Storyboard, *Dancing through the Urban Night*. (Kaloyan Kalev and Albi Blakaj.)

Artists have been using films and projections in spatial configurations that transform architecture temporally before the invention of the term Relational Aesthetics. For example, “Expanded Cinema” of the 1960s and 1970s was one such effort to take control of technology by offering possibilities of an activated spectatorship. Typically, artists created architectural installations using light and film projections on multiple surfaces. While contemporary temporary cinema-as-art projects have a nostalgic tone, the point of expanded cinema experiments was about decentering the screen and re-centering the viewer.

In addition to precedent studies, hands-on workshops<sup>24</sup> and in-depth studies of spatial exhibitions<sup>25</sup> exposed the students to new ideas. Workshops involved creating “soft” or “temporary” architectures using projection mapping and collages. The skillset acquired in the one-week projection mapping workshop was to be later used in

the exhibition installation for which students were asked to produce projection-augmented physical models that would act as props for their project(ion)s.

Project programs were derived from precedents, workshops, and exhibition visits. For example, in the one-week projection mapping workshop, students Kaloyan Kalev and Lisa Vo created what they called “a mini nightclub.” They used rotating panels and mapped different colors on to them which, they imagined, could be activated by individuals entering the cube-shaped model space. They incorporated a mirror inside the cube to increase depth and achieve an infinity effect (Figure 1). Kaloyan Kalev then went on to study the historical role of popular nightclubs and dancing in interethnic imagination, and teamed up with another teammate, Albi Blakaj, who was interested in ethno-spatial segregation in postwar Kosovo. Together, they developed a vision of crossing borders through the prop of a night venue in

Mitrovica, Kosovo, floating on the river dividing Albanians in the south and Serbians in the north (Figure 2).

### Collage and Storyboarding

Collage and montage were employed as a key mode for developing visual ideas for the semester-long projects. A collage by students Peter Recht and Lisa Vo conceptualized the underground of Montreal as the “spatial-night” (Figure 3). They observed the underground to be nothing more than a mall-like space for consumption where food is brought from outside. Intervening into Montreal’s bunker-like Place Bonaventure, which features large exhibition halls, their project speculated on ways that processes of food transformation and production (composting, growing, cooking, fermentation, consumption) can evolve from their existing systems for a future more sensitive to waste and thereby to climate change.

Once students were comfortable with collage making, it became relatively facile to move from collages to storyboards. Storyboarding was used to further develop these visual ideas into time-based scenarios. Alexander Venditti and Arthur Stache produced versions of a collage in which nighttime gatherings in city centers expand to inhabit the office facades vacated for the night. Historically, workers have always managed to hide nonproductive activity using the space of the office as a set and its various objects as props of productivity such as making calls as if they are for business.<sup>26</sup> The question that emerged from the collage work was how the office building itself could be repurposed for nonwork, nonproductive activity—it must be emphasized that the collage was key to generating this question rather than the question preceding the collage. The valorization of office work as the “problem” of capitalism was however criticized in studio discussions as contemporary capitalism is increasingly dependent on flexible forms of labor. The student pair circumvented



**Figure 3.** Collage, "Spatial-Night." The Montreal Underground bridges the urban day and urban night as the "spatial night." (Lisa Vo and Peter Recht.)

this issue by choosing to focus on Tokyo's district of Shinjuku and studying the work culture relevant to this business district, with inspiration based on documentaries and a close reading of Jordan Sand's *Tokyo Vernacular* (2013). The students sought to extend the vibrant back alleys populated by bars, restaurants, and similar entertainment venues up on the facades of office buildings lining the major thoroughfares and thus called their project "Vertical Front Alleys." Through a proposed (fictional) amendment to the Tokyo Building Code, their project envisioned a future where the facades of buildings on major streets are reappropriated through projected leisure activities. They argued that by extending the public space vertically and cross-programming monofunctional office spaces with multifunctional public interfaces, they introduced informality into the rigid and separated work environment (Figures 4, 5, and 6).

#### **An Exhibition of Models-as-Props**

In the second part of the studio, the students were asked to design and install an exhibition of their large-scale projection-augmented models. They then animated the models with sound and voice-over in a short essay film that was presented at the final review. Thus, the order of operations in design teaching was reversed. The convention at this level of undergraduate studio is to design a "complete" project through sketches, study models, develop architectural drawings, and then to build a presentation model. In this studio, the students were asked to move from collage to storyboard to the large-scale model. The model in our case was not a 3D presentation of drawings but a design problem in itself, as Figure 5 demonstrates. The model was a design problem in the sense the students had to decide on the size and scope of the model not only in terms of the communication of their project but also practicality

such as material costs, their physical capacity to build them, and their ability to produce them within the allocated time. Finally, the models had to be designed to be lit, simulating after-dark hours.

The models' function vis-à-vis the project was akin to "props" in a film. Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby's discussion of speculative design and the prop's role in speculative design was helpful in this regard. They explain:

One way of considering the fictional objects of speculative design is as props for nonexistent films. On encountering the object, the viewer imagines his or her own version of the film world the object belongs to.... Props used in design speculations are functional and skillfully designed; they facilitate imagining and help us entertain ideas about everyday life that might not be obvious. They help us think about alternative possibilities—they challenge the ideals, values, and beliefs of our society embodied in material culture.<sup>27</sup>

These studio "props" were meant to help the viewers (studio participants, critics, and guests) imagine the alternative fictional world set up by projects and to bring to it their own active imagination. Projection-augmentation required that the students animate the experience of the models. Hence, for example, in the project *Cobabiting the City*, Nikzad Peykari and Marco Carmosino imagined a scenario aimed at integrating pollinators at a citywide scale by "rewilding" rooftops, beginning with those of public neighborhood schools, and creating suitable habitats for the existing pollinating organisms in Montreal (Figure 7). The model didn't show the full "network" and in fact they never designed the network. The model pedestal design emulated the interpretive boards found on nature trails and provided information and visuals about the larger scenario,





Figure 4. Storyboard, Vertical Front Alleys, Tokyo. (Alexander Venditti and Arthur Stache.)

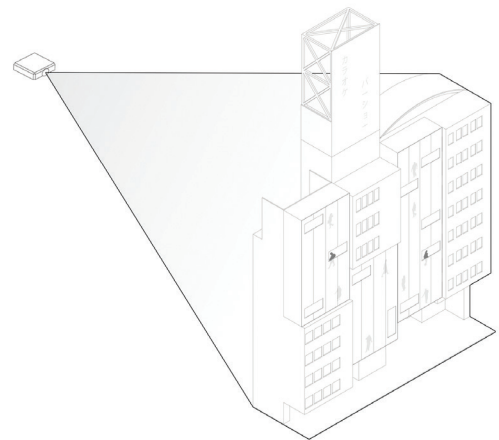


Figure 5. Exhibition lighting concept, Vertical Front Alleys, Tokyo. (Alexander Venditti and Arthur Stache.)



Figure 6. Exhibition installation, Vertical Front Alleys, Tokyo. (Alexander Venditti and Arthur Stache.)

demanding the viewer actively participate in the project by imagining the forms it can take.

The students curated and designed the exhibition *Projections for the Urban Night* where they showcased their props as incomplete yet evocative proposals for the alternative futures they envisaged. The exhibition itself was a design problem where students had to think about ways to animate their models with light, sound, and projections—and it had to cohere as a single exhibition when the projects turned out to be vastly different. The students planned the exhibition space, lit it, and used oversize hanging “manifesto” posters to achieve a sense of unity. The exhibition was timed and coordinated with the “Light, Night and Urban





**Figure 7.** Exhibition view shows how the design was presented in reference to interpretive boards found on nature trails, and as a prop to imagine a networked system of flora, fauna, and human cohabitation in the city, April 8, 2019. *Cohabiting the City*, Montreal. (Nikzad Peykari and Marco Carmosino.)



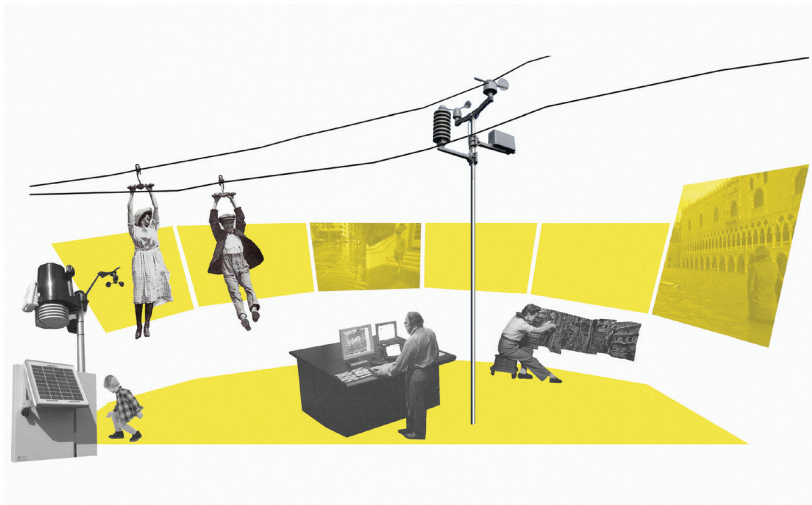
**Figure 8.** Film stills, *Reassembling with Care*, Montreal. (Daria Khadir and Eymen Hakkı Özkan.)

Sustainability” symposium.<sup>28</sup> A public reception brought together symposium speakers and participants, some academics, other industry specialists, and policy makers at the exhibition opening where the students had the opportunity to explain their projects to visitors on a one-to-one basis. This was an extraordinarily rewarding event for the students at the end of their immense labor, honoring their creativity, and thus pedagogically empowering.

### Essay Film

The final deliverable, an essay film, was defined for the purposes of the studio as a self-reflective film that follows neither fiction nor documentary conventions.<sup>29</sup> Students were expected to animate their models with voice-over narration and diegetic environmental sounds to present a fuller version of the project. The students did try to innovate by applying visual techniques congruent with their themes. In general, this stage would have benefited from more time to help students to improve their filming and editing skills. Daria Khadir and Eymen Hakkı Özkan, however, anticipated this impasse earlier on and incorporated filming into their process. They filmed what they were doing step by step, and thus placed themselves in their narrative. The final film not only animated the installation model but also showed how they arrived at it. This was appropriate with the theme of their project—entitled *Reassembling with Care*,—through which they proposed reassembly as a tool to cultivate the potential of what was previously considered redundant and as waste (Figure 8).

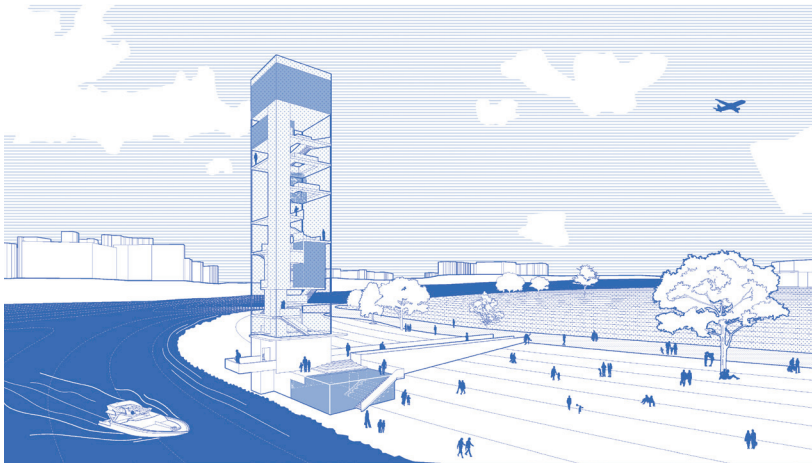
The urban night and assembly at night became a departure point for most of the projects. Other themes such as climate change, environmental and social justice, sustainability, food security, and human rights also emerged as distinct foci and in fact took precedence over specific programs limited to the after-dark hours such as cinemas or bars. For example, in their project entitled



**Figure 9.** Collage, *Climate Sensorium*. (Ankit Gonkal and Hanna Hentze.)



**Figure 10.** Map showing the network of climate sensoriums, *Climate Sensorium*. (Ankit Gonkal and Hanna Hentze.)



**Figure 11.** Rendering of a potential iteration of the sensorium in Vancouver, *Climate Sensorium*. (Ankit Gonkal and Hanna Hentze.)

*Climate Sensorium*, Ankit Gonkal and Hanna Hentze requalified the studio question as “How can we create spaces for collective assembly to respond to the threat of sea level rise?” They proposed a network of towers that would act as instruments to raise ecological sensitivity and link people from around the world based on this awareness (Figures 9–12).

### Conclusion

The Projections for the Urban Night studio asked students to imagine architectures for assembly at nighttime. Within this broad frame, they were expected to respond to real-world issues and define their programs through collective discussion in the studio. The studio drew on many cinematic techniques utilized by the avant-garde groups of the 1960s, such as collages, storyboards, models, and essay films of varying degrees of completeness, sometimes exceeding, sometimes not meeting their own expectations. With deliverables firmly set in place and presented as a distinct design methodology, the students focused on what to design rather than on form making. They were explicitly encouraged to concentrate on world-building rather than an end product. In fact, the end products were deemphasized as merely props for their overall fiction.

The methodology and process encouraged students to discuss the social, political, and environmental consequences of current ideologies and realpolitik from surveillance in China to our apathy in the face of climate change. The seeds of the projects were visually generated, but a research-intensive period and collective in-studio discussions helped further refine the studio question to the students’ interests. The students were able to examine the spatiality of the issues they chose to tackle, with the night being a temporal anchor for the discussions on public assembly and its democratic potential. In this way, the studio diverged from other film-based studios and practices, which tend to





**Figure 12.** Film stills. Projections emulate the different sensorial experiences offered by the Vancouver Climate Sensorium within its Tital Room, Wind Room, Fog Room, and Collective Screening Room. *Climate Sensorium*. (Ankit Gonkal and Hanna Hentze.)

place emphasis on film phenomenology with its focus on the senses and/or its relationship to memory.

The methodology drew on cinematic explorations applied in previous experiments conducted in film-based studios, and the scholarship at the intersection of architecture and film. The students who took part in this studio developed a multifaceted understanding of “project(ion)s.” Some of the projects took a literal approach to the word “projection” and integrated media into their designs. There were also proposals on the opposite spectrum where projections only meant projecting into alternate worlds. Thus, the word “projections” in the studio’s title was interpreted in multiple ways, from architectural representations, visual augmentation to future projections, and storytelling. The students conducted self-driven research on the architecture of the night and urban commons, and created narratives where the architecture identifies, points to, and reframes real-world problems by way of questioning rather than trying to provide solutions or answers to pre-given problems. They cultivated an understanding of architecture as an intellectual project rather than

service provision, and a personal approach to using architecture for critical commentary on the world at large. They acquired a time-based understanding of architecture, where architecture exists in temporalities and also is experienced in relationship to movement and subject positions. A final key takeaway was that architectural projects actively seek new publics, and the props/models sought to show in concrete ways how those publics could be created.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### Author Biography

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#### Notes

- 1 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, from the 1935 essay (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 239, 240.
- 2 Martino Stierli traces the use of the term “cinematographic” in architectural design to the Deutscher Werkbund. Martino Stierli, *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror: The City in Theory, Photography, and Film* (Getty Research Institute, 2013), 163–164.
- 3 Rafael E. Pizarro, “Urban Design and the Cinematic Arts,” in *Companion to Urban Design*, ed. Tridib Banerjee and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2011), 208–17; Stierli, *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror*, 169–170.
- 4 Stierli, *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror*, 153–162.
- 5 William H. Whyte, *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), film, 55 min.
- 6 Buckley Craig, *Graphic Assembly: Montage, Media and Experimental Architecture in the 1960s* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 244.
- 7 Irene Sunwoo, “The Static Age,” *AA Files*, no. 61 (2010):118–29.
- 8 Pascal Schöning, *Cinematic Architecture* (Architectural Association, 2009).
- 9 I recount this from personal experience as I joined this unit in 1996–7. The unit participated in the 1994 Europa Exhibition in Linz, Austria with a public projection on a building and repeated this work on Bedford Square in London. For a brief review of Pascal Schöning’s work with Diploma 3, see Graham Cairns, “Cinematographic Architecture: Exercises in Theory and Practice,” in *The Architecture of the Screen: Essays in Cinematographic Space* (Bristol, UK; Chicago: Intellect Books, 2013), 157–158.
- 10 For example, the work of Bartlett’s Unit 24 is viewable here: <https://www.unittwentyfour.com>.
- 11 Rafael E. Pizarro, “Teaching to Understand the Urban Sensorium in the Digital Age: Lessons from the Studio,” *Design Studies*, no.



- 30 (2009): 272–86; Rikke Munck Petersen and Mads Farsø, “Resonance and Transcendence of a Bodily Presence: How a Filmic Mapping of Non-Visual, Aural and Bodily Relations in Space Can Strengthen the Sensory Dimension in Landscape Architectural Design,” in *Architecture Filmmaking: Making Visible*, eds. Igea Troiani and Hugh Campbell (Chicago: Intellect, 2019), 301–19; Sara Mills, “The Pedagogy of Place: The Recording of Urban Patterns through Cinematic Investigative Techniques to Inform Place-making,” in *The Production of Place 2012: An International Symposium and Workshops*, December 15–18, 2012, University of East London, Docklands Campus, 2012; Roy Strickland, “Background into Foreground: Film as a Medium for Teaching Urban Design,” *Places* 18, no. 2 (2006): 44–51; Eliana Sousa Santos, Patricia Santos Pedrosa, and Paulo Figueiredo, “Parallel Cities: Film as Architectural Tool,” in *Intersections: A Conference on Architecture, City and Cinema*, proceedings, Porto, Portugal, September 11–13, 2013, 354–63; Wowo Ding, “Mapping Urban Space: Moving Image as a Research Tool,” in *Understanding Urban Phenomena through the Moving Image*, eds. François Penz and Andong Lu (Chicago: Intellect, 2011), 257–79; Carmen Aroztegui, Irina Solovoyva, and Upali Nanda, “Architectural Research and Representation: Expressing Sense of Place through Storyboarding and Animatics,” paper presented at the ARCC/EAAE International Conference on Architectural Research, Washington, DC, June 23–26, 2010, <https://www.brikbase.org/content/architectural-research-and-representation-expressing-sense-place-through-storyboarding-and-rene-davids>, “Serial Visions: Storyboards in the Design Studio,” in *Legacy + Aspirations: Considering the Future of Architectural Education: Proceedings of the 87th ACSA Annual Meeting*, eds. Geraldine Forbes and Marvin Malecha (ACSA, 1999), <https://www.acsa-arch.org/proceedings/Annual%20Meeting%20Proceedings/ACSA.AM.87/ACSA.AM.87.52.pdf>; Marc Boumeester, “‘Camera Eye’: Cinematic Studio Research into Architectural Practice,” *Architecture and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2015): 87–104; Penelope Haralambidou, “The Architectural Essay Film,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* (arq) 19, no. 3 (2016): 234–48; Lee Anderson, “Film Theory and Architectural Design,” in *ACADIA Conference Proceedings* (St. Louis, 1994), 219–227, [http://papers.cumincad.org/cgi-bin/works/Show?\\_id=241b](http://papers.cumincad.org/cgi-bin/works/Show?_id=241b); Julio Bermudez, “Designing Architectural Experiences: Using Computers to Construct Temporal 3D Narratives,” in *ACADIA Conference Proceedings*, Seattle, WA, October 19–22, 1995, 139–149, <http://papers.cumincad.org/cgi-bin/works/paper/aab6>.
- 12 Luiza Prado and Pedro Oliveira, “Futuristic Gizmos, Conservative Ideals: On (Speculative) Anachronistic Design,” in *Modes of Criticism*, no. 1, February 27, 2015, <https://modesofcriticism.org/author/luiza-prado-pedro-oliveira/>.
- 13 City-by-city experiences differed around the world. For an overview of Istanbul, see İpek Türeli, “Istanbul,” in *Cities of Light: Two Centuries of Urban Illumination*, eds. Sandy Isenstadt, Margaret Maile Petty, and Dietrich Neumann (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1–9.
- 14 From within architectural history *Cities of Light*, and from urban planning *Planning the Night-time City* present disciplinary approaches to the study of the urban night: Sandy Isenstadt, Margaret Maile Petty, and Dietrich Neumann, eds., *Cities of Light: Two Centuries of Urban Illumination* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Marion Roberts and Adam Eldridge, *Planning the Night-time City* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012). See also Ilse Van Liempt, Irina van Aalst, and Time Schwanen, eds., “Geographies of the Urban Night,” special issue of *Urban Studies* 52, no. 3 (2014).
- 15 Ezra Marcus, “Will the Last Confederate Statue Standing Turn Off the Lights? A monument to Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Va., has become the site of an unlikely community space,” *New York Times*, June 23, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/style/statue-richmond-lee.html>.
- 16 Lusi Morhayim, “Nightscapes of Play: Enjoyment of Architecture and Urban Space through Bicycling,” *Antipode* 50, no. 5 (2018): 1311–29.
- 17 Morhayim, “Nightscapes of Play.”
- 18 Lucia Jalón Oyarzun, “Night as Commons: Minor Architecture and Dayfaring Citizens,” *Scapegoat*, no. 10 (2017): 57–70.
- 19 James Taylor-Foster, “From Derelict Structure to Urban Cinema,” *ArchDaily*, August 6, 2014, <https://www.archdaily.com/533710/from-the-archive-from-derelict-structure-to-urban-cinema>.
- 20 Krzysztof Wodiczko, “The Tijuana Projection,” *Rethinking Marxism* 15, no. 3 (2003): 422–423, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0893569032000131983>.
- 21 See, for example, Ali Momeni and Stephanie Sherman, “A Manual for Urban Projection (MUP),” (Minnesota: Modern Press, 2017), <http://c-uir.org/projects/manual-for-urban-projection/>.
- 22 Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artists’ Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2009).
- 23 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: les presses du reel, 2002).
- 24 The semester began with two hands-on workshops guest-taught by Montreal-based Creative Technologist Marouane Sahbi and Tokyo-based architect-filmmaker Keiichi Ogata respectively on projection mapping and collage making. Ogata is founder of the art-architecture collective “Cinematic Architecture.”
- 25 In particular the studio examined the work of British artist Jasmina Cibic and the Italian architecture group Superstudio by visiting exhibitions of their work.
- 26 Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler, “Diversiary Tactics at Work: Making Meaning Through Misuse,” in *Design History Beyond the Canon*, eds. Jennifer Kaufmann-Buhler, Victoria Rose Pass, and Christopher S. Wilson (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 39.
- 27 Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013), 90.
- 28 The “Light, Night and Urban Sustainability” symposium was organized by studio critic Dr. Will Straw and held on April 9, 2019, <https://theurbannight.com/light-night-and-urban-sustainability-a-symposium/>.
- 29 Chris Marker’s *La Jétee* was shown to the students as a progenitor of the genre of essay film, and Victor Nieuwenhuys and Maartje Seyferth’s *Nexo Babylon de Constant* was shown as an example of the use of environmental sounds in animating architectural models. For an overview of essay film, see Yelizaveta Moss, “Essay Film,” in *Cinema and Media Studies*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Oxford University Press, 2021), accessed May 30, 2021, <https://www-oxfordbibliographies-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0216.xml>.