

INDEPENDENT THESIS / COLLECTIVE STUDIO

Inquiries, Observations, and Provocations through Architecture

“Choose carefully the site of rebellion.”
— Terence van Elslander



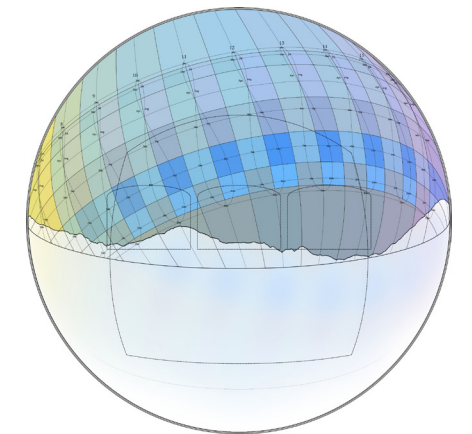
Background

An architectural thesis is a proposition. A proposition that results from a critique and reexamination of the role of architecture as a critical participant in the conditioning of (public) space. A thesis demands that the student take a position and have something to say, something to contribute to the ongoing discourse in the widening sphere of architecture.

Marking the transition between academic and professional practices, the thesis project is an opportunity to define an individual position relative to the discipline of architecture. Thesis topics reflect the diversity of student experiences and interests, ranging from building construction, design research, emerging technologies and materiality, social issues, landscape, urbanism, spatial perception and methods of conceptual thinking. The studio will present their work together in a public exhibition and symposium.

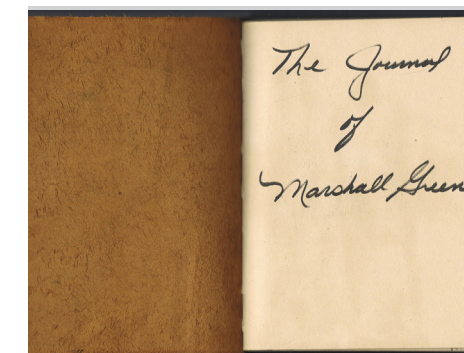
World Making_

Worldmaking is an optimistic act; it is based on the understanding that other worlds are possible than the one we are handed. Our diverse worldviews inform how we create those worlds, and how we understand the creative process. The word “worldmaking” is a gerund; it is active, describing the ways the worlds we make unfold. Similarly, the thesis studio is reflective on the act of producing a thesis, the journey of its making is as valuable as the final product exhibited at the end.



Context

In defining your thesis project, you are also defining a space for yourself ideologically and artistically in the landscape of architecture practice. You are testing ways of working, making an impact in the discipline, and reflecting critically on your own work. To that end, you will be working under the guidance of carefully selected, trusted advisors, but the project is ultimately your own. You must trust yourself to envision the outcome and make it happen. Throughout the process of designing a thesis, you will exercise strategies for writing, research, time management, organization, and communication that will be invaluable throughout your career. At the end of the year, you will have completed a personally, intellectually, and aesthetically satisfying project that will reap dividends after graduation.



Left: Christoph Eckrich, *Through the Singularity: Narrative Conjectures Beyond the Zero Hour*, 2021.
Above, left: Emmanuel Nwandu, “*The Journal of Marshall Green*,” from *Manifesting Identities: Memory, Myth and Legacy in African America*, 2021.
Above, right: Louis Suarez, *Mapping the Zauberg*, 2021.

Program

Class time will be devoted to:

- Developing a thesis exhibition and publication
- Desk critiques to ensure the timely development of independent work
- Group discussions to review project milestones, requirements, and ideas
- Reviews with advisors and outside critics to refine design projects and exhibition strategies
- Independent design, research, and writing

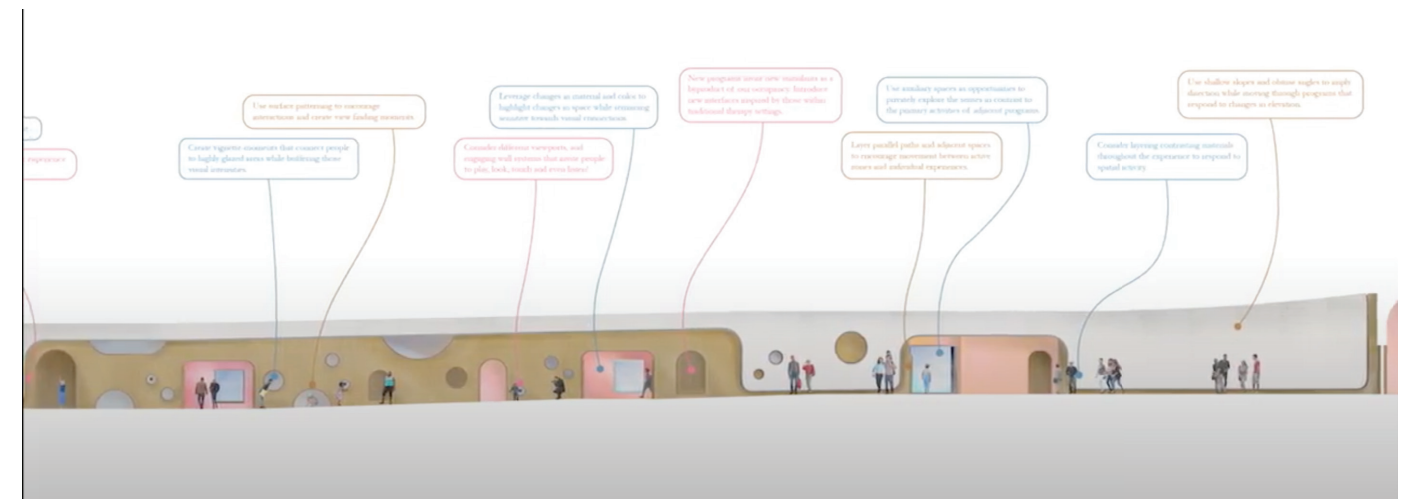
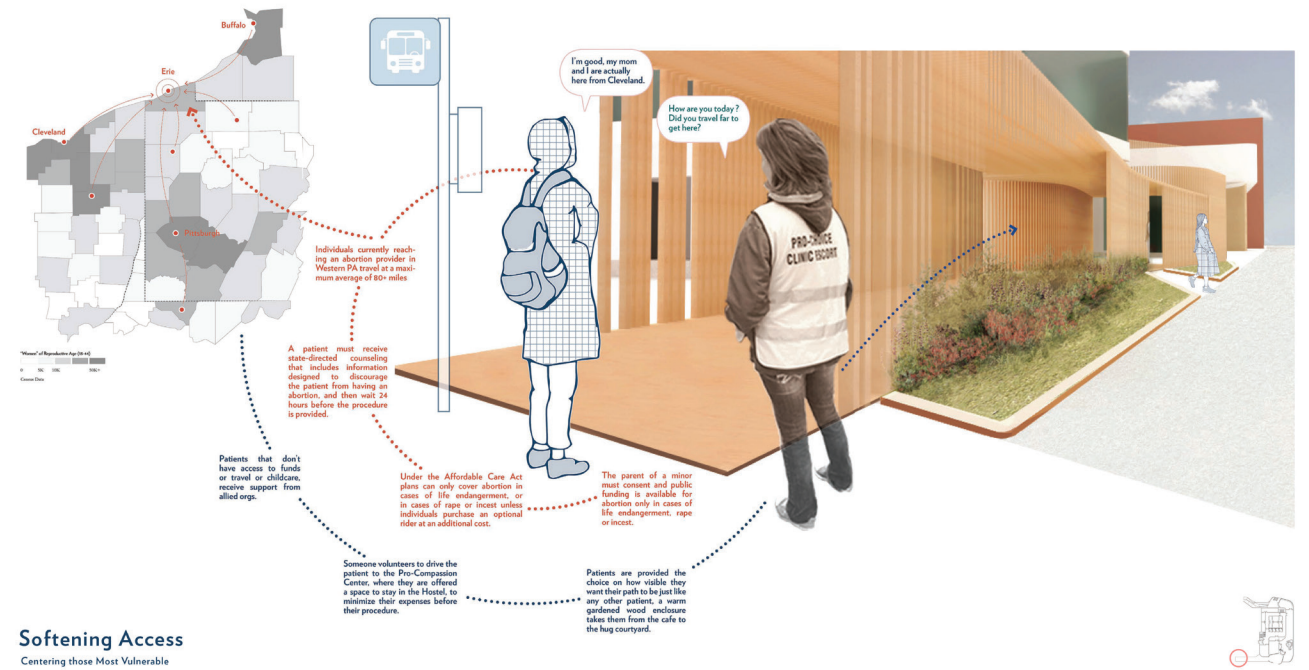
A series of “thesis talks” throughout the semester offer students an opportunity to engage with faculty, scholars, and practitioners working in related topics. These regular presentations help foster critical thinking and reflection on the projects’ relevance outside the classroom.



Learning Outcomes

In this studio, students are expected to engage and develop a wide range of interrelated capacities, including critical thinking, analytical writing and reflective design production.

- Refining research skills in architecture and design
- Developing and expressing a critical outlook and perspective on architecture practice
- Designing and installing an exhibition of work
- Writing, editing, and designing a thesis book that compiles the outcomes of the research and design process
- Sustaining and managing a long-term independent project
- Polishing verbal and visual presentation skills



Left: Brandon Smith and Gil Jang at the pop-up exhibition of their thesis, Tectonic Topographies, May 2021. Above, top: Alina Kramkova, Designing Procompassion: Conceptualizing Destigmatized Spaces for Independent Abortion Providers, 2020. Above, below: Still from video in Michael Powell, too little TOO MUCH: Looking at existing sensory therapy practices to inform spatial experience through an expanded definition of access, 2020.