



walton

STUDIO

Bermudez + Brown

THE FUTURE



As the US and the world move deeper into the 21st century, the practice and the very idea of architecture will experience dramatic changes. The population growth, the information-knowledge revolution, the changing social and cultural realities, the globalization and virtualization of the economy, breakthrough technologies (AI, nanotechnology, IoT, genetic engineering, etc.), environmental destruction and global warming, the pressures of urbanization and migration, pandemics, etc. will pose extraordinary challenges to our profession and lives. Coping with the impending new reality will require a very different and unprecedented set of social, professional, and personal skills than those handed down by traditional culture. These circumstances make it advisable to engage in serious preparation for the future. Preparation here means developing a critical understanding and approach to the issues and events that will most likely impact society, architecture, and ourselves in the years ahead.

This is especially true for architectural practitioners as

- architecture is a service industry dependent on the market and therefore, will be directly impacted by the (r)evolutionary changes underway.
- architectural practice is based on images (vision and expectations) about the future. Any act of design or planning is an attempt to concretize a (better) future based on changing the existing (i.e., inherited) conditions.
- those affected by our services (clients) will be conducting their personal and professional lives in the future.

To some, the anticipatory nature of design provides an excellent antidote to any type of future shock. After all, design has always dealt with the future and done well without any formal theory or discussion about the future. Hence the profession has developed the confidence that architects will adapt to whatever circumstances tomorrow may bring, thus making unnecessary any serious attention to it. Besides, design is, by nature, a “science” and “technology” of innovation and change. In other words, by giving a response to the present, it finds its most valuable tool for dealing with the future. Although these considerations have been true in the past, today's speed, magnitude, and depth of change make such arguments not only baseless but worse, dangerously



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Metropolis

misleading. New social developments, novel belief systems, breakthroughs in technology, the environmental threat, and the mediatization of culture, among others, will substantially change the face of Earth and the way we think and live in the world.

The lack of attention to the future does not mean that we don't think about it or have no vision of the future. Nobody can act without at least some working assumption of tomorrow. Some image of the future is necessary for any meaningful, practical, or theoretical enterprise. Without a future, there is no purpose in human action. Therefore the issue is not whether or not we should think about the future (for we are) but instead how far ahead, acute, and critical we go about it. We have hitherto dealt with the future very much like traditional cultures have done for millennia. We have thought of the future as a conservative extrapolation of the past. In this mindset, everything changes slowly, linearly, and predictably. This perspective encourages a firm adherence to inherited beliefs, methods, technologies, and social rules.

Unfortunately, the contemporary and particularly the future worlds do not grant "the-future-like-the-past" paradigm of forecasting. The qualitative, quantitative, fast, and non-linear evolutionary leaps already underway make it clear that the future is going to surpass the wildest trend extrapolations of the present. We are looking at exponential growth/change! Under these conditions, the way to prepare for the future is NOT by revisiting, adapting, or critiquing inherited knowledge and traditions, but rather to think completely anew, informed by forecasting tools and vision, so that we learn how to operate in a just-in-time or ahead-of-time basis.

"To succeed in the future, we need to know more about how the world is likely to change." Edward Cornish

"It is hard to predict, especially the future." Niels Bohr

Given the extraordinary events and challenges to come, holding a naive or uninformed image of the future is unconscionable at all levels. Thinking about tomorrow has never been more necessary than today.

ARCHITECTURE



Marshall Brown

Professing architecture is no light matter in these circumstances. True professing demands that we hold a position, make a vow in the name of a deep-seated passion for architecture, our fellow beings, and Earth. But let us not forget that our professing also requires being technical competent to respond to architectural challenges. Professing is where belief and knowledge come together in the here and now. Hence, uncritically adopting off-the shelf Postmodern, Neo-Modern, Deconstructivist, or any other pre-digested style is superficial and irresponsible. So, how are we to profess architecture in light of the radical future we face? Can we truly make a committed and caring act for the sake of improving whatever is trusted to us as architects? What is that we need to defend, preserve, and advance to grant humanity a better tomorrow? Can we make a difference? The studio will take on these questions professionally.

SPIRITUALITY



There is something unspoken of great power that is pushing us into this path toward considering and responding to the unsettling future of humanity: *Spirituality*. At some level, we "sense" that the huge challenge we are to face will never be sincerely addressed (and thus solved) unless we acknowledge the ultimate meaning, wholeness, or trans-personal nature of reality and all beings. While this vision does not require a divinity, it doesn't shy away from the sublime and metaphysical either. In this sense, perhaps, *our most urgent job as architects is to profess the sacredness of all space on Earth* so that land development may be done with care and wisdom. The preservation, respect, and celebration of space can only come when we honor its sacred dimension. By bringing a spiritual sensibility to its fold, architecture may be able to positively affect a world in desperate need for truth, goodness, and beauty.

The Sacred Space & Cultural Studies (SSCS) concentration is our learning laboratory to discuss, explore, practice, and advance an architecture that invites us to transcend by the power of design quality

Marshall Brown



We are fortunate to have architect, urbanist, and futurist **MARSHALL BROWN** in our studio. Well-known for his use of "*multi-disciplinary speculative architectural fiction to offer progressive visions of a boundless and radical American civilization*" (from Western Exhibitions catalogue), Brown's artwork and speculative architecture have been exhibited in multiple venues including the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Brown is a MacDowell Fellow, and a Graham Foundation grantee. The design workshop he will direct (August 31-September 5) will lay the foundation for the rest of the semester work. As the 2020 Walton Critic, Mr. Brown will also deliver a school-wide lecture (Sept. 21), and return for final studio review in December. We hope students will take full advantage of this unique opportunity.

The semester will be broken down in the following four parts:

PEDAGOGY & SCHEDULE



Part	Study/Design Focus	Modality	Duration	Due	Grade
One	Brown Workshop	individual	2 Wks	5-Sep	20%
Two	Program & Site Research	team/ind	2.5 Wks	25-Sep	10%
Three	Schematic Design Parti	individual	5 Wks	30-Oct	30%
Four	Design Development & Communication	individual	5 Wks	7-Dec	30%
All	Overall Growth, Participation, Citizenship	individual	n/a	n/a	10%

Part 1 (Brown Workshop) defines the ideological, methodological, and attitudinal scaffolding of the studio. **Part 2 (Program and Site)** asks students to research and develop the program for the building and study the site where it will be erected. **Part 3 (Design Parti)** will produce an architectural scheme for a SANCTUARY intended to protect, celebrate, and consecrate something the world cannot lose as we move into a radical new phase in human evolution (located in Washington DC). **Part 4 (Design Development and Communication)** focuses on elaborating and presenting the SANCTUARY project.

READINGS, ONLINE EDUCATION, ETC.



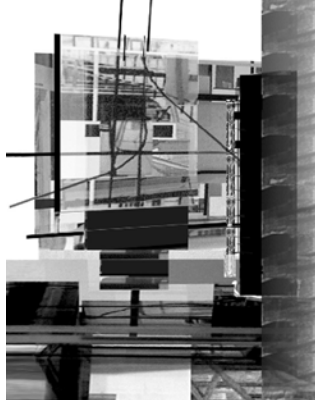
Required readings, bibliographical and web references, particular materials, other resources as well as specific details about studio activities, goals, and expectations will be presented in the assignments covering the four pedagogical phases and schedule described above.

All the instruction (except for the site visit) will be done online due to school and university regulations addressing COVID-19. We will use ZOOM and MIRO as our communication platforms. You are expected to have a workstation allowing you to work both digitally and manually. We will be making physical models and hand drawings. Besides the obvious computer and ordinary suit of architecture-related software you are accustomed to, you will need a wideband and high-speed internet connection, a video camera, a microphone, a scanner, and a printer. Two screens/monitors are strongly recommended.

REGULATIONS

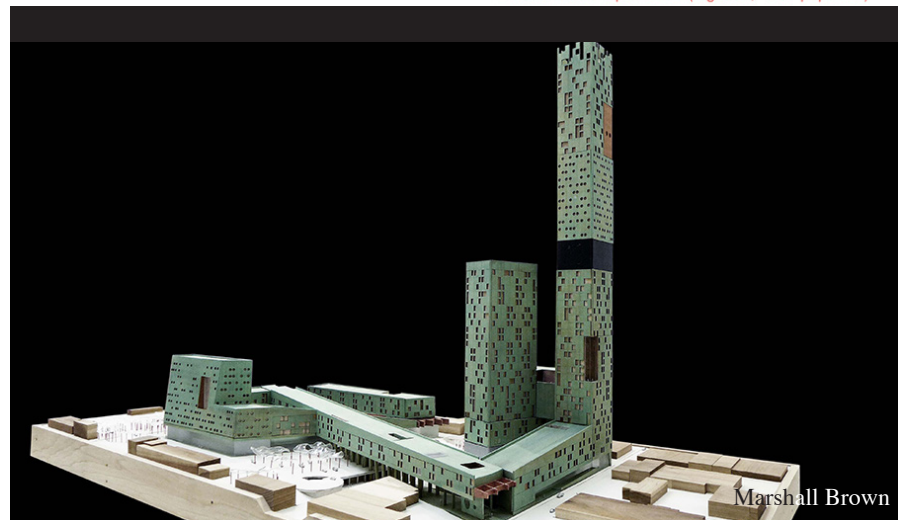
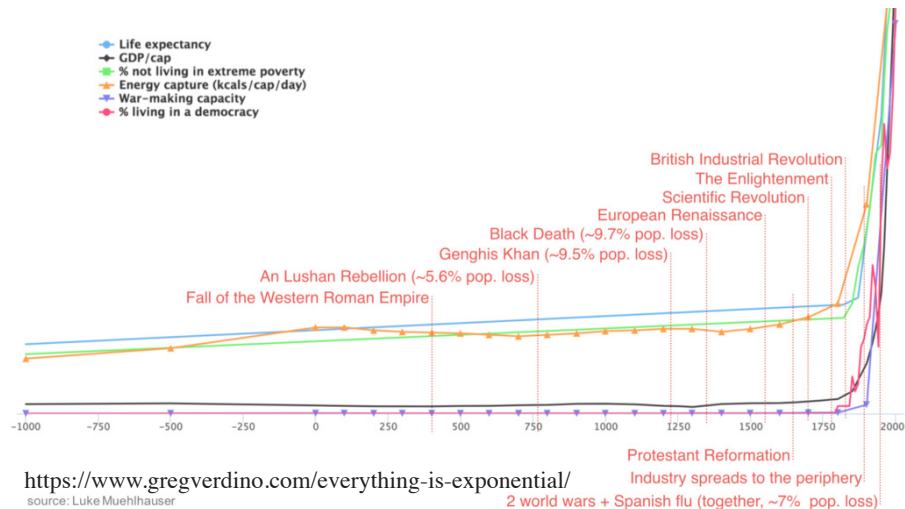


Bennett Neiman



Lebbeus Woods

Specific information regarding grading, support, accessibility, resources, standards, policies and more are included in the OFFICIAL SYLLABUS of this class, as per regulation of The Catholic University of America. All that is included in *this* SYLLABUS COMPANION falls under the regulations and rules described in that document.



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