Benjamin Davis'18: researching the Parisian suburbs

I am a second semester here at Brown. I just returned from a semester abroad, where I was a part of the Brown program in Paris, studying at the Sorbonne, one of the world’s oldest universities. While in Paris, I took 2 courses in urban planning and geography, and 4 courses in French language. During my time in Paris, one of the courses I took was an urban planning workshop, where we would analyze different areas of Paris and the banlieues, or the suburban areas. The project I worked on was to create a diagnostic of one of these banlieues, Juvisy-sur-Orge, located 18 km south of Paris. Juvisy is known for its history, Juvisy-sur-Orge, located 18 km south of Paris. Juvisy is known for its history, Juvisy-sur-Orge, located 18 km south of Paris.

We had found that one of the three areas was blocked off from the other two, shown in the map in blue, and for our project we sought to find a way to reconnect it to the rest of the town. Our plan was to create a public green space located between the tracks that will help to draw people into the area and reconnect it to the rest of Juvisy. This project required hours of hands-on field work, including meetings with people working in town hall, hand-drawings of different blocks in the town, public transportation and right of way in the town, a run-down of the new train station, a historical analysis mapping out changes throughout the years, as well as several other lenses of which we viewed the town through.

The project had two parts: a diagnostic of the town and a creative project. The diagnostic comprised of several maps and passages that would explain the relation of Juvisy to the rest of France, the topography and geography of the town, public transportation and right of way in the town, a run-down of the new train station, a historical analysis mapping out changes throughout the years, as well as several other lenses of which we viewed the town through.

Our group found, from our analysis, that the town was split into three parts that were divided by the train station and tracks. We had found that one of the three areas was blocked off from the other two, shown in the map in blue, and for our project we sought to find a way to reconnect it to the rest of the town. Our plan was to create a public green space located between the tracks that will help to draw people into the area and reconnect it to the rest of Juvisy.

If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.

Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast (1964, published posthumously)
Paige Vance
Disrupting Dichotomies: Queering the Public/Private and Urban/Rural Through Lived Experience

My capstone explored the limitations of how the public/private and urban/rural dichotomies are used to conceptualize the city. Relying on queer theory, feminist theory, and the lived experience of LGBTQ and/or gender non-conforming people in cities and small towns, this capstone worked to challenge and destabilize these conceptual binaries and the structures of power that created and sustain them.

I will be spending the summer working on a farm in Missoula, Montana.

Jessica Zambrano
Cardboard City

The past three years I have worked at CityArts, a youth arts organization in South Providence. I have helped to develop and teach their course Cardboard City both at CityArts and at Vartan Gregorian Elementary School (primarily teaching 8-10 year olds). In Cardboard City, youth design and construct their own city out of cardboard. Each time I have taught the course I have attempted to incorporate more city planning vocabulary and concepts, but these additions and edits to the curriculum have been minimal. For my Urban Studies capstone, I rewrote the Cardboard City curriculum used by CityArts to include zoning and transportation methods/regulations that I have learned in Downtown Development and Transportation. The final curriculum is geared toward older elementary school children (ages 8-10).

Post-graduation I am staying in Providence. I plan to work in the nonprofit sector, currently awaiting decisions from a few education-focused AmeriCorps programs.

Elaine Wang
Forbidden Cities: A study of Beijing’s (de)gated communities

This is a critical moment of change in China’s urbanization trajectory. In the past thirty years, the Chinese urban model has adhered closely to modernist principles of urban planning, and taken the form of repetitive towers enclosed into gated superblocks, separated by wide, arterial streets. Though walls have a long history in China, this gated typology has been criticized for its homogeneity, car-centric nature, and sociospatial exclusivity—problems that threaten the livability of Chinese cities. As an effort to tackle these problems, recent design guidelines suggest the incremental phasing out of these gated communities. This capstone explored this alternative model, and its impact on public space. What are the effects of gating on social interaction and urban experi-

"I have never felt salvation in nature. I love cities above all."
Michelangelo

Students in Prof. Neumann’s seminar on the Jewelry District visiting the Manchester Street Power station
Senior Honors Theses

Eddie Mansius
Rails to Riches: An Historical Analysis How Growth Machine Politics Introduced Light Rail to the City of Charlotte

For his honors thesis, Rails to Riches: An Historical Analysis of How Growth Machine Politics Introduced Light Rail to the City of Charlotte, Eddie Mansius researched the political process and means by which land-based interests in his hometown Charlotte, North Carolina have shaped local development, particularly through the lens provided by the case study of the city’s incipient light rail system, the LYNX Blue Line. The project’s almost twenty-year history offers a compelling example for how a durable coalition of land-based interests controls the levers of policy in Charlotte, shaping in this case not only the local discourse surrounding transit, but also the hitherto outward direction of regional growth. Over the nineteen years since voters passed the Blue Line’s sales tax funding mechanism, this coalition has utilized two distinct narrative structures to justify the public investment in fixed-route transportation, each structure contingent upon whether the public had direct control, through ballot measures, over the future of the project. The first discursive structure, utilized when voters could exercise their influence, framed transit as a universal good and a panacea to the city’s congestion woes. The second framing, however, justified the initiative through largely economic terms, theorizing the billions in private investment spurred by the line as a means of indirectly benefitting the population through augmentation of the city’s tax base.

The unprecedented riots of September 2016, however, offer counterevidence to this theory, making manifest the underlying racial and economic tensions that the growth-coalition has ultimately failed to combat in its endorsement of transit as a means of economic development.

After graduation, Eddie will be working as a Development Analyst at JBG Smith Properties in Washington, D.C.

Madeleine Matsui

Madeleine wrote her senior thesis on the topic of video surveillance in London. The thesis explored the history and development of video surveillance, its implications related to crime, as well as how surveillance functions in the context of gentrification and urban redevelopment. After graduation, she will be moving to San Francisco where she will be working as a paralegal for a public interest law firm.

Best Honors Thesis

Ashley So
Reworking the Waterfront: Engaging Development, Preservation and Resilience at New York City’s South Street Seaport

Few people think of South Street Seaport when they think of New York City, but without it there wouldn’t be the New York we know today. Tucked along the East River just south of the Brooklyn Bridge, South Street Seaport marks the location of New York’s founding port by the Dutch West India Company in 1625. During the 19th century, the Seaport became one of the world’s largest centers of trade and commerce; it was a global marketplace and a site of massive immigration. With the eventual decline of the shipping industry, however, much of the city’s waterframes were abandoned. In the late 1960s, a group of preservationists led by maritime enthusiast Peter Stanford stepped in to save the Seaport from the growing development pressures in Lower Manhattan.

Central to Stanford’s vision was a desire to return maritime functions to the shore to revive the Seaport’s “working waterfront.” My thesis attempts to understand what the “working waterfront” might mean for the Seaport in the 21st century. Over the last fifty years, developers, preservationists and planers have tried to establish the historic district’s identity within the context of a modernizing New York City. From the South Street Seaport Museum founder Peter Stanford’s initial visions for a “working waterfront” in 1966, to commercial developer James Rouse’s “Festival marketplace” concept during the 1980s, to the Howard Hughes Corporation’s retail, dining and entertainment-focused “Sea- port District” that is currently unfolding, the neighborhood has undergone waves of revitalization in hopes of reestablishing itself as a vibrant center of downtown commerce. In many ways, they have failed to do so. Today, the challenges of balancing preservation and development are further exacerbated by the additional environmental pressures of flooding and sea-level rise, as demonstrated by the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

South Street Seaport’s rich and fascinating history was ideal for studying the intersections between development, preservation and resilience. In my thesis, I argue that for the Seaport to achieve a working waterfront today, it must be “working” in more than one sense of the word. Not only should the waterfront celebrate its historic maritime roots, as Stanford envisioned, it must allow for contemporary urban uses in a socially equitable way while being physically resilient to sea-level rise and flooding. Furthermore, I discuss ways in which the challenges of the waterfront present a unique opportunity for the Seaport to become a laboratory for 21st century urbanism and a showcase for new strategies in historic preservation, equitable development and coastal resiliency.

Writing a thesis has been a long, tiring and extremely challenging experience, but it has nonetheless been a rewarding one as well. I do not anticipate writing another 100-page paper any time soon, but I do hope to end up in New York City after graduation!
Deborah Berke is at once educator and practitioner. As Yale School of Architecture’s first female dean she maintains her practice at Deborah Berke Partners. Her firm was recently selected to transform the Bayview Correctional Facility, a former women’s prison, into a women’s center. As this project tethered our conversation, it allowed Berke to unfurl conceptions of adaptive reuse, gender equity in envisioning the built environs, and the necessary future of collaboration.

Interview by Emma Phillips ’17

Do you have insight into how to create those cross disciplinary connections, or do they come organically and situationally depending on the moment, the build site?

They do not come organically when the field is not watered and fertilized. They come organically when it is the focus and belief of individuals and institutions that it is their responsibility to do good work. Here at Yale there are a host of new deans that have started fairly recently. We are interested in inter-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary work and conversation, so we will make it possible for our students to have those opportunities, whether it is from the most pragmatic of adjusting class schedules so you can take a class in architecture and take a class in public health if that is your interest, to the most profound, which is to have educators in the school who share this philosophy.

You touch briefly on something I would like to unfurl. The architect acting as a pseudo-sociologist, or a sociologist imitating an architect. How do you encourage people to be in pursuit of their expertise rather than undercutting themselves by attempting work they are unqualified to do?

I think familiarity should lead to respect and knowledge. If an architect takes a sociology course they have read enough material to know what it’s about, and ideally they know who to call as they take on a project that requires that kind of input.

The Conversion Project of the Bayview Correctional Facility on West 20th is certainly explicitly gendered. In your position as a dean, one that is emblematic of a larger groundswell of women attaining positions of power within the field and academy, do you feel a pull to focus on projects that explicitly center women’s advancement or conversely, a hesitancy, as to not be reduced to a ‘female architect’ and have your work and legacy solely considered as that of an ‘architect’?

That is a complicated question, and I would say, wouldn’t it be nice if that were actually a problem? There are so few facilities and programs devoted to the betterment of women, that so far I have not been pigeonholed in that way.

I think a bigger problem for women in architecture is the traditional sexist pigeon holing. Which is, oh you’re a woman you must only do interiors. Yes, there are many gifted women who do interiors because they want to. Nobody should assume a woman couldn’t design a skyscraper or a hospital. So I am more concerned about dated stereotypes about what women are good at in architecture, than I am about being typecast as doing a job for women’s buildings.

In fact when I was a trustee at a New York City all girls school and they were looking to hire an architect, part of my voice in the room, was to say, you know it should be a woman led firm or a woman partner who is the lead on this job, because it’s an opportunity for you as an institution to show your students female role models.

In previous interviews, you’ve commented on loving life, and utilizing design as a portal through which to channel that vivacity. I’m curious, with the transformation of the Chelsea facility into a women’s center, how you intend to forge a new moment that is in pursuit of a liveliness in a building that was originally constructed to explicitly imprison and necessarily convey a deprivation of life.

Further, adaptive reuse is a common thread in your practice. Will you incorporate the previous vestiges of the building as the use value shifts entirely? What do you perceive to be the implications of reclamation of a women’s prison to uplift the very communities it once subjugated?

I’m sitting here in my office at Yale looking out at a church that is now the Repertory Theater. Buildings have embedded energy in terms of material and labor. They also have the memories of communities, both positive and negative. So when the memory of the community is negative, and justifiably so, the job of the architect is to work with the bones and the current mission to erase the negative history and rediscover, in the case of Bayview, the original dignity of what was once there. I have a particular interest in adaptive reuse projects because of these multiple levels of social and environmental responsibility. I love the fact that we are reversing the immediate history of Bayview, but respecting and building on, in the 21st century, the accomplished work of Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon. We’re collaborating with dead guys in a good way.

You mentioned the distinction between the pragmatic and the profound, how do you balance on that precipice as the dean at Yale?

Every day is a giant puzzle, of little and big pieces, trying to address them all in some logical sequence where small, practical changes can do what we’ve meant to do. Large, profound content initiatives get the necessary attention sought and input from others that gives them staying power.

Is staying power an honoring of the urban fabric that already exists, the energy of a building’s history? Or is it the pursuit of a newly rendered imagining of urban place that instead prioritizes the future communities frequenting space? And can you know if your building is successful in achieving those ends?

I don’t think you do. You work your hardest. My husband asks me this. He’s a doctor. At 6 weeks, 6 months, there are criteria; you replace somebody’s shoulder. Can you raise your arm after a year straight over your head? Good, yes we have succeeded. You have no pain after six weeks? Good, yes we have succeeded.

I think both for architecture school graduates and the life of buildings, what is success, and when do you judge it, and by what criteria, is really difficult.

The question about the Bayview is even more complex because the building was originally built, in its first incarnation, to be a YMCA-like facility for men who worked the shifts when New York had an active harbor, when the west side of Manhattan actually had piers with freight on them. It’s also a building by Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon, who are very accomplished architects; they designed the empire state building. So the idea, in my mind, that buildings can have multiple lives, multiple purposes, is an important thing to note.

+++

The Urban Studies Newsletter 04
In Conversation // Shawn Hesse, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility

Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility works for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities. The programs aim to raise profound and public awareness of critical social and environmental issues, further responsive design and planning, and honor persons and organizations whose work exemplifies social responsibility. Shawn Hesse, an architect at Emerson Design in Boston, serves on the board.

Interview by Emma Phillips ’17

How did you come to be on the board for ADPSR? By hearing about your work and practice, there is a thread of social equity, how did that become your charge?

For me it’s been an evolution of thinking. My last question is this: you touched on the fact that architecture and having to make a living, and do what you do best?

The other challenge is that development is not happening within a silo within architecture. There’s the architecture profession and then there’s property developers, which is even more removed, and more disassociated from an ideal around diversity and inclusion than even the architecture profession. So there’s that dynamic.

The reason that I’m an emeritus is that I do get the opportunity to push. For example I was working on a project for a university and was able to talk through a lot of social justice-related topics, not in an activist voice, just in the simple act of creating space to have a conversation about cultural issues within the context of the project. So we’re planning a major renovation, maybe there’s an opportunity to reach out to the black lives matter student group and essentially see the project as just an excuse to open a dialogue. Hey we’re working in this property and I’d like to talk with you on how you think we should be spending 60 million dollars. Or the design campaign that’s on campus, the student group that’s focused really on climate change. Whatever those groups may be. Opening up the space just based on those two examples created a different dynamic in the meeting. So there’s suddenly a new conversation around stuff that was maybe off limits before. We had four days of meetings and the last day at the end of the table hadn’t said anything.

I feel like I could do that kind of work all the time. I used to be a planner in city planning, its community planning. It should be 20% African American. That is not the case at all.

For me it’s been an evolution of thinking. When you look at that framework, the un declaration for human rights basically every single one of them is an architectural need. Its education, its healthcare, its housing, its community involvement. Public space, healthcare, housing, and education. Those are all architecturally dependent, or built environment dependent.

Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility always community planning.

When you come to that moment of realization, and you see that your firm is that very city-centric, what do you do? I mean, so there’s Enterprise community partners, they’re headquartered in Boston, but they have target communities throughout the country that they do work in. Some of them are in rural parts of the country. They pay attention to this dynamic, the need to think about communities not just being in cities, not just being in urban centers. There’s also the Rural Studio. That was one of my first exposures to the idea that architecture could actually do something to help people who need help and now, after the work I’m doing with Rafael and ADPSR, it’s really solidifying the framework around human rights, because when you look at that framework, the un declaration for human rights basically every single one of them is an architectural need. Its education, its healthcare, its housing, its community involvement. Public space, healthcare, housing, and education.

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that’s one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community, because architects are not trained it. That’s one of the first kind of fundamental fears where architecture is, it’s very homogenous, it’s very white, it’s very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it is if you’re responsible for the industry to make a robust effort to really create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change the culture you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and actually pretend to. So that’s a tough shift for an industry.

I think we were in a society where there weren’t any kind of equity strategy, you know, that’s one of my first exposures to the idea that architecture could actually do something to help people who need help and now, after the work I’m doing with Rafael and ADPSR, it’s really solidifying the framework around human rights, because when you look at that framework, the un declaration for human rights basically every single one of them is an architectural need. Its education, its healthcare, its housing, its community involvement. Public space, healthcare, housing, and education. Those are all architecturally dependent, or built environment dependent.

So it’s a lot of a challenge. The Cincinnati police station has a giant Cincinnati police station has a giant outreach design process where they’re trying to figure out how to shift it, and and to try to kind of bring people in who don’t think of themselves as part of the community. That needs to happen or is ongoing I think there certainly are metrics that could be tracked. You could look at community policing, incarceration rates and police shootings. As long as you don’t think that anyone is but, it’s certainly a good idea.

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that’s one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community, because architects are not trained it. That’s one of the first kind of fundamental fears where architecture is, it’s very homogenous, it’s very white, it’s very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it is if you’re responsible for the industry to make a robust effort to really create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change the culture you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and actually pretend to. So that’s a tough shift for an industry.

The reason that I’m an emeritus is that I do get the opportunity to push. For example I was working on a project for a university and was able to talk through a lot of social justice-related topics, not in an activist voice, just in the simple act of creating space to have a conversation about cultural issues within the context of the project. So we’re planning a major renovation, maybe there’s an opportunity to reach out to the black lives matter student group and essentially see the project as just an excuse to open a dialogue. Hey we’re working in this property and I’d like to talk with you on how you think we should be spending 60 million dollars. Or the design campaign that’s on campus, the student group that’s focused really on climate change. Whatever those groups may be. Opening up the space just based on those two examples created a different dynamic in the meeting. So there’s suddenly a new conversation around stuff that was maybe off limits before. We had four days of meetings and the last day at the end of the table hadn’t said anything.

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that’s one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community, because architects are not trained it. That’s one of the first kind of fundamental fears where architecture is, it’s very homogenous, it’s very white, it’s very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it is if you’re responsible for the industry to make a robust effort to really create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change the culture you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and actually pretend to. So that’s a tough shift for an industry.

I think we were in a society where there weren’t any kind of equity strategy, you know, that’s one of my first exposures to the idea that architecture could actually do something to help people who need help and now, after the work I’m doing with Rafael and ADPSR, it’s really solidifying the framework around human rights, because when you look at that framework, the un declaration for human rights basically every single one of them is an architectural need. Its education, its healthcare, its housing, its community involvement. Public space, healthcare, housing, and education. Those are all architecturally dependent, or built environment dependent.

So it’s a lot of a challenge. The Cincinnati police station has a giant outreach design process where they’re trying to figure out how to shift it, and and to try to kind of bring people in who don’t think of themselves as part of the community. That needs to happen or is ongoing I think there certainly are metrics that could be tracked. You could look at community policing, incarceration rates and police shootings. As long as you don’t think that anyone is but, it’s certainly a good idea.

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that’s one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community, because architects are not trained it. That’s one of the first kind of fundamental fears where architecture is, it’s very homogenous, it’s very white, it’s very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it is if you’re responsible for the industry to make a robust effort to really create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change the culture you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and actually pretend to. So that’s a tough shift for an industry.

The reason that I’m an emeritus is that I do get the opportunity to push. For example I was working on a project for a university and was able to talk through a lot of social justice-related topics, not in an activist voice, just in the simple act of creating space to have a conversation about cultural issues within the context of the project. So we’re planning a major renovation, maybe there’s an opportunity to reach out to the black lives matter student group and essentially see the project as just an excuse to open a dialogue. Hey we’re working in this property and I’d like to talk with you on how you think we should be spending 60 million dollars. Or the design campaign that’s on campus, the student group that’s focused really on climate change. Whatever those groups may be. Opening up the space just based on those two examples created a different dynamic in the meeting. So there’s suddenly a new conversation around stuff that was maybe off limits before. We had four days of meetings and the last day at the end of the table hadn’t said anything.

I think I agree with that sentiment, and that’s one of the things that I advocate for is broadening the consultancy team so that you actually bring people in who are trained in community, because architects are not trained it. That’s one of the first kind of fundamental fears where architecture is, it’s very homogenous, it’s very white, it’s very masculine. The architecture industry does not represent the communities were designing for, and the only way to really do it is if you’re responsible for the industry to make a robust effort to really create a culture of inclusion, which is hard, because to change the culture you actually have to change things. And actually listen, and actually engage people, and actually pretend to. So that’s a tough shift for an industry.

The reason that I’m an emeritus is that I do get the opportunity to push. For example I was working on a project for a university and was able to talk through a lot of social justice-related topics, not in an activist voice, just in the simple act of creating space to have a conversation about cultural issues within the context of the project. So we’re planning a major renovation, maybe there’s an opportunity to reach out to the black lives matter student group and essentially see the project as just an excuse to open a dialogue. Hey we’re working in this property and I’d like to talk with you on how you think we should be spending 60 million dollars. Or the design campaign that’s on campus, the student group that’s focused really on climate change. Whatever those groups may be. Opening up the space just based on those two examples created a different dynamic in the meeting. So there’s suddenly a new conversation around stuff that was maybe off limits before. We had four days of meetings and the last day at the end of the table hadn’t said anything.
The tour focused on the History of Prefabrication in Providence. We first looked at the 1874 Elizabeth Building at 100 North Main Street (architects: Stone & Carpenter) and learned about its remarkable cast iron front, manufactured in Providence at the "Builders Iron Foundry." The tour then moved on to the Modern Diner at 364 East Ave and then stopped at the Box Office at 480 Harris, a remarkable structure made from Shipping Containers by architect Peter Case. The tour concluded with a visit at the Steel Yard, which turned out to be the old location of the Builders Iron Foundry. Along the way we discussed the history of prefabrication in architecture, its impact on the urban landscape and the roles of designer and client. (Led by Itohan Osayimwese, History of Art and Architecture, affiliated with Urban Studies).

Urban Studies Bus Tours

17.3.2017
Portable Providence: Mobile & Prefabricated Structures and the Spaces they Create

24.3.2017
Urban Renewal in Providence

This tour visited several sites where modernist planners in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s looked to remake the Providence downtown and nearby neighborhoods, hoping to reclaim so-called "blighted" areas. It also considered the history of these places, their successes and failures, and how they work or don't work today in a rejuvenating city. (Led by Associate Professor Samuel Zipp, Urban Studies and American Studies).

7.4.2017
Public Schools in Providence

Public schools are situated in a larger physical, institutional, and socio-economic context. Providence’s schools reflect the communities’ diverse income, racial, ethnic cultural, and governing characteristics. This tour provided an opportunity to look at a small sample of public schools from a broader perspective. (Led by Professor Kenneth Wong, Urban Studies and Education).
Solitary Confinement: Inhumanity in Rhode Island
Reception
March 10, 2017

Architect Shawn Hesse (emersion DESIGN, Boston) spoke about the role architects can play in resisting social in-
justice, and Morgan Grefe (executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Society) touched on the stories prison
museums tell about race. This was the closing reception for “Solitary Confinement,” the John Nicholas Brown Center
for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage’s exhibition on the use, abuse and experience of solitary confinement.

Gentrification and Urban Revitalization
Panel
Monday, March 20, 2017

During an era in which so many cities have undergone rapid urbanization and heralded processes of urban renais-
sance, in what ways can these forces be reconciled with the needs of existing communities? What is gentrification
and what tools exist to curb its most pernicious effects? Through the complimentary perspectives of professionals
across sectors, attendees were presented with the tools by which to craft a better understanding of both the gen-
trification process and the effects it has on stakeholders in urban communities.

Abundant Access: Public Transport as an Instrument of Freedom
Lecture
Thursday, March 16, 2017

Janrett Walker spoke about how transit can be simple, if we focus first on the underlying geometry that all transit
technologies share, and that the forces that cause transit to succeed or fail often go unexamined in today’s transit
debates. For architects, urban designers, housing and development professionals, transit is key to building suc-
cessful cities, yet its essential task and the keys to its success are not always clear. In this engaging lecture Walker
lead us beyond some of the distractions that sometimes dominate transit debates, to an understanding of public
transit's core power: to give people freedom.

Women Making Place: Graffiti, Street Art, and Public Murals
Artist Presentation, Discussion, and Q&A
March 22, 2017

Renowned graffiti artists AM and Petal discussed what it means to participate in the graf world on both the east
and west coasts. While showcasing their work, they touched on issues of what it means to be a woman engaging in
large-scale aesthetic alterations, and the significance of their work in a traditionally male dominated field.

AM is a New York based interdisciplinary artist working in the mediums of painting, installations, murals, and socially
engaged art. Her work explores the inner connectedness of individuals and community using the duals lens of em-
pathy and compassion. Alice aims to inspire creative expression in the sense of shared humanity through art. Her
work has been featured in exhibitions at the Museum of the city of New York, the national museum of women in the
arts, the un women in contemporary art museum in DC, and she's been commissioned as a mural artist for projects
in Tel Aviv, Berlin, and across the United States. She holds a BFA from Parsons School of Design and was an instructor
at school of visual arts in 2015. Her book project will be released this summer.

Petal 1 is a legendary Los Angeles based graffiti artist, muralist, educator and activist. She paints as part of the
Danger Bees collective with fellow legendary graffiti artist Blossom. This discussion was moderated by Malana
Krongelb and the artists were introduced by Stefano Bloch.

Benjamin Davis at Frank Gehry’s Fondation Louis Vuit-
ton in Paris. On the left, his study of Parisian suburbs.
(see page 1)
URBN 1870U: Critical Urban Theory

Stephano Bloch

In this seminar students closely read and applied critical theory to thinking about urban formations and inherent socio-spatial inequalities and forms of everyday representation in a contemporary US context. More broadly, students became familiar with geographical thought concerning out of the social sciences and humanities that advances the decidedly spatial perspective that the majority of social, economic, political, and environmental problems and their potential solutions are urban-based.

URBN 1870T: Transportation: An Urban Planning Perspective

Robert Azar

This seminar explored how urban planners in the U.S. plan for and around various transportation networks. Students examined how these networks are designed and funded, which modes get priority over others, and ultimately how transportation shapes the built environment. Real world examples of plans and projects from Providence and Rhode Island were used throughout the course. Important concepts were illustrated through field trips and guest speakers.

URBN 1870U: Critical Urban Theory

Stephano Bloch

In this seminar students closely read and applied critical theory to thinking about urban formations and inherent socio-spatial inequalities and forms of everyday representation in a contemporary US context. More broadly, students became familiar with geographical thought concerning out of the social sciences and humanities that advances the decidedly spatial perspective that the majority of social, economic, political, and environmental problems and their potential solutions are urban-based.

URBN 1500: Understanding the City Through Data

Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz

Cities are complex systems, but luckily there are lots of data and analysis techniques that are commonly used and essential in urban studies. The case studies were selected from humanities, social sciences, and real-life urban problems.

For more information, visit: https://www.brown.edu/academics/urban-studies/courses