

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan: All tracks

Studio	
Name / Theme	New York Midtown (Complex Projects Graduation Studio)
Main mentor	Hrvoje Smidihen Design Mentor
Second mentor	Hubert van der Meel Building Technology Mentor
Third mentor	Jelmer van Zalingen Seminar Mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The choice of Complex Projects is predominantly driven by my interest for the complex progression of urban environments, as they continue to densify and the problems that often arise from this. The studio's methodology of viewing the urban world through a multitude of lenses and scales, all whilst dissecting current world themes through testbed locations, is at the core of all projects. This along with the use of research, ensures projects are grounded and envisions how they can be related to future scenarios. I completely agree with this way of thinking, as from my experience of working in the construction industry, projects are always a collaboration between specialists from all different fields.</p> <p>The ability to understand and utilise other fields expertise enables architects to effectively lead the discussion, as well clearly conveying key points to others, all of which are valuable skills that this studio aims to teach. New York City is one of the most stereotypical versions of a modern city which is continual evolving and in that way, offers a great testing ground for globally relevant research.</p>

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	"Patterns of Change"
Goal	
Location:	466 10th Ave, New York, NY 10018, United States.
The posed problem,	The rezoning of Midtown Manhattan has facilitated extremely financially led developments, for example Hudson Yards. This injection of major capital projects is leading to large disparity between neighbourhoods, inducing gentrification and the destruction of existing communities, both residential and commercial. As such projects continue to expand, this exclusiveness is likely to continue to fester. Contributing factors can also be found in the city's political and socio-economic history, Hudson Yards is only the newest addition in the continuous cycle of Manhattan development.

	<p>With some of the most expensive real estate of New York City located in Midtown, for instance new developments like Hudson Yards, land values are rising in turn pushing out the existing residents. Another situation that is arising, is the creation of perceived harsh borders between these enormous developments and the surrounding districts, this consecutively produces an even greater sense of detachment. Midtown is especially representative of this, as the ridged zoning plans and the iconic blocks further exacerbates this sense of segregation.</p>
research questions and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the influx of financially led developments, affect existing frameworks in midtown Manhattan?</li> <li>• How can architecture create urban environments to reinforce societal values?</li> <li>• How can a project reducing societal disparity be made feasible within the constraints of Midtown's financial and real estate dynamics?</li> <li>• How can a mixed-use building express its public and private functions?</li> </ul>
design assignment in which these result.	<p>The design assignment will result in a mixed-use tower and complex with public, commercial and residential functions to be constructed in Transitional Yards. Transitional Yards is defined as the south-western quadrant of Midtown, comprising of several distinct neighbourhoods, including the newly built high-end Hudson Yards development.</p> <p>The non-profit developer <i>New York City Economic Development Corporation</i>, who strive to create sustainable and resilient future communities, aims to develop a scheme which will serve as the link between the newly corporately developed Hudson Yards and the existing Garment district. The scheme aims to introduce other local partners and representatives through which the local inhabitants can collaborate and breakdown the boundaries that currently exist. The presence of multifunctional programming, split between social and commercial purposes, intends to provide a self-funded development whilst promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>The design assignment provides a simulated example of how architecture can be constructed with a larger influence of social and community values, particularly in an economically driven city such as New York. It will speculate in regard to issues of functionality and user-centred design but also with the question of identity, as well as the clash of different values that are present in Manhattan.</p>

## Process

### Method description

The complexity of understanding Manhattan, in terms of the magnitude of layers which facilitate its current state, requires the analysis of monumental amounts of data and information. Initial cross-disciplinary research was conducted in groups to maximise in-depth analysis, a specific strategy enabled the categorisation of analysis into key topics: History, People, Public, Mobility, Buildings and Nature. The use of mapping techniques for descriptive research and physical modelling for representational and morphological studies, enabled the collection of both qualitative and quantitative research. In this, the research acquired specific focusses, which could be used at a later stage of the design process and would be easier to translate the research findings into an architectural design approach in the presence of a group urban strategy.

Through inductive research, I am placing my project within a theoretical context of architecture, economic theory and social inclusion; utilising typological studies to provide references and also enabling the investigation of the predicted and unforeseen consequences to such correlation. The recording of Transitional Yards through historical economic crisis's, enabled me to envision the circumstances which has led to present Manhattan and how economic cycles have effected the city. To understand how current developments engage within Manhattan and the figures who operate behind them, I utilised the mapping of quantitative datasets. However, since social inclusiveness and the study of how these large developments are affecting the inhabitants of New York is a qualitative data, the on-site research which I conducted was also vital. I also look at large multifunctional complexes, commercial typologies and public spaces to analyse the connection between form and function of the space and how they intersect.

Furthermore, as I progress into the design research, I will utilise various methods including sketching, diagramming and 3D modelling as main methods to proceed with the design direction.

### Literature and general practical preference

#### Literature

Easterling, Keller. *Subtraction*. Critical Spatial Practice, 4. Berlin: Stenberg, 2014.

Florida, Richard L. *The New Urban Crisis: Gentrification, Housing Bubbles, Growing Inequality, and What We Can Do About It*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2017.

Harvey, David. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Jacobs, Jane. Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Miessen. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage Books, 241. New York: Random House, 1961.

Lefebvre, Henri, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas. *Writings on cities*. Cambridge, Mass, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. 2nd ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Miller, Donald L. *Supreme City: how Jazz Age Manhattan gave birth to modern America*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015.

ODA New York, and Maeve Roughton. *Unboxing New York*. New York: Actar, 2018.

Willis, Carol. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*. New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995.

### **Theories**

Post-democracy

Right to the City

Degrowth

### **Precedents**

Essex Crossing, Manhattan

Sewoon Sangga, Seoul

Panorama West, Amsterdam

### **Reflection**

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A, U, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The aim of this studio is to study different global urban conditions, how they are affected by social, economic, environmental and political changes, whilst also considering how they may evolve over time. Possible solutions or developments are then tested upon a city, this year being Midtown Manhattan. The studio also asks that we see the world through a multitude of lenses; that of a planner, organiser, politician, economist, philosopher, strategist, humanitarian and visionary.

I have identified a site and programme which is at the convergence of new highly capitalised developments and pre-existing commercial and residential communities. This juxtaposition provides an ideal location to study all these influencing themes, against the background of an ever-evolving city such as Manhattan. Complex Project's multi-disciplinary approach is essential to the understanding and the designing of future liveable urban environments. I have incorporated knowledge from philosophical, theoretical sociological and economical texts, whilst also considering world globalisation issues, for example, climate, political and urbanisation; these are essential in the adapting role of the architect in today's society. My project is to rethink developments and urban space into one of citizen participation, in an attempt to strengthen a destabilised equality controlled by economical decisions.

The Architecture master track invites that we consider contemporary urban questions involving the built environment, urban futures and especially the

environment and sustainable development to be included in all projects. The programme blends knowledge and skills from design practice, from the physical and social sciences, technology and engineering, to formulate projects that not only work for the current situation but have the ability to adapt to unforeseen futures.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

New York City is not the only city experiencing growing disparity between its inhabitants, as the majority of megacities are also experiencing similar conditions as economic growth is often isolated to pockets within the urban framework. In the context of global issues, there is a clear demand for environmental and social awareness, particularly as populations continue to grow and converge towards urban environments. Current methods of growth are not limitless, both in the sense of resources and economic development. Through my graduation project, I am aiming to design a building that will rethink how architecture, communities and economy relate to one another. The idea being that social validation becomes the mark of success and the drive for a city's improvement, rather than economic worth. This rebalancing of ideals particularly in a location such as Manhattan, which has grown through consumerism, could become a showcase for developments in urban settings.