SOUTH WORKS CHICAGO STUDIO
MADE IN SOUTH WORKS
RE /SHORE /SEARCH /TAIL

Mick van Gemert (main mentor)
Suzanne Groenewold (second mentor)
Rein Have (external examiner)
GRADUATION PLAN
The Chicago studio of Complex Projects poses a complex and multi-faceted project in which many levels of social/political/spatial developments need to be considered. Placed within a city and a country that can really broaden my personal horizon and ways of thinking when dealing with large scale urban questions within a complex city fabric.
South Chicago is haunted by many deep-rooted problems. When the former steel industry left the area, many of its inhabitants were suddenly left without a job. Because of the loss of jobs neighborhoods started to deteriorate as a result of unpaid property taxes. These taxes are used to pay for schools, infrastructure and other public amenities, all of which started to suffer from insufficient financing.

The horrible public schools, high taxes, and crime have driven families out of Chicago, especially the Southern parts of the City that was hit the hardest by the loss of jobs.

As of now, the city’s job base cannot compete with places like Houston and Phoenix, which is why many of the inhabitants of South Chicago are now heading southwards.

The question remains; how to turn south Chicago’s ongoing decline around by developing the empty industrial site on which the steel manufacturing of U.S. Steel used to provide jobs to the many inhabitants of the area.

**GOAL**

The Made in South Works project poses a vision for the shrinking neighborhoods of south Chicago where the solution for the ongoing shrinkage is the concentration of the traditional monofunctional American urban sprawl into dense multi-functional nodes. The vast site of the former steel factory will have to be recolonized within the spirit of the new frontiers. The node proposed for the South Works site brings back manufacturing and returns the lost jobs.

Infrastructure and new models for manufacturing are of paramount importance for the success of the project. This is why the development of a multi-modal infrastructural hub with incorporated manufacturing will be the main focal point within the the second half of this graduation studio.
Getting to know Chicago is of utmost importance if one wants to even begin to comprehend the scale of the problems that the city is dealing with at the moment. This is why the first few weeks were dedicated to researching and actually visiting the city. The latter really helped with grasping not only the scale but also the feel of the city in general.

Afterwards a manifesto was written on how to approach the empty industrial South Works site, which resulted in several soft and hard guidelines that served as guidance during the development of the vision / masterplan towards an actual spatial translation onto the site.

Within this masterplan, an individual fragment was chosen to develop further until the P2 presentation on the 27th of June.

Several topics were studied to accumulate the necessary knowledge needed to deal with the complexity of the issues that are found within the shrinking urban fabric of south Chicago today.


NOTE: further literature can be found in the beforementioned research booklets: Shrinking Chicago, Identity and Black to Green
Shrinking cities are a big problem in the current urban development of Western cities. The midwest of America has experienced an ongoing decline in population within its city centers since the middle of the 20th century and nothing has yet to be proven effective to turn this development around. Chicago is no exception to this phenomenon with many of its neighborhoods slowly but steadily diminishing and literally falling apart.

This project proposes a new way of conducting urbanism in North America. By moving away from the heavily car-dependent monofunctional and low-density urban sprawl that characterizes most of Chicago’s urban areas the vacancy strucken south of Chicago has a way to turn their ongoing decline around.

Our research shows that a concentration of people, functions and jobs into high-density nodes, along major infrastructural axis that are still present around the Steel Works site as a result of the manufacturing industry that used provide thousands of jobs to south Chicago’s residents, could actually contribute to a revival of the manufacturing industry within these areas that are in dire need of lower-educated jobs and amenities.

The individual design part concerning a multi-modal transportation hub incorporating new ways of manufacturing forms an essential part of the proposed master plan, which is centered around infrastructure and new ways of manufacturing.
TIME PLANNING

**Kick-off MSc 3 - 11/02/14** groups divided amongst three topics: shrinkage, identity and ecology started researching everything about Chicago and its role within the global and regional context, eventually creating three booklets containing a vast amount of data that formed the base of further progression.

**P1 - 16/04/14** focusses on the presentation of the manifesto and its argumentation. This manifesto is to form the guideline for further development of the master plan. The different points of the manifesto express the position and ambitions of the architects / urban designers and poses the benchmark for the resulting strategies and designs.

**P2 - 27/06/14** consists of both a collaborative and individual presentation, the former should conclude the entire master plan / vision from beginning till end, resulting in both a comprehensive study as well as a meticulously argumented proposal for the South Works site in south Chicago. The latter should include a 1:500 fragment of the building that is chosen to further develop during the coming semester, elaborating on program and functions.

**Summer-time** work vigorously to make sure enough progress is made to be able to ensure a successful ‘fast-track’ graduation before 2015.

**Kick-off MSc 4 - 01/09/14**

**P3 Progress review - mid semester** plans, facades, cross-sections, 1:200 / 1:100, part of the building, plan and cross-sections 1:50, façade fragment with hor. and vert. cross-sections 1: 20 details 1:5.

**P4 - 10/11/14** theoretic and thematic support of research and design + reflection on architectonic and social relevance, situational drawing 1:5000 / 1:1000 plan b.g. in situ 1:500 plans, facades, cross-sections 1:200 / 1:100, part of the building, plan and drawings 1:50, façade fragment with hor. and vert., cross-sections 1: 20, details 1:5

**P5 - 19/12/14** public final presentation.