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STUDIO
Theme: Complex Projects-Chicago Studio
Teachers: Olindo Caso, Hubert van der Meel
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TITLE
Title of the graduation project: The Mid-city’s New Apple Center
The relationship between research and design

The design of The Mid-city's New Apple Center is based on extensive research on different levels: physical built environment, programmatic area and infrastructure research. All of this research was concentrated on the aspects of problem-discovering methodology, such as abandoned built environment in Chicago Mid-city, unbalanced urban area development, missing connection in terms of city transportation and industry economy decaying. The design The Mid-city's New Apple Center has been keeping exploring the solutions to these urban problems, which is able to be organized in three levels in terms of scale - city scale, neighborhood scale and building scale. The design of city scale named as "Cluster city" is a urban strategy to condense the urban resources, opportunities and built environment. In terms of neighborhood scale, the concept "From Individualism to Collectivism" was raised up to image a new urban life - collective work opportunity, balanced education system and public street life in the broad background of America. Within them, the building project New Apple Center will be focused on the target that how a building could that catalyzed the new development of central "Cluster City" and how a future envelop holds the capacity to contain a new chain of capitalism production chain.

Figure 2. Cluster Plan
The relationship between the studio theme and chosen subject

The theme of Chicago graduation studio focused on re-definition of mid-city in Chicago, which is the area between downtown and suburb. Within this broad field, the chosen subject is divided into three layers for further analysis and design. The first layer is the urban strategy - Cluster City, interpreting the specific conditions in mid-city and solving each aspects of mid-city struggles. Then the chosen cluster played a simplistic role which represents the way to modify the urban neighborhood cluster structure and re-organize collective life of new urban cluster. Finally, the building project located exactly on the transportation intersection, which is significant position to lead new development of urban cluster.

1. Traditional Chain

Research ----> Production ----> Consumption

2. Targeted Chain

Research

The density of urban structure, the concentration of resource, the accessibility of infrastructure and the trend of tele-economic mode helps this switch.

Figure3. Target Overview
The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the chosen method

The project is based on the research that was finished in the first half of the Msc3 period by the contribution of whole studio group. Through the research relevant data was collected and organized in three different themes: physical built environment, programmatic area and infrastructure. During the working of The field trip to Chicago was organized in order to provide us with detailed insight into the site and surrounding neighborhoods. The workshop with SOM was organized as well as other informative events that were helpful in understanding American social-political context. After this research, in the work of urban strategy the method of metaphor and layering - system theory raised by Ungers was implemented to develop the mid-city master plan. In the process of building design, the complexity of future commercial, working and exhibition space was analyzed and researched for the design of building project. Through the physical models, massing and shapes were investigated as well as positioning on the site.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

Within the broad social context, the project will be sensitive in three aspects: in the first one the urban strategy - Cluster City - is challenging the traditional mode of modernism city planning which still remain under construction in most of Asian cities. This urban strategy provides a new thought of city master planning - clustered urban cell other than distinct function-zoned urban mode. The second aspects is exploring a new chain of capitalism’s production process. The old capitalism economy is causing a series of single-polarized and unbalanced condition within the world-wide field. There exists a deep gap between the conditions of production and customization. The new shorted, sharper and fluent chain is an urgency for the development of working situation. The third aspect is located in the field of architecture. Plenty of buildings is being abandoned or demolished every day because of the lacking of flexibility on itself. This project was concentrated on how to develop a future envelop building to feed the various needs of modern society and maximize the freedom of program and function.

Figure 4. Interior Impression
Figure 5. Exterior Impression