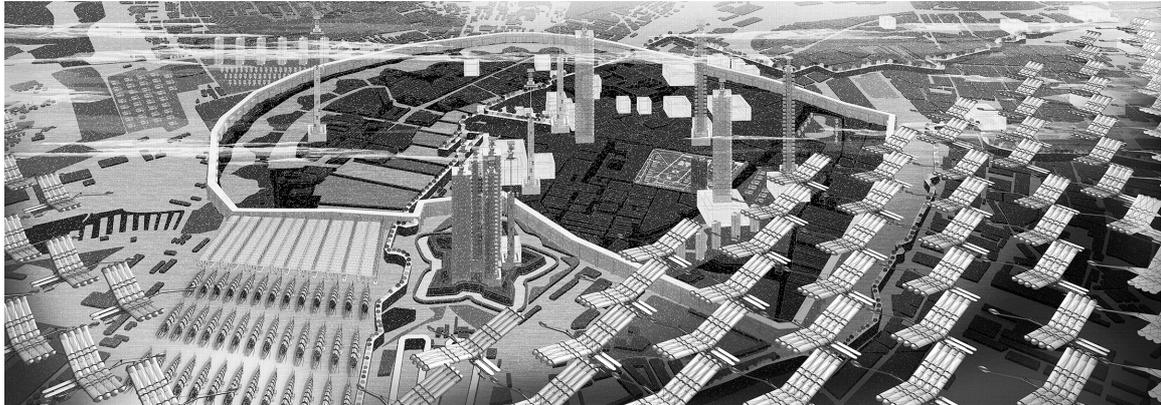


PG Unit 10: CJ Lim and Simon Dickens



In Search of Architectural Narratives and Manifestos

The year's theme focuses on the potential of architecture and urban design that address the fundamental human requirements **to protect, to provide and to participate (PPP)**. The design projects are to explore issues of sustainability, resilience and the challenges posed through climate change, and the reciprocal benefits of simultaneously addressing the threat and the shaping of cities. The effects of climate change on architecture are not limited to changes of weather, but include changes in culture, behavior, demographics, population growth and economic environment. The stimulus derives from postulated narratives and processes gleaned from literature and fiction as well as current body of scientific knowledge regarding changing environmental impacts on architecture and cities. Roland Barthes comments that 'narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it is simply there, like life itself.' It is therefore significant that buildings and cities, as physical repositories of and monuments to human culture and history, should now imply beyond their quotidian function.

In pre-secular times, it was not unusual for buildings to be constructed of and around narrative, and determined by metaphor. In 'Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan', Rem Koolhaas depicts the city as a metaphor for the diverse human behavior. However, not only is narrative unfashionable in contemporary practice, the modern age has also been an unkind chapter to architectural manifestos. Many manifestos in their purest forms are uncompromising calls for change. Antonio Sant'Elia wrote in 'Manifesto of Futurist Architecture' that 'every generation must build its own city, and for which we fight without respite against traditionalist cowardice.' Even Walter Gropius, a scrupulously practical architect, called for architects to 'engrave their ideas onto naked walls and build in fantasy without regard for technical difficulties; he predicted making 'gardens out of desert' and 'heap wonders to the sky.' Nearly every important development in the modern architectural movement began with the proclamation of these convictions. The manifesto for Ebenezer Howard's garden city, for example, was inspired by the utopian tract, 'Looking Backward: 2000-1887', written by the American lawyer, Edward Bellamy. Published in 1888, Bellamy's novel immediately spawned a political mass movement and several communities adopting its utopian ideals – plan of open space, parkland and radial boulevards that carefully integrated housing, agriculture and industry.

Climate change offers opportunities for imaginative interventions – a new lens through which cities are forced to rethink priorities and established dogma. No longer should climate change be considered solely in the realms of scientific policy; fiction is most valuable in its speculative function, and can inform the built environment. PROJECT 1, by employing narrative, students will speculate, prioritize and redefine the poetics of 'protect', 'provide' or 'participate'. The interpretations and identified issues will provide a manifesto and speculative framework for the year. PROJECT 2, the manifesto and critical thinking are to be located in a place of 'neglect'. We encourage expressions of personal ideology, scale and working methods in search of the visionary masterplan and innovative architectural proposals.