



SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

The architectural surfaces of Mexico City have been a ground for polychromatic treatment with a tradition unmatched anywhere on the globe. From the Aztec and Maya, to colonial architecture, to the modernism of Luis Barragán and Juan O’Gorman, to a flourishing contemporary Graffiti culture, Mexico City provides a unique opportunity for Wentworth students to explore design opportunities of the surface, not only in the climatic or contextual responses, but extending to the political, cultural, and social dimensions.

This Special Topics Studio will explore color first and foremost, but also representation, inscription, patterning, camouflage, and deformation, to understand how these factors transform architectural experience. Students will link historic and contemporary modes of surface treatment, and use this baseline as a springboard to propose means by which building envelopes may project identity, ownership, communication, and surveillance in civic space.

The studio will rely on a fluid exchange between traditional and experimental modes of digital and physical fabrication. We will analyze and present methods seen in the course of travel and generate prototypes drawn out of these investigations. The final project will propose the radical application of these prototypes to a specific site, testing the capacity of manipulated surfaces to engage and transform a building, street, and even entire neighborhoods.

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS:

Our travel will be based in two distinct, but related locations: Mexico City and the Yucatán peninsula.

Mexico City is an active metropolis of 9 million, but also a collection of unique and intimate neighborhoods. Here we will explore Inca and Aztec sites. We will tour and meet with street artist collectives to discuss the contemporary explosion of graffiti culture. We will give special focus to the architectural work of Luis Barragán, Juan O’Gorman, and the polychromatic treatment of buildings and urban cityscapes. Additionally we will visit the work of Félix Candela,

Tatiana Bilbao, Alberto Kallach, Michael Rojkind, TEN Arquitectos, and David Chipperfield.

The second portion of the trip will use Mérida and as a base for multiple day trips on the Yucatán Peninsula. Day trips include, the ruins of Uxmal and the Ruta Puuc, the “yellow city” of Izamal, the walled city of Campeche, and ethereal subterranean cenotes.

The Travel Studio will be undertaken in coordination with Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). UNAM is a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to works by highly recognized 20th century Mexican architects and muralists.

METHODOLOGY

The course will take the form of an iterative experimental workshop. Students will work in teams to analyze precedents, experiment with new materials, test prototypes and develop full-scale mock-ups. Instruction will be in the format of review and consultation, assessing experimental outcomes, and working with student groups to identify opportunities.

Collaboration will be central to the methodology of the course. Ideas will be generated, shared, and developed collectively. Groups may be arranged and reconfigured around techniques, methodologies, research avenues, prototypes, and so on. Participants must be prepared and willing to distribute, borrow, co-opt and misuse ideas from sources internal and external to the studio.

COST:

The airfare cost is \$1,066, payable directly online to Student Universe travel agency. The estimated program cost is \$1,760, payable to the Department of Architecture. The total cost is \$2,826 covering accommodations, local transportation, and entry fees. It does not include visa fees, transit to and from Logan airport, entertainment, shopping, or personal expenses. Students will be responsible for applying for any necessary visas per your nationality for travel to Mexico. A visa is not required for U.S. citizens.