

ARC2014: Design Studio 4 – Comprehensive Building Project
Winter 2023

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Gordon Matta-Clark, Garbage Wall, 1970, recreated by the Bronx Museum Teen Council, 2018

End Games

Toward Circularity

This Studio will start by looking at building life-cycles, specifically learning at the multiple ways that life cycles end. Whether through biological decay, disassembly or demolition, these ends today are the logical conclusion of a carefully designed and linear path toward obsolescence. This cycle always starts by means of extraction of resources and ends with burying them. In other words, architects today design wasteful dead-ends.

As a result, today our industry is responsible for more than 50% of the material we extract from the earth, more than 50% of the solid waste we produce and 40% of the CO₂ emissions. As we need to drastically and urgently reduce our impact on the planet, we must to reconsider how we design buildings. It starts by better utilizing our above ground resources.

So let's spend some time rigorously learning about life-cycles and the way in which building are simply part of a never-ending, slow moving river of materials that organize our world. We will investigate material flows, especially the ones related to urban waste, building elements and their life expectancies and metabolic qualities of materials.

Having learned from the life cycles end, we will then design new beginnings with the goal to see emerge new "circular" forms realizing an efficient and beautiful exchange of materials, re-invent the way we occupy space and reframe how we interact with one other.