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# Thesis Projects

## Winter 25

Architectural Studies Thesis

Architectural Studies Capstone

Visual Studies Thesis



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
JOHN H. DANIELS FACULTY OF  
ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, AND DESIGN



This book showcases final thesis and capstone projects produced by undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies (BAAS) and Bachelor of Arts in Visual Studies (BAVS) programs at the University of Toronto's John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

## **Architectural Studies Thesis Advisors**

Nicholas Hoban

Jeannie Kim

Simon Rabyiniuk

## **Architectural Studies Capstone Advisors**

Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone Project:

Michael Piper

Sneha Mandhan

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project:

David Roberts

## **Visual Studies Thesis Advisors**

Karen Kraven

Sarah Robayo Sheridan



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# Architectural Studies Thesis



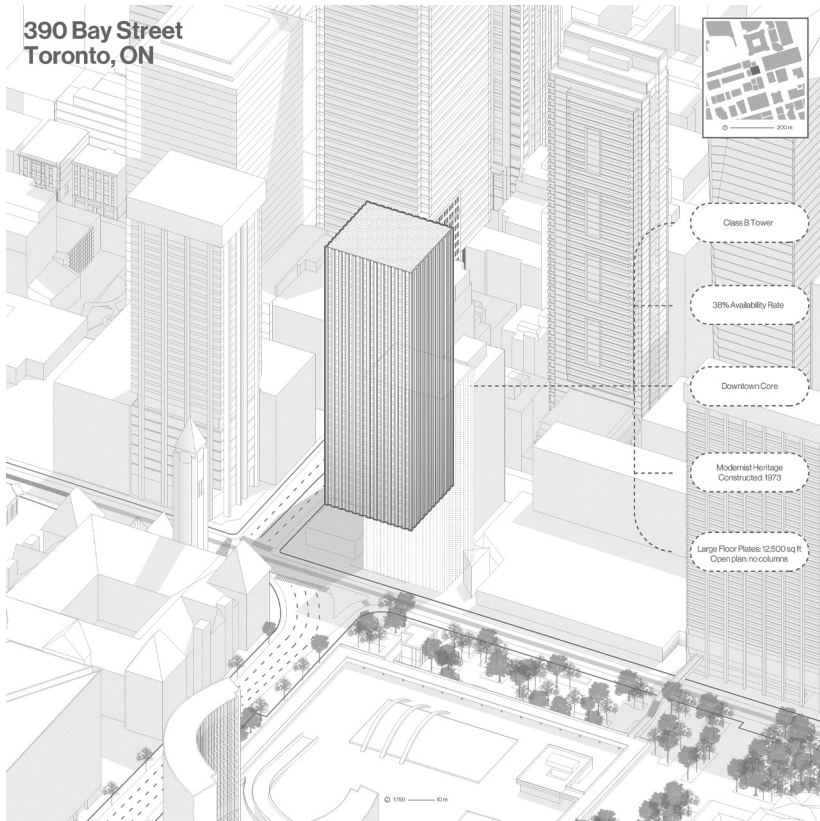
## Roxanne Bustard

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Shapes of Engagement: From Ambiguity to Community

Shapes of Engagement explores how ambiguous, modular forms can strengthen connections in Toronto's fragmented neighborhoods. Informed by community responses to questions like "What shape makes you want to relax?" each design is tailored to local contexts. By playing with scale, orientation, and spatial arrangement, these forms invite a range of interactions—rest, play, gathering—shaped by each community's identity. Placed within niche, underutilized public spaces, they transform the interstitial into the intentional. Collectively, the designs form a polycentric network that enhances both local cohesion and broader urban connectivity, using form as a tool for social interaction, place-making, and belonging.



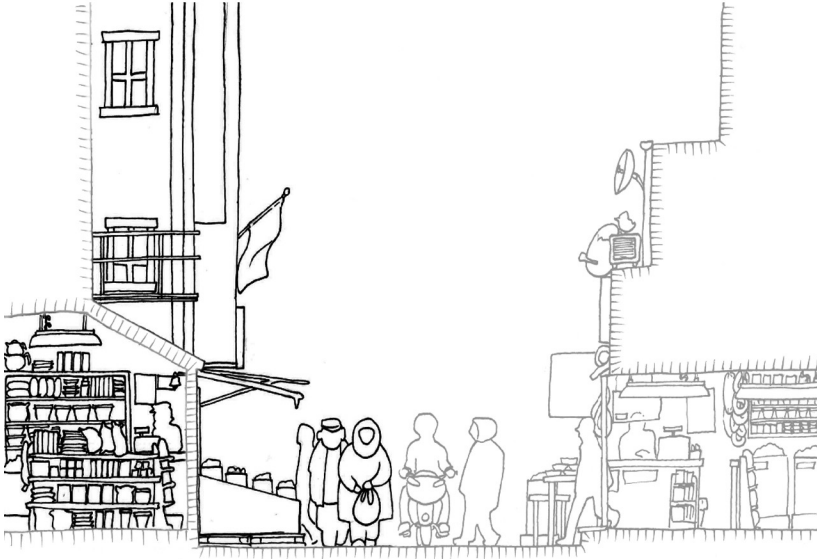
## Stephanie Carruthers

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Vacancy to Vitality

The thesis research and design proposal are grounded in an investigation of the concurrent problems of rising office vacancies and a lack of affordable housing in downtown Toronto. Converting high-vacancy office buildings to mixed-use, subsidized housing responds to an urban crisis, while offering new proximities between residents through a redefinition of what an amenity can be. My thesis insists upon the adaptive reuse of underutilized spaces as the most sustainable response to pressing spatial needs, while imagining new ways of living and working together within the tower typology.



## Yagmur Ceylan

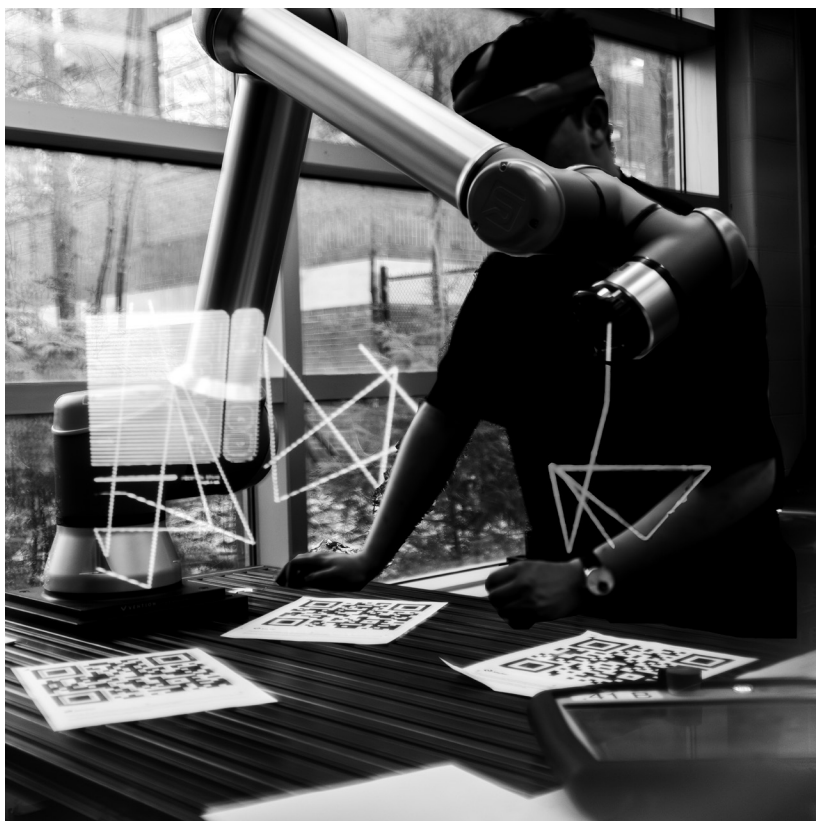
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### الضيوف هم جيراننا, Misafirler Bizim Komşularımız (Guests are Our Neighbours)

Guests are Our Neighbours explores the cultural and social dynamics of the Malta Market in Istanbul's Fatih district as a framework for cultivating interaction between refugees and landed populations. My project uses architectural drawings as ethnographic tools to visualize the challenges Syrian refugees face within the urban fabric, investigating the lack of cultural exchange and community involvement. Since 2011, Malta Market has reflected a mix of Syrian and Turkish stores, yet they rarely interact. Proposed urban architectural interventions, like repurposing the abandoned Şekerci Han and creating a social hub above the parking lot, support integration through social programs and inclusive opportunities.





## Hong Chen

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Augmenting Robots

How can robotics become more accessible to designers and non designers, enabling greater creative practice? How do we enhance the capabilities of our robots to enable environmental awareness and to become more adaptable within? Augmenting Robotics explores augmented reality systems to provide individuals with the agency to both program and view robotic actions before they are executed in a mixed digital / physical environment, often the largest obstacle within creative robotic practice. By including a human in the process, the system eliminates the need for complex environmental sensing and provides natural adaptability to the robot system.



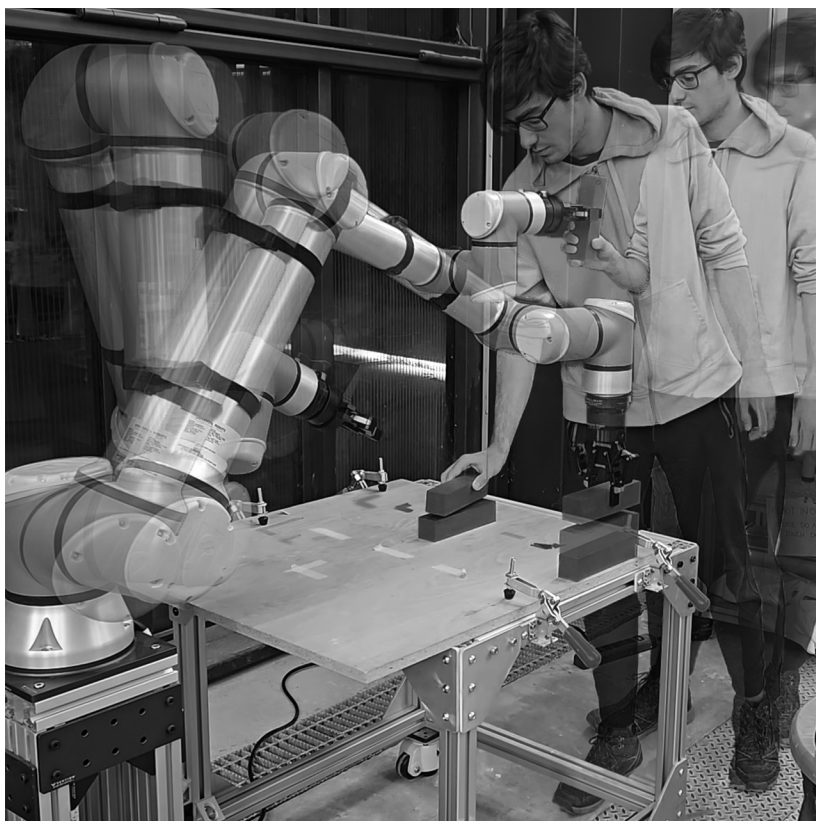
## Margarita Claus

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Through the Window: Architectural Responses in San Telmo (1800–1930)

Buenos Aires' eclectic architecture is credited to cultural blending through European immigration; in reality, it emerged from dynamic processes of shifting public trust, politics, local systems, and international relations. Using the window to study these dynamics, this research connects architecture to broader realities by focusing on three residences in the neighbourhood San Telmo (1800–1930), each representing a period—Casa de la Virreina (Colonial Era, 1800–1816), Casa Ezeiza (Post-Independence Period, 1816–1880), and Casa Bolívar (Golden Age, 1880–1930). This questions the evolution of eclecticism and residential preservation in Buenos Aires, challenging existing criteria that define 'heritage' sites while examining public attitudes toward preservation.



## Mucteba Core

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Robotic Arms and Unexpected Actions

How can we explore methods of human communication and interaction with an industrial robotic arm? Can human gestures, and robotic arm motions be interpreted towards lines of creative communications in a collaborative design environment. Robotic Arms and Unexpected Actions investigates the collaborative creative design process between human and robot, challenging how the robotic arm is viewed. During the interactive experience, participants construct a block tower alongside the robot as it follows a set of hidden rules, revealing them only through its movements in response to human actions. The final structure emerges through collaboration between the user and the robot.



## Nawal Dabbagh

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### **Thresholds of Segregation: Movement, Identity, and Apartheid in Palestine**

How do physical barriers shape identity and daily life? In Palestine, walls, checkpoints, and ID systems do more than restrict access; they reshape lives, identities, and memories. These thresholds fragment the land and alter the way people live, move, and remember. Through spatial analysis, testimonies, and crafted artifacts, this project visualizes these divisions and the journeys they disrupt. Lived experiences manifest in tangible forms, exposing the systems of control. This thesis calls for the preservation of Palestinian memory, using architecture as a tool for resistance, storytelling, and spatial justice.



## Aaron Di Giacomo

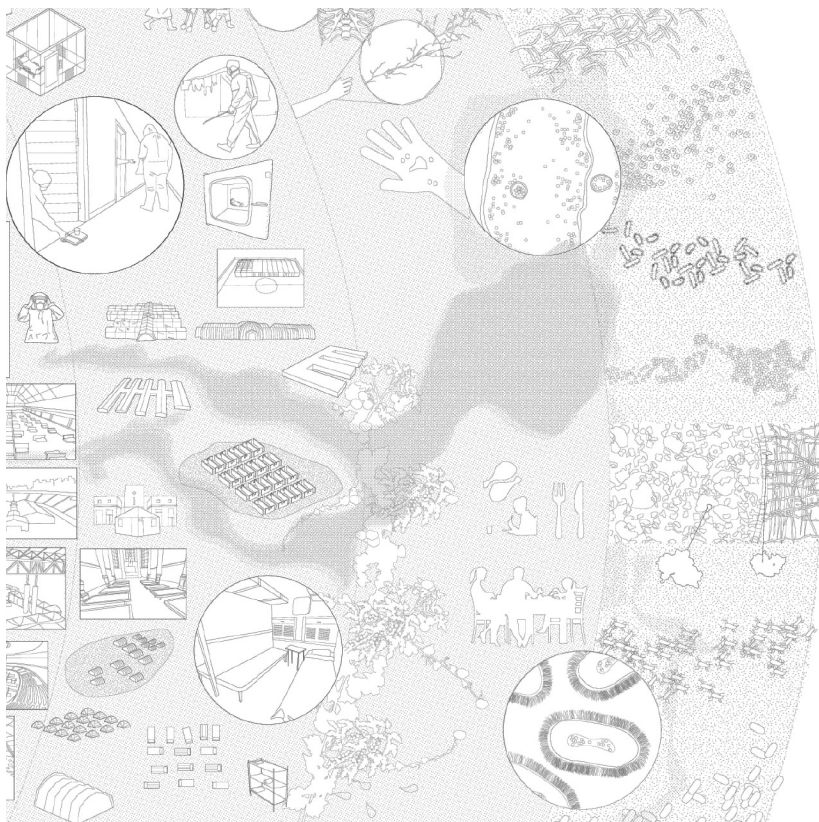
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Rethinking Assembly with Upcycled Materials

Often discarded after use, wooden pallets offer a compelling opportunity for reuse but pose structural limitations due to their standardized dimensions. Exploring reciprocal structures as a means of overcoming these limitations, this research expands into a broader investigation of reusable materials in joinery. Plastic bottles, particularly PET, are repurposed through heat-shrink techniques and a novel lashing method to form strong, adaptable connections between timber pieces. Robotic co-operative assembly further enhances precision and placement, optimizing these connections for efficiency. Together, these materials and methods establish a new construction approach that transforms discarded resources into durable, scalable architectural assemblies.





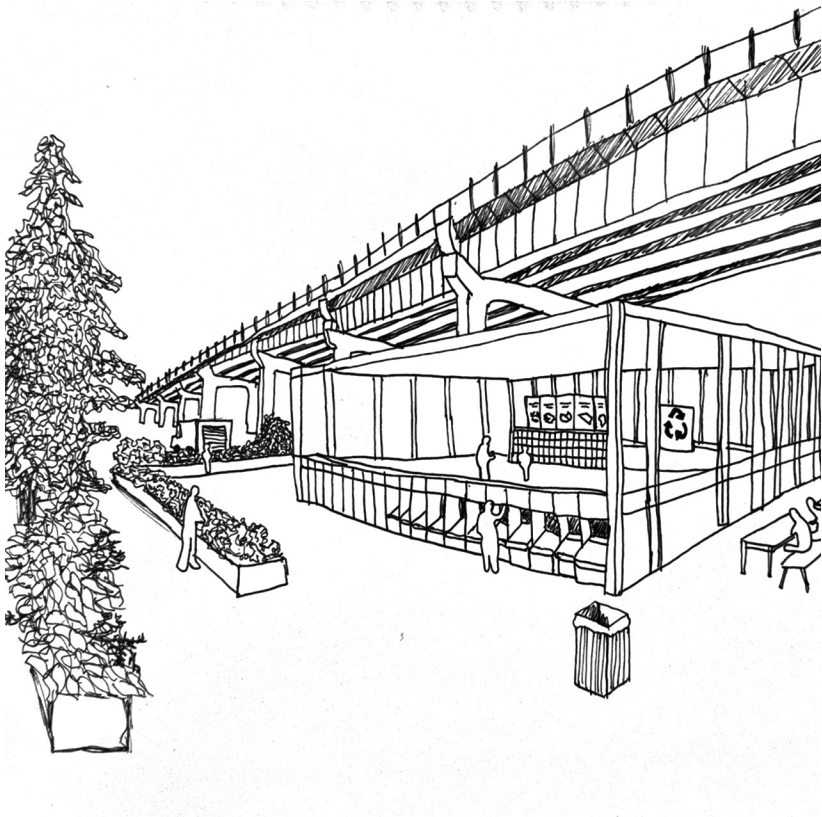
## Megan Fezi

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyniuk

## The Bedroom Laboratory: Rekindling Interspecies Alliances

This thesis seeks to utilize architecture as a medium for fostering interspecies alliances between humans and bacteria, realizing an imperative for better coexistence among species. Prior to the rise of germ theory and separation architecture in the 1800s, the now distant human-bacteria relationships had coexisted since the oxygenation of the Earth. Employing the concepts of metabolism and transscalar, this project investigates how interspecies architectures can allow energy to flow between species. Through creating a bedroom laboratory, feminist perspectives on science introduce new ways of sharing space with bacteria. A similar setting is established in a public forest, reinvigorating human relationships with other life forms.



## Jenna Fisher

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Common Roof: Reimagining the Public Realm Under the Gardiner

Beneath the Gardiner Expressway lies an underutilized space with the potential to support Toronto's unhoused community. With over 10,000 individuals unhoused each night, there is an urgent need for inclusive design solutions that promote safety and integration. My thesis reimagines this area into community-centered nodes—shared kitchens, upcycling depots, gardens, and washrooms—providing infrastructure and social inclusion. By prioritizing waste management and material reuse, the project addresses both environmental and community needs. This intervention envisions a space where unhoused individuals and daily users coexist, benefiting from shared resources and encouraging community connection. It engages with *Under the Public Realm*, a plan associated with The Bentway, reimagining the space as one of resourcefulness and collective care.



## Jenny He

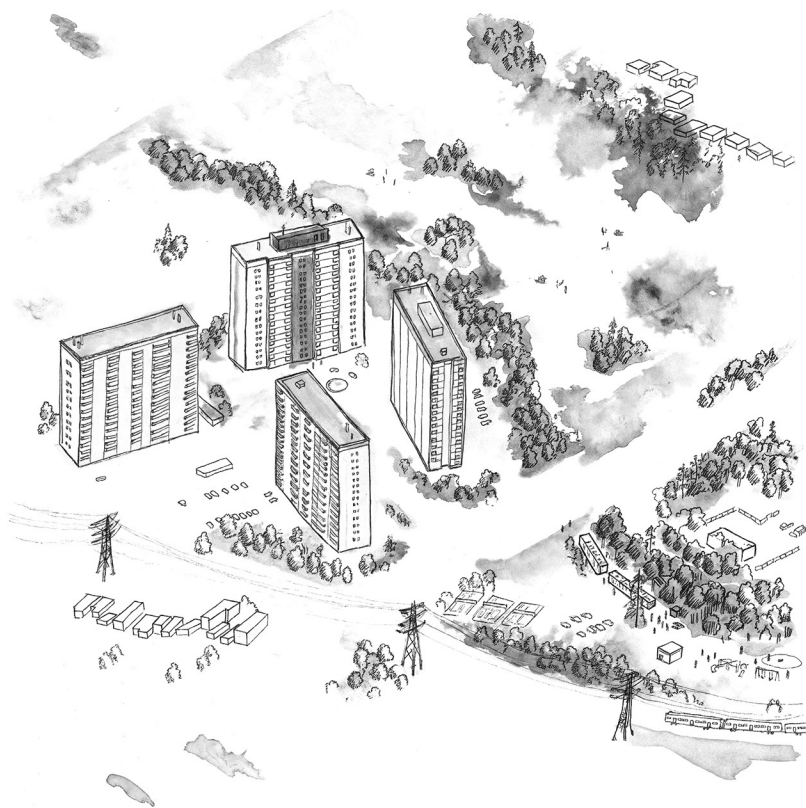
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Keeping up Appearances

My research challenges the conventional single-family home by proposing a more adaptable multigenerational housing model tailored to the lived experiences of Chinese immigrant families. This model not only preserves cultural continuity but also offers economic benefits and redistributes essential household functions—such as childcare, elder care, and domestic labor—through mutual support across generations. While multiplex housing is gaining traction, it often lacks the communal spaces that foster intergenerational bonding. My proposal envisions a more flexible typology, where units remain accessible yet separable, enabling both shared living and individual retreat. Inspired by collectivist Chinese values, this design redefines suburban housing to support evolving family structures, reinforcing interdependence while maintaining a balance between shared and private spaces.





## Joshua Helm

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### **False Proximities: Reconnecting Toronto's Public Housing with the Ravines**

Toronto's ravines are essential for the health and wellbeing of the city and its inhabitants. Despite the close proximity of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) buildings to this unique ecosystem, racialized and marginalized low-income tenants face barriers in accessing and enjoying ravines. Examining the Warden Woods Ravine and its surrounding community in Scarborough, *False Proximities* aims to connect TCHC tenants with Toronto's ravines. Through community engagement, didactic models and drawings, and a series of design proposals (such as landscape interventions and a community kitchen), this thesis reframes Warden Woods as a vital public amenity fostering ravine education, stewardship, and community.



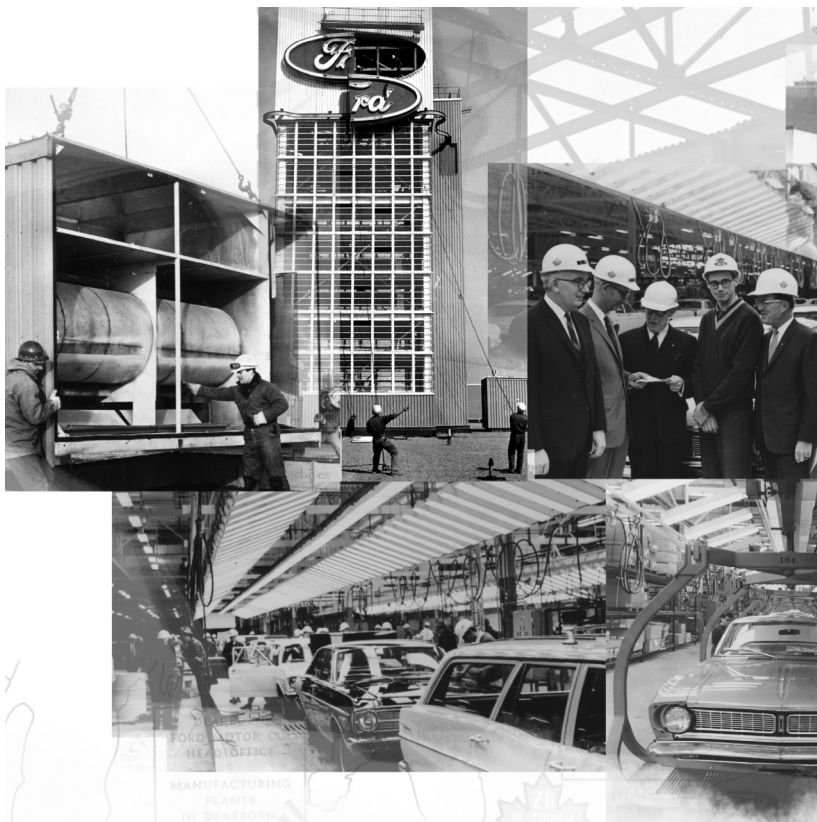
## Kyra Holzscherer

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### **Deconstructing Identity: Haitian Gingerbread Houses and History**

Over the past century, the gradual loss of Haiti's Gingerbread houses has been perpetuated by the prevalence of concrete construction, environmental catastrophes, and political instability. This investigation addresses this loss of heritage by analyzing the link between the architectural elements of the Gingerbread house and the Haitian identity to reveal the diverse aspects that make up Haiti's history. Through a research-based analysis of the elements of this architecture, an enveloping story about Haiti is presented, ultimately revealing Gingerbread architecture's significance to the Haitian identity, and serving as a tool for the preservation of its defining physical and cultural features.



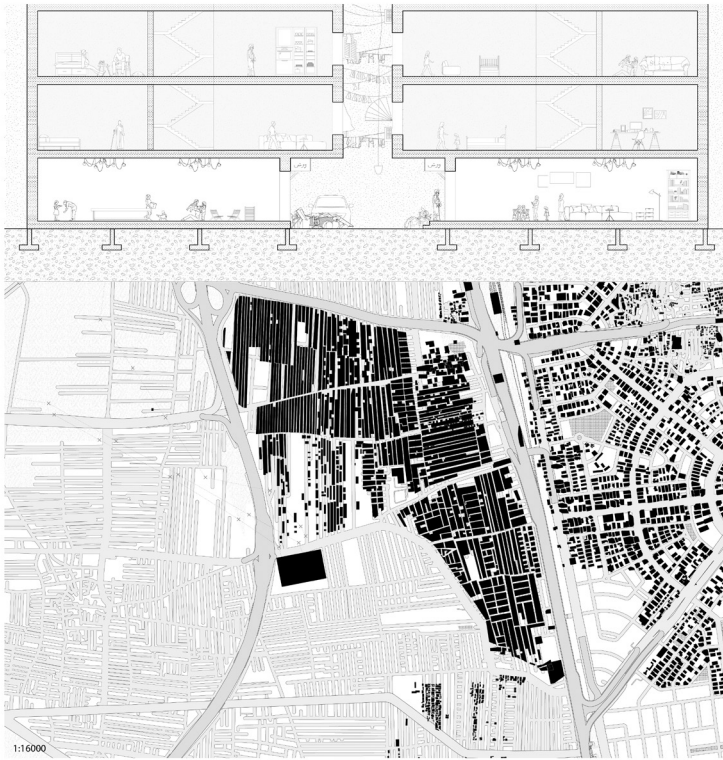
## Emma Hwang

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Rational Objects: Architectures of Management on the Shop Floor

As industrial work adopts digital systems, human-machine relations evolve to accommodate these changes. This project investigates the transitioning nature of labour through a grounded case study of the auto sector in Southern Ontario. In doing so, it attempts to address a technical knowledge gap between organized labour and the companies that introduce new technologies. The design of key objects and spatial layouts used in the rationalization of workers on the shop floor are studied through close readings of plant and labour representations across multiple archives, connecting these to managerial regimes throughout time.



## Mary Iskander

Architectural Studies Thesis

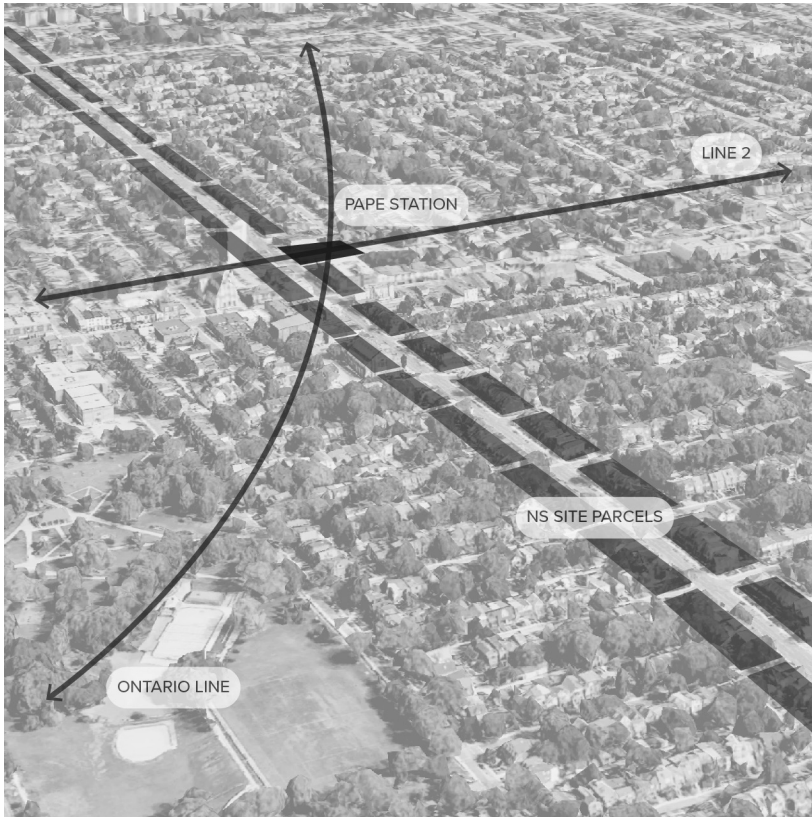
Advisor: Simon Rabyzniuk

### Hay El Khayal: Rethinking Urban Informality in Cairo

Architectural discourse views informality as chaotic and detrimental to the built environment. This thesis challenges this view and argues that they are incremental and sites of imagination. Ard El Lewa, Cairo, Egypt is a community-built settlement addressing housing needs through collective agency. However, these dominant and dense forms of urbanization remain underserved in terms of public space. As men congregate in the streets at the traditional 'Ahwa' (coffee shop) women are left without designated spots for social engagement, financial independence, and safe public interaction. By repurposing underutilized spaces embedded into the narrow street fabric, this project aims to assert the role of the architect as a spatial agent facilitating women-led collective hubs fostering inclusive and intergenerational environments for women of all ages in the community.







## Riley Jackes

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### **Grey Stations: Solutions for the middle ground of Toronto Transit Hubs**

The promise of transit-oriented communities (TOCs) in Toronto remains unfulfilled. This research examines how TOCs function in pre-existing communities like Danforth, critiquing the city's current zoning framework for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). Rather than fostering community integration, the existing model prioritizes vertical development and land value maximization. This study positions zoning as a catalyst for architectural interventions, advocating for a shift toward context-sensitive strategies that emphasize connectivity. Enhancing north-south arterial streets can improve first-mile/last-mile access and create cohesive communities. By challenging the standard MTSA zoning model, this research calls for a more equitable approach to development planning.



## Amy Joung

Architectural Studies Thesis

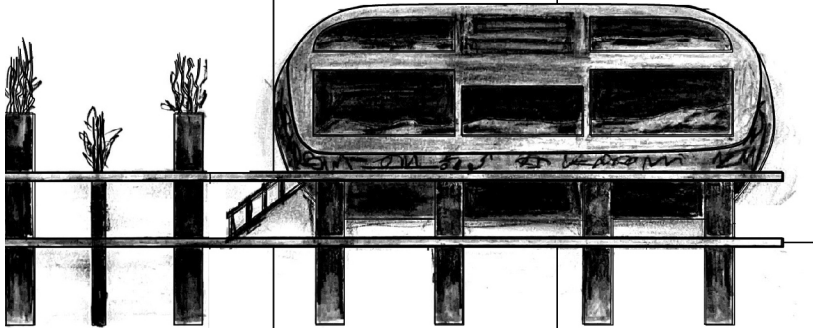
Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Reviving Sewoon: Rethinking Urban Renewal for Elderly Communities

This thesis looks to repurpose the Sewoon Sangga—a mixed-used megastructure—to reconnect and support marginalized low-income seniors. Rapid urbanization and class segregation in Seoul, South Korea, have led to the marginalization of the country's growing demographic of low-income seniors. Excluded elsewhere, they have created their own safety-net communities in the city's historic core. These communities have been protected by the presence of the Sewoon Sangga, however, ongoing city beautification efforts now threaten their existence. In response, this project seeks to preserve the structure while introducing a series of acupunctural public space interventions that foster placemaking for the elderly.

CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1965 AS PART OF THE BEIRUT CITY CENTER COMPLEX, DESIGNED BY LEBANESE ARCHITECT JOSEPH PHILIPPE KARAM

INTENDED TO BECOME A CINEMA WITH A SEATING CAPACITY OF 1,000, THE EGG WAS TO BE THE CENTERPIECE OF THE FIRST MALL IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THE EGG CINEMA



CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1965  
ABANDONED IN 1975

DURING THE 2019–2020 PROTESTS, THE EGG HOSTED LECTURES AND EVENTS, SYMBOLIZING REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT AND COMMUNITY

## Romy Khayat

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Shadows of Instability

Shadows of Instability explores Beirut's abandoned buildings as symbols of conflict and opportunities for social intervention amid political and economic upheaval. The research challenges neoliberal policies favouring real estate over social welfare, advocating for adaptive reuse that balances heritage and humanitarian needs. Through historical analysis and architectural intervention, the Egg's revitalization addresses its original role as a cinema in Beirut City Centre, the Middle East's first mall. Souks reclaim their role as vibrant social and productive spaces, transforming the site into a network of shelters, workshops, and a marketplace where displaced artisans find refuge and actively preserve tradition.





## Daniel Hyunsu Kim

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisors: *Simon Rabyiniuk / Hans Ibelings*

### **On The World That Walls Itself: Barriers, Artifacts, and Response**

On The World That Walls Itself examines the absurdity of borders, drawing from my experience serving in the Korean DMZ. Through a speculative design scenario—where one company fortifies divisions and another facilitates transgression—the project reveals the essence of border evolution. By placing borders in speculation, I propose a scenario of perpetual reaction, challenging conventional narratives and imagining alternative futures shaped by opposing forces.



## Jason Lee

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Actuated Granular Structures

Traditional methods of construction rely on heavy machinery, manual assembly techniques, standard fastening components, and complex processes. These methods not only build, but dictate how we design. This thesis looks elsewhere, looking at a self-assembling particle system that aggregates and forms shapes. By looking at the intersection points between Karola Dierichs aggregate spike pavilion, compliant mechanisms, and self-assembly, the system is made of flat, star-shaped units that, upon impact, unfold and latch onto one another. In doing so, this approach reimagines how structures are built, and opens new possibilities for architectural geometry shaped by movement, adaptability, and material behavior.



## **Tilija Leskauskaitė**

**Architectural Studies Thesis**

*Advisor: Jeannie Kim*

### **Waking Up a Neighbourhood**

In 1957, USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev promised to provide an apartment for every family in the Soviet Union. The following decades of rapid housing construction were made possible by prefabricated concrete panels, manufactured in factories and assembled swiftly on site to form identical apartment buildings arranged in superblocks dubbed mikrorayons or “sleeping districts.” Today, over half of Lithuania’s population resides in these apartments, which have long exceeded their intended 30-year lifespan and consequently face significant structural challenges. This thesis examines Lazdynai, a microdistrict in the capital, Vilnius, and leverages this mass renovation project to explore concepts of deconstruction, modularity, and community identity while introducing shared spaces and fostering collective care.



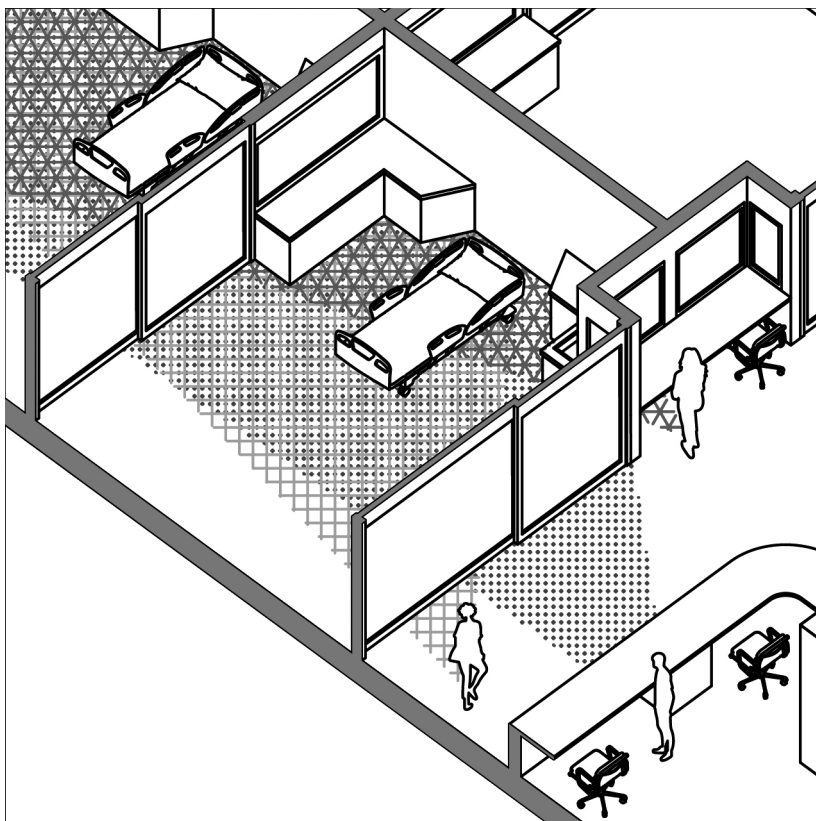
## Erica Ma

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Modern Vernacular: Designing for the Future of Chongqing's Rural Villages

This thesis project explores rural revitalization in Chongqing, China, by connecting a village to a larger economic network. Inspired by Chongqing's critical position in the broader framework of Belt and Road Initiative, the design proposes an agriculture-based tourism village and rethinks rural areas as active participants in modernization. Chongqing has experienced rapid development over the past seventy years. Many rural residents moved to cities seeking a better life. The loss of labour force in rural areas resulted in the need to restructure the agriculture system. The design translates the spatial intelligence of vernacular structure and cultural practice of rural Chongqing into contemporary programs.



## Michael Mac

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### **Walking the ICU Tightrope: Balancing Comfort and Efficiency**

This thesis explores two approaches to redesigning the SickKids ICU, a teaching hospital in downtown Toronto, contrasting large-scale systemic changes with patient-centred, room-specific improvements. The efficiency-focused approach prioritizes staff workflow, optimizing room placement to reduce travel distances and improve response times. The patient-centred approach balances visibility and privacy while enhancing visitor accommodations to support comfort and emotional well-being. By comparing both approaches, this study highlights the trade-offs inherent in each and explores opportunities for integration with minimal disruption. Ultimately, it demonstrates how design decisions shape patient care from both operational and human-centred perspectives within a legacy urban hospital.



## Ivan Makhno

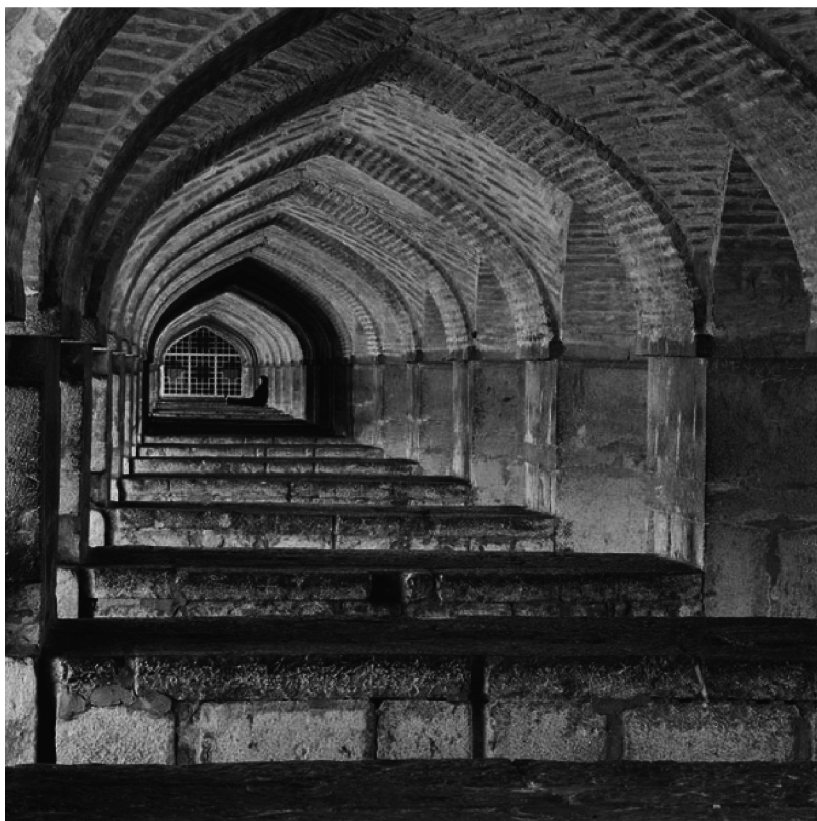
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Evolving Tradition

Rooted in the intersection of tradition and innovation, this thesis explores the integration of Ukrainian vernacular construction techniques with modern digital fabrication methods. Using impact printing, I am investigating how clay mixed with straw, a historically significant building material in Ukraine, can be applied through a robotic fabrication method to create sustainable and culturally rooted architectural solutions. To optimize material performance, the project experiments with variables such as clay consistency, straw percentage, and PSI levels, while pushing the boundaries of material application and form. This research aims to bridge tradition and innovation, offering a framework for rebuilding Ukrainian architecture through contemporary technologies.





## Ala Mohammadi

Architectural Studies Thesis

*Advisor: Nicholas Hoban*

### **Adaptive Restoration: Reimagining the Underside of Si-o-Se Pol in Esfahan**

Si-o-Se Pol is more than a bridge, it is a testament to Esfahan's advanced engineering. Built to work with the Zayandeh Rud river, its foundation has suffered from years of exposure, and the river's return now threatens its stability. Without intervention, erosion and structural failure are inevitable. This thesis proposes a restoration method that not only reinforces the bridge but also transforms its underside into a public space. By integrating engineering solutions with adaptive reuse, the goal is to preserve Si-o-Se Pol's identity while ensuring it remains a place of connection, resilience, and continuity for the future.



## Louise Nordquist

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Getting to the Root of It

Today, around 85% of Swedish woodland is used commercially, while 60% of the forest has been clear-cut since the 1950s. Much of the native forest has completely disappeared, replaced by monocultures, and over 2,000 forest-dwelling species are on the red list. Despite these alarming numbers, only 5.7% is classified as protected by law. Sweden has been slow to respond to the call for improvement of its forest protection. This project aims to inform the Swedish people of the dire state of their forest, showcasing the centuries of ill management that have resulted in its current state.





## Ashley Park

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Through the Backdoor

Toronto's Koreatown is a neighbourhood in flux, shaped by shifting cultural presence, continuous migration, and periodic erasure. Once a hub of Korean immigrant life, it has transformed into a district driven by consumption, where history persists but is not always visible. How can architecture sustain lived experiences in a changing urban landscape? Can the overlooked back conditions of laneways become spaces for connection, memory, and cultural continuity? This thesis examines the transition from the dense storefronts along Bloor St. W to the underutilized laneways behind them, exploring how these hidden thresholds can reimagine Koreatown's future while honoring its layered past.



## Nicole Li Zhou Quesnelle

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### One Foot in Two Boats

Shanghai's urban landscape reveals ongoing tensions between modernization and cultural preservation. This thesis examines this dynamic through the evolution, decline, and potential reconstruction of Lilong housing: Shanghai's dense alleyway-based communal housing that blends Western and Chinese architectural elements. I draw on generational memory and individual experiences to navigate how these spaces influence relationships, cultural identity, and belonging. In order to address issues of colonization, political shifts, and Shanghai's tier system that have influenced its built environment, I used circulation patterns from traditional Shikumen housing to make a midrise intervention situated in Hongkou, offering a bottom-up approach that reconciles Shanghainese history with its increasingly globalized urban future.



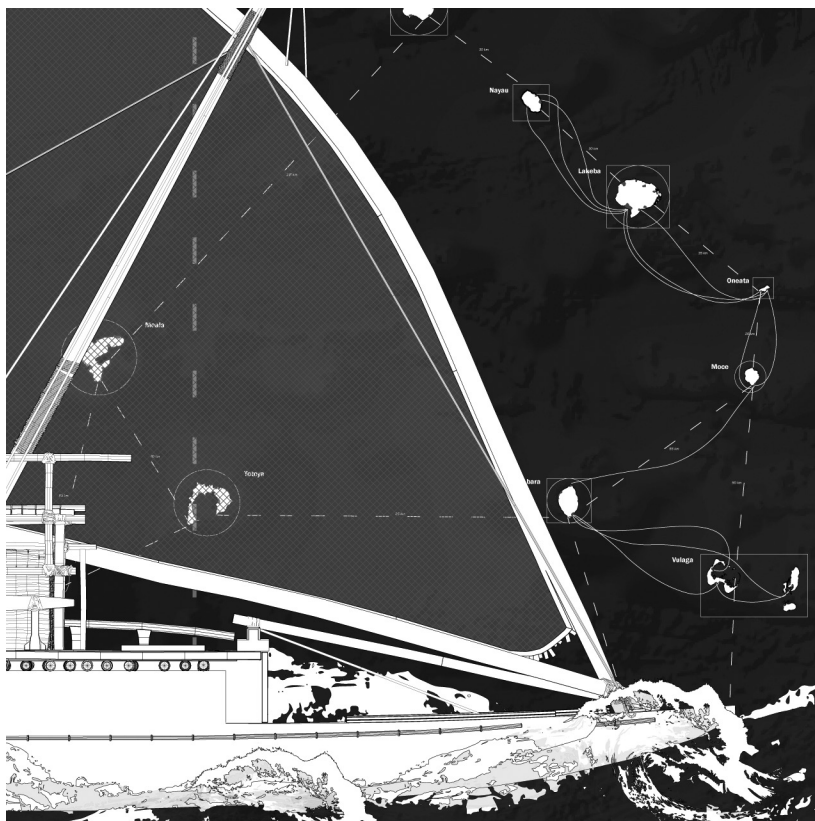
## Diba Shams

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Sacred Spaces, Secular Needs | An architecture of coexistence

This project explores the adaptive reuse of underutilized mosques in Tehran, transforming them into shelters and vocational facilities for street children amid Iran's economic crisis. With thousands of children forced into labour, this initiative proposes innovative design strategies to address pressing social issues. By maintaining existing communal functions and minimizing structural changes, it reimagines these sacred spaces as sites of care, growth, and empowerment. The design integrates NGO partnerships, offering both immediate shelter and long-term opportunities. This project demonstrates how neglected spaces can be revitalized with minimal reconstruction, balancing preservation and transformation to create socially responsible architecture.



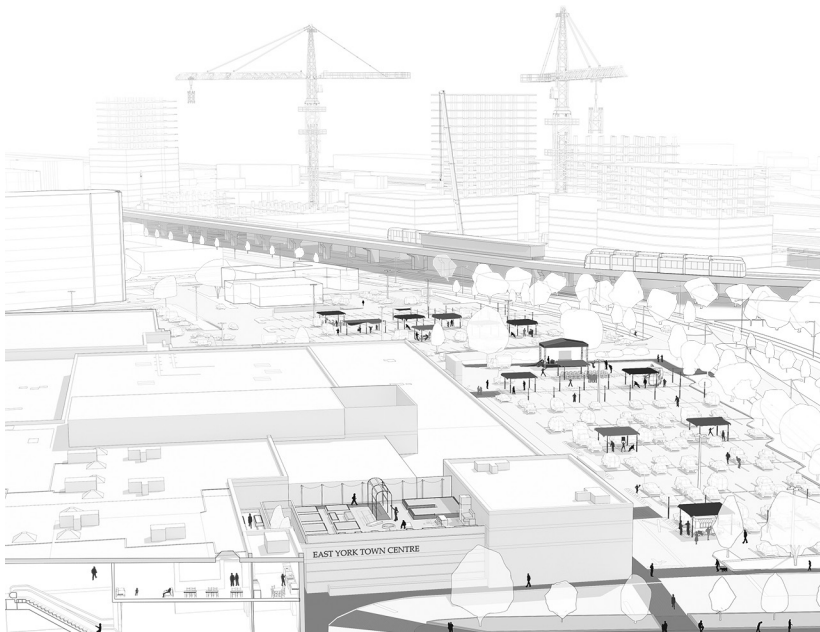
## Vineel Sharma

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Reconnecting the Central Oceanic Archipelago

Amid a global backdrop of climate change, environmental degradation, and precarious fossil-fuel dependency, the resurgence of Drua, a sacred double-hulled sailing canoe in Fiji's Lau Islands, provides solutions to many locals' loss of sovereignty. By focusing on community-led solutions and Island Degrowth principles, the project addresses the struggles of peripheral island communities, such as limited transportation networks, irregular delivery schedules, and restricted healthcare access. Intertwining local knowledge, informal networks, and ecological preservation, Reconnecting the Central Oceanic Archipelago proposes new ways to connect scattered archipelagos. Ultimately, it envisions resilient interisland travel through the design of contextual port infrastructure and navigational aids.



## Mohamad Sinjab

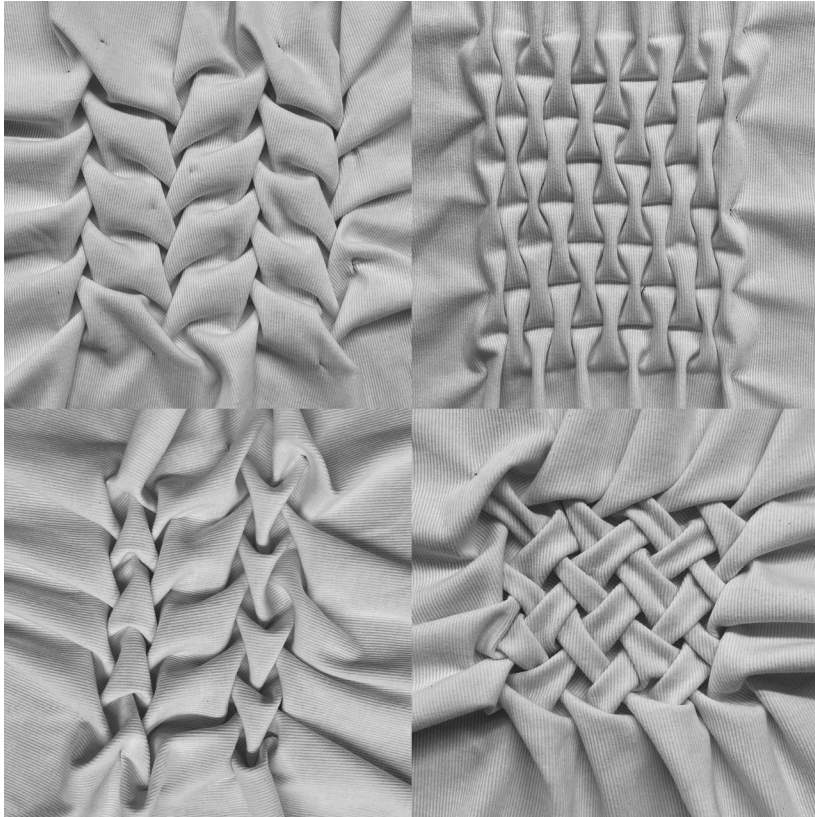
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Between the Tracks

As Thorncliffe Park anticipates the arrival of a new Transit-Oriented Community (TOC), the future of the existing fabric is uncertain. This thesis imagines a process of pre-emptive placemaking to anchor and amplify the neighbourhood's existing dynamics. Everyday spaces, including the East York Town Centre, parks, and plazas, are actively occupied by the dense ethnic community. Yet, the spaces between these existing nodes remain underutilized. This thesis proposes tactical approaches to reclaim that land through programmable, community-driven spaces—a prefiguration of the eventual transit-oriented development to come. Without necessarily formalizing these activities, adaptable structures assemble and disassemble, providing infrastructure for vendors, festivities, informal markets, and other activities that support visibility and shared access.





## Matthew Straub

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Sensory Softness: Applied Textile Prototyping

Using the term softness as a material and conceptual tool, this research argues that the dominance of rigid, static materials in architecture limits an environment's capacity for sensory engagement. Softness is viewed not only as a physical quality but as a form of technological adaptability. Through an exploration of various sewing techniques, including smocking, this study investigates how the adaptability of textiles can shape tactile, interactive, sensorial spaces. With a focus on multi-sensory room design, it examines how textiles and interactive projection mapping can enhance sensory engagement for neurodivergent children, adults, and individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's.





## Dora Sun

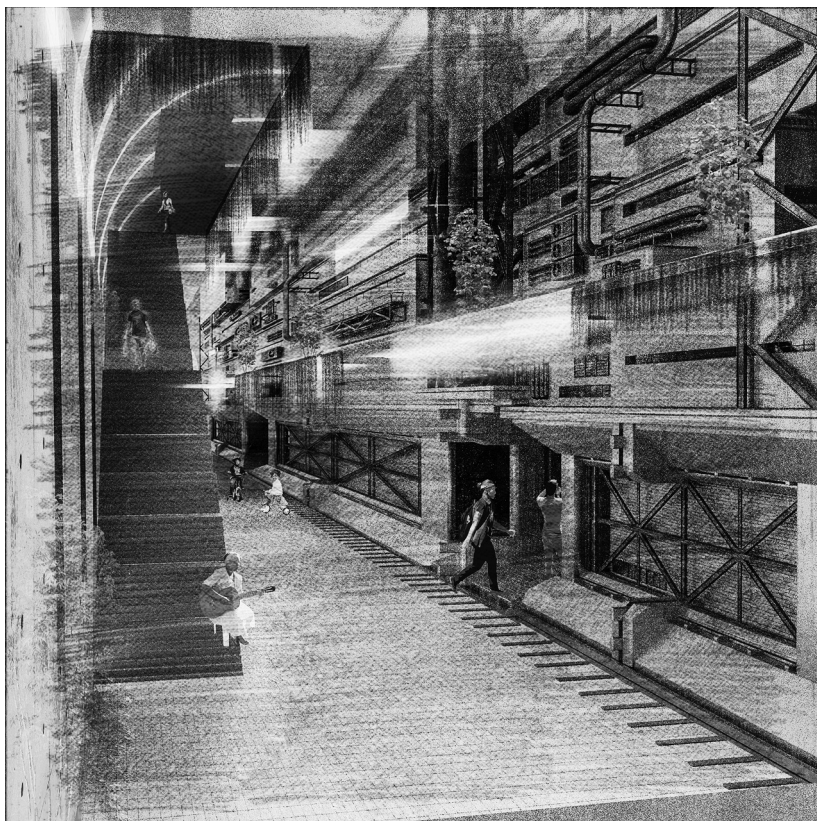
Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### **Beyond the Straight Line: Flexible Architecture for the Scoliotic Spine**

Most buildings and furniture are designed for an “average” body, but not everyone fits this mold. This project looks at scoliosis, a condition that curves the spine, to show how standard designs fail to support different body shapes. Many chairs claim to be “ergonomic,” but they don’t adjust to side-to-side spinal curves. This research explores a flexible, expanding support using a playful kinetic structure. Instead of forcing posture correction, this structure gently shifts and adapts with movement, balancing support and expression. This project rethinks how design can better support diverse bodies, moving beyond rigid norms toward a more inclusive future.





## Alyssa Tao

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Fragmented Futures: Adaptive Urbanism in Post-Collapsed Societies

Exploring architecture and urban planning within the context of societal collapse and demographic transformations projected for 2080, this research underscores adaptive urbanism strategies—particularly decentralization, resource autonomy, and adaptive reuse, as essential for managing infrastructural decline. Central to this exploration is the reimagining of Tokyo's underground metro stations, transitioning from transit infrastructure into integrated, self-contained arcology units capable of supporting comprehensive human habitation. Juxtaposing these revitalized subterranean environments—symbols of resilience, equity, and social regeneration—against the decaying monuments of past excess represented by abandoned skyscrapers, the study fuses speculative fiction and historical precedent, proposing urban planning as integral to societal renewal and stability.



## Alyssa Tegelaar

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Creating a Circular Culture of Food

This thesis researches the concept of urban food metabolisms and how the current food flow can be re-evaluated to create a circular culture of food. Food deeply intertwines cultural heritage and social cohesion. Accessing affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food is a vital aspect to urban communities. My project re-imagines a pre-existing community center into a vibrant food hub, creating a food-oriented community that encourages people to grow, share, and celebrate food, encouraging individuals to engage in the food system in impactful ways. The site design reflects the full cycle of food metabolism from production, distribution, consumption, waste, and reuse.



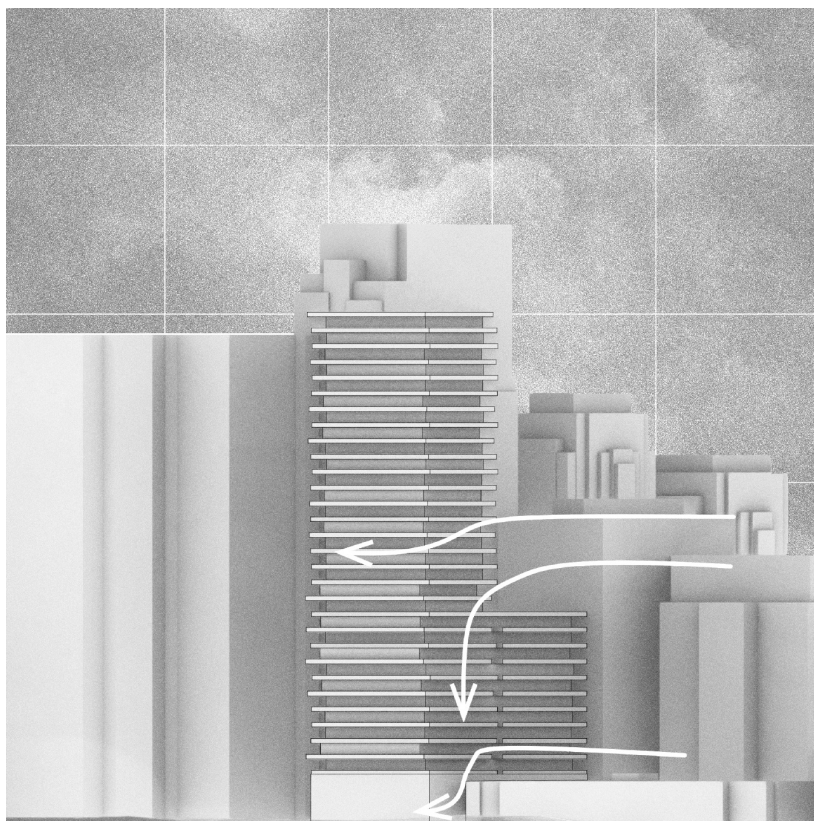
## Cherisse Teves

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Placemaking as Resilience: Toronto's Little Manila

Connecting global influences and personal experiences, this thesis explores how the Filipino diasporic community made space in Toronto's Little Manila (Bathurst-Wilson, 1950s-now). Filipino cultural space reflects deeper histories of international and national frictions than it is accredited. In Little Manila, such frictions simultaneously isolated and liberated Filipino caregivers from their homeland. This made Filipino caregiver placemaking practices responsive to how Canada's 1992 Live-In Caregiver Program gradually diminished their identity, agency, and work. Past spatial theoretic frameworks reveal how Filipino caregiver placemaking was necessary navigation within Canadian space, done through recontextualizing the pre-existing neighbourhood to maintain their culture.



## Sophia de Uría

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### High-Rises and Wind Tunnels: Design Approaches to Enhance Urban Pedestrian Comfort

Catalyzed by one of Toronto's urban wind tunnel effects, this research aims to improve pedestrian comfort by altering the geometry of high-rise towers. The study examines three types of towers: those that harness wind, divert wind, and disregard wind in their design. Using computational fluid dynamics analysis, I identified the optimal tower geometry to minimize wind tunnel effects in urban settings. However, since demolishing and rebuilding cities isn't feasible, I propose a design solution that serves as an integrated façade to the catalyst building to mitigate the issue, thus offering an adaptive strategy to enhance urban wind conditions.





## Kenny Vo

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### To Hold and Let Go: Vietnamese Homes, Diasporic Memories

Our homes hold what our hearts cannot forget. Domestic spaces of the Vietnamese diaspora in Southern Ontario become vessels of living memory, embodying both cultural resilience and everyday adaptation. Beyond nostalgia or trauma, this project captures the subtle yet profound ways Vietnamese families preserve and transform their heritage through spatial gestures—altars, heirlooms, and photo albums—that anchor their identities amid displacement. Through personal stories, visual archives, and speculative architectural renderings, this thesis reveals how memory becomes a dynamic act of cultural agency, negotiating the delicate balance between holding onto the past and embracing the present.



## Augustine Wong

Architectural Studies Thesis

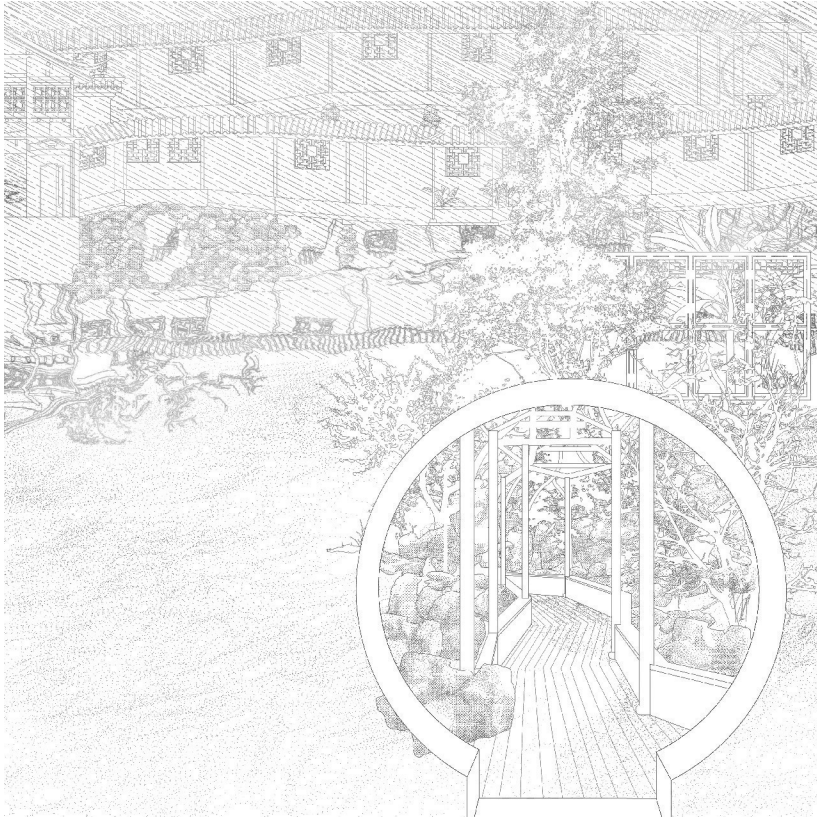
Advisor: Jeannie Kim

### Upon a Silicon Shield

Protecting Taiwanese independence against an increasingly aggressive China transcends physical force. Taiwanese national security strategy relies on a virtual monopoly on advanced semiconductor production to ensure US economic cooperation, by inextricable integration with global manufacturing chains. Nonetheless, as Taiwan pursues cutting-edge innovation to maintain competitiveness, the island is expected to consume exorbitant quantities of ultrapure water and electricity beyond its natural carrying capacity. This project explores artificially increasing resource reserves of Tainan City, South Taiwan by hypothesising a regional network of colossal subterranean silos used for water storage and electricity production to highlight the precariousness of contemporary Taiwan's predicament.







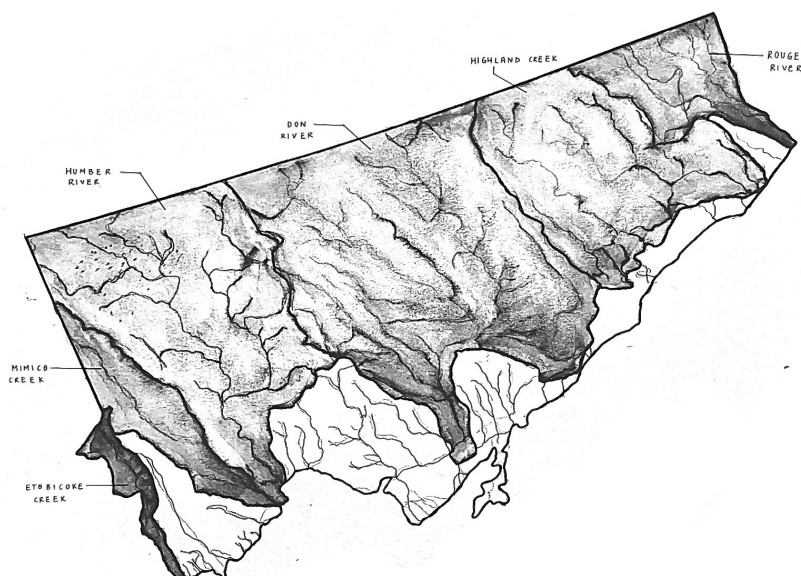
## Yuxin 'Rain' Shen

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Simon Rabyiniuk

### Reinventing Centuries-old Jiangnan Garden: A Cultural Heritage Experiment

This thesis reinvents the Jiangnan garden as a contemporary cultural landscape that merges domestic productivity with public inclusivity. Revisiting garden representations from the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, it explores the garden's historical role as a lived, domestic space. Centred on a long-lost Suzhou garden, rediscovered through archival research, the project proposes planting strategies, cultural programs, and residential integration to restore its dual function as productive and aesthetic. By reclaiming the garden's intimate, everyday dimensions alongside its collective social potential, the project reintegrates the Jiangnan garden into the continuity of life rather than preserving it as a distorted, static image.



## Songzi Zhou

Architectural Studies Thesis

Advisor: Nicholas Hoban

### Traces: The Lost Rivers in Toronto

Traces unveils Toronto's hidden waterways, revealing how the historical rivers of Garrison and Taddle Creek shaped the city's urban development. Through archival research, watercolour visualization, and site exploration, the layers of natural and artificial waterways embedded within the urban landscape are uncovered. An immersive audio-visual installation highlights the layered past of these rivers, accompanied by a field guide for on-foot exploration of their urban legacies. By resurfacing these lost rivers, Traces emphasizes their enduring presence in Toronto's urban fabric, fostering a deeper understanding of the land's history and its flow beyond city borders.



# Architectural Studies Capstone



## Sharon Kim, Nadeen Naqaweh, Hadassah Okebugwu, Maya Sargeant, Evie Xu

Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone

Advisors: Michael Piper, Sneha Mandhan

### 100-Year Homes - A Smart Investment for the Future

Amid the ongoing housing crisis in Toronto, the need for affordable and sustainable housing is critical. Circle Community Land Trust is a social housing provider who is working towards implementing 100 Year Home retrofits, an initiative focused on retrofitting with the future in mind. This project aims to preserve scattered homes, ensure their longevity, and hopefully contribute to the city's housing decarbonization efforts. By creating a 100 Year Catalogue, this capstone project is collaborating with Circle's impactful work to provide net-zero houses for families who will call them home.



**Azelia Ahmed, Katharine Loui, Alyshia Tougas,  
Jennifer Wang**

**Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone**

*Advisors: Michael Piper, Sneha Mandhan*

**Learning Outdoors: Cultivating Student Knowledge in the Landscape**

Collaborating with Sir Ernest MacMillan Senior Public School, this capstone project reimagines the schoolyard as an adaptable and engaging environment for adolescents, fostering planned and spontaneous learning. Our design activates the school edges, unifying the outdoor space and integrating programs that encourage development in growing adolescents. Based on student engagement through questionnaires, observations, and informative games, the project highlights the students' needs, wants, and current informal uses. This project aims to create a flexible space that responds to its end users, granting students the opportunity to shape their learning experiences while simultaneously creating relationships with the land and their community.



## Cassandra Bilotta, Luke Callaghan

Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone

*Advisors: Michael Piper, Sneha Mandhan*

### Westview Gardens

The Westview Centennial Secondary School outdoor revitalization focuses on enhancing the exterior greenhouse space and the school's large backyard area. The goal is to implement small, achievable changes that can be easily carried out by the school community, including students, staff, parents, and local residents. Given that the greenhouse building is currently out of service, the focus is on restoring functionality, promoting engagement, and providing opportunities for learning in the surrounding outdoor spaces. Through proposed designs that consider practicality, the project seeks to create a sustainable and functional space, all while anticipating more extensive interventions in the future.





## **Boer Li, Dalia Atie Levin, Joseph Cheng Wai Hon**

**Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone**

*Advisors: Michael Piper, Sneha Mandhan*

### **Thresholds: Reimagining Common Learning Spaces for the TDSB**

In today's educational landscape—reshaping how students learn, think, and interact—it's essential to rethink a school's relationship to its community. Our project reimagines underutilized common spaces as thresholds: key transition points that open the school to its surroundings while fostering deeper connections between students, learning environments, and the broader community. By activating these overlooked areas, we aim to encourage social interaction, support physical well-being, strengthen school identity, and accommodate diverse learning methodologies. Grounded in research and shaped by stakeholder engagement, our design interventions transform these common areas into vibrant hubs that enhance student learning and invite the wider community to participate in a more integrated and connected educational experience.



## Adam Sauriol, Eddy Chan, Theo Dalangin

Daniels Design & Community-Engagement Capstone

*Advisors: Michael Piper, Sneha Mandhan*

### Adaptive Classrooms

A classroom is more than just a static space—it is an active environment that shapes student development. Accommodating diverse learning styles and responding to evolving educational needs requires scalable, experience-driven solutions that empower students and teachers to actively shape their learning spaces. In collaboration with Sir Ernest Macmillan Senior Public School, our project explores how promoting student-led decision-making and teacher autonomy in education is intertwined with designing adaptable classroom environments—imagining a framework that enables students and teachers to co-create learning experiences through scalable models that respond to evolving educational needs.

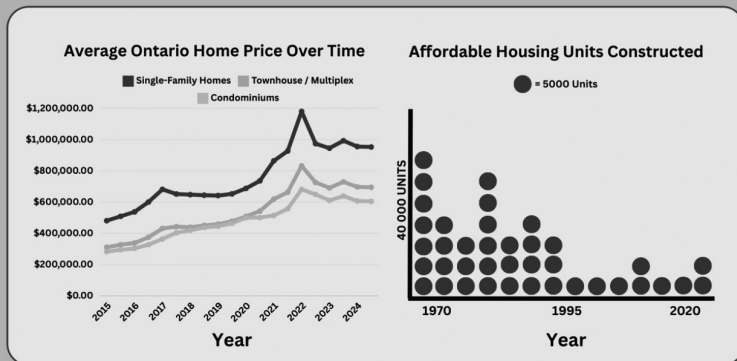


Figure 1: Sample data-driven insights from research

## Neiththa Sivakumar, Sunnie Hu, Jake Knight, Madeline Ahn, Cathy Zou

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project

Advisors: David Roberts, Bridget Cherry

### Association of Municipalities of Ontario - Service Delivery vs. Funding

In the last decade, the housing crisis has become a significant concern, marked by rising housing prices and increasing homelessness. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) recognizes the strain this issue places on municipalities and is actively working with the government and policymakers to address it. Our group's goal is to support AMO in conveying its concerns to the provincial government, as Ontario's municipalities continue to face ongoing challenges related to housing across various sectors. This includes issues such as zoning bylaws, missing middle housing, community benefit charges, development charges, and the social implications of affordable housing, including low-income housing and homeownership.



## Alicia Sanchez Gonzalez, Ashton Silaphet, Rojeh Nasser Mostofi, Sara Ranu

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project

Advisors: David Roberts, Daniel Silver

### Venice Futures: Academy of Venetian Arts

Venice, Italy, is a city with a rich cultural heritage, which in recent decades, has been facing challenges including an aging and declining population, lack of economic diversity and employment opportunities, affordability, and environmental sustainability. Our project proposes the “Academy of Venetian Arts” to change Venice’s narrative from a declining city to one that spurs innovation and engagement. Our intervention is a dynamic space, revitalized through adaptive reuse, dedicated to preserving and reimagining Venice’s artisanal traditions such as glass, lace-making, mosaics, and mask-making. This institution connects youth, creatives, and the community, fostering an environment where heritage meets innovation.



## Saleha Waqas, Yi En Wang, Jyotsna Kumar, Hanna Kuzdra

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project

Advisor: David Roberts

### Space to Create: Survey Insights from Davenport's Arts & Community Voices

Toronto's Ward 9 (Davenport) was once a hub for affordable community, arts, and cultural spaces. In recent years, many have been displaced to gentrification. To address this, the Community and Cultural Spaces Trust (CCST), founded in 2022, aims to acquire affordable and sustainable venues for these organizations. This year, CCST asked our team to research community needs and challenges via an expanded survey. After promoting it through email and poster distribution, our team developed an interactive, ever-changing dashboard to convey our findings. The dashboard informs CCST's future decisions, while also allowing for easy presentation of key information to relevant stakeholders.





## Noa Sabbah, Diego Dore-Batres, Jingshi Xiao, Young Hoon Cho

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project

Advisor: David Roberts

### Kensington Community School Outdoor Revitalization

Aiming to improve the outdoor spaces at the Kensington Community School for both students and its broader community, the Kensington Market Community Land Trust commissioned this project to use in grant applications and foster communal excitement. Feedback from multiple community consultations articulated an appreciation for the site's trees, so the final design reimagines the school's northwest yard by the main entrance with wide curvilinear platforms—made from locally sourced wood—around the trees for seating and play. Brightly coloured rubber mulch paths playfully twist around the site, encouraging children to run around while guiding visitors along College Street toward Kensington Market.



# Visual Studies Thesis

```

<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <p> >be me (f21) </p>
  <p> >spend a lot of time on Instagram as a teenager </p>
  <p> >become overly concerned with my appearance </p>
  <p> >but like not my physical appearance, my narrative appea
  <p> >like i want to walk down the street and have people loc
  <p> >realize that viewing myself in this way makes me feel l
  <p> >now im in university </p>
  <p> >start learning about art and visual culture and stuff <
  <p> >surprise surprise art oppresses women like what doesnt
  <p> >start thinking about the senstation of being observed e
  <p> >realize that when people are implicated in a gaze their
  <p> >realize that there's a precedent for this in art and ci
  <p> >maybe this happens on instagram too </p>
  <p> >start critically analyzing a lot of the content i see <
  <p> >i get a lot of girlblogging content </p>
  <p> >start wondering if maybe girls portraying an ideal of t
  <p> >also start wondering if maybe since instagram is so vis
  <p> >hey maybe this explains why i view myself in a way that
  <p> >start wondering if there's any connection between all t
  <p> >hey maybe this would be a good idea for a paper </p>

```

## Claire Allen

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### hot, intelligent, and probably mentally ill

Theorizing from ideas in visual studies, cinema studies, and contemporary rhetorical studies, my work investigates girlblogging content on Instagram as representative selfies that communicate sociopolitical awarenesses and alignments through subcultural visual languages constituted of symbols drawn from popular media and popular culture. Although it may seem to use a lot of big words, I intend for this paper to become one of many written works in a practice that acknowledges voices on the internet that speak from outside of traditional academic institutions and frameworks, both in the sources that it consults and the methods by which it is disseminated.



## Juanita Arango Corchuelo

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### **Mi Hamaca es Tu Hamaca**

“Mi Hamaca es Tu Hamaca” is a quilted hammock built collectively by over 80 members of the Latinx communities in Tkaronto, the U.S., and Abya Yala, as a decentering practice of home-making rooted in cultural and familial traditions. Birthed through collective care, each piece of clothing embodies a story of place-making as a tactic of (re)inhabiting our identities and belonging. It acts as a container of these stories, a space to rest together, and a constellation of migratory subjects. It weaves together our experiences of being uprooted and rerooted, moving across geographical, linguistic, and identity borders, while resisting the tensions of living as diasporic bodies.

## **Winnie Chan**

### **Visual Studies Thesis**

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

#### **Welcome Home**

Home is a space shaped by memory, where traces of presence linger even as time erodes its physical form. “Welcome Home” reconstructs the front of my childhood home in China, inviting the audience to step onto a wooden step before a tapestry-painted door. Three potted plants that the audience can move around, representing me, my mother, and my grandmother, symbolize the enduring connections between generations. As the audience engages with these elements, they witness how touch and time alter materials, reflecting the fragile yet persistent nature of memory, place, and familial bonds.

## **Xinyue Chen**

### **Visual Studies Thesis**

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

#### **Flowers in the body**

“Flowers in the body” is a cyanotype installation that uses life-sized prints of the artist’s ballet-posed body on sheer curtains to explore themes of femininity, discipline, identity, and pain. Drawing on a lifelong relationship with ballet, the work exposes the often-invisible physical and emotional toll behind the artform’s polished exterior. By turning the creation process into a public performance, the artist confronts ballet’s romanticized silence around pain and control. The installation reclaims agency through vulnerability, transforming ballet’s contradictions into a personal visual language. It is both a protest and a meditation on the body as a site of struggle, transformation, and resilience.



## Zoe Smith Crepp

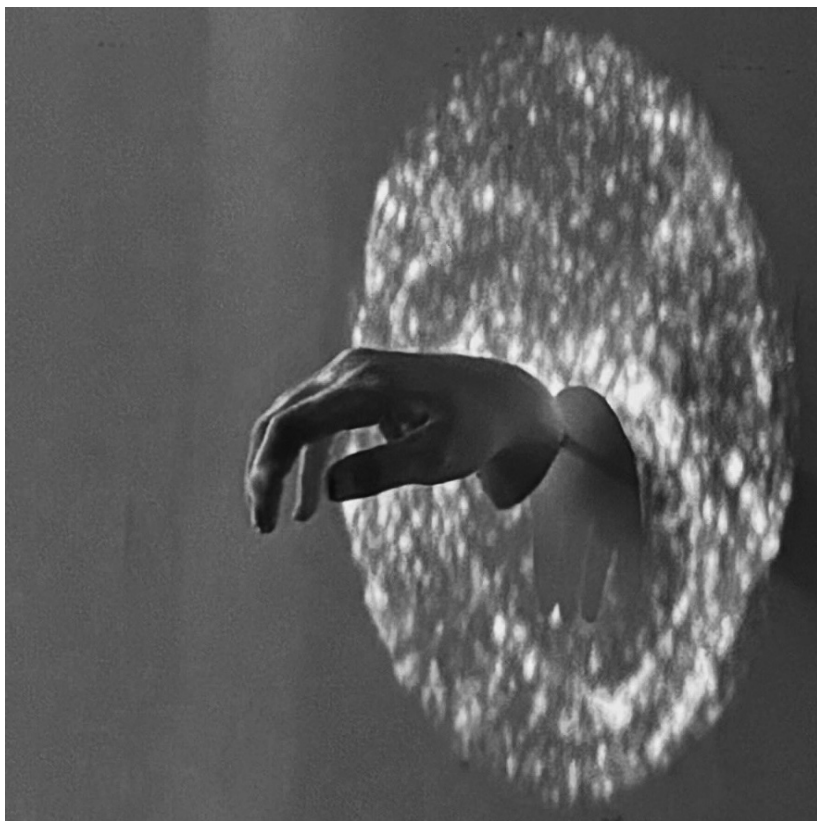
Visual Studies Thesis

Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan

### Poets/Mothers/Girls

My thesis project emerged through ritualized deconstruction and reconstruction of my poetic reflections on five women in my life, a practice which turned these words into a recombinant poem, one that tenderly exemplifies my family's intergenerational narrative. Through the process of hand-making paper from printed sheets of the original texts and inking the new poem onto them, I aimed to create an analogue of complex familial communications between women. Inspiration for my display came from works and writings by various Black artists and scholars including Chantal Gibson, bell hooks, Texas Isaiah, and more.





## Xiangshengtong Dong

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### Reach In, Reach Out

Human relationships resemble a game, where interactions strengthen intimacy and connection. My interactive work explores the role of touch in relationships, using gestures like handshakes, intertwined fingers, and shouldertaps to symbolize connection. When participants touch plaster hands embedded with sensors, colors emerge on a black-and-white background, visually highlighting the significance of touch in fostering familiarity and intimacy. As hands release, the colors fade, illustrating that relationships require continuous interaction to maintain closeness. Through this work, I emphasize the dynamic and evolving nature of human relationships, where touch acts as a bridge to bring individuals closer together.



## Sammi Herlich

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### No Strings Attached

"No Strings Attached" is a video installation that utilizes the nostalgic form of children's media, inviting viewers of all ages to consider the capabilities within themselves to make sillier, weirder and more caring choices over those of hate. The three puppet characters turn actions of popping balloons, separating socks and tearing paper into filling balloons, pairing mismatched socks and creating a paper boat when goofy hats appear on their heads. This playful act uses exaggerated silliness to simplify the ability a single individual has to create a better world by becoming aware of the strings in their own lives.



## Amber Kwok

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### **like travelling along the time river**

In a series of paintings and reconstructed window frames, I examine the fixation on a vivid yet implacable homeland that my mother has reproduced in me. Disinterested in our spatial ancestry, she has instead tethered us to a temporal home through retelling great Chinese histories as if they are an intimate component of our own story. According to Stuart Hall, cultural identity for diaspora is not a fixed origin towards which one can simply return, but something that requires “imaginative rediscovery” to reconstruct. Embracing fantasy and sentimentality, I aim to give our imagined home a physical space to occupy.



## Wendy Li

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### **Tide: The Distance**

“Tide: The Distance” is a time-based installation consisting of two-channel videos projected on opposite walls with a stereo sound composition. The piece explores loss and tension—the distance between lovers. They approach each other but never meet, turning away when the other comes closer physically or emotionally. The painful distance remains, a dissonance. They long for each other; in reality, they never sync. The tide rises, the tide falls. The loop continues. The installation activates the space between the two screens, involving viewers to be at play in the varying distance.



## Siting Lyu (Alice)

Visual Studies Thesis

Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan

### **I am aware, therefore I am**

"I am aware, therefore I am" was inspired by the philosophical concept presented in Zhuangzi's story Dream of the Butterfly. This story deeply captivates me as it challenges the boundaries between reality and illusion, prompting me to question: How do we define the self? What is our place in the world? With these questions in mind, I embarked on an artistic exploration, integrating painting and installation to express the infinite cycle of life, transformation, and inner awakening. The work unfolds within a semi-enclosed space, creating a temporary retreat from the outside world and inviting viewers to engage in inner dialogue through interaction with the space. It is a journey between reality and illusion, as well as a return to nature and a broader perspective of oneself. Each viewer is encouraged to interpret the work in their own way, discovering answers unique to their own experience.



## Yilin Peng

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### From us, To us

As an artist and marine conservationist born in a coastal region, I witness daily the collision between human consumption and fragile ecosystems. The materials for this plastic whale and coral installation—plastic bottles—were collected by local volunteers. Humans created synthetic polymers, yet their proliferation has halved marine species populations in just 40 years. Through this work, I aim to awaken viewers to the crisis facing marine ecosystems, giving this plastic waste a second purpose. At the same time, I invite fellow artists to reflect on whether using recycled materials in art inadvertently beautifies the pollution.





## Angel Peters

Visual Studies Thesis

Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan

### What Absence Cannot Say (a Fragile Grammar)

My thesis project explores the spectral residues of colonial violence through language, memory, and cultural untranslatability. Rooted in personal and inherited histories, the project reflects on how erasure—both intimate and systemic—shapes post-colonial identity. ‘Haunting’ operates as both method and metaphor: a refusal of resolution, a presence that unsettles. The work meditates on how histories persist not through monument or archive, but through rupture, silence, and the fractured transmission of language. It asks how we carry what has been forgotten, and what it means to speak in a tongue shaped by loss.



## Dorsa Sarvi

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### What Remains Becomes

My installation examines the body's dissolution, not as an end, but as a process of integration. Through a circular triptych, the figure unravels, its anatomical structures merging with organic forms. This transformation erodes the boundary between self and environment, positioning the body as material in flux. The circular format reinforces this shift, mirroring the inevitability of return. By aestheticizing decomposition, the work questions whether beauty allows for a deeper confrontation with mortality or renders it more distant. By exposing the body's interior and its entanglement with nature, my thesis project challenges the illusion of permanence, presenting decay as an active state of exchange rather than erasure.



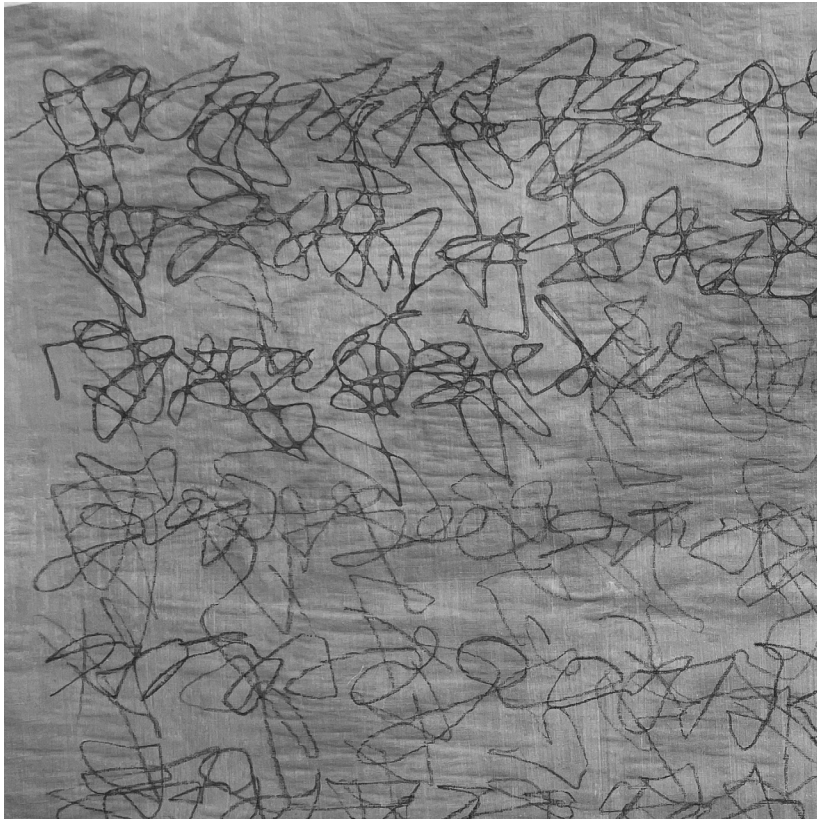
## Gillian Stam

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### Untitled

My work documents the loss of subculture, and the feelings of disconnection and alienation that result in individuals searching for community and mutual understanding. In “Untitled,” subcultural spaces are depicted as barren and isolated, inhabited by a pronounced absence. The subjects—close friends with shared experiences of the city’s waning subcultural landscape—are shown navigating places that no longer resonate with the complexity of contemporary “scenes,” emphasizing relational gaps in 21st-century youth culture. Through the use of Super 8 film, I intend to visualize the duality of longing for a unified subcultural community—often shaped by nostalgia—while simultaneously striving to forge one’s own identity and sense of place.



## **Sophie Woelfling**

**Visual Studies Thesis**

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### **Untitled**

My project consists of a series of four works on linen that explore language and writing as essential tools of communication/deliverers of understanding—specifically when these tools/deliverers fail to fulfill their design—creating confusion rather than comprehension. Utilizing recognizable writing conventions but obscuring or eliminating meaning and legibility, I create an experience of simultaneous recognition/unrecognition: a deceptive appearance of decipherability. These page-like organizations of scripts and scrawls present themselves as writing, but refuse to be read—calling the experience of unknowing into investigation.



## Lucy Lin

Visual Studies Thesis

*Advisors: Karen Kraven, Sarah Robayo Sheridan*

### Neither Here Nor Ever

My work originates from photographs taken by my father two decades ago, which I used to reconstruct my childhood home: Gulang Island. As urbanization and migration erode my connection to the island, I feel an urgent need to preserve. Through the phenomenology of place, personal and collective remembrances intertwine into a spectral monument. The punctum of photographs evokes mourning, driving me to capture the fragments through painting. Abstracted architectural installations frame these paintings, becoming vessels of sentiment. The fragility and permanence of materials mirror the Island's paradoxical temporality—while vanishing, its ghost lingers in a space untethered from time.

