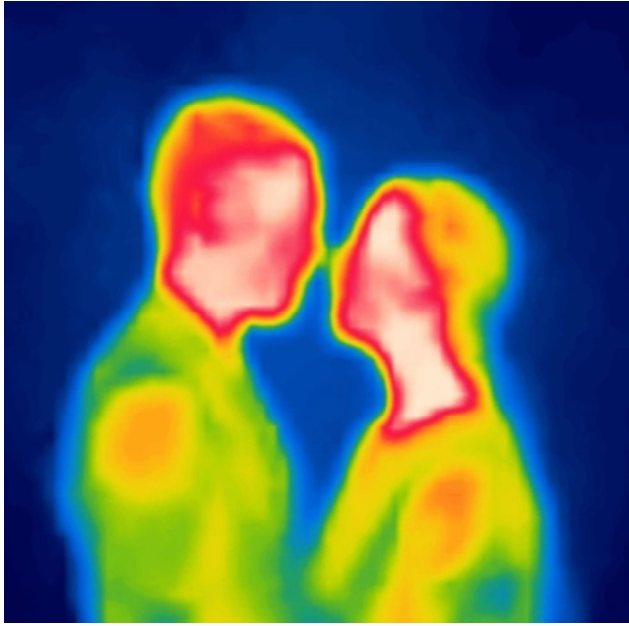


ARC2014: Design Studio 4 – Comprehensive Building Project  
Winter 2022  
Course Coordinator: Sam Dufaux

Instructor: Christopher Cornecelli



Philippe Rahm, portrait of Pezo von Ellrichshausen, 2020.

## Gradient Building

"Its form remains ambiguous, indeterminable, unknowable as an entity"

Richard Serra on the perception of his sculpture *St. John's Rotary Arc*.

How does one design a building that must accommodate twenty five feet of flood elevation over the next one hundred years?

Using the extreme environmental susceptibility of our site with regards to the floodplain and sea level rise as a point of departure, we will embrace the concept of fluctuation through the technique of the gradient. Just as our analytical tools for evaluating the natural and built environment produce representations through gradients (i.e. solar, thermal, atmospheric, hydrologic, etc.), so too will our designs manifest the production of gradients through architectonic means: morphological, material, spatial, structural, organizational, programmatic, climatic. "We... are interested in force delay, detour, and propagation – in short, an architectural elaboration of the force field." <sup>1</sup>

The Climatorium is at once a the headquarters for a new agency of national significance, as well as an international-facing institution implementing policy written and ratified by a global community. (Paris Agreement; 2015, Kyoto Protocol; 1997, et al.) As José Aragüez observes in his article *Critical Imageability*, institutions and agents in power capitalize on architecture's qualities of imageability.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in opposition to the United Nations Headquarters, *the* eminent emblematic global institution a mere five miles up the East River, an additional ambition of this studio is the development of design proposals that resist formal iconicity, suppressing the static pictorial in favor of an aberrant multiplicity of readings; privileging experience over Gestalt, temporal over instantaneous.

The gradient has the capacity to blur boundaries, create hybrid conditions and soften limits to address the local complexities of the urban context as it is subject to impending environmental threat, while simultaneously defying the reductive pressure of image culture's effect on architecture.

<sup>1</sup> Reiser + Umemoto, 'Moving in the Gradient Field.' Atlas of Novel Tectonics, 175.

<sup>2</sup> Aragüez, José. "Critical Imageability." <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/222387/critical-imageability/>