

ARC2014: Design Studio 4 – Comprehensive Building Project
Winter 2022
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Title: Interstitial

Much of the richness of interstitial spaces—the voids between primary programs or structure — stems from the variety of processes and intentions that shaped them. Starting as intimate spaces for occupation or circulation carved out of thick structural poche, interstitial spaces have, more recently, ranged from a pragmatic means of achieving flexibility (see Louis Kahn’s Salk Institute) to a method for inserting informality and programmatic breaks into museums and other cultural projects.

With a focus on the programmatic, formal, material, structural, and environmental potential of interstitial spaces, students will consider how traditionally “thin” building elements such as walls, floors, roofs, facades, and thresholds can be pulled apart, layered, thickened, or hollowed out to generate diverse spatial qualities and the potential for occupation (whether by humans, flora, fauna, light or air). These explorations should reveal new opportunities: opportunities to divide or unite; to mediate between indoors and out, public and private, conditioned and un-conditioned; to generate electricity or natural ventilation; to shape circulation or the image of a building. The Comprehensive studio’s Climatorium program, flood-prone urban site and mid-rise typology further offer exciting possibilities to deploy interstitial spaces in the service of climate change education and action, and to push the mid-rise typology in new directions.

As a working method, the Interstitial studio will privilege the physical model, using it as the primary design tool, coming before and informing later computer modeling, diagramming, and drawing. Students will build study models at a variety of scales to develop and test robust concepts. Rather than representing only “final” designs, models will communicate intent and open new venues of investigation.

