

a turn too quickly. Bounding this small homes and shops dot the countryside, interspersed with large statues of Hindu gods and the odd light post disguised as a coconut tree. Brightly colored plastic elephants, lions, and zebras hang in rows, next to restaurants covered in black and white linoleum. Middle-aged women carrying hats and sunglasses look out for their next customers, while men in leather jackets and mohawks pose for the cameras in the tropical heat. Every 20 feet or so a small wicker basket burning with incense and a couple of small purple and orange flowers line the front of homes and businesses, establishing the boundary between where one may walk and one may drive. The heat is ever present even at night, thicker than the crowds that moves through it, there is a perpetual shine to all those outside. You are never far from the sound of waves, but to see them, you must first navigate the ever-shifting topography of the roads.

Everything we drank in Bali:  
 4×vodka sodas with lime  
 15×glasses of red wine (pinot noir)  
 2×glasses of white wine  
 1×glass of sangria  
 6×glasses of mango juice  
 9×glasses of orange juice  
 1×pineapple juice from a pineapple  
 1×coconut water from a coconut  
 18×glasses of water  
 2×espresso martinis  
 1×blue martini  
 2×glasses of champagne  
 5×bottles of pellegrino  
 2×pots of tea  
 4×cups of ginger ale  
 3×glasses of soda water with lime  
 1×cup of pomegranate juice  
 1×can of Sprite  
 1×can of Coca-Cola  
 1×grande coffee with 3 shots of espresso

Canales Studio  
 Miriam Dreiblatt on Mexico City, Mexico



While most of the studio took the 5AM shuttle from New Haven and subsequently ran into one another at JFK MUJI after seeking some individual, pre-flight retail therapy, we marked the beginning of our group experience in Mexico by reconvening around a table to enjoy one another's company. From the outside, this looked like a typical dinner shared between American tourists; however, from my seat, this was the studio's first opportunity to explore the meaning of *vecindad* in Mexican culture.

With Fernanda Canales at the head of the table and the rest of the studio stretching out toward the other diners, we comprised a small community within a larger collective environment. We shared our table and menus with the adjacent couples and families, and the space at large with the chef and waiters who prepared delicious tapas in the open kitchen along the far wall. The restaurant's large, garage-style doors were open to the street, allowing the music from the adjacent bar to permeate the space. Although the sky was overcast, the canopies of the tropical trees cast shade along the sidewalk, creating a welcome respite for passersby in the typically sunny climate. Thus, from the very beginning, Fernanda's itinerary was organized to demonstrate the intersection of private and public spheres within a communal society.

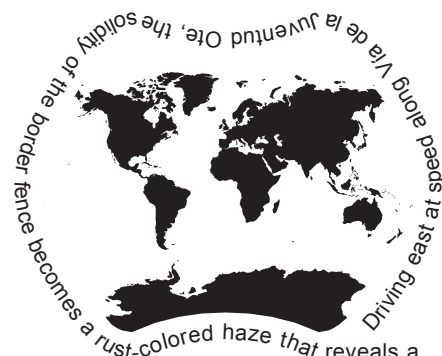
Our studio brief is to design a *vecindad*, housing with shared, public space, in the government-underwritten, tract developments on the outskirts of Mexican border cities. Although the typology is not uniquely Mexican (Armory Court at the intersection of Orange Street and East Rock Park serves as a New Haven example), it seems to encapsulate a collective spirit within Mexican culture. Immediately following dinner, Fernanda took us to explore the adjacent *vecindad*. Blending with the surrounding context from the outside, the *vecindad's* covered entry gave way to a generous, communal street with private doorways on both sides. The visit set the tone for the rest of our time in Mexico City, which we spent visiting precedents we had studied in the weeks prior and documenting the varied typological iterations built in the past century.

The collective ethos of the trip extended beyond the physical boundaries of the *vecindades'* shared walkways to the hospitality of Fernanda's architectural network. In particular, Surella Segú and Armando T. Hashimoto, Frida Escobedo, Tatiana Bilbao, and Carlos Zedillo opened their studios and answered our many questions. Zedillo's extensive research on Mexican housing abandonment and experience as the former head of the Research Center for Sustainable Development of INFONAVIT (Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores) set the stage for our site visits to Tijuana and Mexicali. We walked away with grounded optimism on the design opportunities latent in border housing complexes as well as an invaluable selection of books to enrich our work this semester.

In less than 36 hours, we visited Baja California's eastern and western extents along the U.S.-Mexico border. The Tijuana and Mexicali sites exemplify the profit-driven development that has characterized middle- and lower-income housing construction in Mexico since the 1980s. Despite the neighborhoods'

limited connection to employment and public services, poor construction, and single-use zoning, the communal ethos we experienced in Mexico City pervaded these environments. From Mexicali's single-family homes renovated into neighborhood restaurants and thrift stores, to Tijuana's taco and vendor stalls tacked on to duplex row houses, it was evident that residents lived in a collective manner despite architectural and policy limitations. In the spirit of the studio, Fernanda co-opted empty seats on the underbooked return flight for desk crits about our upcoming assignments. These instructions synthesized the direction we had assimilated during the generative studio trip—we are charged to design spaces to support the existing cultural practices of the *vecindad*.

Cruz / Forman Studio  
 Page Comeaux and Deo Deiparine on San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico



Aware of the studio's interest in addressing waste management, our driver, Jesus, tells us that his place of business collects plastic bottle caps to exchange for cancer treatment through a local hospital program. "One-thousand bottle caps equals one chemotherapy treatment for a child," he says. When a bottle is returned to a participating facility in California, the highest return one can receive is ten cents—one-thousand caps, ten cents each...do the math. Having been introduced to Tijuana's booming medical-tourism industry earlier that morning, this was both an indictment of the costly U.S. medical system by comparison, and a testament to the resourcefulness of a community with limited resources.

At a community station, we meet with residents and community leaders of Rancho Las Flores. Don Angel details the steps his community has taken toward attaining "regular" status in order to receive services and utilities from the government. Representation is no given, one of the many disproportionate burdens on the residents of this neighborhood, nevertheless, they work to redress this fact. Señora Vicky reveals to us that because of an absentee landowner, the land she occupies doesn't qualify for the same title as Don Angel. Fighting through tears, she describes the community she

imagines that Las Flores could become, one that her children would feel proud to say they come from. Jorges, who tends a small nursery in neighboring Rancho Macías, has become an expert on using native plants for erosion control—a pressing issue which threatens the homes and lives of the Canyon's residents daily. "These plants are my daughters; these plants are my life," he says, lamenting that due to improper education on their care, many of the species he plants are dead within two weeks.

Our critics, Teddy and Fonna, insisted on allocating part of their travel budget to pay each of the community members that met with us. The act of articulating the injustices that are happening, and have happened to them is already a form of labor, and fairly compensating them for it is an acknowledgement of their concerted efforts toward improving their livelihoods and the communities they are a part of. Their often underrecognized time and labor becomes the information crucial to the foundation of our proposals.

As we learned from the studio's brief, the Tijuana River Watershed presents a geological case for a permeable border between nations. 'The Wall' is actually now two, sometimes three, walls—a thickness—one that dumbly misinterprets and rejects the streams of information converging around it. To the north, cones, barbed wire, and the watchful gaze of a border patrol officer keep us at a distance to observe the perverseness of the border fence sinking into the ocean. The following night, we stand within arms reach of it on the southern side, watching as waves, illuminated under moonlight and flood-lights, slip inward and outward freely between its gaps.

Gage / Harman Studio  
 Katie Lau on Lhasa, Tibet



our tour guide, Tenzing, meets us in the parking lot with Khata scarves and water bottles and loads us into the tour van. As we make our way to our hotel, guzzling water and shedding coats, Tenzing gives us the ground rules: 1. No beer until you adjust to the altitude. 2. Always carry your passports. 3. No talking politics.

Although it goes unstated, we assume that "politics" refers to China's occupation of Tibet and the exile of the Dalai Lama to India, not Graham's updates on the Trump impeachment inquiry. With the fatigue of altitude sickness setting in, we muster the energy to follow Tenzing to dinner. Hunched over a low wooden table, we consider our first bites of yak curry. Graham makes a request for a vegetarian substitute—surprised that a Buddhist country consumes so much meat. Tenzing laughs, "all Tibetan Buddhists eat yak; there's nothing else."

The smell of yak settles everywhere and clings to everything. Cuts of meat hang on butcher hooks—heads lay nearby, blocks of butter sit in shop stalls. Tibetans drink yak butter tea for breakfast, bring yak butter to temples and offer a scoop to each prayer candle, and carry plastic bags of yak meat home for dinner each night. The ice cream in KFC Lhasa? Made with yak butter. I suspect the same of the hotel coffee creamer.

The ubiquity of all forms of yak product speaks not only to the historic difficulties of life in such an extreme climate, but also to the distinct qualities of Tibetan culture that are affected by Chinese development. Chinese imports and greenhouses outside of Lhasa and Shigatse bring previously unavailable food products into the cities and loosen dietary reliance on the yak. At lunch stops in Chinese restaurants, we eat chicken, pork, and fish—customarily off-limits in Tibetan diets due to water burial practices. Yak-wool tents that house nomadic herders dot the mossy mountainsides of rural Tibet. From the passenger seat of the van, Tenzing explained that the nomadic herds graze for half of the year and are brought down to villages in the winter; what he didn't, or couldn't, say was that tightly monitored borders, urban development, and changing economic policies threaten the lucrativeness and sustainability of nomadic lifestyles. [a]

At roadside stops, tourists can pose with yaks for ten yuan a photo and purchase yak-themed statuary, jewelry, and wall art. Our group is positive three golden yak figurines (all Mark's), one yak bell, and several yak bone bracelets. The yak is a distinct and marketable symbol of Tibetan culture. As I'm sure is the case for many tourists, the pervasive yak made a clear impression on me. Those that have visited Tibet before say it's vastly different every time—the cities are bigger, more modern, more global. If I ever manage to maneuver my way back into Tibet, I don't think yak as cultural symbol will have gone anywhere, but yak as cultural product might.

a. Benanav, Michael. "Yak Herders' Vanishing Way of Life." The New York Times. The New York Times, August 28, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/28/travel/india-yak-herders.html>.

Gissen Studio  
 Andrew Miller on Brno, Czech Republic



The tour starts in the private bedrooms on street level. It feels warm, but it's not until you're led into the living room that the realization sets in: compared to the early autumn air outside, the Villa Tugendhat is brutally hot. In fact, after the near-tropical modernist rooms—an environmental motif reinforced by the non-native houseplants and the exotic wood—the next hour of the tour is spent underground, moving through the technical rooms—and one-time work spaces—required to make the space remotely livable. From a room-sized "air conditioner" where cool water is sprayed on rocks and ventilated through the house, to the "moth chamber" that protected the family's furs, by square footage, the villa is more service than served. The production of the upstairs environment is both energy and labor intensive and was, at one time, conceptually invisible. Now, revealed by the tour guide, the costs of modernism are made abundantly clear; the temperature upstairs, a result of the inactive systems, almost seems like an intentional move to disrupt the idealization of the space through sweaty armpits.

Just as the Villa Tugendhat quietly hides its energy-labor infrastructure within the project's conceptual ground, so too does the city of Brno by choreographing the path from the train station to the picturesque medieval center. But, despite the care paid by the urban planners to shepherd visitors from the train station up into the clean, daylight shopping mall and past the Swarovski crystals; it's just as likely that they'll slip past the stairs, through the hypostyle carpark, and into the hill under a Soviet-era arcade and tower—now a Tesco. Like the mall, the sunken passage is also a commercial space, but where there is white paint, metal security gates, and a generous skylight above, the underground is defined by loose piles of cheap goods, old fluorescent lights, and sagging acoustical tiles. The individual T-shirt vendors—with their collection of Iron Maiden and Slipknot shirts—their smattering of local customers, and the olfactory overload of fried food and permanent damp stand in stark contrast to the corporate managers and, depending on the season, the touristic shoppers of the sanitized new mall upstairs. Back at the Tugendhat house, the tour guide mentions that the shear amount of coal burnt each winter to keep the Villa warm could fill the living quarters from floor to ceiling, you just have to be willing to scuff the linoleum.

Kéré Studio  
Hojae Lee on Accra, Ghana



of Burkina Faso and Ghana; these were what kept me busy early this semester. The numerous requirements subtly implied the depth of foreignness I was about to encounter. Daunting yet exciting would be the correct phrase to describe my emotions at that time. The tingling inside one's stomach before taking a leap is always a memorable feeling, but this was slightly more tickling than before.

The visited destinations ranged on a spectrum of spaces from high-end skyscraper bars to apocalyptic garbage dumps; however, to be honest, this disparity between programs and social class was not the most shocking factor. Rather it was the generic, unspicifiable, and ubiquitous scenery of Accra's street scape that captivated most of our eyes. It almost seemed as if all of Accra's arteries were congealed with commerce; mobile merchants with uniquely compiled goods on their heads and in their hands, minimized kiosks with flamboyant paintings, food stalls with incomprehensible yet deliciously aromatic sauces, and chaotically organized stands of everything.

In the first few days the only word to describe my impression was 'intense,' I was always exposed to too much as soon as I stepped outside the bus. The city was illegible. My questions were so elementary that I was too embarrassed to even pronounce them: is this a parking lot...? is this a park...? Is this a market...? Is this a restroom...? etc. But after every exhausting day, Martin and Francis were fluent enough to bring up and discuss this general confusion at the dinner table. Slowly I found myself digesting the dynamics of Accra. I stopped struggling to carry large water bottles and bought them from merchants (although maybe this is why I got sick one day). Public urinals and the line of sight that goes across the awkwardly low walls no longer was a problem.

My eyes started to notice the actual interactions occurring beyond the chaos. Everyone was a seller and a customer and a manufacturer. Every individual would be more than one. There was no grander, underlying system, but rather it was a collection of persons and their decisions. Every public space was a collective negotiation between them, and the resulting solutions were surprisingly efficacious: bricolage in nature.

In a city of persons, can architecture do anything? Can architects precisely predict how a structure will be used? If not, how much should I intervene?

The week-long trip to Accra was sufficient enough for me and my colleagues to come back with healthy questions to tackle the foundations of conventional modern architecture. While I admit, it is a difficult and fearful situation to be exposed to, there might not be another chance to think of such things after Yale. This discourse by itself is what gives me confidence that all of our works will be fruitful at the end of the semester.

Plattus / Harwell Studio  
Seth Thompson on Gothenburg, Sweden



At midnight on the third night of our trip, our ferry passed the southern tip of Finland, en route to Stockholm from Helsinki. At the time, however, we couldn't have told you what direction the boat was sailing, let alone our longitude, as we were in the middle of the eighth-floor deck in the aft-side lounge watching a German magician perform card tricks. The twelve of us—five Post-Pros, five M.Arch I students, Alan Plattus, and Andrei Harwell—had 16 hours to kill as the *MS Mariella* completed its daily overnight journey between Finland and Sweden, plenty of time to recount our favorite Alvar Aalto buildings in Helsinki and figure out our next steps in Stockholm and Gothenburg.

The plan was to visit Stockholm, meet with the national innovation fund, and get a feel for the cultural and metropolitan attractions of the capital, including Gunnar Asplund's public library, of course. Then we would head to Gothenburg and figure out how Sweden's second-largest city and the largest port in the Nordics, stacked up. Our studio brief was to revitalize the Lindholmen neighborhood of Gothenburg, home to decommissioned shipyards, industrial buildings, and a new science park composed of local technical universities and a number of large technology companies making cell phones, smart cars, cameras, and new media.

When the ferry finally pulled into the Stockholm archipelago the next morning, we hit the ground running...or, more accurately, scootering. Since the Stockholm city-center spans multiple islands, bridges, hills, bluffs, and neighborhoods, some of us took advantage of the ubiquity of Lime scooters to take in as much of the city as we could in 36 hours at 18 km/hr. From Josef Frank's beautiful textile designs to the fully-intact 17th-century ship Vasa, Stockholm's downtown and museum district had something to offer for every interest.

By Wednesday night, we were packed and ready to head to Gothenburg, a 3-hour train ride away. This was it—the moment when two weeks of Google Maps research met the reality of the real place! We walked through the lively old town, past the canals and another Asplund masterpiece, the City Hall courthouse extension. After a short ferry ride, we finally reached Lindholmen, our site itself. Under the towering presence of the shipyards' iconic red harbour cranes, we toured the area with guides from Älvstranden Utveckling, the state-owned development company in charge of turning Lindholmen into the hottest neighborhood in the city.

The rest of our time in Gothenburg was a blur. We split into our studio groups and traversed the neighborhood and the city in pursuit of site visits, interviews, and local research. Some groups took the ferry to the archipelago, others visited industrial areas including Frihamnen and Ringon, and still others stuck downtown to do some "research" at Arket, which had a 50%-off sale on all manner of Nordic sweatshirts, fleeces, and wool jackets. The trip ended the only way it could have: Alan and Andrei took us to a blues concert and we were serenaded as we collected our memories and prepared to head home to our paprika-colored Hall.

Tsien / Williams Studio  
X. Christine Pan on San Antonio, Texas



One of the most fun and special things I saw in Texas was a dead armadillo. I saw it in the road en route to Lockhart from the airport in Austin, through the passenger seat window of our rental minivan. We'd just passed through several dramatic flash thunderstorms on the highway and were driving along a Texas road dotted with scenic rural life. The armadillo was dark, belly up, and stiff. All four legs were in the air. I can't remember ever seeing a real armadillo before, alive or dead, but I knew it when I saw it. I alone had this privilege of encounter; everyone else was driving or stuck in the back of the minivan. It was a beautiful welcome, and I felt blessed by the spirit of the Official Small State Mammal of Texas.

2. Our Lyft driver Christopher picked us up at our Portuguese robot hostel [a] to take us to our first San Antonio Meal™ at La Fonda on Main. A clearly experienced Lyft driver, he pried conversation out of us slowly and methodically, in a choreographed give-and-take of personal information.

We learned that he, like us, was vaguely from Connecticut; he'd followed his wife, who was in the military, to San Antonio (Military City USA ®); and perhaps most surprisingly, he was an architectural draftsman by trade. He pointed out a favorite taco truck and told us that our restaurant destination was widely acknowledged to be one of the best, although he had not personally been. We bumped lives briefly, and then he dropped us off and drove away.

3. By the time we made it to Garcia's for breakfast tacos, I'd already eaten more beef on the trip than I normally eat in a year. Garcia's Mexican Food looks like every other roadside food place in San Antonio—it's a stand-alone building, has no concept of graphic design or consistent signage, is painted a garish-but-whimsical color, and has a lot of parking. The distinction is that at Garcia's, the entire parking lot was full at 9:30AM on a weekday and we had to park our minivan down the block. Another distinction: at Garcia's, smoked brisket is something that can be eaten in a taco, brisket tacos can be eaten for breakfast, and breakfast can be eaten on the hood of a minivan in front of somebody's house. The longhorn is the Texas Official Large State Mammal [b] and to honor it, we had to continue consumption. We went back to Garcia's for breakfast the next day.

- The hostel is called "Sua Casinha." The staff of two, who live somewhere in the hostel, speak Brazilian Portuguese to each other and make pancakes every single morning. There are few other guests that also seem to also be Brazilian. The hostel is full of recharging Roombas®. Bad music plays at odd hours from Google Home speakers mounted on the walls. The hostel is actually just a large house in a residential neighborhood with bunk beds. There are hammocks everywhere.
- There is also an Official Flying Mammal of Texas, the Mexican Free-tailed Bat, but I couldn't work it in.

Zenghelis Studio  
Luka Pajovic on Athens, Greece



There have been few tourists over the last two centuries or more who have failed to be impressed by the Parthenon and its dramatic setting on the Athenian Acropolis—claims Mary Beard in her wonderfully wry and honest study of the venerable monument. [a] She goes on to single it out as one of the few canonical

works which (unlike the irritatingly small Mona Lisa, or the surprisingly suburban Pyramids) never fails to enchant, despite millions of tourists and dozens of manipulators of public opinion, availing themselves of its symbolic reserves year after year.

It was therefore with a sense of intense, if studied, anticipation of overwhelming beauty, that we made our way to the holy rock on that limpid late-September morning. And there it was, 800 metres down a rather banal street from where we spent the night, looming over the city of the living like a stone ghost—uncanny in its marmoreal infirmity. The contrast between the two could not have been more striking to any pair of less desensitized, less expectant eyes.

We began our ascent in the blue haze of the still-unlit southern slopes. Turn after turn, we took in the views, meandering past the olive groves and unmarked ruins along paths choreographed more carefully, and laid out more recently than any one of the unsuspecting students of antiquity around us would have dared to imagine. We revelled in the picturesque deceit of it all, stopping every now and then to take in the views of the city at our feet and record the moment—some for their followers, others for lack of a better way of coping with the growing sense of sensory fatigue and resignation.

But the swoon never came; not even as the Propylaea opened up before us, flooding us with warm easterly light, its shattered columns' flutes ablaze like a thousand lipping tongues. [b] Neither did it come as we crossed into the sacred precinct itself, finally to face that delicate behemoth of marble that had until then looked so remote. The great ruin's timeless glow seemed to leave most of us frigid behind our many layers of optical protection from the world. Its benevolent grandeur seemed mute before a generation taught to view its wondrous forms in painfully reductivist, or else, openly dismissive terms.

And so we frolicked about, doing what we do best: getting punny with the Caryatids, cooking up witty captions to give others a taste of some "Acropolis experience" we never really had, vainly trying to capture visually the ineffable charm of the place, or simply wandering about, mouth agape, for the better part of the hour spent there. Whether it was simply the jet lag that prevented us from coming out of our usual blasé shells, or a more pervasive shift in the way we look at the world around us, I still do not know. At any rate, we all seemed rather more at ease with the facile pleasures of the Aegean, probed through and through over the week that followed.

- Beard, M. (2002). "The Parthenon", Profile Books, London (p.3)
- A bit like the way the chipped striations of Rudolph Hall light up on most mornings.

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Baker, Bonne, Collignon, Eckert, Hill, Larrivée, and Loximuthal retrieved from <https://bl.ocks.org/>.

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Bellew / Spence / Squire Studio  
Rukshan Vathupola on Bali, Indonesia



glass windows. Outside, a city of motorcycles flock around any and all traffic as they jostle for the best position on the narrow country roads. Children, businessmen, laborers, and farmers tanned by the sun drive within this ever-growing mass of people. Students on the backs of open pickup trucks cut through the traffic and the heat, feeling the cool breeze of the night winds in their hair. Large circular mirrors peer from around every bend and corner, watching for rogue motorists that may attempt to take