



PART **1a** STUDIO PREPARATION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

STARTS Monday 29 August
DUE Monday 12 September at 2:15PM

GENERAL GOAL These first two weeks are intended to provide you with the basic intellectual scaffolding for the rest of the semester. It involves reading, watching, reflecting/debating, and producing conceptual work that examines architecture's capacity to interrogate, embody and advance a socio-cultural and ethical agenda using communal memory as a catalytic framework.

POSITION The best examples of architecture are buildings that *transcends*. By this, we mean structures that go well beyond successfully responding to functional, economic, sustainable, contextual, cultural, and symbolic expectations. Aesthetics is perhaps the most obvious ways to attain such goal. In beauty, we may find the ineffable, sublime, or immeasurable as great architects and philosophers have pointed out. But there is more to architectural transcendence than aesthetics, a path that, many would argue, is plagued with pitfalls leading to irresponsible hedonism, subjectivism, and escapism. Architecture in service of an ethical practice, while more horizontal and immanent than its aesthetic sister, may be a much wiser choice. After all, the pursuit of the good is the most direct and compassionate way not only to help others, nature, or the world but also to reach God as architectural theoretician Michael Benedikt claims (2007). In other words, good ethics always leads us to, if not delivers, the 'numinous.'

TOPIC The 2022 Walton Studio addresses the ethical function of architecture (without losing sight of its aesthetic power). We will utilize the design of *a large communal building in Malcolm X – Meridian Hill Park in Washington, DC*. to examine the architectural capacity of cultural spaces to amplify feeling in order to promote equity, inclusivity, and empathy. The project and its exploration will be charged with addressing, in our time, what is culturally, architecturally, and programmatically necessary for supporting a healthy flourishing of our Republic, not unlike what the Carnegie Libraries intended to do 120 years ago

MONUMENT MEMORY In our communal histories, monuments, and memorials have been among the first expressions of public art, created to inspire and galvanize public sentiment as emblems of emotion. As architectonic signifiers in our culture, these spaces and

structures embody both our understanding of the past and its implications for our future. They also bring people together although, sometimes, such works backfire. Our studio will re-examine the role of the monument in our present time and cultures, its ability to embody the values of our communities, and its capacity to engage them to amplify inclusion, equity, and empathy in our turbulent times.

Questions include, How can we use architectural remembrances as inspirations, catalysts, or even provocations for a new renaissance, flourishing, or evolution of our social/cultural body? What past or future memorials and monuments are missing, forgotten, or censored in our culture that need to be honored or imagined? How can the issues we face today be addressed through architecture? What is the ethical function of professing architecture?

TEAMWORK The Walton Studio asks you to work in teams of 2-3 individuals.

READINGS Juhani Pallasmaa. “Empathy and Embodied Imagination: Intuiting Experience and Life in Architecture” (p. 4-19), in *Architecture and Empathy* (2015)

Sarah Robinson. “Chapter 9 - Collective Dreaming: Imagining - Remembering – Storytelling” (p.155-180), in *Architecture is a Verb* (2021)

Esther Sternberg. “Chapter 1 – Healing Places” (p.1-24), in *Healing Spaces* (2010)

Sarah Williams Goldhagen. “Chapter 5 - People Embedded in Social Worlds” (p.183-218), in *Welcome to your world* (2020)

MEDIA Stone Ghosts in the South: Confederate monuments and America’s battle with itself - NBC News - Jun 4, 2020: <https://youtu.be/msIDM8MyGqg>

Notes on Blindness: https://youtu.be/W2eTgbyiY_0 (2016)

OTHER Relevant books are

- Mark Treib. *Spatial recall: Memory in architecture and landscape* (2009)
- E. S. Casey. *Remembering: A phenomenological study* (2000)
- Peter Zumthor. *Atmospheres* (2006)

REDDY You are to review all the material posted in our studio webpages “OTHER” related to 2022 Walton Critic Suchi Reddy. Familiarize yourself with her ideas and work before she arrives to campus. In addition, review the following:

<https://www.suchireddy.com/>

<https://rmdny.com>

<https://in-dialogue.co/interviews/suchi-reddy>

PRODUCT Student teams will deliver a 1,000 word paper (images up to students) **and** a 5 to 10-minute PPT presentation **summarizing their understanding/reflections**.

GRADE Part 1a, 1b, and 1c account for 10 % of the course grade.



PART **1b** STUDIO PREPARATION: PRECEDENTS STUDY

STARTS Monday 29 August
DUE Monday 12 September at 2:15PM

TASK The intention of this PRECEDENTS STUDY is to help you refine what you think the power of architecture can be.

You will find and study three precedents that inspire emotion and encourage and advance new behaviors and perceptions. There will be one each required in the following categories:

- ⇒ An architectural project or building that explores the power of communal memory, and/or its ability to catalyze a community. The project should not be in Washington DC.
- ⇒ An artwork that explores equity and inclusivity.
- ⇒ A landscape design that invites contemplation and reflection.

Each team will also find three *counterexamples*, one each in architecture, art, and landscape design, that is, the antithesis of what we are looking for. These are projects, artworks, and buildings that forget, divide, confuse, anesthetize, control, discriminate, do NOT inspire ...

TARGET PROGRAM In order to provide context to this PRECEDENTS STUDY, you should know that our studio project will have three components:

- ⇒ A 40,000sf building that will include a communal and public space that is dedicated to the examination of the role of monuments and memorials in our culture and their power, nature, and quality in our collective futures.
- ⇒ Integration of the existing water features into the landscape design
- ⇒ A new public artwork or amenity that supports the program of the communal space.

This PRECEDENTS STUDY in the context of your *THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK* (Part 1a) and *SITE ANALYSIS* (Part 1c) should inform you about what your building program could be about. Can you imagine potential ‘functions,’ ‘activities,’ ‘experiences,’ ‘intentions,’ and ‘hopes’ that your building should address? How would Suchi Reddy’s “form follows feeling” position vis-à-vis of inclusivity, agency, empathy, and equity play out? What is the role of memory, honesty, and reverence towards the past that may support constructing a brighter, better, worth-living future?

EXAMPLE The ACSA administered 2022 Steel Competition “Towards a New Monumentality & Open” provides you with a precedent of the type of project we are to develop in our studio. Here is a link to the website with information: <https://www.acsa-arch.org/competitions/2022-steel-competition/>

TEAMWORK The Walton Studio asks you to work in teams of 2-3 individuals.

PRODUCT 1 Students should utilize their existing representation toolbox to carry out and communicate their analytical investigation of precedents. Ideally, this work should fit on several, tile-built, 11”x17” sheets but other formats are negotiable based on your approach (talk to instructor). While digital technology is a logical choice, students are encouraged to employ hand diagrams over tracing paper to study the selected projects/artworks. Students should consider the short time given, the topic, and the theoretical underpinnings to strategize their analytical approach. If you have doubts about what study methodology to apply, visit similar assignments in past Walton Studios or consult with the instructor.

PRODUCT 2 A list of 3 to 5 potential programs (general yet specific enough to be discussed) that could respond to the objective of this architectural inquiry.

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STUDIO

Bermudez / Reddy

PART **1c** STUDIO PREPARATION: SITE ANALYSIS

STARTS Wednesday 31 August
SITE VISIT Friday 2 September
DUE Monday 12 September at 2:15PM



SITE The site for the project is the **Malcolm X Park (also known as Meridian Hill)**: a significant urban public space that connects evolving neighborhoods. An important site of protest during the Civil Rights Movement and home to four memorials, one monument, and one of the longest cascading fountains in North America, it offers rich ground to explore the potential of architecture to catalyze communal feeling.

Our site will be reimagined without the existing building that commemorates Joan of Arc but will include the statuary and water features it currently hosts.

Useful Introductory links and information

“Is it Meridian Hill Park or Malcolm X Park? Your answer is meaningful” by Rachel Kurzius, *The Washington Post*, Nov.5, 2018. URL

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/is-it-meridian-hill-park-or-malcolm-x-park-your-answer-is-meaningful/2018/11/02/610af0e2-d07e-11e8-b2d2-f397227b43f0_story.html

<https://www.nps.gov/places/meridian-hill-park.htm>

Ana Garcia, “Blurring the lines – A bathing hub to connect a divided society,” *Master’s Thesis Project*, School of Architecture and Planning, CUA (Spring 2021)

TEAMWORK The Walton Studio asks you to work in teams of 2-3 individuals.

TASK Understanding the site demands considerations of space, scale, history, culture, demographics, nature, landscape, use, traffic, accessibility, visibility, context, experience, etc. What kind of natural, socio-cultural, functional, and experiential zones exist or overlap on it? Is there a particular pattern to follow? What about the major tensions informing-deforming the conditions? “Who” is the site? What is invisible yet essential to most people about the site conditions? And how all this informs and is informed by the 2022 Walton Studio’s intention to create a building, artwork, and landscape design that deal with feelings, community, memory, equity, inclusivity, empathy, and more?

You will be assigned to one of the following tasks. Each job will be done by a group of 2/3 students

- **Social/Cultural/Historical:** Social: demographics, events, interactions, etc. Culture: institutions, community values, and cultural fabric; History: time, memory, evolution, and events. (Teams A & B, one graduate)
- **Functional:** activities, uses, accessibility, human/transportation flow. (Team C)
- **Environmental:** weather, seasons, climate, sun, shadow, wind, rain, vegetation, etc. (Team D, undergraduate)
- **Formal/Spatial:** third-person study, detached considerations of massing (man-made and natural), scale, figure-ground, materials, context, section/topography, geometry, monuments, etc. (Team E & F, one graduate)
- **Experiential:** first-person study, embodied, phenomenological (i.e., NOT analytical) study of the site as it appears to a person arriving, moving, staying, and leaving it. Use the provided means (photos, sketches, overlays) and other appropriate information. Consider the full sensorium. (Team G)
- **Site Documentation & 3D model:** utilize existing data/information to build a 2D and 3D digital model for laser-cutting a good physical model (and also for rendering) at a scale to be defined in the studio. Additionally, in the meantime, produce a rough physical model documenting the general conditions for use by all students during the first weeks of architect Reddy’s visit. (Team H-graduate)

Find examples of this type of work in the following web link:
<http://juliobermudez.com/courses/202/site-analysis/>

PRODUCT Teams will produce at least two 20”x 20” visual compositions, representing their analytical findings. Utilize diagrammatic, conceptual, photographic, and other means and notations to carry out and communicate your thinking and, very important, conclusions. The media is up to you.

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