

KOREA(S): PARALLEL UTOPIAS

STUDIO BRIEF The Studio will research and analyze the dystopic status of the divided Korea to propose divergent urban and architectural scenarios of an immanent reunified future. The objective is to analyze the language of utopian dreams purported through the propaganda machine deployed by the two Koreas to critically assess its trajectory to unification. The parallel existence of the two halves provides an intriguing juxtaposition of escalated reification of dreams that are uncannily similar and interdependent in which architecture becomes its key organizer. Understanding the myth of architecture's political immediacy and its critical career in sustaining the mirrored relationship is essential in analyzing the current status of the two parallel worlds and its implications in the path to reunification.

The Studio will progress research, analysis and preliminary scenarios prior to traveling to South Korea. The Studio will present the research in a workshop with the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at Seoul National University, a key think tank for reunification research and policies, and the Ministry of Unification. Site visits will be made to the DMZ and other politically sensitive sites in South Korea for further understanding of the geopolitical conflict. The final studio proposals will be exhibited and edited for publication.

KOREA(S): PARALLEL UTOPIAS

PROJECT STATEMENT Objective

Current studies and research regarding the divided condition of North and South Korea are focused mainly on its political and economic conditions and agencies. What has not yet been adequately addressed is how constructed realities of the two Koreas are employed as a mechanism of normalizing current political and economic agendas by both entities. Mundane elements of planning and architecture have become tactical tools and means of territorial assertion for ulterior agendas, and studies in the political agencies of spatial products have yet to be investigated.

The divided Korea provides the opportunity to analyze the assumed transparency of architecture and its process of normalcy to assess spatial products as key participants of regional and international geopolitics. Through the Studio we hope to initiate the discussion on architecture as an active apparatus and mechanism to expand the understanding of the career of architecture in the history of political conflicts.

Process

The research work regarding the project has been in progress since 2008. The project received a Graham Foundation Grant in 2008 to initiate and advance the research. This became the basis in which the seminar course "Extraterritorial Mapping" was taught in the Spring 2010 semester. The course addressed opportunities within the field of architecture regarding the political, social, cultural and economical situations of global economic systems, specifically through the study of geopolitical conditions in North and South Korea. The research, analysis and the mappings advanced through this seminar will continue in a follow-up research seminar course in Spring 2011 that will formulate the basis from which the Studio will be able to advance preliminary urban and architectural scenarios prior to the trip in Fall 2011 or Spring 2012.

The Studio will travel to Seoul to participate in a week long workshop with the students and faculty members at the Dept. of Architecture and the Graduate School of Environmental Design at Seoul National University. The materials developed prior to and during the design workshop will be presented to the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at Seoul National University, a key think tank in South Korea for reunification research and policies, and the Ministry of Unification. The contents of the workshop will be developed into the final design proposals which will last 6 weeks after returning from the trip. During the trip, the Studio will visit sites related to war tourism as well as politically controversial sites outside of Seoul such as the DMZ, Panmunjum, Peace Village and the Tunnels to survey the military and propaganda apparatus of the divided territory as well as sites inside Seoul such as the War Memorial Museum and the National Cemetery.

The Studio will develop and produce final design proposals that envisions a reunified yet dysfunctional Korea relative to three sites specifically. The DMZ, and the current capitals of the two Koreas, Seoul and Pyongyang. The scenarios will address topics of immanent urban development relative to the conflicting issues of economic development, ecological and historical preservation and cultural transition.

Production

The research, analysis material and the final scenarios proposed by the studio will be exhibited in Ithaca and New York City in the U.S. and Seoul, Korea. The material will be edited into a catalog for publication to be distributed to the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at Seoul National University and the Ministry of Culture in Seoul, Korea.

Use of Funding

Air Travel (12 students and 1 faculty)	\$13,000
Traveling Exhibition	\$4,000
Editing, Printing for Publication	\$3,000
Total	\$20,000

* Studio expenses, facilities and staffing will be provided by the Department and the workshop in Seoul will be hosted by Seoul National University.

KOREA(S): PARALLEL UTOPIAS

FACULTY BACKGROUND The Applicant teaches architecture and urban design and is a Registered Architect in New York State. She had worked with Weiss/Manfredi: Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism in New York City for eight years where she was the project architect for award winning projects such as the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, which received the 2007 Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Urban Design from Harvard University and the Diana Center for Barnard College in New York, which received the 2008 P/A Honor Award. She was also the Project Manager for the Taekwondo Park Master Plan in Muju, Korea which was the winning project from an international competition. Her recent site installation works "Field" and "Stories of Nature" focus on the relationship of Architecture and Landscape relative to issues of reference systems and representation. She recently curated the "Rowe x Ungers: Untold Collaborations on the City during the 1960-70s" exhibition in conjunction with the Preston H. Thomas Memorial Symposium in August 2010. She received her B.F.A. and M.F.A. in industrial design from Seoul National University in Seoul, Korea, and her M.Arch at Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

The Applicant's research is focused on the study of spatial products and its political, social, economic ramifications through processes of transparency and strategies of normalcy relative to architectural, landscape, urban, and infrastructural networks. In 2008 the Applicant received a Graham Foundation Grant for the research of Parallel Utopias: The Normalcy of Architecture in North and South Korea. The travel studio will allow for the research to expand through actual design proposals and scenarios that can explore opportunities of architecture as an active agent in geopolitical environments. As well as addressing pertinent issues of regional and international geopolitical issues, the research and the production of the Studio intends to facilitate a discourse that can question the presumed transparency of architecture that engender conditions of normalcy. The Studio hopes to add to the discourse of architecture as a means of sociopolitical production and analysis that can facilitate alternative discussions between government agencies, policy centers in conjunction with the discipline of architecture, landscape and urbanism to expand on scenarios of future development in regions of political conflicts.