

THE LA WATER STUDIO

Speculating on the Convergence of Nature and Culture at LA's Sepulveda Flood Control Basin



“If a city can be seen as a dense cluster of symptoms of civilization, then Los Angeles is a dispersal of these symptoms into a spectacle of affects, a baroque conflation of special effects, a resonant mix of American culture. In both fact and fiction LA County has become a laboratory which has extended the notion of what can be called a city. An aerosol of places and non-places; a rangy gathering of nature and culture transformed into a random terrain of land, water, dwellings and commerce.*”

This studio will speculate on a site at the Los Angeles River and the Sepulveda Dam in greater Los Angeles where two large infrastructural conditions: converge suburban sprawl and the 100-year flood control basin.

What will shape and extend our urban and ex-urban areas in the 21st Century?

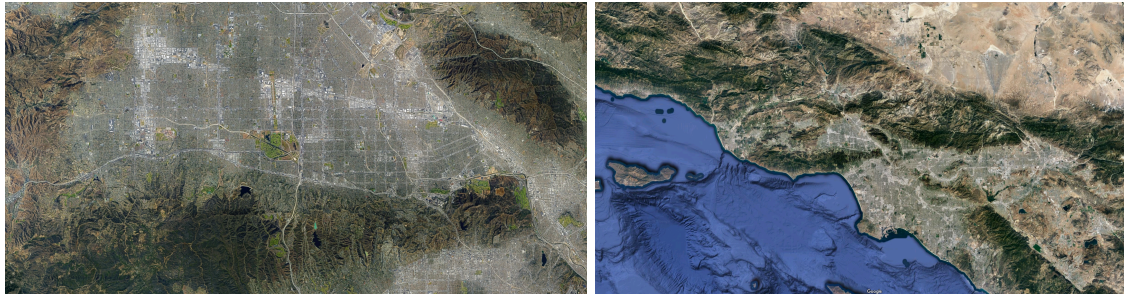
As climate change accelerates, peak oil arrives and globalism accelerates, the American Southwest presents numerous challenges and opportunities given the simultaneous abundance *and* lack of water.

With projects of this scale, what are the unique opportunities for a flood control infrastructure with cultural production?

Can these systems synthesize sustainable development and provide public amenities as well?

California's population continues to grow at accelerating rates each year. To sustain this increasing population, new strategies for the confluence of infrastructures and residential occupation must grow. Most of this new growth must go into existing urban areas: how might the infrastructure of flood control as open space accommodate, engage and partner with cultural programs at a very large scale?

What will shape the urbanisms of the future in the globalized “instant age”?
Are there clever methods of reuse that anticipate new hybrids and social arrangements?



STUDIO AGENDA

In this studio we will identify issues, imagine strategies, develop programs, and create designs. The class will analyze this complex and extra-large-scale physical environment through many trajectories: geophysical, historical, environmental, technological, political, cultural, and economic. We will look to develop proposals beyond the accommodation of the flood control facility and propose public programs to partner at the site, as well. Designs should project what life will be like in this ***near future scenario***, and speculate changes in lifestyles, social behaviors, and envision how your designs may impact California's growing population.

Could issues of energy, ecology, together with events and recreation be our framework for thinking about Architecture and Infrastructure?

Given these two civic acts of visionary, how might architecture engage with these impending infrastructures?

Could this new infrastructure physically connect, and combine various types of industry such as social services, commerce, entertainment, culture in innovative ways?

What are the potential environmental, scientific and aesthetic impacts of this project on the downstream recreation when considering demographics, land use, terrain, and industry.

Can Architecture be treated as leading or alongside infrastructure rather than as an after thought?

How can Architecture galvanize projects around big ideas and capture new value for both the public events and infrastructure?

What programs would you propose to partner with these two initiatives?

The term “big” may be interpreted in many scales; is it an accumulation of small installations—or something of a tremendous infrastructural dimension and scope?

STUDIO STRUCTURE

Design work will progress concurrently with the research. Through case studies, comprehensive research, and design investigations, we will work to explore how the systems of flood control, energy storage, infrastructure, and ecology are integrated together with architecture in innovative ways. Students will work individually or in teams to develop programs and site strategies to formulate concept proposals. Each project will be developed as a thesis, and thus, defended and argued for at critical points during the semester.

Energy and sustainability issues are essential components and leading concerns for the studio and the studio projects. To take this imperative seriously, we will work closely with environmental engineers and structural engineers at critical points in the semester to test your ideas.

Students will begin by critically mapping the site using GIS, among other data sources; and will make assumptions projecting how things may change by 2028 and beyond. The studio will participate in the GSAPP/GIS Tutorials to effectively benefit from the cartographic investigation. Additionally, the Studio will have the use of four 360 Theta Cameras in analyzing the complexities of the site and for immersive visualization of their projects.

The studio will make physical site model(s) and installation formats within which projects will be conceptualized, developed, and presented throughout the semester.

By midterm, each student or team will locate their project in the site to test their proposed strategy. The selected area of study as a detailed architectural proposal will be developed in the second half of the semester.

For the Final Review, students will present their site strategy, the production of a scenario, and the detailed development of their test site at an architectural scale using drawings, models, mock-ups, and large-scale sections.

Week 1- 3 360 Theta Camera Workshop and Concept Studies
Team Research Topics for Studio Colloquium
GIS + Studio Site Model development and Case Studies

Week 4-7 Studio Site models
Studio Research Colloquium
Program Development
Studio Travel**

Week 8 Midterm February 25

Week 9-11 Advanced Model and 360 Theta Camera immersive representations
¾ Review

Week 12-14 Large Sections
Final Review Documentation
Final Review April 27

TRAVEL – March 7-11**

Preliminary Itinerary: Hoover Dam, Ivanpah Solar Energy Facility, Double Negative by Michael Heizer; then drive to Los Angeles to visit the site and exemplary architecture.



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