

Core I Fall 2022 – Places of Care: West Harlem Youth and the Commons
Prof. Alessandro Orsini

The studio aims to re-envision the urban voids of Harlem between 120th-152nd street as an opportunity to create new opportunities for the commons. Since urban voids — in the form of vacant land and buildings — directly relate to the gentrification of neighborhoods and the continuous spatial re-arrangement of underrepresented communities in the area, primarily African Americans and Latin X, the making of the new commons will generate tools to reject the violence of racial capitalism.

The new commons aim to address how architecture can create alternative paradigms to the individualistic, heteropatriarchal, and white supremacist values that have shaped wealth disparity and accessibility to resources. These spaces are designed and developed with the community through a universally inclusive strategy to redefine the societal educational values historically configured around patriarchal structures, white supremacy, and capitalism.

Students will investigate the history of these interruptions of the city fabric to determine what and who generated these voids, to whom these plots of land belonged before becoming unused. Students will be asked to articulate strategies to reconfigure the urban fabric of West Harlem along Broadway, enabling equitable and inclusive visions that transcend the nuclear family and facilitates alternative leisure, working, and educating arrangements focusing on spaces of care for local youth. We will provide safe spaces for LGBTQ youth, sometimes unhoused, and historically important for the local culture of our study area. We will target discriminatory urbanization patterns that will be re-oriented towards collective models of ownership and responsibility for "the commons," defined as the space that ensures access to food, education, shelter, civic engagement, and meaningful work for all.

This approach to the evolution of the cities can be at the base of the nation's urban policies and planning revolution, where the collective is at the center of society's well-being and prosperity.

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