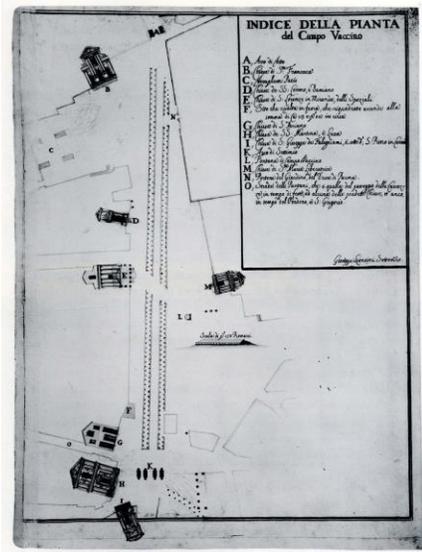


DETROIT TIME, RUIN and RETURN.



*"...And what if the gnawing and scrapping of millennia, the destructive erosion of weather or the forge of the earth's core can make a ruin of a cliff, melting, pulverizing, and building it anew as if it were some form from the organic world? The most ordinary pebble will survive infinitely longer than every realm and every conqueror, will lie peacefully in the shadow of a crevice or in the soft clay floor of a cave long after all the palaces of an empire are in ruins, their dynasties rotted and the shimmering mosaic floor of a throne room buried under tons of soil so arid that not even a thistles and wild oats will grow above the sunken splendor. How much more comforting and fitting, surely is the ultimate destiny of petrification than the nauseating, putrid process of organic decay with its lace curtains of worms and maggots, Naso said. Compared to that abomination, transmutation into stone seem nothing short of redemption, a gray path into the paradise of rocky slopes, gorges and deserts. The flashy splendor of life passing like a meteor is nothing, the dignity and permanence of stones is all.*  
Ransmayr, Christoph. *The Last World*, 1991, p.118.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Detroit sets the largest scale for events occurring within living memory and in a fast decaying city. This condition is one that reflects world-historical connections and profound changes in the meaning of a site. Common to such events are the manifest workings of time, the ineluctable transformation of land and infrastructures, the necessity of re-dedicating them to other purposes and endow them with fresh meaning. Instead of massive interventions on the land, we aim to formulate ideas that advance the possibility of rendering fluid what is static and solid, of injecting time as a benign rather than a devastating force.

**Travel /Research:**

The studio will move in space and time, exploring the city of Detroit after taking stock of the conditions of ancient Rome in late antiquity. In the first half of the semester students will undertake research, mapping, and diagramming of the city of Rome in comparison with the current condition of Detroit. In the second part of the semester students, after travelling to Detroit, will engage economic and environmental scenarios, rehearsing proposals that have significance beyond the immediate instance.

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## METHODOLOGY

A dramatic confrontation between Romulus, the last Emperor, and Ottaker the barbarian general in the Imperial Villa in Tivoli brings the conflict of time and place to a head. Their dialogue in Durrenmatt's play *Romulus* occurs at the terminal moment of the Roman Empire, when time comes to a standstill and all of Europe turns into a boundless land of Barbarian conquest. The vanquished and the conqueror agree that *"we are both helpless. Time has us by the throat. There is only one thing left. There is nothing left. Ah, but there is. The present. The day. The moment. The instant. Now."* While many think of the past or the future in moments of collapse, the protagonists suddenly face the present as the only manifestation of time. Instead of finishing each other off, the Emperor without an Empire and the general without a country, they seize the moment: *"No absolutes. Only the long present...the now. So let us begin, Ottaker, to live now."* Brought to their senses, they decide to join forces in the name of *"the simplest. You and I—two mistaken men [...]—we will make it safe to breed chickens from one end of Europe to the other."*

Historical continuities emerge in the breach of time. When the capital of the Empire falls into ruin and its grounds turn into a hen yard, Rome does not end in a literal or geographic sense, but transforms into a re-ruralized town from which new ideas of settling and urbanizations spring in due course. A long series of "nows" reassemble themselves into a past and extend into a tentative future.

Without implying a straightforward correspondence, an actual comparison of population and city area at moments of high and low density renders stark figures: Rome's inhabited surface in antiquity amounts to roughly 18 km sq for a population somewhere above one million. In Detroit a vastly larger municipal area of 370 km sq held a population of 1.8 million in 1950 and now has to accommodate only c. 700,000 inhabitants. Surprisingly, the ratio of inhabitants to km sq is virtually identical, i.e. c. 1.9. This is, for all intents and purposes, a rural population density, comparable to the conditions of Medieval Rome.

What makes for a particularly compelling insight is the fact that the city of Rome has lived not just through a crisis or two, but has gone through such dramatic cycles in the course of three millennia that one may profitably study its history as that of permanent crisis. It is tempting, if admittedly a bit speculative, to consider Detroit and Rome in parallel, but their geographic locations, essentially towns tied to major fluvial connections, their diverse populations, and their symbolic association with globally adopted forms of civilization, lend some credence to this attempt. What is more important, though, for the development of strategies of re-cultivation is a critical assessment of late Roman measures to reshape the geography of the ancient city for new times and new forms of cultural practices. In general terms, one can consider such major transformations of Rome as those of Renaissance and Baroque times a fundamental reshaping of the landscape and townscape. For a host of reasons, the population remaining in post-antique times was concentrated in the abitato, the low-lying areas along the Tiber, while the hills that had been previously sites of privilege and of institutions were deserted.

## PROJECT SYNOPSES EDUCATIONAL GOALS

### Exercise 1 – Comparative

Starting from the play *Romulus* which illustrates a historical turning point in late antiquity, develop a way to map the condition of Rome in comparison with the transformation of Detroit during a recent time of change. Find a condition in both cities that allows for considerations of scale, voids, and shifts in the urban geography.

Single out two extreme conditions, one at a large scale and another of discreet and distinctly contained nature [e.g. the system of aqueducts versus inner-city shops] .

For your presentation, prepare maps, drawings, and conceptual models that are apt to convey the thematic comparison you've chosen for this exercise.

Research, map, and diagram the evolution of the city of Rome in comparison with present-day Detroit.

Consider land activities, culture, natural resources: Students will place special emphasis on the natural, urban and cultural phenomena that will open an understanding of time as a course of events.

The class will explore, geology, urban agriculture, (*rus in urbe*) water (aqueducts and cloaca maxima), and power infrastructure in context and with the objective of documenting their interdependencies in a landscape and townscape of ruin and emptiness under a spacious sky.

## Exercise 2 - Mnemonic

Not only the physical fabric of the city decays, but the memory of its life dissipates as well. Instead of viewing Detroit through the lens of urban decay and desolation, we seek to find a compelling instance for its commemoration, an object that captures precisely those things that would otherwise be forgotten. We'll use our visit to Detroit to explore the half-hidden nature of the city and its no-longer present character. As you return, you'll search for a way of conserving the impressions you gained on site. We'll look at the work of Detroit artist Michael Kelly who created an imaginary memory of his childhood and Taryn Simon's *Paperwork* which documents the will of Capital: an account of flora as witness. Simon assembled the flowers displayed at political events in an herbarium, creating a collective memorial of these unrelated events. Both artists took a familiar reality—the one-story tract house, the ubiquitous flower arrangements for public events—as a point of departure for the construction of memories. The goal of your effort is not to make a reliquary (assuming that objects hold meaning *per se*) but to bring something to life so that we can experience it anew. By the same token, choose a medium that enables you to use your work as a stepping stone to Exercise 3.

Studio research and site explorations will help single out thematic objects as an initial statement of your position. Then assemble or disassemble your thematic objects in an effort to endow them with significance for Detroit. Students will be required to work with diverse materials and technologies that liberate their design process from mere pre-conceptions. The result must reflect the appropriateness of your research for the problem at hand. In other words, the type and style of documentation should reflect the content of your proposal.

## Exercise 3 - Exploratory

We will now get into the reality of Detroit's Land Use strategies and its implementation. Working on the Detroit Strategic Framework Plan by Toni Griffin (Detroit Future City, 2012) and on the analysis and research she is developing at the Max Bond Center at CCNY on Legacy Cities in America, we will take a critical position in this field. Keeping present the seemingly inconclusive conditions in late antiquity and their current counterpart, we shall not aim at lasting resolutions but give a provocative response to actual dilemmas. Take advantage of this suspended moment in history and exchange the negative terms of abandonment and vacancy for a challenging concept of your own. You will select different issues arising from the present conditions of the city and develop ideas for voids and gaps. The research and design charrettes will be the vehicle to reach this goal. Beyond maps, models, diagrams and drawings, your response is expected to take the form of dramatic confrontation between two agents of power in analogy to Durrenmatt's *Romulus*.

Studio participants will write a dramatic episode of a "play" that conveys their vision of the Detroit/Rome Landscape and defines explicit principles and tactics for their performative plans. These will be described visually and include: performance criteria for infrastructure adaptation to environmental criteria (climate change, flooding, water and soil pollution, etc.), cultural characteristics that promote community buy-in, and other relevant design parameters. Ideas for the physical manifestation of the plan will support the presentation at Mid Review.

## Mid-Review Thursday October 30

Mid-Review presentations from each student will include the following:

- Presentation of the framework of your "Play", in the form of a script (libretto) with images, storyboard, or other.
- Your two-scale strategy for the Detroit area and new extra-regional scenarios – how do the systems play out at different scale? Identify opportunities of acting in recognition of transitional conditions?
- What ideas do you have about a "transitional landscape" in which positive effects of retrenchment and diminution might be discovered?
- A site-specific strategy that responds to the principles outlined in the performative plan. This must be represented with diagrammatic sections, emblematic views, and strategic plans of the necessary apparatus for social, cultural, and environmental transformation.

Develop Case Study Scenarios, including detailed design plans, sections and material conditions that are specific to the site(s) selected. These will include: phased layout plans, phased section drawings, an animated sequence, a site model or a model of an infrastructure apparatus, operational diagrams, and images that describe the experiential intent of your design proposition.

### **Final Review Tuesday December 7 (pending confirmation)**

The Final Review presentation from each student will include the following:

- A re-statement of the “Play” as a manifesto with additional nuances or alterations since the Mid-Review
- Summary descriptions of the performative plan that establishes the framework for understanding the design proposal.
- Detailed designs for the settlement, including, but not limited to:
  - a. site context diagrams,
  - b. an operational plan describing how the transformed economic-environmental system works,
  - c. grading plans and planting plans where relevant to the proposal,
  - d. diagrammatic layout including deployment of new material conditions and infrastructural apparatus,
  - e. diagrammatic sections that relate the detailed plan to the larger site,
  - f. rendered sections to describe the intended experiential qualities of the place
  - g. an animation or series of plans that describe the changes in the site design over time as it adapts to the forecast climate change scenario or changes in other socio-cultural variables.

### *Expected outcomes:*

The studio will enable students to synthesize a range of skills required for professional practice in landscape architecture, including the critical thinking and conceptualization of urban landscape systems necessary to develop independent projects in preparation for their Comprehensive Studio.

### *Studio V learning objectives:*

CCNY offers a travel studio in the fall of the third year as a mechanism for aiding students in understanding how to apply the ideas and techniques of their previous coursework and studios in new contexts. The studio is structured around a theme that is relevant to global urban conditions and that can be explored in both the New York metropolitan region and in other parts of the country and the world. The scope of the studio will require students to present a thorough visual analysis and a comprehensive statement describing their proposition at a macro-scale supported by detailed design plans, sections, models, and material selections for at least one case study or the key sites in the investigation. All students are required to describe the relevant social, environmental, and ecological issues and explore the resolution of these issues, by weighing the often conflicting demands of environmental mitigation and remediation, cultural habits of occupation, and economic and social constraints. At this point in the curriculum students should be prepared to define the ethical and value-based positions that shape their design approach.

### *Grading Breakdown*

Grading for the class will be determined according to the following criteria:

Students are expected to turn in work on time, as in a design office, there are no excuses for not producing deliverables.

Grades will be based on:

- 30% conceptualization and completion of design research
- 40% final project presentation, strength of project and clarity of execution
- 30% class performance: timely completion of work, professional skill level with technology

### *Grading Criteria for Studio:*

In addition to formal midterm and final jury reviews, students will be evaluated on preparation and quality of work at periodic desk critiques, pin ups, peer reviews and informal discussions with instructors and visiting professionals. Feedback during the semester will be honest and constructive. Evidence of progress in individual work, as well as the team work within the individual design groups will be taken into account in evaluations. Final grades for the studio, as well as grades for individual phases, will take into account collaborative contributions as well individual design work.

Design work will be graded based on the following standards:

- **Completeness:** Assignments complete and graphically legible.
- **Technical Skills:** Assignments executed with the appropriate method and knowledge of technique, showing proficiency in the various media skills.
- **Accuracy and Presentation:** Assignments completed with precision and presented professionally.
- **Effort and Concept:** Student iterates through multiple drafts and shows evidence of experimentation and improvement during the assignments. Concepts are clearly articulated and well developed. On a broader scale, student shows consistent effort and improvement over the course of the semester.
- **Incompletes:** There will be no Incomplete given for a course except for a documented medical excuse at the discretion of the instructor. You are required to attend all classes and be present in the studio during the allocated times. Absence needs to be notified as mentioned in the paragraph above.

- **Attendance and timely submission of assignments:** More than two unexcused absences in a course will result in a failing grade (two absences is equal to over 13% of total class time). Late assignments (including work for pinup or review) will not be reviewed for a grade. Each student must turn in what is completed or receive a failing grade for the particular assignment. Names of groups and individuals should be clearly indicated on all assignments.

### Grading Standards

This schedule conforms to CCNY 2008-2010 Graduate Bulletin:

Grade	Explanation (refers to class performance)	Quality Points
A+	Rare, near perfect achievement	4.00
A	Exceptional	4.00
A-	Excellent	3.70
B+	High caliber	3.30
B	Satisfactory	3.00
B-	Below average	2.70
C+	Not satisfactory	2.30
C	Poor	2.00
F	Course failure	0.00

### Faculty Contact information:

Elisabetta Terragni elisabetaterragni@msn.com

### Reading List

The following list is in addition to the citations in the text above and is intended to jump start your research; you will be expected to augment this with independent investigation. Please note: I include citations for publications that will require critical assessment.

- Ransmayr, Christoph, *The Last World. (A novel with an Ovidian repertory)*, Grove Weidenfeld, 1988, English ed. 1990.
- Vidal Gore. *Romulus*. Adapted from a play of Friedrich Durrenmatt, Dramatists Play Service, Inc. 1998.
- Czeraniak, Julia, *Formerly Urban: Projecting Rust Belt Futures*, Princeton Architecture Press, 2012.
- Diamond, Jared, *Collapse. How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, London, Lane 2005.
- Archer, David, *Climate Crisis: An Introductory Guide to Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Black, Maggie, *The Atlas of Water: Mapping the World's Most Critical Resource*, University of California Press, 2009.
- Carlisle, Stephanie and Nicholas Pevzner, "Scenario 4: Rethinking Infrastructure," *Landscape Urbanism*. Spring 2013. <http://landscapeurbanism.com/journal/issue-4/>.
- Gleick, Peter, *The World's Water, Vol. 7*, Island Press, 2006.
- Infranet lab, "Coupling: Strategies for Infrastructural Opportunism" *Pamphlet Architecture 30*, Princeton Press, 2011.
- Shane, David Grahame, *Recombinant Urbanism*, Wiley, 2005.

### Resources on Rome and his history

- Ashby, Thomas, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935.
- Boatwright, Mary T., Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J.A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Boethius, Axel, *Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture*. New York: Penguin Books, 1978.
- Braudel, Fernand, *La méditerranée: les hommes et l'héritage*. Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1978.
- Buchner, Edmund, *Die Sonnenuhr des Augustus*. Mainz: Zabern, 1982.
- Ceen, Allan. "Piranesi and Nolli: Imago Urbis Romae," in: *Piranesi Rome Recorded*. New York: Arthur Ross Foundation, 1990.
- Claridge, Amanda, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Edwards, Catherine, *Writing Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Forster, Kurt W. "Stagecraft and Statecraft: The Architectural Integration of Public Life and -Theatrical Spectacles in Scamozzi's Theater at Sabbioneta," in: *Oppositions*, 9 (1977): 63-87.
- Frutaz, Amato Pietro, *Le piante di Roma*. Volumes I-V. Roma: Istituto di studi romani, 1962.
- Galinsky, Karl, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Gros, Pierre, *L'architecture romaine: du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire*. Paris: Picard, 2006.
- Heiken, Grant, Renato Funicello, and Donatella De Rita, *The Seven Hills of Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Lanciani, Rodolfo, *Forma Urbis Romae*. Roma: Quasar, 1990.

- Livy, *The History of Rome*. Books 1-5. Trans. Valerie M. Warrior. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2006.
- MacDonald, William L., *Architecture of the Roman Empire*. Volumes I-II. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965, 1982, 1986.
- Renfrew, Colin, *Figuring it out: What are we? Where do we come from?* London: Thames & Hudson, 2006.
- Steinby, Eva Margareta, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. Volume I. Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 1993.
- Zanker, Paul, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan

**Resources on Detroit and his history (in progress):**

- Griffin, Toni, *Detroit Future City*, 2012 Strategic framework plan.
- Hansen Andrea, Griffin, Toni, *Detroit Interrupted. Defining new geographies for the American City*, GSD studio 2011.
- Welchman, John, *Mike Kelley*, Phaidon, 1999.

A Dropbox will be open to access to all digital materials for the Semester.

**Weekly Schedule**

**W1**

Thu 08.27.15 First Day of Class, General Presentation. **Launch exercise 1 “Comparative.”**  
Convocation 5.00PM Aaron Davis Hall

**W2**

Mon 08.31.15 **Pin up-strategies and sites.**  
Thu 09.03.15 **2.00 PM Presentation by Kurt W. Forster on Rome in Antiquity, followed by discussion.**

**W3**

Mon 09.07.15 **No Class-College Closed for Labor Day.**  
Thu 09.10.15 **Monday Schedule.**  
Desk crit

**W4**

Mon 09.14.15 **Work in class**  
Thu 09.17.15 **Pin up, exercise 1. Launch exercise 2 “Mnemonic.”**  
**6.30pm. Lecture: Andres Jaque - Sciame Auditorium.**

**W5**

**Mon-Thu** **DETROIT trip**  
**09.21 - 24.15**  
09-22 - 23.15 No classes scheduled (College Open).  
Thu 09.24.15 **6.30pm. Lecture: Marie Law Adams & Dan Adams - Sciame Auditorium.**

**W6**

Mon 09.28.15 Discussion  
Thu 10.01.15 **Work in class**  
**6.30pm. Lecture: Maria Hurtado Mendoza, Sciame Auditorium.**

**W7.**

Mon 10.05.15 **Desk Crit**  
Thu 10.08.15 **Pin Up Exercise 2 Mnemonic.**

**W8**

**Mon 10.12.15** **Columbus Day College closed**  
Thu 10.15.15 **Desk Crit**  
**6.30pm. Lecture: Shawn Rickenbacher - Sciame Auditorium.**

**W9**

Mon 10.19.15 **Pin Up,**  
Thu 10.22.15 **Desk Crit**  
**6.30pm. Lecture: Ivan Rupnik- Sciame Auditorium.**

**W10**

Mon 10.26.15 **Desk Crit**  
Thu 10.29.15 **MID TERM REVIEW.**  
**6.30pm. Lecture: Judith Le Clerc & Jamie Coll Auditorium.**

**W11**

Mon 11.02.15 **PRESENTATION exercise 2 (part 1-2-3)-desk crit Launch Exercise 3.**  
Thu 11.05.15 **Desk crit**  
**Master of Landscape architectural info panel.**

**W12**

Mon 11.09.15  
Thu 11.12.15

*Pin Up*  
*Desk Crit*

**W13**

Mon 11.16.15  
Thu 11.19.15

*Pin up*  
*Desk Crit*

**W14**

Mon 11.23.15  
**Thu 11.26.15**

*Pin Up, Individual*  
**No class-Thanksgiving**

**W15**

Tue 11.30.15  
Thu 12.03.15

*Desk Crit*  
*Pin Up*

**W16**

Mon 12.07.15

**FINAL REVIEW exercise 1-2-3 and Play presentation.**