PIDGIN MAGAZINE

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Princeton University School of Architecture

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A MALLEABLE MANIFESTO

ARCHITECTURE FASTER THAN ITS SHADOW

THE MALLEABALISTS

Members of the Malleable Manhattan Group at Archiprix International 2011 – Gijs Adriaansens, Qiu Chang, Huub Donkers, Rodrigo García González, Luis Eduardo Guísar Benítez, Melanie Hammer, Junwoo Lee, Raquel Mayorga, Rian Qiu, Derk Thijs (Author), Brandon Clifford (Instructor), Edrie Ortega (Assistant Instructor)

FAST CULTURE

I like Obama,
I like Lady Gaga,
I like Phillip Glass,
I like Amnestie International,
I like Starbucks,
I like Jamie Oliver,
I like Michael Graves,

and I like Rem Koolhaas.

The manifesto is dead,

long live the manifesto.
I push the like button,
and consider it done.

I like without effort,
I click therefore I am.
A painless execution of discourse,
a feedback that really is none.

I like the manifesto,
I take a position and therefore I am.
an act of bravery,
in a culture that is *fast*.

MANIFESTO

I like Manhattan,
"Ich bin ein New Yorker",
We are all New Yorkers.
Our goal is not to redesign Manhattan, but to redesign architecture.

We are dedicated to scales of time.

The timelines of the city, of architecture and the materials we use are currently in a state of friction.

What was formerly small, medium, large or extra large, we redefine in minutes, hours, days, months, seasons, years and centuries.

We reject the false notion that architecture is only obligated to permanence

The problem of architecture today, is the futile attempt to make the generic specific.

We define this tendency as a clash of scales in time:

The houses we design are meant for a century,
Whereas the styles by which we design them change every week.

We split the generic from the fast, and assign to every building its proper scale of time.

An architecture responding to scales of time requires a new capacity for the architect —to be fast.

The architect must learn to do projects in 15 minutes, and to replace the burdens of the métier by absolute opportunism and optimism.

We are proposing an architecture like a tailor made suit responding to precise and time bound functions.
What was formerly broken down to *residential*, *commercial*, *leisure* or *infrastructure*, Is now rethought into functions as:

desiring
sleeping
climbing
crying
walking
drinking
praying
peeing
bathing
listening
studying
searching
liking

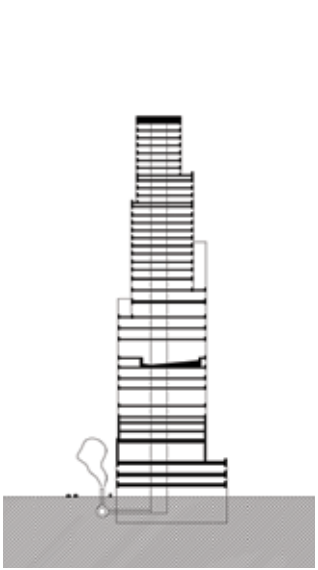
We are dedicated to a malleable Manhattan, a city that reconciles time and space through architecture.

If change and crises were formerly the city's enemies, they are now its driving forces.

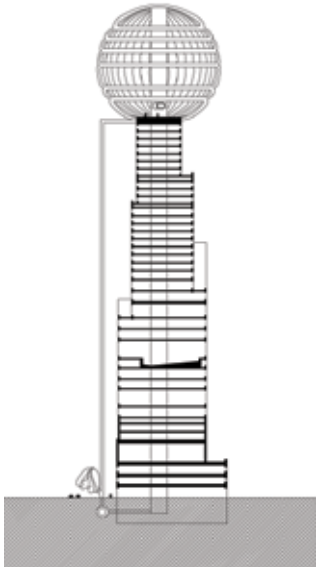
EXPERIMENTS

We propose four projects for a Malleable Manhattan:
I LIKE STEAM
I LIKE STREETS
I LIKE GARBAGE
and
I LIKE WINDOWS

I LIKE STEAM is working on the timeline of the economy.



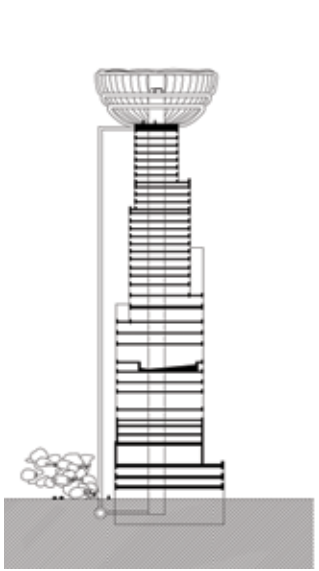
Status quo



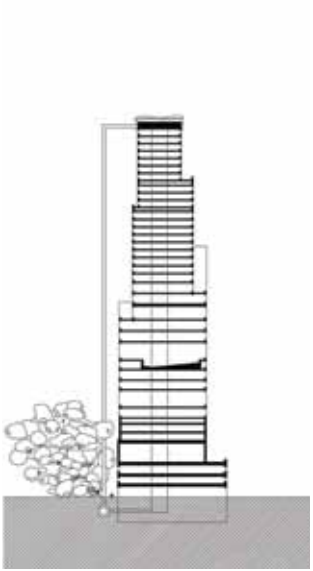
Boom = office space

The scale of time on which the economy changes it's trends can be a matter of days, weeks, or months. The effects of economic change have always a great spatial impact.

We propose a new architecture for New York's skyline, that can adapt to changes in time, making the city malleable to economic change, and preventing it to enter into states of spatial crises.



Recession



Depression = homeless shelters

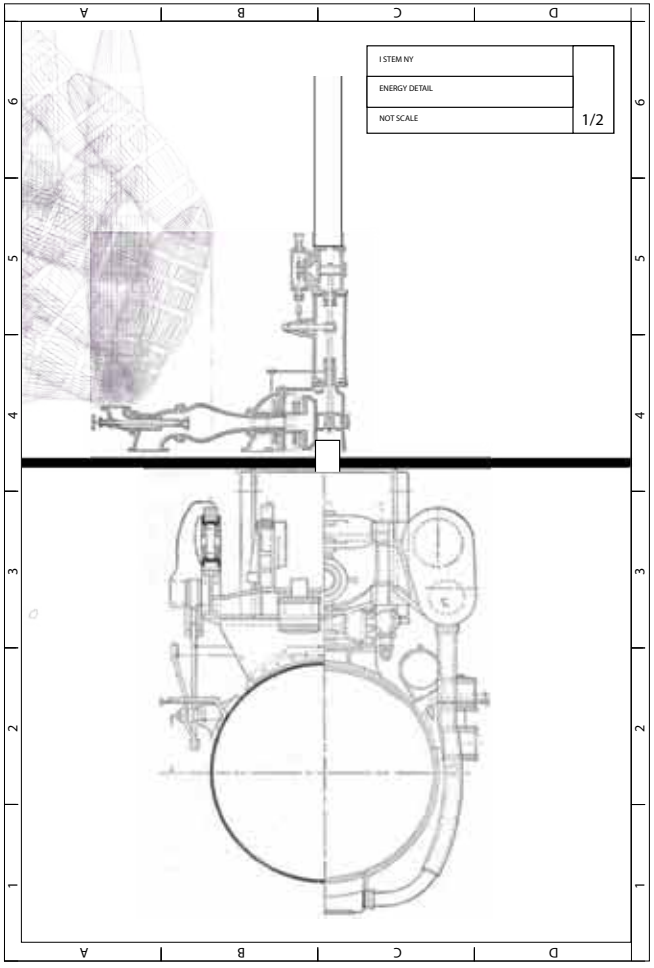
The skyline of New York will reflect its economic situation. A skyline of spheres and towers, the two most efficient ways of spatial reproduction, combined in one go.

These giant spheres can host up till 20 floors and can be inflated floor by floor depending on the economy. The spheres are using steam, a byproduct of the cities energy system, to inflate.

The invention we propose is a really simple one: to hook the existing steam outlets on to two pipes: one for prosperous times and one for financially bad times. The former runs onto the balloons on top of the building, the second is hooked onto a housing system for the street level. A simple switch allows for adjustment to the economy.

Idea: the city shows its economic state and the availability of work is directly visible. Day workers will enter the city and follow the balloons for a job of a month, a day, or maybe even longer. We propose a new horizon for New York City.

In case of bad times, the air is injected to a system of temporary housing, providing shelter for the homeless and the poor, making the downsides of economic crises bearable to the city.



Detail of the switch to accomodate economic adjustments

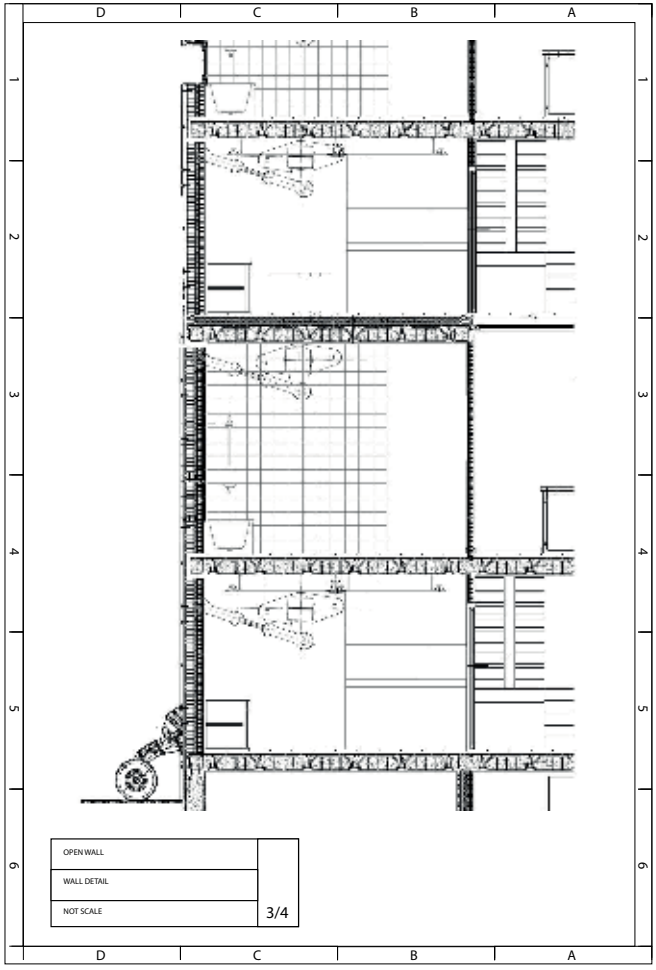
I LIKE STREETS works on the timeline of the demand for public space. Every day, for the period of an hour, a street may be radically transformed into a real public space. We think here of a school that needs a playground for only an hour per day, a gym that has an outdoor yoga class, a restaurant that needs extra space during lunch time, a street rave, a festival, etc.

Four huge movable facades close of the ends of the street to create a 'room'. A mechanically driven system can create a public space out of a street within less than five minutes. A total transformation with minimum effort.

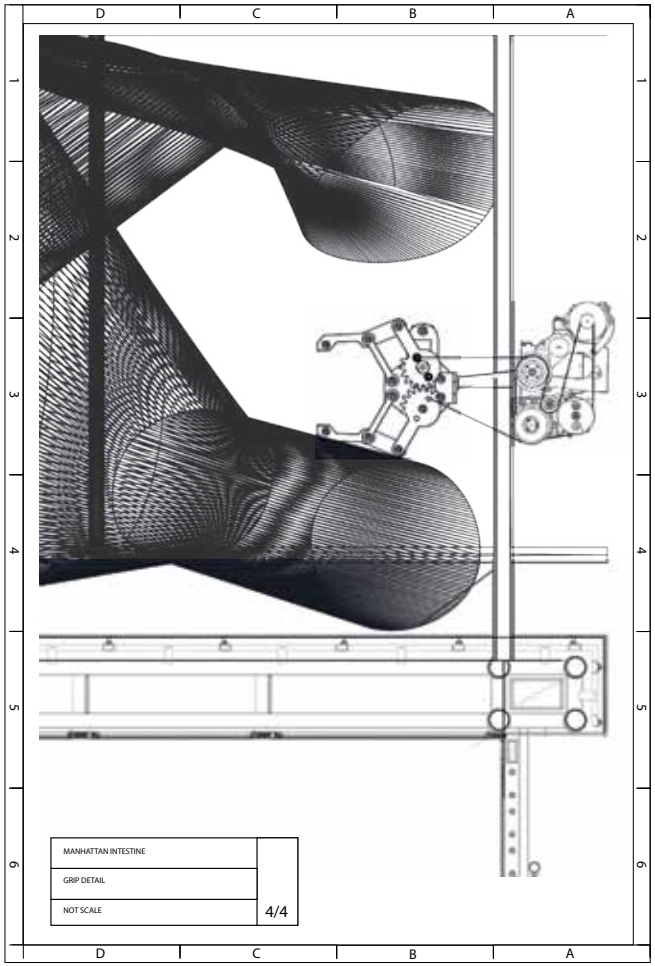
As the doors close traffic is removed from the street, and a public space is introduced, the buildings so to say open up to this public space, which is an intimate space, and one that has no sound pollution of traffic. The social aspects of the street are amplified to their maximum.

Open urban doors

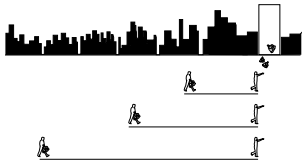
Closed urban doors



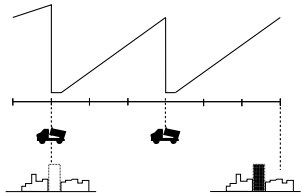
Detail of the urban doors mechanics



Detail of the robotic arm



Perimeter of garbage accumulation



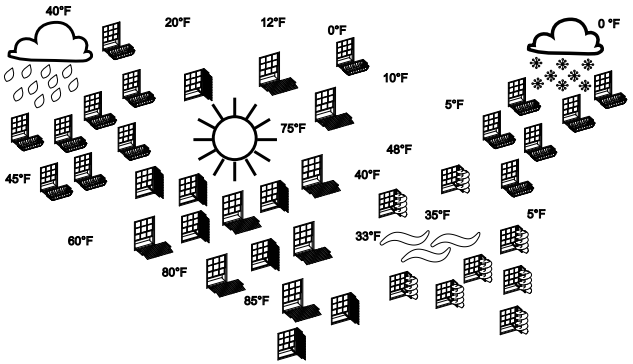
Timeline of garbage accumulation

I LIKE GARBAGE works on the timeline of Manhattan's garbage accumulation. We are proposing to use the local momentary abundance of recyclable materials for a fast architecture, conceived for a number of days.

This is a mapping of the perimeter that is still in walking distance of a hypothetical site. It determines the volume of recyclable materials that can be used for a fast architecture. We propose to use vacant sites for the storage of recyclable garbage. A grid is designed in which this garbage can generate space: a playground, a vertical garden, or other specific additions to the cities timeline.

A robotic arm that can be used to place compressed units of recyclable materials into the grid of a vacant space. The system is a one-time investment, leading to ever changing spaces in direct response to the community's needs. At the end of the week the garbage is picked up and a new structure starts to develop.

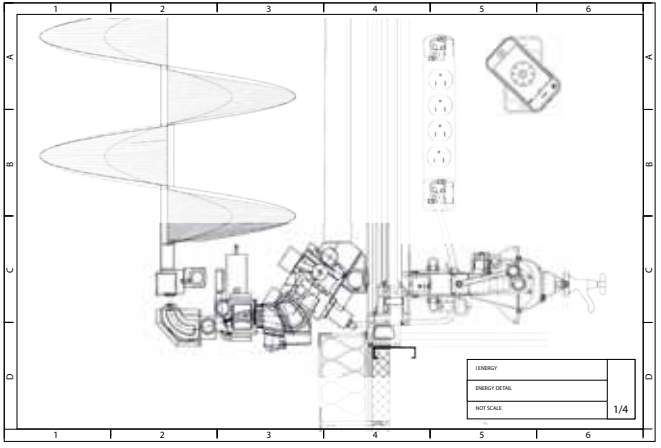
I LIKE WINDOWS works on the timeline of the weather forecast.



Timeline of weather forecast

The city is a consumer using endless kinds of natural resources for its inhabitants. Central to consumerism is identity: without marketing products don't sell.

We propose to combine the city's consumerism with the constant need for identity of its inhabitants. We activate the window as a malleable unit.



Detail of a malleable window

Today, the window is a homogeneous fabric to be found on any architecture, regulated by urban planning laws and conventional esthetics. We propose to open possibilities for the window as an energy harvester and an expression of identity of the individuals that live behind them.

People plug into the window grid and update their preferences. From IPhone, laptop or PC apps tell me what my energy return is and what to expect for the next days. Window status is updatable at all times and so also becomes a mode of expression.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

I like the manifesto,
and I like Manhattan,
I take a position and therefore I am.
We are dedicated to scales of time
we redesign architecture as a means to reconcile space and time
in a culture that is fast.
Every building has a scale in time
an infrastructure lasts longer than a flash mob taking over times square,
and yet we believe they are both a part of architecture.
We reject the notion that architecture is only permanent.
An architecture responding to scales of time
requires a new capacity for the architect: to be fast.

During the archiprix international workshops at MIT in summer 2011, The Malleablists experimented with fast projects. The central question was if a group of architects could make a project, presented in image, scheme, plan, section and detail, within the timeframe of a day or even a quarter of an hour? At MIT, with a team of six architects we did several 15-minute projects, as a performance before an audience. It was all a matter of timing: whilst the manifesto was read out loud, which took exactly 15 minutes, the team was frantically working out a project, of which the audience had randomly determined site and program at the start of the performance.

After the success of the first experiments in fast architecture, the Malleablists are planning to organize fast architecture tournaments at various locations this year. In a television talent show format, multiple teams of architects will be competing for the best fast project. The excitement of the 15 minute limit is further magnified by a moderator commenting the work process, a professional jury giving critical analyses, and an involved audience passing judgment over the projects by vote. Locations and dates for the tournaments will be confirmed at www.themalleablists.org.

COLOPHON

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IMAGE CREDITS

pp. 34-35 All images courtesy and copyright of the artists.

p. 180 Wilhelm Kreis. Bismarck column, near Zehdenick.1899. Source: Hans K.F. Mayer. *Wilhelm Kreis: Architekt in Dieser Zeit.* Essen: W. Classen, 1953.

p.182 (top) Wilhelm Kreis. Design for a cenotaph at Dnjepr. (Exterior and cross-section). Source: Hans Stephan. *Wilhelm Kreis.* Oldenburg: Gerhard Stalling Verlag, 1944.

p. 182 (bottom) Bruno Schmidt. Observation platform of the Völkerschlachtdenkmal.
Source: Volker Rodekamp, editor. *Völkerschlachtdenkmal.* Altenburg: Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, Leipzig, Verlag DZA, 2003.

p.186 Paul Virilio. Atlantic Wall Bunker. Source: Paul Virilio. *Bunker Archaeology*. Translated by George Collins. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.

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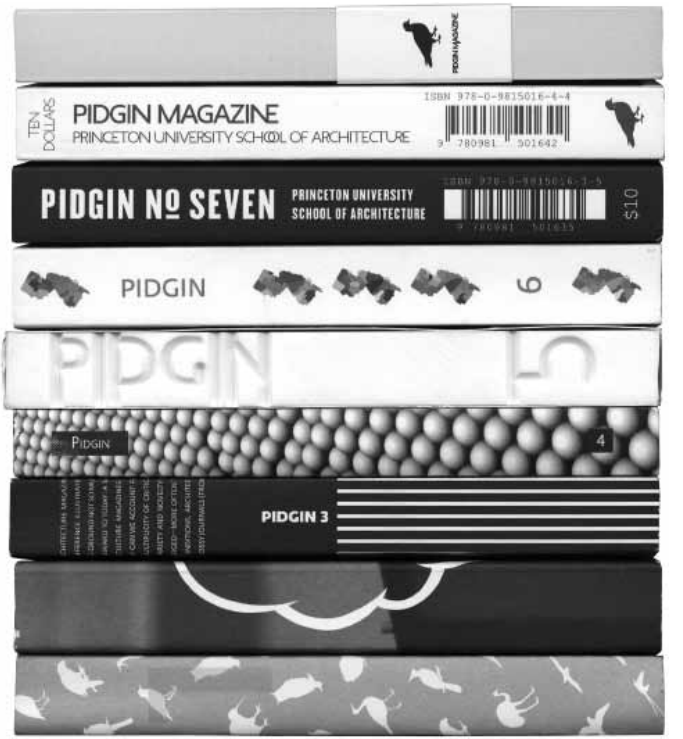
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