

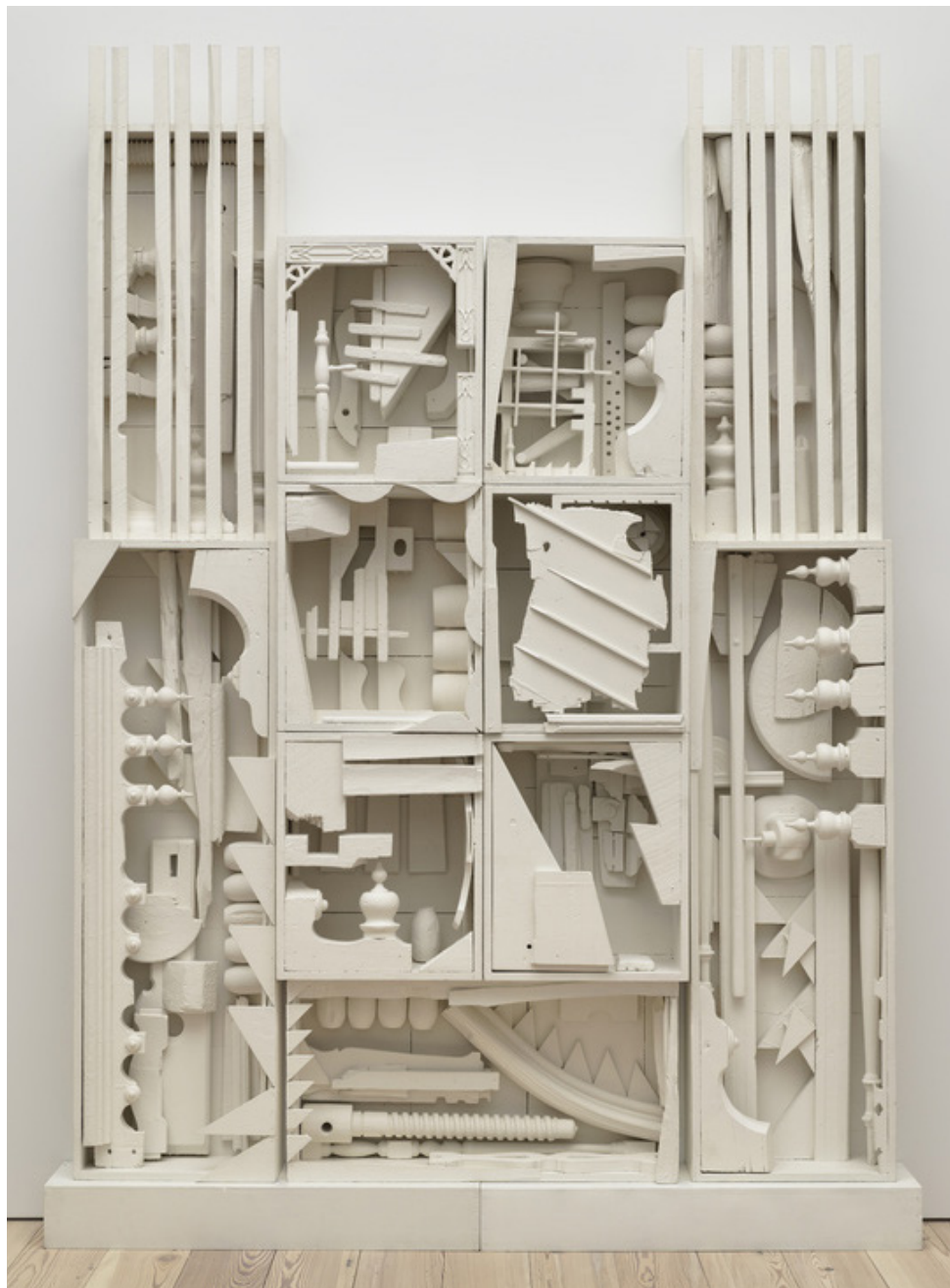
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superfluous studio:

COURTYARDS OF L.A.

instructors: Simeon Brugger & Zeynep Brugger
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www.formerlynotknown.com/teaching

meetings: Wednesdays (see detailed schedule on page 5)
9:00 - 18:00



Dawn's Wedding Chapel II, Louise Nevelson, 1959

1: STUDIO DESCRIPTION

This semester, superfluous studio will investigate Los Angeles' *courtyard housing complex typology* through a drawing based design approach. Students will design a **mixed-use, multi-apartment complex with interlocking courtyard structures** that integrate residential, commercial, and social programs on **Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Los Angeles**, rethinking the relationship between housing, public space, civic infrastructure and privacy levels in a large scale city.

The site highlights an important urban condition in California; reconsideration of previously built environment due to the population growth and density of the built environments in mega cities such as Los Angeles. Buildings get torn down to make way for bigger new developments. Additionally the 2025 wild fires caused a large destruction to buildings but also a disruption to how people move around within and live in the city and has fractured the continuity of the urban fabric, leaving gaps in both community life and physical space. Therefore new mixed-use developments are more and more in demand. To address this, students will be asked to develop a complex that serves residents, office workers, scholars, and the broader public, blending private and communal life within a resilient architectural framework.

The studio draws inspiration from Los Angeles' *dingbat* housing and courtyard complexes, a mid-century multi-family typology (coined by **Reyner Banham**) known for its efficiency and car-centric design, as well as the court complex typology, which has long been a model for dense, community-oriented living. By reinterpreting these precedents, students will explore how hybrid housing models can foster urban vitality, aid in post-disaster housing, and promote new patterns of shared living.

Ultimately, the studio's goal is to establish a **new urban fabric** one that is not only programmatically functional but also **rooted in form-based architectural studies**, ensuring that the evolving identity of Los Angeles is as much about spatial coherence, aesthetics as it is about resilience and livability.

2: COURSE ORGANIZATION & DESIGN PROCESS

This studio will be conducted in **English**, and all projects will be developed in **teams of two students** to encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary exchange. Regular **attendance is mandatory**, as active participation in discussions, critiques, and iterative design development is essential for a successful learning process. The course will be structured around a series of lectures, site analyses, research-driven explorations, and iterative design exercises, culminating in a final presentation that synthesizes conceptual, technical, and formal aspects of the project.

A key infrastructural focus will be ensuring **seamless pedestrian accessibility** while addressing the challenge of rebuilding in a way that

strengthens urban and social continuity. Students must carefully balance public, semi-private, and private domains creating spaces for gathering while preserving residential privacy. The studio's challenge is to **reimagine the site not just as a reconstruction effort but as an opportunity to create a more adaptable urban environment.**

Hybrid drawings will serve as a critical methodology in the design process, allowing students to layer existing conditions with new interventions through an iterative and interdisciplinary approach. These drawings will form the basis for a **2D-to-3D transformation process**, in which students will extract key spatial, material, and structural elements to generate massing strategies. Through physical and digital models, students will explore solid and void spaces, city density and contemporary urban living, developing proposals that balance architectural form with program integration.



Lignes d'été, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, 1942



8150 SUNSET BLVD, LOS ANGELES



3: PROJECT SITE

Located on the Sunset Boulevard, in the neighborhood of Hollywood this semester's architectural design studio focuses on a mixed-use plaza with housing, businesses, and infrastructure designed for the central parts of the city. As the density in such areas get higher in businesses and hospitality the housing rates drop and therefore create a break in the urban fabric, thus creating unsafe pockets within the center of the city for pedestrian use.

This studio challenges students to approach the topic of housing with sensitivity and innovation. How can architecture be a venue for creating more adaptive spaces, both private and public, that can inhabit urban programs and conditions for both the landscape and the people who will inhabit it?