HOSTEL.PDX : LOCAL ARCHITECTURE FOR THE GLOBAL TRAVELER

This studio will encourage students to consider the anonymity of the traveler. In a standard hotel, frequent travelers can find themselves in a space that is so much like other hotels that they forget what city they are in. With the disappearance of the architecture, a sense of place has been replaced with that of non-place. A hostel attempts to give a sense of place by providing space for day to day interactions to occur, a place for learning and sharing, a lodging experience that is as dynamic as the ebb and flow of its visitors.

The hostel mission is to allow travelers to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the world by offering accommodations in various locations that can be booked spontaneously and at low-cost. Hostels may either have shared rooms, dormitories with bunk beds, private rooms or a combination of room types. These establishments are intended for travelers coming from out of town and provide a great way to meet other like-minded people from around the world. Most hostels have shared common spaces where guests can meet and socialize with other travelers. Unlike hotels, hostels may offer amenities such as lockers, self-service kitchens, laundry facilities, vegetable gardens, libraries, or workshops.

The programmatic elements just outlined will provide students with a vehicle with which to explore and develop a concrete architectural approach to the problem at hand - the design of a building that speaks to its context and communicates a clear attitude towards tectonics, materials, sustainability and building organization. The hostel model implies a sense of responsibility towards the environment (they are often bike friendly, expect guests to come on foot, offer limited linen service, etc.) where resources are being conserved and a sustainable approach to design encouraged.

The hostel is a place where the experience is as dependent on fellow travelers as it is on the space being temporarily resided in. There are two components to this experience, and they are both intrinsically related to the architectural solutions the students will develop during the Spring term. First, there are the perceptual aspects of a traveler related to the physical environment (e.g. views, light, relationship with nature, circulation, materials). These elements allow travelers to have a sense of place, a reference point. Secondly, there are the social dynamics that result from the exchange between the travelers sharing the hostel facility. Students in this studio will create a stage for an unknown cast of characters from around the world.
SITE:
The project site is located on the only vacant parcel adjacent to O’Bryant Square in downtown Portland. It is a south-facing site that is easily accessible by public transportation, foot and bicycle. Though centrally located, this stretch of Stark St. is easily overlooked. Each building design will inevitably change this, by contemplating and testing architectural operations that support the program as it relates to its geographic, social and urban context.

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE:
Sebastian Guivernau was born in Santiago, Chile in 1972. He received his Masters of Architecture from Harvard University and Bachelors degree in Economics from the University of Michigan. He currently works as an architect for Portland based Skylab Architecture and is design lead on a number of commercial and branding projects, the most recent being the Nike Camp Victory experience at the 2012 Olympic Trials in Eugene.
Prior to joining Skylab, Mr. Guivernau was a founding principal at COSMARQ Arquitectos in Madrid, Spain, where he designed and built five buildings for the European Space Agency. His body of work includes projects of varied scales, program and geographical locations. He has won competitions in Spain and Finland, and worked in the offices of Rafael Moneo, SOM, Allied Works and Diller Scofidio + Renfro.