Intermediate Unit 8 continues exploring the political implications of working with large urban blocks within the ever-expanding urbanization of Latin American metropolises through their characteristic city grid. This year the unit moves to Santiago de Chile, a prototypical reference to neoliberal urban development for being the first city to suffer the socio-political consequences of the Chicago Boys' economic ideas. Even though Santiago is now shifting towards a more socially committed urban agenda, reflected in a number of public works, the city still relies on independent private entities creating a continuous disconnection between public and private interests within the regular colonial grid. From this paradoxical disconnection, the unit will explore the potential of large urban buildings as “substantial immobilities” within the continuous system of capitalist reproduction performed by the gridded city.

The unit will work on individual design proposals for a 120x120m urban block within Santiago’s regular grid to be share by public and private premises. The structure of the course will revolve around a formal research on this urban block, interrogating spatial, organizational, material and contextual aspects in three interrelated phases.

1. **Material:** Inspired by the richness of Chilean material culture, studies on rough material possibilities will be conducted understanding the expression of its natural state, structural logic and organic morphology at multiples scales.

2. **Form:** Critical studies on Latin-American and European urban block examples will be used to understand formal and spatial organization to be extrapolated as preliminary systems of spatial relations. Diagrams will articulate and structure the programmatic content of the block through successive iterations.

3. **Field:** Research on socio-cultural and economic aspects that will inform the block programmatic brief. This research will be accompanied by a reading of the city through a collection of maps, photographs and video fragments that will be used for filling the block with content.
In Inter Unit 8 we believe that the work of an architect is fundamentally intellectual. This does not mean that architects could not need to master certain techniques in order articulate their own ideas properly, but these techniques have to be subordinated to intellectual and conceptual preoccupations which guide them. Following this principle, Inter Unit 8 proposes as an intermediate year work to define compelling arguments related to socio-political and cultural questions able to give certain guidance to the design work throughout different stages. Regarding this aim the unit work will be phased according to a learning process of different tools and skills to enable to acquire a complex understanding of the mediation between socio-politics, cultural matters and architecture through material investigations.

Specifically this academic year Inter Unit 8 work will be focus on designing a range of proposals for one block in Santiago’s regular grid. Each individual proposal will be supported on rigorous socio-cultural, urban, spatial and material investigations developed through different small briefs distributed along the first two terms. A prolific production of drawings, images, texts and physical tests (models) will be encouraged, but only in relation to a precise and sophisticated individual arguments. During the second and third term proposals will be interrogated according to different concepts and requirements, including those registered during the field trip to Santiago. Finally, at the end of the year, the work will be edited in a vertical A2 portfolio that will prove the ability to consistently relate theoretical enquiries with each block solution and a smaller document summarizing unit trip research.

Workshops and Seminars
Term 1 will include a series of seminars and talks that will cover different theories on fundamental elements to spatially organize blocks, the urban history of Santiago de Chile and ideas on the grid. In the first two terms there will be workshops to learn specific representational and design techniques such as Rhino and Grasshopper.

History and Theory
Students joining Unit 8 should have a strong interest in cultural, urban and architectural theories, aiming to translate this into specific design proposals. Ideas and theories employed in philosophy, literature, art and architecture are considered fundamental for design development, driving the unit work both materially and conceptually. Students are strongly encouraged to combine HTS with their own unit research and to find a common conceptual grounding for both. A series of specific seminars related to the unit interests will be taught by the unit tutors.

Design Portfolio
Students are expected to collect all design material of the year into an vertical A2 portfolio document. A smaller 210x210mm document or a video summarizing the unit trip research will be also demanded. This is intended to work as an on-going process of collection of all sources of investigation/inspiration to be shown the end of the year. Folio checks will occur at the end of each term by unit tutors. The laying out of folios and booklets is seriously considered by the unit as part of the design and communication of ideas process. Students will be expected to master specific software such as In-design and Photoshop for this purpose.

Visits
Specific visits to exemplary blocks in Santiago (Chile) and Madrid (Spain) will be arranged in terms 1 and 2. We will pay particular attention to housing examples in the Spanish capital. After each trip/visits students will elaborate some analytical/reflexive drawings of the architectural examples visited.

Technical Studies
Working with a large urban block the unit suggests focusing TS work on one of these three topics: structures, light and material construction. An option of an integrated TS study with all these three aspects is also possible and has proved to be successful in previous years. In any case TS has to be considered as essential and integral to design process based on a certain material quality that is intended to be built. Technical research should be documented and collated in order to support concepts and build viable technical solutions underpinning the main design project – based on experimentation and research. We will follow TS Option 2 that entails submission in the first week of Term 3. Further information on the TS is given in the Appendix.
## Schedule

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### Tutorials

Mondays or Tuesdays, and Fridays. Any enquire to: interunit8@gmail.com
Schedule will be announced in https://politicsneoliberalblock.wordpress.com

## Unit Tutors

**Francisco Gonzalez de Canales** studied architecture at ETSA Seville, ETSA Barcelona and Harvard University, and worked for Foster+Partners and Rafael Moneo. He is co-director of award-winning office Canales & Lombardero. An active architectural critic, he has previously lectured in England, Chile, Mexico, Spain and the USA, worked as AACP coordinator and collaborated in different architectural publications. Among his recent publications are First Works (AA Books, 2009), with Brett Steele, Experiments with life itself (Actar, 2012), based on his PhD research on the radical domestic self-experimentations of the 1940s and 1950s, and Rafael Moneo: A Theory through Practicing. (Barrie Foundation, 2013).

**Nuria Alvarez Lombardero** studied Architecture and Urbanism at ETSA Madrid and AA. She has worked for Machado & Silvetti Associates in Boston. Since 2003 she co-directs the London-Seville based office Canales & Lombardero. She has previously taught in the University of Cambridge, TEC Monterrey and University of Seville. After working as a researcher in Harvard University, the University of Cambridge and the TEC, she finalized her PhD on the dissolution of boundaries traced by modern urban planning. She is currently writing in La Ciudad Viva magazine and editing the book Arquitectas: Redeining the practice (RU 2014).

## Term 1

### Material I

Weeks 1-3 - SHAPE

As a starting point the unit will explore through 1:250 scale models the shape of a120x120m block. This will be first developed in a purely intuitive manner. Different materials, such as paper, cardboard, cloth, foam, cables, wood and metal sticks, will be initially used to have a range of schematic shapes that will be later used to define formal ideas. Students are invited to feel comfortable with these materials, and learn rules and modeling criteria out of their manipulation. After this initial stage we will experiment with other stiffer materials such as wood, metal, stone and plaster, discovering other intuitive possibilities for block schematic designs. Along this exploratory process students will be exposed to intellectual, artistic and literary references generating a specific unit inspirational atmosphere.

### Reference Books:

**Literature**

**Novels**

- José Donoso: *The obscene bird of Night*, Boston: Verba Mundi, 1995

**Poetry**

- Pablo Neruda: “Towards an impure poetry” (http://www.onierofilms.com/readings/neruda.pdf)

**Arts and Architecture**

- Eduardo Chillida: *Sculptures and works on paper*, London : Annely Juda Fine Art, 1992
Field I

Weeks 4-8 THE SPHERE AND THE LABIRYNTH
As a starting point different examples at various scales of block proposals by different contemporary architects exploring form as a structuring system will be analyzed (Bowles and Wilson, Kenzo Kuma, Christian Kerez, etc.). General aspects driving different building examples spatial organizations, such as free section, voids, light and circulation, will be explored by diagrams to understand their spatial organizations to be later applied to block proposals. Chilean architectural examples (including CEPAL building by Emilio Duhart, Portales Housing by Fernando Castillo et al., the Benedictine chapel by Correa and Guarda and recent Alejandro Aravena and Smiljan Radic work) will be analyzed using different diagrams and axonometric drawings. These examples will be visited during the unit trip.

Reference Books:
Miguel Adrià (ed.): White Mountain : architecture in Chile, Ostfildern : Hatje Cantz, 2013.

Seminar: The Sphere and the Labyrinth

Weeks 9 • ANALYZE SANTIAGO URBAN FABRIC
Before deepening into material aspects of the block the unit should familiarize with the different formal aspects of Santiago.

In groups, the unit will create an archive of drawings in different scales with information about the urban grain, voids, density and urban form. Individually each student will select a block in Santiago urban grid where the proposal will be located.


Weeks 10-11 • FINDING OUT ABOUT SOCIO-CULTURE ASPECTS & WAYS OF LIVING
In this initial approach to our site, students will start exploring Chilean socio-cultural, political and economical aspects and everyday life hidden in Santiago urban grid. The first part will consist in a detailed investigation about the different cultural customs and spatial characteristics where they take place. The reading of texts, reviews of movies and examination of Brazilian artist work will help to elaborate different analytical diagrams.

Week 12 - 10 days - UNIT TRIP TO SANTIAGO DE CHILE

The second part is a reflection on how citizens’ everyday life activities construct politics in this city. The collection of specific information by interviews, photographs, maps, drawings and visits during the unit trip to Santiago will complete the first hypothesis elaborated in London. These are the initial steps for later individually select programmatic framework and location for each block proposal in Santiago colonial grid.

Intermediate Unit 8

Field II
Weeks 1-2 THE GRID

The unit will recapture the first blocks modeled at the beginning of the year and will redefine them after an intense conversation on the implications of inserting them into the urban context, and specifically, within the Santiago grid. The placement of the block in its particular location will bring the context forward as a sharpener of first formal organizations helping the progress with the block design definition. This reflection on the block form will establish a connection between the block and the grid.

Readings
Rosalind Krauss: “Grids”, October, Vol. 9, Summer, 1979, pp. 50-64.

Field II
Weeks 3-7 PROGRAMME

First Term block proposals will be interrogated in terms of program reviewing two main questions.

Programmatic Insertions
The capability of programmatic anchors in specific locations to engage with the city public space will be put into question. The results will be expressed by axonometric drawings, analysis, iterations and scenarios.

Readings
Programmatic Decompositions
First briefs for block proposals established by socio-cultural investigations of Santiago city in the previous term will be further defined. Responding to the conflict generated by private investments and social entrepreneurship in Chilean context the blocks will include two different programmatic parts. Cross-, trans-, de-, un- programming strategies will be deeply explored by students.

Readings

Material I

Weeks 8-11 - RESPONSIVENESS: SKINS AS MEDIATORS
Building on the discussing from the first term, the politics generated by the block envelope will be reassessed through three different questions.

Permeability
Firstly the building envelopes will be explored by questioning how permeable and accessible the blocks are that will define the levels of privacy of block proposals. A key question will be the relationship that the block designs aim to establish with its immediate context and passer-by.

Seminar: Immediate Governance: Doors and Transits

Readings:

Porosity
Each student will provide an efficient system of openings for the skins that is consistent with the political argument being presented. Sections thought the facade explored before in models will determine how porous is the block design as well as the relationship that the envelope establishes between the exterior and the interior of the block.

Seminar: Immediate Governance: Windows


Material II

Weeks 8-11 - RESPONSIVENESS: SKINS AS MEDIATORS

Portability
Each student will provide an efficient system of openings for the skins that is consistent with the political argument being presented. Sections thought the facade explored before in models will determine how porous is the block design as well as the relationship that the envelope establishes between the exterior and the interior of the block.

Seminar: Immediate Governance: Doors and Transits

Readings:

Transparency
Transparency is a fundamental property that defines the politics behind a building design. Projection and reflection are also increasingly important for representational purposes in political activation of building envelopes to engage with public space. The unit will test these three qualities through collages and actual projections on different surfaces in elevation drawings.

Readings:

Reviews

WEEK 9 - TS3 INTERIM JURY OPTION 2 - Third year students will present their work on TS for final refinement and feedback to prepare the final submission.

WEEK 11 - END OF THE TERM JURY (tbc)

WEEK 12 - Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th of March - INTERMEDIATE PREVIEWS/PART 1 - 3rd years
Weeks 1-3 - EXERCISE ON MATERIALITY
Continuing with the explorations of last Term the unit will finally explore through 1:250 scale models the skin of the schematic block proposals. This will be first conducted in an intuitive manner, testing different materials, such as wood, metal, concrete or plastic that will be used to have a range of schematic facade schemes. Throughout this phase, concepts will acquire a more accurate material expression and will reflect on the responsiveness of the block to its immediate environment. As a second part of this exercise, students will construct a specific model detailing part of the envelope.

Reference books
Philip Ursprung: Herzog & de Meuron: Natural history, Montreal, Quebec: Canadain Centre for Architecture; Baden, Lars Muller Publishers, 2002.


Weeks 4-9 - PORTFOLIO
After reviewing the three different components of the block design, the unit will be focused on finding the limits of student’s designs in the third term. This will include a more detailed conception of the internal spaces created, their multilayered variables and sensual perception. All the work will be directed to complete the A2 portfolio that will be weekly reviewed.

Scenarios
Scenarios for the proposal will be presented by employing different types of atmospheric drawings, such as perspectives, sections and rendering stills. These images will include the immediate context of Santiago urban fabric. These scenarios are also an opportunity to work with different building users, interior environments and the impact of circulation main main trajectories.

Drawing Workshop using Autocad, Photoshop and Illustrator softwares, as well as hand drawing techniques.

Finalizing and Presenting
Students will finalize their drawings and mock–ups. Portfolios will include the work produced throughout the entire year and will be organized according to the conceptual arguments discussed during the course. The Intermediate End of the Year Jury will be the last opportunity to present whole year work before the tables. Layout for the Portfolio should be defined with a printed test and models finished for Final Jury. Those documents missing in the portfolios should be produced for the End of the Year reviews.

Reviews
WEEK 1 - Monday 27th April - TS3 FINAL SUBMISSION OPTION 2
WEEK 7 - Wednesday 8th June - 2ND YEAR END OF THE TERM REVIEWS
WEEK 8 - Monday15th and Tuesday 16th June - INTERMEDIATE PART 1 FINAL CHECK
WEEK 9 - Tuesday 23rd of June - AA INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION RIBA PART 1
Friday 26th of June - OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION
Intermediate Unit 8 explores the role of large city block structures in the context of the rapid social and economic changes experimented in Latin-American metropolises. In particular, we are interested in exploring the tension and negotiation between architectural block and city grid, permanence and change, public and private, or in other words, between the stability of governmental policies and the instability of economic processes. This exploration implies a level of sophistication in the possibilities of stability and responsiveness of the block which requires a certain technical resolution.

This year the unit is going to be working in a block proposal that should have a size of 120 by 120 metres in each of its sides inside Santiago grid. This condition suggests the need for a deep exploration of light conditions inside of the block proposals and large span structures. As the unit brief is concerned with material questions, block materiality has a strong potential to be a TS question to be researched too. Therefore the main issues suggested for this year TS work are: light, large span structures and materiality.

Student’s Work
Students’ work for TS has been structured in different stages along the three terms. These stages run parallel to the development of the design. Students will start to define their TS research topic by the first week of the second term, when designs are developed enough and transformation, adaptation, and change is requested according to the unit brief. Once the topic has been proposed and defined, most of the work for the TS will be developed through the term with assistance of the TS tutors. Students will analyze the fundamental aspects of their technical interest, select and analyzed relevant case studies, apply their research to the design development, experiment with different possibilities working with models, mockups and simulations.

ScheduLe
Term 1
Week 10: First meeting with TS tutors to understand the TS work dynamic and development.
Week 11: Special contribution of TS tutors in End of the First term Jury

Term 2
Weeks 1-2: DEFINITION
Coherent definition of the TS theme according to the development of the design deciding between structural innovations or vertical interfaces definition.
Weeks 3-4: COMPREHENSION
Analysis of the fundamental aspects implied and selection and analysis of relevant case studies with the guidance of TS tutors.
Weeks 5-6: EXPERIMENTATION
Experimentation with different possibilities and hypothesis as part of the design exploration in its technical aspects.
Weeks 7-8: APPLICATION
Translation of the acquired knowledge to the reinforcement and development of the unit design.
Weeks 9-10: REVISION
Assimilation of the criticism derived from the interim, improving the necessary aspect for the development of the TS.

Week 9 TS3 INTERIM JURY OPTION 2

Term 3
Week 1: CONCLUSIONS
Gathering of information and clear presentation of the results.

Week 1 TS3 FINAL SUBMISSION OPTION 2
High Pass panel and exhibition

Tutorials
TS tutorials should be established by the academic coordinator with TS tutors. We strongly recommend all students to book in advance and use these tutorials intensively for the development of their designs. These sessions, as indicated from TS Technical Master, are not teaching sessions but an opportunity for the students to be helped to discover the potentials of their projects. One or two sessions with an expert from outside the school will be appointed in the second term according to the students’ needs.

High Pass panel and exhibition
Valérie Vergez: Jorge Oteiza, Angel: Atlantica, 2003
Eduardo Chillida: Sculptures and works on paper, London: Annely Juda Fine Art, 1992

Samuels, Ivor; Panerai, Philippe; Castex, Jean; Depaule, Jean Charles: Urban Forms. The Death and Life of the urban Block. London: Architectural Press, 2014.


Asterios Agkathidis: Modular structures in design and architecture. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers, 2009
Philip Beesley: Hylozoic ground: liminal responsive architecture, Riverside Architectural Press, 2010
Makowski, Z. S.: Steel space structures, Michael Joseph, 1964