

The School strives to be an expanding platform that gives access to intellectual, artistic, and creative inspiration that challenges and supports students in securing their personal and theoretical positions in architecture. The School aspires to be an environment where individuals develop a tenacity to exhibit themselves as they are—architects of the highest caliber and sincerest character—in order to bring their vision into reality.

—— **Hyeree Kwak / M.Arch. I, 2018**

lead

think

create

respond

elicit

direct

critique

build

sleep

—— **Anonymous**

The Yale School of Architecture is founded on the idea that Architecture is necessarily reflective and generative of sociopolitical and cultural space. We train students in recognizing and shaping these rituals, patterns, and forms.

At the Yale School of Architecture, collaboration and interdisciplinarity are not rhetorical appliqué, but foundational principles for the success of a pluralistic and general academic pursuit. We teach a management of the intellectual process of architecture in which complementary bodies of knowledge and a cultivated diverse field of extra-architectural specialists are made accessible for students.

We structure productive freedom, loosening the dogmatic pedagogy and grueling working hours typically associated with Architectural education which has pushed graduates into the workforce, that the economically foolish and self-cannibalizing professional culture of Architecture.

We believe that more freedom for students to think and operate will not only ameliorate some of these issues implicit in professional practice but will produce more thoughtful, inventive, and critically engaged students.

Our school will continue to structure a pluralistic education to generate meaningful discourse today. Amid the shifting professional landscape, our students emerge more innovative and critically engaged with the built environment, with the ability to lead the profession and discipline.
—— **Ian Donaldson / M.Arch. I, 2018**

Among architecture schools, almost all sense of mission languishes in the shadow of Walter Gropius’s 1919 *Bauhaus Manifesto*:

Wollen, erdenken, erschaffen wir gemeinsam den neuen Bau der Zukunft, der alles in einer Gestalt sein wird: Architektur und Plastik und Malerie, der aus Millionen Händen der Handwerker einst gen Himmel steigen wird, als kristallenes Sinnbild eines neuen kommenden Glaubens. [Let us strive for, conceive and create the new building of the future that will unite every discipline, architecture and sculpture and painting, and which will one day rise heavenwards from the million hands of craftsmen as a clear symbol of a new belief to come.] —Translation from: Dugdale, Kyle: “Faith in Architecture (2017).” In: *Cloud-Cuckoo Land*, Issue 36, p. 73-82.

This confidence in interdisciplinary endeavors and the future continues to beat through the profession’s educational apparatus. Ivy League mission statements, in particular, are characterized not just by confidence, but superlatives: normally *highest*—as in “artists of the highest caliber” (Yale School of Art). A few go further, by suggesting they will “recast the boundaries of the discipline” (Columbia GSAPP)—*we are so good, we will redefine what it is to be good*. Why not?

And as Gropius focused on what will come, schools jump to worship the future—none better than the GSD, whose Dean’s Statement begins by quoting Walter Benjamin, “In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it” and ends simply: “The imaginary is the infrastructure of our project. The future begins here.” In this, it exceeds even SCI-Arc, which merely encourages

its members to “take the lead in reimagining the limits of architecture.” Such aims make it difficult—as it has been since Gropius—to parse what sort of building you can expect from their students and faculty. Notre Dame is lonely in this sense, with its awkwardly specific words, “Classical and Vernacular Architecture.”

Unlike Gropius, we live today surrounded by the word *critical*, whether it be “critically focused on answering questions” (MIT), practicing “critical thinking” while developing a “critical mind” (Bartlett), “critical knowledge of the arts” (UCLA), or simply a general emphasis on “Creative, Critical and Contextual Contents” (NUS Singapore).

Being *critical*, it seems, has replaced faith in “the new belief to come.” And gone are Gropius’s “clear symbols.” As are those craftsmen, with their millions of hands.

So avoid superlatives. Avoid critical. No prostration before the zeitgeist. Emphasize our strengths: community, discourse, close connections to the University and the profession, a pluralism of projects, and just a little bit of irreverence. List a few aspirations: diversity, economic inclusivity, maybe even an urban planning department. And perhaps then, we put back in a word for those craftsmen.
—— **Nicolas Kemper / M.Arch. I, 2016**

The Yale School of Architecture is dedicated to struggle and criticality. The School is not dedicated to pluralism, which results in a flattening of each idea, but instead to a respectful friction between disparate

ways of thinking and working. The graduate architectural education is, in our view, meant not only to provide guidance for aspiring practitioners but also a space to test, to fail, and to create bad things in the pursuit of ultimately finding what is important. The strong, traditional focus on studio is replaced by a broader approach to education. Focus is shifted from studio work to seminars that are rarely repeated and often rotated, and are a primary space for faculty to test ideas with students. Beyond being a school, YSoA is here to support the growth of the architectural profession. There is a strong commitment to funding the individual projects and research of current and recently graduated students, emphasizing a belief in the students’ future as both practitioners and leaders who can expand architecture beyond its current limited and rigid framework. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the School is dedicated to the affordability and accessibility of these opportunities.
—— **Anonymous**

The Yale School of Architecture is a community of architects based in New Haven, Connecticut. Our mission is to advance architecture and spatial thinking as a powerful language and way of knowing the world. We train our students to be articulate designers, politically engaged community members, strong collaborators, and sensitive practitioners.

We work at the corner of Chapel and York Streets, but we consider ourselves a part of the broader city. We are energized by our surroundings and we recognize that as producers, designers, and agents of space, we have a responsibility for our impact on

the world. With the increasing pressure to address complex issues on a global scale, our response as a school is not to cast our net far and wide but rather to focus our lens on the places we already inhabit. We confront questions of growing inequality, environmental crises, and political instability by engaging our own context: on campus, on the street, in a city, in a region.

To support that project, we continuously reflect on our inherited canon. We look into other corners of our history to reveal roads not taken, and we fold in other forms of intelligence that help us to reframe the role of architecture in the world. Lastly, we confirm that the future of architecture will not be sustained by individual authors but by teams of collaborators willing to share and exchange ideas. And so we invite our faculty and our students to question professional boundaries with full faith that if we forgo our ambition of “expertise,” we can envision new ways of working in and thinking about the built and unbuilt environments.
—— **Maggie Tsang / M.Arch. I, 2017**

Compassionate, humane spaces must be designed. As such, the Yale School of Architecture’s primary mission is the intellectual and moral development of its pupils. This goal necessitates that we expose our students to a variety of subjects both inside and outside of the traditional realm of architecture, so that we may cultivate a profession that is not only critical of itself, but of the widely accepted state of spatial inequality seen in the world today.
—— **Ethan Zisson / M.Arch. I, 2019**

of communication between the administration and the student body at large. What is on the horizon for the Yale School of Architecture ought to be equally determined by a bottom-up as well as a top-down approach. In fact, top and bottom, students and administration, may be an altogether insufficient way of looking at a graduate, professional school, full of adults committing their time and finances to pursuing an advanced degree. YSoA has been and will remain a destination for leaders, and increased student agency is the single most important way the School, at large, can facilitate this. So what *is* on the horizon for the Yale School of Architecture? That is a question to be answered by all of us.

—— **Brian Cash / M.Arch. I, 2019 & Luke Studebaker / M.Arch. I, 2019**

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What’s on the horizon?

This summer, Dean Berke convened a series of faculty retreats, the first to occur since the earliest days of Robert A.M. Stern’s deanship. According to those present, the faculty wrestled with issues such as the future of architectural education, diversity, funding, and the future of the School under the leadership of a new dean. At the most recent meeting, faculty were divided into curricular subgroups. In these groups, they were tasked with drafting mission statements for YSoA.

Unlike many of its peer graduate and professional schools within Yale University, YSoA’s closest document to a mission statement is a lengthy combination of the Letter from the Dean and the School’s History & Objectives webpage. At the retreat, faculty came up with several different versions of a mission statement, but ultimately grappled with

whether a singular statement goes against YSoA’s pluralist identity. With this idea of pluralism in mind, we as editors set out to see what a mission statement would look like if it were penned by the School’s students. We therefore solicited our peers to draft mission statements for the Yale School of Architecture. The responses, we hope, might productively broaden the ongoing conversation about the future direction of our School. Regardless of whether the creation of a mission statement is the best way to shape the School’s future, this discussion—like many others within the walls of Rudolph Hall—needs more substantial input from students.

The following collection of responses is an exercise in the sort of student participation we would like to see more frequently in the School. The question we would

like to pose to the YSoA community is: how could decisions that impact students be made with more direct student engagement? Other than post-semester course evaluations—which, unlike many schools in this University, are not made available to students, and which instructors are not required to read—how are students’ voices integrated in a real-time, accountable way?

To state it directly, why don’t students have a seat at the table in faculty meetings?

A faculty retreat is a great first step, and one that will have subsequent actions. In addition to finding ways to make the Yale School of Architecture more financially accessible to all, for example, faculty should be working with students to create a direct line

Design and its role have fundamentally changed

through modes of propagation that are much

greater than design itself: media platforms and

alternative realities. As a profession, we do not yet

have apparent answers or instructions for where

we are heading and how design can reintegrate

and reinvent itself within a much larger context. As

a result, do as you wish and pursue your forever-

evolving design ideologies at the Yale School of

Architecture. Do it at your own intensity and explore

plausible scenarios with rigor. Both the School

and Yale University provide and support students

with abundant resources, while challenging and

questioning the process of formulating ideas in an

interdisciplinary manner. Ultimately, your time at Yale

is about incubating as a designer. The Yale School of

Architecture strives to provide a safe haven for your

expedition to discover your physical, social, political,

theoretical, and psychological constitution in design.

It is only in the cumulative efforts of individuals that

we can attempt to create the world of "now" and of

the "future" as a design profession.

—— **Jennifer Lai / M.Arch. I, 2019**

As a prime institution in educating a new generation

of creative leaders, the Yale School of Architecture

will critique, provoke, and speculate on the future

by: (1) Honoring our past, those who came before,

and the wisdom they imparted on us; (2) Tirelessly

pursuing the advancement of knowledge in academia

and practice to inspire and educate; (3) Collaborating

to improve the quality of life globally by tackling the

issues and threats to our environment, both man-

made and natural, physical and metaphysical

—— **Mengi Li / M.Arch. I, 2019**

The mission of the Yale School of Architecture is

to foster creativity in pursuit of professionalism. To

engage both the left and the right brain and offer

programs in imagination and intellect, innovation

and pragmatism. To provide a broad and informed

understanding of architecture and its related

disciplines. To prepare students for analytical

problem solving toward the creation of thoughtful

solutions for the built environment. And finally,

to provide students with the professional tools

necessary to sustain successful work in the practice

of architecture.

—— **Margaret Marsh / M.Arch. I, 2018**

May the mission statement aim at changing the

culture of architecture school through financial aid

endeavors and the balance of work and life. Simple

things like studio expenditures versus budgeting

for food are walls for potential students who are

interested in pursuing architecture, which enforce the

image of a "gentleman's profession." Apprenticeship

programs and job searches should be talked

about more when thinking about investing in one's

education and job planning in the profession.

—— **Abena Bona / M.Arch. I, 2018**

The mission of the Yale School of Architecture is

to further the agency and integrity of architecture

through rigorous training in design and critically

engaging the discipline's intellectual discourse.

We seek opportunities to expand students'

understanding of architecture's role in society

while at the same time defending the theoretical and

practical domains to which architects can, or should,

claim the greatest ownership. We believe thoughtful

environment to society's evolving conditions

and needs. We continue to ask how as architects

we can better serve our clients, our communities,

future generations that will inherit the conditions

we construct, and those whom architecture has

historically failed to adequately serve.

—— **Darryl Weimer / M.Arch. I, 2020**

The intention of the Yale School of Architecture is to

provide an even more ambiguous statement about

stimulating artistic sensitivity and creative powers,

strengthening intellectual growth, and helping

students acquire the individual capabilities necessary

for the practice. Intentions that could apply to any

professional school, no questions asked. The School

does not impose one single design philosophy yet

does not necessitate one either. Claiming a pluralist,

as it could ever be. The pedagogy of the place is

in a hazy spot with claims of robots replacing the

profession altogether. And instilling a "responsible

practice" ethic does not necessarily resonate with

everyone equally.

A clear definition of what is right and wrong in

architecture could be a place to start.

—— **Azza Aboualam / M.Arch. I, 2018**

The practice of architecture is a way of seeing,

thinking, and understanding the world around us.

Architects have the ability to question, provoke,

challenge, create, and ultimately shape our everyday

environment unlike any other discipline. The

architect is about more than making the building:

the architect is now, more than ever, the problem-

solver. The Yale School of Architecture educates

future leaders and thinkers of the profession in

order to constantly challenge the role of architects

in our communities. We believe in a pluralistic

approach within our educational program. We foster

diverse modes of thinking and encourage a broad

range of individual exploration and expression.

Through collective discussion of theoretical, visual,

and technological conditions, we aim to push the

profession forward in order to shape a better world.

—— **Nadeen Safa / M.Arch. II, 2018**

At the Yale School of Architecture, our mission is to

enable our students to explore the facilities needed

to develop a more equitable, inspiring, and socially

reflective built environment.

—— **Jeremy Jacinth / M.Arch. II, 2018**

Architecture maintains a unique and pivotal position

within society and is held to a wide range of

responsibilities. It is considered both a profession

of technical expertise and an art form deeply rooted

in imaginative thinking. It is largely fueled by private

capital yet it is responsible for shaping the world we

all share. As such, architecture becomes a highly

political and extremely powerful tool—its theories

can vary infinitely, while its execution is felt globally.

The Yale School of Architecture is a testing ground

for these theories, a place where any idea will

be heard, but also scrutinized. In an increasingly

complex world, it is counterproductive for architecture

to be dominated by a single school of thought. Yale

maintains its pluralist approach as a guarantee that

will thrive within its walls, and that its graduates will

embody that approach outwardly.

—— **Timon Coveill / M.Arch. I, 2018**

The mission of the Yale School of Architecture is

to train the next generation of design practitioners,

academics, leaders in public and private sectors,

and other parties interested in the success of

our built environments and the urban world. The

ongoing global crises of social and environmental

convention—and must do so responsibly. As even

the minutia of design impact the success of the built

environment, a sustained dialogue between students

and faculty is imperative. In providing students

interdisciplinary collaborations, we are nurturing

imaginative ideas that will perpetuate a new, more

inclusive future for all. Rudolph Hall provides an

arena for healthy debate, dialogue, and exchange

approaches towards the technical, cultural, and

systemic matters of building in the 21st century.

—— **Colin Sutherland / M.Arch. I, 2019**

The Yale School of Architecture operates under

of lively debate, critical insight, and leadership in

practice and discourse.

—— **Amanda Iglesias / M.Arch. I, 2018**

To educate aspiring leaders in architecture and

design through excellence, research, and creativity.

—— **Rashid Muydinov / M.Arch. I, 2018**

The mission of the Yale School of Architecture is

to nurture individuals with integrity who have faith

in their intuition and hold distinct capabilities to

visualize, materialize, and speak of their imagination.

—— **Fran X. / M.Arch. I, 2018**

uncertainties of the "real world."

that forces an architect's principal structure to be

adaptable. Therefore, we must foster curiosity,

skepticism, and an understanding of pluralism

within our students that better prepares them for the

Lux et Veritas