

# CARMODY GROARKE

## An incomplete performance

Instructors:  
Andy Groarke  
Kevin Carmody

Option Studio 1326, Spring 2023  
Harvard University - Graduate School of Design

## An incomplete performance

Our option studio will explore the double meaning of performance – working between the short-lived act of theatrical performance, and the environmental performance of long-lasting buildings.

In the context of the accelerating climate crisis, the buildings we design are accountable to increasing performance standards to reduce their energy consumption during use. Yet, the demolition of our existing building stock for new energy efficient buildings, fails to acknowledge the huge amount of energy expended in the extraction of materials from the landscape and their construction.

If we consider that 80% of the buildings that will exist in 2050 have already been built, we must value all our existing built environment as a heavily invested ‘carbon bank’ to be retained, reused and reinvented. This options studio will therefore explore the possibilities of extending the lifespan of everyday buildings for as long as possible, by transforming them with new uses.

To do this, we will learn from theatrical performance space architecture. Performance space is by its very nature, makeshift and provisional; and we are inspired by its capacity for constant reinvention to host new events and remain relevant. Through improvisation, artists, companies, and directors exploit overlooked and undervalued spaces and creatively transform them in unselfconscious and imaginative ways. We are interested in the “energy transfer” within these spaces that connects the energy of artists with audiences, and back out to the wider city.



Tino Sehgal's Tate Modern installation 'These Associations', 2012



Teatro Oficina, Lina Bo Bardi and Edson Elito, São Paulo.

## An Incomplete Performance

lifespan. We will consider the urban fabric of Boston as a contemporary mine for rehabilitating structures, spaces, and materials.

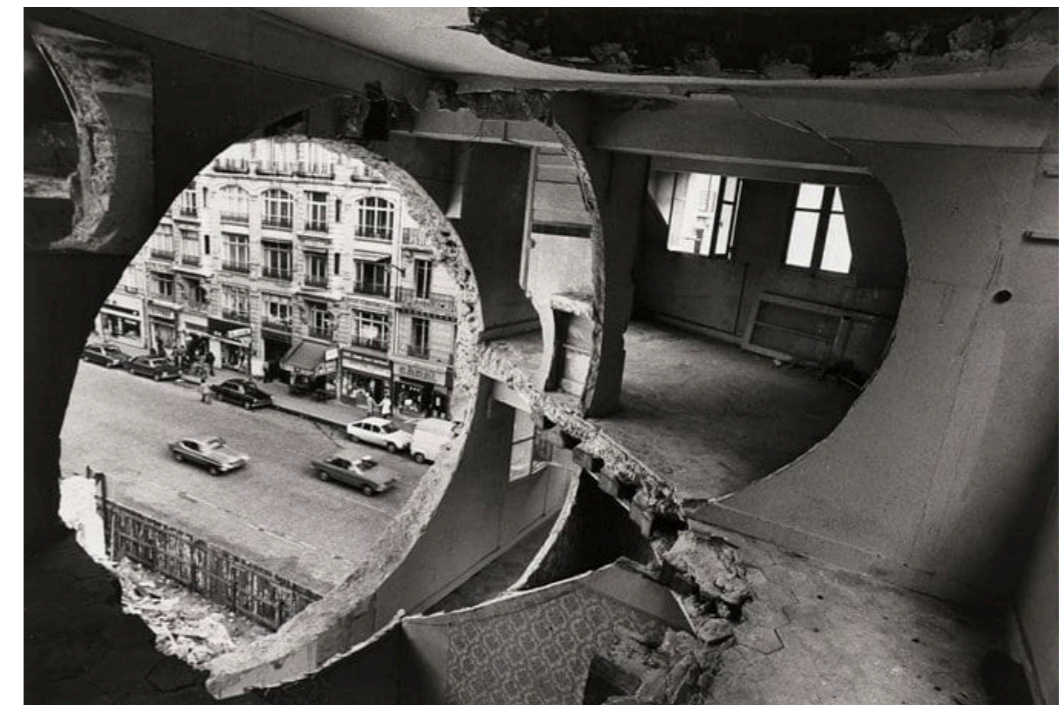
We will see the process of architectural transformation as deliberately open-ended, extending the wider possibilities for continuity of city life and its energy, without the prospect of construction costing the earth.



The Young Vic, Bill Howell and Frank Dunlop, 1970, London.

Our option studio will transform overlooked existing buildings in central Boston with short lifespan architecture for the performing arts.

We will focus on the ordinary and overlooked buildings of the city – those that do not have heritage or nostalgic status to protect their futures – and imagine ways in which these buildings can be transformed for new uses that were not originally intended, in order to extend their



Conical Intersect, Gordon Matta Clark, 1975.