Refugee Housing in Portland – Regenerative Design

RE-GENERATIVE DESIGN: In this fall's re-generative studio we will look at refugee housing the US and try to find solutions to housing and integration including live-work. Re-Generative Design in this context means first of all to renew the life of refugees who went through hardships and need support and recovery, but it also means to renew the life of the city.

THE LARGER PROBLEM: The United Nations estimates that there are about 250 million migrants in the world and 65 million refugees. This means that one in every 113 people alive today are now displaced by war, violence, and persecution, and the severity of the situation only continues to increase. In Europe and in the US, migration issues are divisive and at the fore of public debate and protest. How the world responds to this global crisis will arguably impact the trajectory of peace and well-being on this planet for generations to come.

ARRIVAL CITY AND DAILY LIFE: In this studio we will look at this difficult situation from the point of view of daily life in the arrival city. The concept of the ‘arrival city’ is based on a book by the Canadian journalist Doug Saunders, in which parts of cities can play an important role in welcoming migrants and refugees, and help them to assimilate into cultures they are not familiar with. The studio will involve the design of prototypical housing, some of it combined with workplaces, and common facilities for refugees after a year or two of arrival, when they have begun to assimilate in the new place.

The site will be in Portland, in a place suitable for residential uses and support functions. We will work together with Professor Davis’ studio that specifically deals with living and working in the city.

The program will include several components:
- housing for refugees who have made a decision to stay, and for others who may be longer-term residents of the city
- a few workplaces on the same site, or connected to the dwellings, providing a means for people to start and operate their own small businesses
- common facilities that aid in the process of arrival and assimilation.
- Inclusion of host country families and people who might help with support and integration

The number of housing units for families and communal housing for singles will likely be about 30-40 in total, but this may change somewhat when a site is chosen.

STUDIO: The studio will accentuate several issues: the use and transformation of housing/site typologies, based on historic and modern precedents, that are suitable to the program/site; the particular circumstances of forced migrants, their vulnerabilities, their economic needs, their aspirations and dreams, and their relationships both to their home country and their new country; finally, the material/construction development of dwellings—including space, light, materials and details—that can support people’s lives in humane ways, are relevant for the refugee housing design.

The studio will be conducted in a penetrating and professional way, including weekly pinups and clearly defined goals, integrating design and research. A range of scales and modes of representation will be part of the ongoing studio design.

NOTES: Students will visit the site in Portland early in the quarter, possibly Friday October 5. During this visit in Portland we will also have a common meeting with students from our exchange University Meiji in Tokyo. Students will have an opportunity to visit the ‘PUARL 10 Year Anniversary Conference’ that deals with issues of migration, refugees, housing and living, October 26-28. ([https://refugee.uoregon.edu](https://refugee.uoregon.edu))

A migrant urban and housing project is also planned for the Rome Summer Program 2019, that students can join. The Lyceum Competition will be open for participation during the fall 2018 the and the winter quarter 2019.