Topic

The design of our home shapes our activities, our relationships and our habitual behaviors. Apartment plans describe the nature of human relationships, since their inert (walls, floors and roofs) as well as their interactive parts (doors, windows, closets) first divide and then selectively reconnect inhabited space. As we continue to work with these traditional building elements we also ask: do the digitally enabled interactive technologies, current or foreseeable, have the potential to substantially transform our home? What if furniture and partitions could be effortlessly rearranged to respond to weather and occasion, enabling different patterns of use of the same apartment? What if high-rise apartments incorporated infrastructure that facilitates the growing of plants not only on balconies but also in the interior, so that one could live in a garden? What if it was possible for apartment to expand or contract within the framework of the building structure and floor plate? What if the most intimate and private spaces of the home could move so as to allow variable relationships between the primary rooms that they serve? What if the apartment could be adjusted to different patterns of movement and creative work, including, a special occasion, a performance or to foster social engagement? What if domestic surfaces could be used to transform the chemistry of human relationships by integrating hitherto separate activities such as cooking, watching video or reading, and what if this was done to support richer conversations and multiple patterns of collaboration? What if each apartment supported both conviviality and retreat, expansion and compression? What if the distinction between storage and display was challenged so that memory and identity could be curated?

Format and aims

Projects will be developed by collaborative teams of architects and industrial designers. Work will be organized to include periods of collaboration and periods of parallel development of the architectural and industrial design aspects of each project. By mid semester, all teams will have developed physical and/or operational models at appropriate scales, to demonstrate the design concept and the interactions between people, the architecture, the furniture and the technologies proposed. At the end of the semester the key features of each project will be presented in a 3-4 minutes video, incorporating drawings, models, live recordings and voice over as appropriate.