

## **Works in the Works Talk**

### **Talk's review of Jason Montgomery**

“Applications of Place-based Learning: Virtual and In-Person Explorations of the Impact of Urban Structure on Diversity and Social Integration”

Last Thursday, Prof. Jason Montgomery from the Department of Architectural Technology shared his research and teaching on the subject of public housing. “Applications of Place-based Learning: Virtual and In-Person Explorations of the Impact of Urban Structure on Diversity and Social Integration” was—perhaps appropriately—conducted in a Zoom room with faculty attendees from across the college. As Prof. Montgomery stated at the start of his talk, his research in the areas of housing development and architecture intersects with his teaching in the interdisciplinary course Learning Places: Understanding the City, where his students engage in place-based learning.

First, Prof. Montgomery provided an overview of funding and design of NYCHA housing in New York City over the past century, in particular how architectural planning from mid-20th century created conditions that deepened segregation and inequality. The cookie cutter design of “tower campuses” has isolated residents from networks of streets, public spaces and diverse commercial and residential sectors. More recently, government disinvestment in housing for working class and poor citizens has caused a strategic shift in funding. The current INFILL program provides tax incentives to private developers to build middle- and low-income housing. However, it has resulted in similar social stratification, leaving out the voices of community advocates and residents from affected communities. On the positive side, a handful of nonprofits have underwritten successful projects that are both integrative and diverse.

From here, Prof. Montgomery discussed how he uses place-based activities with his students to analyze the community structures of recent developments, like the Brooklyn Navy Yards. Students engage in observation and image/data collection, and then summarize their findings on street and public transportation accessibility, integration of commercial and residential architectures, environmental impacts, and overall livability. More recently, due to the COVID pandemic, Prof. Montgomery has developed virtual pedagogies using Google Maps, Google Earth, and digitized historical maps to explore place in his course. His topics and course materials ignited a lively question and answer session that expanded into a discussion about racial and financial inequalities in the city.

The Humanities Department thanks Prof. Montgomery for his excellent presentation, which engaged the audience in the intrinsic interdisciplinarity of architecture technology: creative and intellectual, academic and practical, personal and social, technological and human.

Prof. Montgomery shared links to related conference presentations:

<https://prezi.com/view/QRgFQd3nizf8kMbg3qGB/> and <https://prezi.com/view/hj8nokhxzynaPnMIWgIP/>

Here is Prof. Montgomery's current LIB/ARCH 2205 course on OpenLab, co-taught with Susan Phillips:  
<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/groups/lib2205id-learning-places-fa2020/>

C. Swift, PhD

Associate Professor of Theatre