



STUDIO BIBLIO

Graduate Design Studio M1 + M2 Design Thesis

Field Trip > [LONDON](#) (Oct 18-27)

[Ted Landrum](#) – F2019/W2020

[Lisa Landrum](#) – W2020

(Lisa is on research leave this Fall, and will join us in January)

“The ideal library symbolizes everything a society stands for”
— Alberto Manguel

“The world is a library”
— Robert Wilson

“the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future”
— Jacques Derrida

“whatever its dimension, the Library is infinite”
— Roland Barthes

*“If architecture provides anything at all,
it is a platform for enquiry”*
— Douglas Darden

Studio Biblio will explore the regenerative architecture of Public Libraries. Students will tour libraries, study programs and precedents, perform creative and analytic research, read, write, draw, make, think, collaborate, provoke and inspire – all the while devising and reading places that are equally public, private, playful and profound. Around the world, there has been a [resurgence of new libraries](#) and exciting new [library renovations](#), sparked in part by the rebirth of the [Alexandria Library](#) in 2001.

Libraries are ancient, but they’ve always been concerned with [the future](#), as much as the present and past. The oldest known library was built in the 7C BCE by Ashurbanipal, an Assyrian King. As leader, reader and scribe, he had the need and desire for knowledge of multitudinous things: prosaic accounts, legal records and receipts; magical spells foretelling the future; and epic poetry conveying timeless wisdom. The [Epic of Gilgamesh](#) was already thousands of years old when Ashurbanipal’s scribes pressed its story into clay, but it remains today as utterly fascinating and movingly relevant as ever.

For millennia, libraries—genuine treasure-houses of knowledge—have also served as expressions of wealth, power and prestige, being linked to palaces, law courts, monasteries and schools, but they have increasingly become civic [Palaces of the People](#), more akin to covered markets and public squares. Helsinki’s new [Oodi](#) Library allocates the majority of its space, not to books, but to community services enabling public participation and access to resources. The “free public library” as an open civic institution, only became possible with the proliferation of printing presses, but it sprang from social, cultural and historic processes giving rise to widespread literacy, to modern urban life, and to the basic human desire for discourse and participation.

“There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library”
— Andrew Carnegie

“...it functions as a kind of cultural refuge in the city.”
— Toyo Ito, on [Sendai Mediatheque](#)

Like [“maker spaces”](#) embedded in libraries, design studios are shared places of productive study, where constructive acts of reading, writing, drawing, and making are performed, expanding our capacity to read architecture and to transform places. In **Studio Biblio** we’ll read books, yes, and we’ll visit libraries—physically and online—but our true enquiry is the meaningful agency of architecture. What is architecture!? Maybe architecture is an open pop-up book. A surprising story, never ceasing to unfold as long as we continue interpreting what together we have made, and inhabit: be they book blocks, city blocks, networks or towers.

Students in **Studio Biblio** will ultimately design multistory libraries, with a mix of civic and cultural amenities, for sites in, around or between Winnipeg’s storied Exchange Districts. We will begin by *reading places* (and texts) *in situ*, treating the *city as a library* and an open pop-up book. Students will transform their personal explorations into opportunities for meaningful public engagement in the form of micro-libraries and pop-up interpretive centers. Students will enter their proposals in the 2019 RAIC Student/Intern [Design Competition](#) on the Architecture of Public Engagement.

In October students will travel to London, England, to see the [British Library](#), [RIBA](#) & A-A Libraries, the [Tate Modern](#), Soane Museum, Design Museum, Globe theatre, the [Barbican](#), and other inspiring sites. Returning from this research trip students will invent their own libraries, producing a comprehensive program document, to guide their developing design in the Fall and Winter Terms.

Images: (top) Chongqing Zhongshuge Bookstore; (right, 1): René Magritte, *The Subjugated Reader* 1928; 2) Story Pod, Akb 2015; 3) David Penner, Little Red Library, Winnipeg 2014; 4) Daniel Libeskind [Reading Machines](#), Venice Biennale 1985;

5) Allan Wexler *Field Office Bookmobile*, Buffalo NY 2019; 6) [mecanoo, T.U. Delft Library](#), Netherlands 1997.

