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Title: **About Face**

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the invention of reinforced concrete and the cantilevered floor slab, the connection between facade and interior was largely severed. Le Corbusier's Dom Ino diagram and the "free facade" instigated a crisis in what had otherwise been for the Beaux Arts a logical conclusion to the procedure of architectural composition. Yet in the academy as in practice, the design of the facade is rarely given the time it requires, and it is only considered after the plan and section have been resolved.

Often, under cover of the concept of "views," architects default to no facade at all and clad buildings entirely in glass. At the same time, as we face the climate crisis, not only is reinforced concrete problematic on many levels, but there is also a pressing need to bring opaque surfaces back to the facade. Facades must be load bearing again, but the load is an insulative one.

Contrary to its easy sounding name, the free facade actually requires much more compositional work. Facades are not only totally arbitrary and subjective but are also the most immediately visible aspect of the building in the city. We will try to address that freedom by making facades the starting point of our design. Designing from the outside-in necessarily requires explorations in *composition*, an anachronistic word in architectural discourse that we will try to define.

Make no mistake, this studio is necessarily technical: we will take an aggressive approach to window wall ratio, building form and envelope design as a way to address building energy performance and the embodied energy of materials. But more importantly this studio is aesthetic: we will foreground the compositional design of the building's facade, what our buildings look like, as our most important activity. We will be leaning heavily on our mood boards and favourite aesthetics, offloading our first steps outside of ourselves into the realm of ready made precedents, hybridity, indeterminacy, and possibly artificial intelligence.