



SAYING NO TO WHAT

The Baklava Studio Unit respects the laws, conditions and professional guidelines set out by the city of Ottawa's municipal planning practices and its other guiding body the National Capital Commission. But only so far! To offer a vision that is not already predicated on these guidelines and practices – often bewilderingly restrictive – we have released ourselves from these rules. We know of course that as soon as the students leave a school like this usually many of them face more, and more professional rules and requirements. Are we to ready them for such strait-jackets? So here for a short time in the life of a 4th year student (about to graduate) we say 'pfui' to laws, bylaws, zoning guidelines and the creep of small-world planning. There is a parallel world out there in Ottawa and – along with espresso coffee and baklava - we seek it. We celebrate the not-so-impossible Vanier 2030. Adieu, we say to an Ottawa of such small potatoes and predictable, uncurious developments. Hello to unpredictability and the excellence of incremental urbanism, the running delights of the unknown.

Hyperbolic Urbanism
You're So Vanier 2

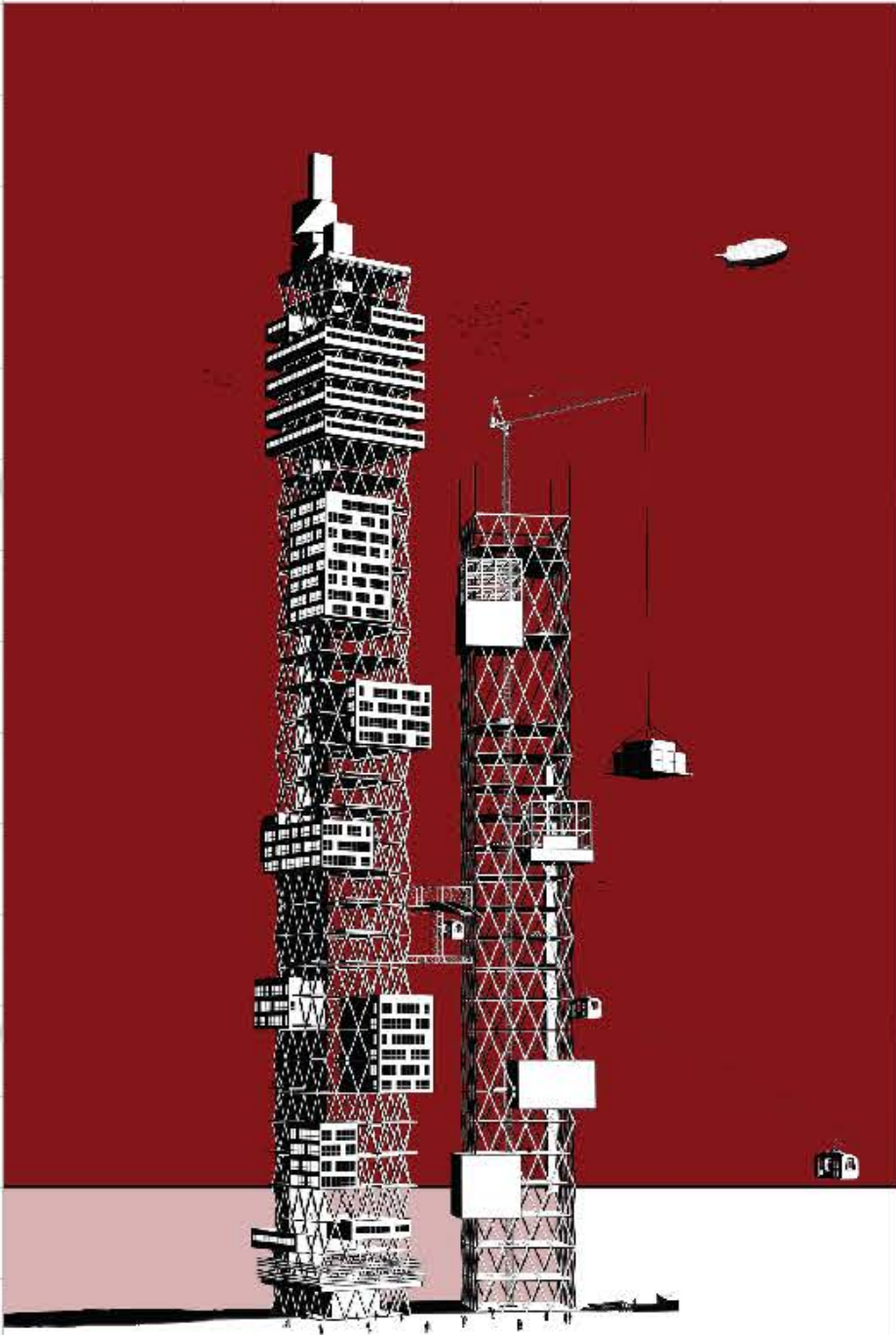
Ottawa: You're so Vanier presents a series of ideas, an urban framework of strategies. Hyperbolic, relevant, incomplete and sometimes even brilliantly flawed, all these ideas ask one thing: where is the future of this city that we call Vanier? Hyperbolic Urbanism asks questions before questions have arisen. This methodology uses a seeming extremity to situate and reveal the limits of the existing. The existing in this case in the city of Ottawa are its bylaws, zoning regulations, guidelines and other steering mechanisms for the future City. In four separate framing groups the students were encouraged to stay real in the unreal, to extend beyond the accepted city regulations, to draw, invent and create a parallel world. Vanier could become a city in the city, it might double its population yet we are being told by developers, politicians, administrators and planners that more and more rules are being laid down for how the city should develop. So we say 'pfui' to those rules. Drawings have been developed to suggest a new approach to urban studies. Ottawa: You're So Vanier consciously opens up this part of the city to a provocative future through a hyperbolic urbanism.

We are not being rude, we are being urgent!

VANIER
Future Ecologies

After a study of four urban ecologies and their dispersion throughout Vanier, a proposal to create a self-sustaining new Eco-Mainstreet (Marier Avenue) was developed as an urban prototype solution for the future. Four main urban and design strategies emerged as part of the incremental urbanism that would transform this street: Arachnid housing, Eco-Street, Urban Farming and Eco-Businesses. The future new Eco-Mainstreet would transform the existing street incrementally, providing sustainable cultivation of food, small-scale environmentally friendly interventions, zero-net carbon residential options, eco-friendly businesses, and educational developments. The Marier Eco-Street 2030 becomes a measured and monitored energy system and an urban framework for a transforming neighbourhood and expanding network.

Mia Giommi - Audrey Caron - Dawn Ling - Stephanie Agar



PFUI

Baklava Studio was the nickname given to a unit studio on the much-maligned fifth floor of the Azrieli School of Architecture & Urbanism (commonly known as The Dark Side) where the sun slanted in from pitched roof lights. Through trying months of snow, leak and thaw, there was always the beach, a sofa, an espresso, and baklava. Students collaborated in ways they have never collaborated before. The atmosphere was infectious, an atelier beyond social media! A kitchen served delicacies, espresso, special tea and baklava. It began with a comprehensively mapped and designed housing study appropriately named – That's So Vanier, the Dirty Realism Studio – in the somewhat neglected but one of the remaining vibrant unplanned parts of the city, Vanier. After Christmas 2015, this studio progressed to the urban agenda, You're So Vanier - exploring a Hyperbolic Urbanism for Vanier 2030. The students were encouraged to stay real in the unreal. They were encouraged to extend beyond the accepted city regulations and somewhat predictable planning directives that already exist for Ottawa. They were encouraged to draw, invent and create a parallel world. A City in the City!

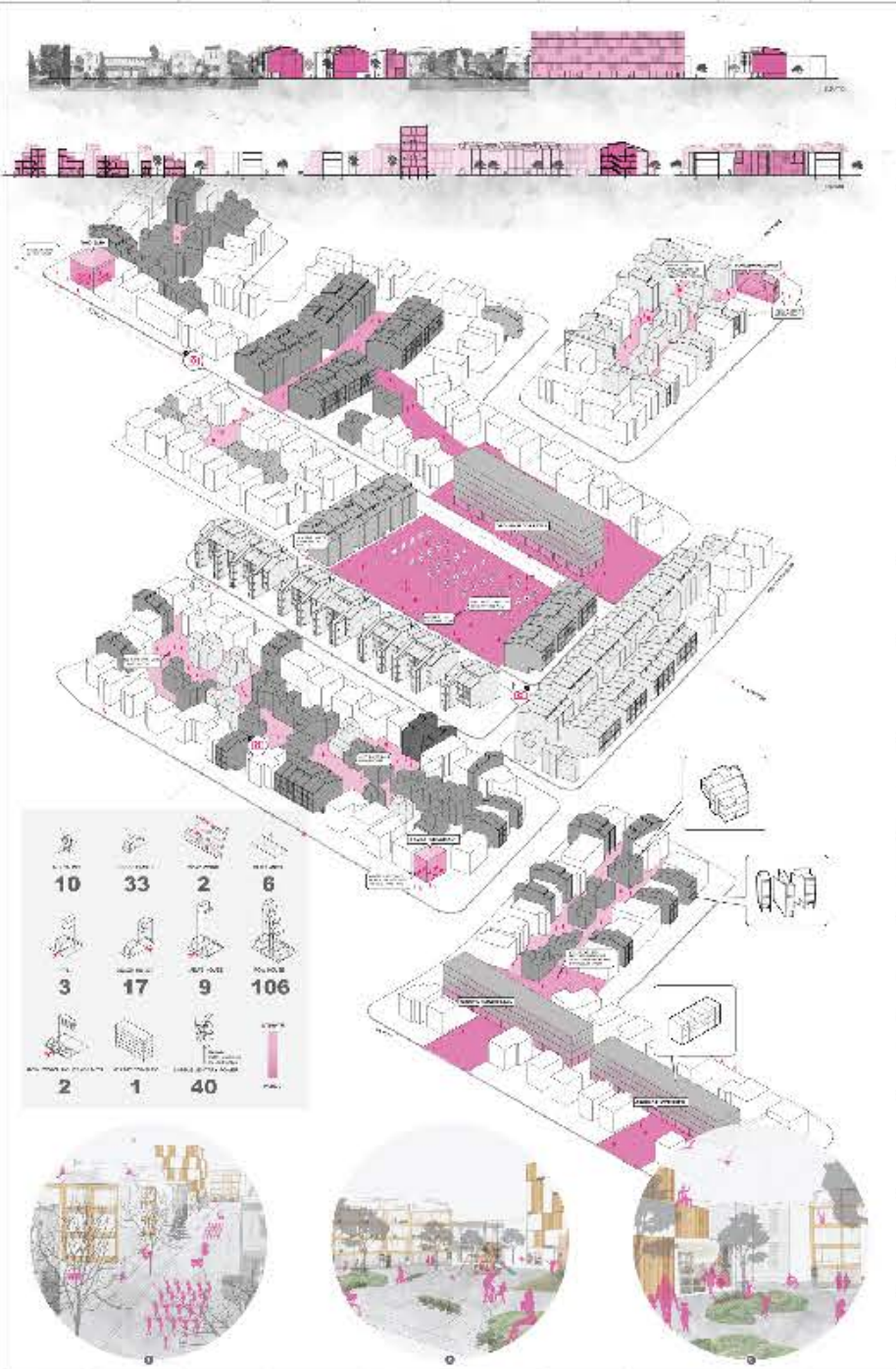
OTTAWA
YOU'RE
SO
VANIER

2015-2017
Manifesto-lite

THE GOSSIPING TOWERS
Vanier Smart City 2030

The Gossiping Towers is an experimental projection of the modern urban hub; a future smart city, a transit-gateway hub for Vanier acting as a catalyst for future development. Using a hyperbolic urbanism, it proposes urban solutions that realistically could be integrated into Vanier by 2030. The urban parcels that make up the intended development lie between Cumming's Island on the Rideau River and Vanier's downtown core including North of Montreal Road. Much of the existing urban stock is dated and will soon be in need of serious maintenance. Key features on the existing site include a retail plaza, a motel, and other commercial premises. Most of these would be removed within the incremental urban vision proposed and a smart city to rival downtown Ottawa itself.

Tyson Moll - Shawn Duke

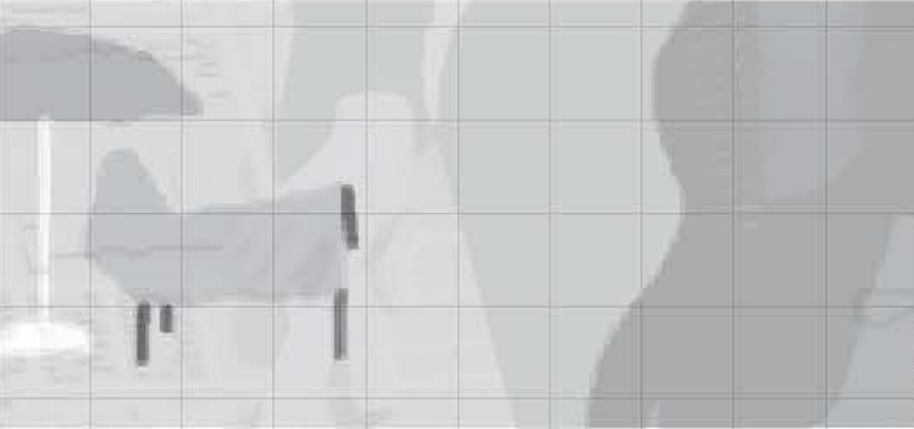


DIRTY REALISM
That's So Vanier 1

Dirty Realism is known as a literary term coined by Bill Buford in 1983 for the magazine Granta and described as follows: "Dirty Realism is the fiction of a new generation of American authors. They write about the belly-side of contemporary life – a deserted husband, an unwed mother, a car thief, a pickpocket, a drug addict – but they write about it with a disturbing detachment, at times verging on comedy. Understated, ironic, sometimes savage, but insistently compassionate, these stories constitute a new voice in fiction." In many ways this suits us as we explore the quarter in Ottawa, originally Gloucester Township, Eastview and now Vanier. Developing as a detached francophone area of the region, it is easily identified today in the sense of the popular urban myth as seamy and sketchy; made up of lower income households, some poverty and street-walking crime. The picture offered expands; developers waiting in the wings with condo towers, 'nice' people ready to move in and another tame urbanism to mesh an already tamed Ottawa. Too general we say, too convenient! Forget it!

* The writers identified by Buford with Dirty Realism are/were Bukowski, Carver, Wolff, Ford, Brown, Barthelme, McCarthy, Gutierrez, Medina, McCullers and Phillips. One must remember, like any usefully framed critical movement, none of these authors accept that they write a 'dirty realism'. It will be the same with the architecture and urban solutions to the housing offered.

We are not being rude



We are being urgent!

SIGMA
Embedded Housing in Vanier

SIGMA proposes an experimental future densification strategy, an urban and community housing development in the residential neighbourhoods of Vanier, Ottawa. SIGMA aims to respect yet incrementally transform the existing vibrant and robust Vanier residential neighbourhood, by incorporating new models of housing. Residents are not so much displaced as invited to become part of the new Vanier 2030. This is post-sentimental planning, where the embedded neighbourhood interventions involve radically new urban strategies. This is post-developer urbanism; these measured interventions for a vibrant future - in density and intensity - are located in areas evaluated on their location, vacancy, and their potential to rezone for an incremental urbanism from 2016-2030.

Anna Leung - Eisa Hayashi - Sabrina Shen - Cristina Hoang - Oliver Tang



The students are presented with this picture, we learn to understand – we learn to understand change – but how will we? How will they propose change? What options do they have, what ways can they work in the contemporary in a city seemingly keen to resort to the nostalgic signs and simulations of the past, a brocaded heritage and internalized comfort? Shall we go ugly cute, shall we bring in Bjarke Ingels or OMA, or the gymnastics of Daniel Libeskind, the reputed concert pianist? To say that we are dealing with a sub-category of realism is not quite the case. What is 'identity' (that favourite word of planners), what is negotiable, shared and shareable space? As many speak – often from outside Vanier – of the seamy, even shabby side of this quarter, where does this 'grit' fit in with our theories of neighbourhood, community, public realm and genius loci? Where is the understated, the ironic, the psychogeography or the savage necessity to keep a city alive and untamed? If we prefer to emphasize the diverse community already existing in Vanier, can we suggest schemes and options that treat them as homogeneous? Why should we? From Beirut to Kingston Jamaica, from Mont Lebanon to Creole Sensations? From Bobby's Table to Robert De Niro? From Donnie Brasco to Donnie Darko? Are the people homogeneous because they live in Vanier? How long does a temporary resident take up the property offered before fleeing to better places. Orleans? Barrhaven? Overbrook? Just where are those 'better places'? North Vanier, Beechwood or Rockcliffe?

The Baklava Beach Studio is a student collaborative contribution to a city that is awakening to its lost urban narrative. Ottawa, you're so Vanier! How can students attend to the City guidelines, regulations and the planning applications yet suggest workable new ideas? We don't know yet, but we came at this in a different way. No one's work is above the other, we were all in this together. And above all this studio was and still is about the courage (as students and professor) to be wrong; to suggest parallel ideas that open up the discussion. We don't wish only to keep the conversation going, we put on our camo-jackets and shorts and wish to suggest ways real change can be taken on.

- The Baklava Beach 4th Year (Comprehensive – Housing / Urbanism) Unit Studio (September 2015 - April 2016)
- Dirty Realism Housing 1 - Exhibited in St. Charles Church, Beechwood Avenue, Vanier (December 2015)
- Ottawa You're so Vanier 2 - the full exhibition Carleton University Art Gallery - CUAQ (April 2016)
- OYSV The Studio won one of AIA Cum Laude Studio - Education Awards by the American Institute of Architects 2016, ARCHITECT AIA (Fall 2016)
- OYSV Life Manifesto & Model exhibition at City Hall Ottawa (November 2016) & Richelieu Community Centre 2017

We would like to thank Councillor Mathieu Fleury for extending the life of this studio.

MAINSTREET URBANISM

Montreal Road and McArthur Avenue are two major mainstreets in Vanier. A radical transformation of these streets for 2030 serves to suggest densification and intensification strategies of selected areas with appropriate commercial and retail needs as well as housing solutions. Using urban mappings on building heights, land use and business types, undeveloped plots and parking spaces, the proposals aim to maximize densification with public spaces and urban plazas. Parking is re-strategized and more mixed-use buildings for the future Vanier including a new Ottawa University street campus are proposed.

Kripa Gyawali - Neha Bhargava - Nahid Ahmadi - Balquis Attef

AZRIELI SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & URBANISM - CARLETON UNIVERSITY - OTTAWA 2015-2017

