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09.26.18
Int. Studio 1: Avatar
Bridge 2: Project Proposal

We spent time reflecting on both our individual issues and the project prompt, as outlined in the syllabus, to best approach this design challenge. The syllabus asks students to “imagine a utopian place in which both of the issues you have identified have been solved”. The issues we chose to tackle are the lack of access to public education and to healthy food, specifically in low-income neighborhoods. Though we are creating a utopian space, an unrealistic ideal to simultaneously solve both of our distinct issues, we have chosen to give a sense of reality and familiarity to our design by placing it in the Bronx – a real neighborhood, right here in New York City, which currently faces both of these issues.

We recently visited the Bronx to get a sense – though limited – of the neighborhood; its communities and their functions, their needs. While there, we noticed a plethora of unused large-scale plots of undeveloped land. Our intention for this project is to make imaginative use of one – or perhaps several – of these plots to create a multi-purpose space that aims to provide both access to public education and create a sustainable source of organic produce for residents of the Bronx.

Our plan is to design a school building that can accommodate a large amount of children and grades. We will, of course, be taking into account points such as public transportation – is our facility easily accessible to those who will be using it? – and classroom versatility – how can our classrooms best adapt to be used for various subjects and uses? The building will also provide the community with substantial access to fresh, organic produce, which will be grown on the top floors using vertical farming systems. Vertical farming is a low-water, low-maintenance, high sustainable way of growing many varieties of organic produce indoors in large quantities and at expedited rates. The goal will be to teach students how to use these systems and provide them with fruits and veggies to take home whenever possible.