

Yusuf Urlu Statement of Purpose

To whom it may concern,

The value of a built place comes from people's attributions and stories of the place. My conceptualization is to give people a different perspective and meaning of looking at their physical space and interacting within their surroundings.

The passion started at an early age when I was running around construction sites with my father, finding leftover materials to build birdhouses, and it never stopped. I have had the chance to work in every phase of a projects' life cycle, from research to design, construction to renovation. The poignant turning point of my interests was the time I realized the power and role of architecture: the conception of ideas into tangible objects that shape the way people live. I strived to learn more but found myself deficient because the wide scope of architecture could not be satisfied by studying only architecture in conventional ways. Thus, I studied sociology, geography, math, and economy to supply the mastery and knowledge required for architectural work and mind.

All this experience and knowledge are to create not only functional or aesthetical but also meaningful and realistic architecture. The work finds meaning when it is strongly connected to the context and finds success when it serves the program and user well. Despite our comprehensive efforts, the work would be unsuccessful without people's positive experience, which makes architecture an instrument of experience and communication that people witness. Therefore, design should attend to the desires, needs, and problems of people. And design needs to go through business to know and attend all of these.

The needs and conflicting desires of society are arguable. Except, recent years have been marked by social pathologies: discrimination, refugee crises, gender issues, and most recently the coronavirus, which unfolded that many of our systems had unforeseen limitations and dysfunctions. Despite the power of social media or intensifying political polarization, we missed face-to-face contact; and became weary of these long-lasting problems. Our present conditions warrant the proposal of unprecedented modalities and typologies that go beyond today's conception of 'living together,' equal society, and architectural roles. The goal is to liberate the spaces and systems from their inequitable and limiting functions to cultivate and empower the building blocks of life: relationships, connections, health, support, and joy.

The growth of these building blocks requires multi-disciplinary approach with profound awareness. I equipped myself with the take on architecture as a conductor of a larger interdisciplinary, social, spatial, and economic operation. For instance, my group's project in San Juan, the "Storm Station" required collaborations with local social groups to identify the common issues in the community. We initially built water, electricity, and medical stations as a post-disaster response. Later, based on the feedback, I designed school and library modules with streamlined methods and materials that now the community can build, adjust, and implement anywhere they need. The project received great reactions followed by investments. Correspondingly, a few colleagues and I launched 'The Collective Infrastructures,' a promising, community-oriented

nonprofit. My other project “De-demarked School” in Queens, New York, involved associations with sociologists and households from low-income families. The main troubles in this area are the limited access to the facilities and the isolation between different ethnic groups. The project proposes to be an agent of change and revitalization as it provides access to many amenities and fosters social interaction between the school and neighborhood by providing extensive social programs. The form of the school is manipulated to be flexible and open and to give students a sense of being in the neighborhood within educational borders, a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Throughout my career, I worked in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The wide range of experiences improved my capacity in designing with some shared understanding of the world. It taught me the importance of giving attention to different geographies, socio-politics, and technologies on the divergent ways they experience and execute design. As a professional, I use this experience to create ways that architecture operates as a catalyst and convener that can inspire all parties to live together cordially and equitably. Now, it is time for further studies in my specialization to upgrade my skills and to acquire the knowledge essential to challenge today into a better tomorrow.

It is for my best interest to enroll in the IE School of Architecture and Design, Master in Business for Architecture and Design program. I strongly believe that the IE is the proper venue for me to upgrade my academic and professional skills for it provides learners with diverse experience, exceptional staff, intellectual prowess, and access to interdisciplinary work. I still have questions -that have not been answered properly or deeply enough- especially about the intersection of architecture, society, commerce, and marketing. That is why I have been studying and admiring the work of Jerónimo van Schendel on the ways of creating entrepreneurship in the intersection of design and technology, Carl Kock on drivers of value in companies, and Caroline Cole on benchmarking of architecture and the business of design. I am confident that with academic and business culture at the IE, I can utilize my resources to the maximum, which will essentially enable me to produce new ideas and innovations.

Finally, this year I started my practice, Yusuf Uurlu Studio, in collaboration with my international colleagues. To carry out this collective effort, I work more astutely and meticulously than ever. I trust my idiosyncratic methods and diversely piled experience, coupled with the IE’s education and podium will expand my understanding of architecture and can widen the horizon to explore.

I believe in the idea that opportunities arise with the disruption of the status quo. My name is Yusuf Uurlu. I am an awake dreamer and I contemplate new worlds.