The tension between old and new permeates the architecture of New York City's five boroughs. While well-established patterns of design and construction are in some instances expunged from the urban landscape, and in other instances preserved and cherished, a basic and defining feature for many of its long-standing, yet continually evolving, communities is a deeply felt interaction between culture and the built environment.

Nowhere is that more evident than in the bodegas, delis, 99-cent stores, and storefront churches that constitute the most visible yet vulnerable icons of New York City's vanishing urban vernacular. The signage in particular, collages featuring posters for local politicians, governmental enforcement in the form of stickers indicating “We check ID” or “EBT accepted”, signs advertising the sale of obscure ethnic food brands and even ones pertaining to the salvation of your soul, reflect the unique interactions of commerce, politics, law, religion, social activism, crime, and fear that make up the street-front pedestrian experience.

Order + Service

ARCH 6509:
SPECIAL TOPICS IN VISUAL REPRESENTATION

(SPRING 2019) THURSDAY 2PM - 4:30PM

INSTRUCTOR: OLASEKAN JENIFOUS / LEKAN@VIGILISM.COM

“Even Jesus Drank”
Olasekan Jenifous

Over the course of the semester students will explore the fictions, histories and futures of these local storefront typologies (signage, surfaces and textures) through an expansive approach to developing visual narratives. Sites and spaces of inquiry will include, but not be limited to, the Yemeni delis and Caribbean storefront churches of neighborhoods like Crown Heights, Brooklyn as well as the Dominican bodegas and Pentecostal storefront churches of Harlem and the South Bronx. As a means of re-imagining social spaces wrought with a synthesis of both utopic and dystopic ideals, students will examine the cultural, political, and socio-economic relationships these spaces have to their respective communities through sketching, digital collage, and photo-montage.