

## Redrawing the Map

Maya Sorabjee

To fall off a map is to imply an edge – a precipice beyond which one's neatly surveyed universe suddenly loses definition. Although the world as we know it today is not so much a jagged edge on a blank page as a Möbius strip of cultural continuity, we all still have personal borders that we wish to expand. To seek the world in the negative space of one's own map is a human inclination few can, or should, fight. But it is the intentions with which we step across that arbitrarily defined line between here and there, and us and them, that makes the difference.

The author of the "Can Today's Traveler Still 'Fall off the Map?'" in *Paprika*/Vol. 4 Issue 2 "Tourism Revolution" admires the traveler of the past as an intrepid adventurer, tirelessly pushing his limited horizon in search of "exotic treasure." The plundering of foreign land that eventually goes from aristocratic sport to the ferocious project of European imperialism is represented on the page with a certain wishfulness that is ultimately contrasted with a disdain for the contemporary mass tourist.

The history of tourism as a trajectory from Napoleonic conquest to cruise ship invasions is not entirely implausible: both are driven by the destructive impetus of material consumption and social prestige. But to imply that the violent pillaging of countries by the imperial powers of Europe is somehow "less devastating" than the purchasing of a plastic Eiffel Tower keychain is a line of thought that only contributes to the damage still reverberating through the decolonized world.

At the center of this narrative sits an architectural typology that is misunderstood as an innocuous cultural beacon: the museum. Cloned examples of the Louvre and the British Museum are some of the best of their kind, not only in the provision of a world-class "experience" to their hoards of visitors, but as crucial repositories of their respective countries' colonial endeavors. It is critical to keep in mind that the collections housed by these museums are comprised mostly of stolen objects. The Elgin Marbles and the Bust of Nefertiti were both uprooted without consent in a manner that often erased the artistic traditions that created them in the first place. More tragically, the people who once lived with those traditions now require an expensive flight and exhibition ticket to engage with their own heritage.

Countries in the decolonized world have still to catch up with the preservation standards of the West. But this is no excuse for confiscation. One need only look at Yale's extended dispute with the government of Peru and its reluctance to repatriate the treasures of Machu Picchu<sup>1</sup> to realize that benevolent cultural protection is merely a euphemism masking a deep-seated desire for prestige, of which the overall damage remains unquantifiable. This author recently had the bitter pleasure of encountering rooms full of exquisite Goan furniture in Lisbon's National Museum of Ancient Art, and left wondering why they had never been seen in their place of origin. Countless visitors to Pergamon in Turkey face an inverse disappointment when they arrive at an empty footprint, the contents of which sit comfortably in a Berlin museum.

If only it were just about pretty things on gallery walls. As Edward Said has famously observed: "Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination."<sup>2</sup> The cultural treasures brought back by "wanderers" like Columbus are often tainted by pogroms and wholesale destruction. But the plaques on the walls will not mar your pleasant afternoon at the museum with this information.

The author fails to condemn his correct observation that Western powers have institutionalized the practice of national theft, instead lamenting the fact that there is now nothing of significance left to take. So follows a longing for an idyllic "Shangri-La" and its "primitive and unspoiled state" – a textbook instance of the kind of Orientalism identified by Said for its harmful perpetuation of cultural hegemony, which has persisted well after the fall of the empires. He writes, "In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible

relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand."<sup>3</sup> A crucial condition of such Orientalist imaginings is their insistence on a perpetual primitivism. The places beyond the map, once discovered, are forbidden from developing so that travelers may enjoy, beyond the satisfaction of getting there first, a state of the world that they long traded in for the comforts of modernity.

The article's "ideal tourist" is positioned in a tier above the fiends that descend on European cities every summer, svelte sticks in hand. Curiously, all of the author's examples of mass tourism are situated in the Western hemisphere. It is as if no cruise ships dock at Bali, no bachelor parties prow the streets of Thailand, no daily crowds swarm Angkor Wat (an example of the neo-colonialist trappings of contemporary tourism that both cripples and supports newly independent countries in the very same page of the *Paprika*/Issue.) The problem of mass travel unleashed by an increasingly permeable world is a global one, making it everyone's responsibility to find in an inclusive and sustainable solution.

We have much to fix, but we have come along way since the days Napoleon and his savants arrived in Alexandria. The wrinkles sold on the streets outside every UNESCO site might be kitschy and are likely made by underpaid factory workers in China, but the crucial difference is that they are sold, not taken. We haven't yet found a way to scale responsible tourism, but at least we have started to address an extremely exploitative economic equation.

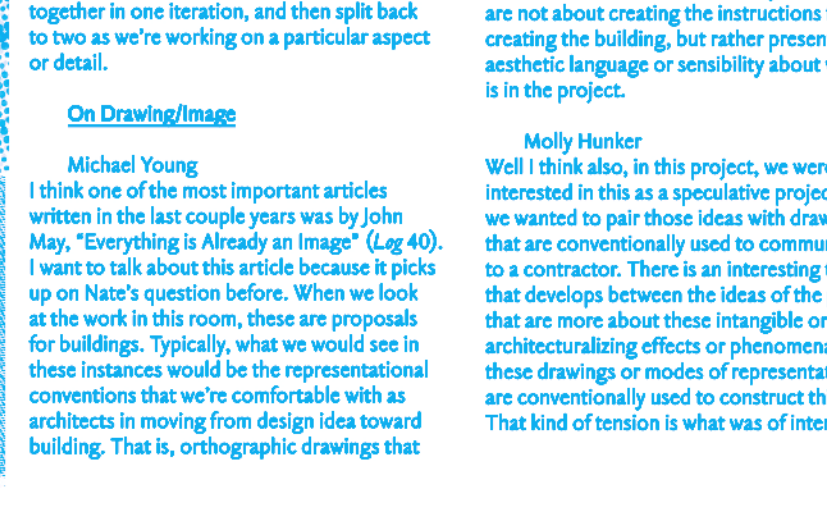
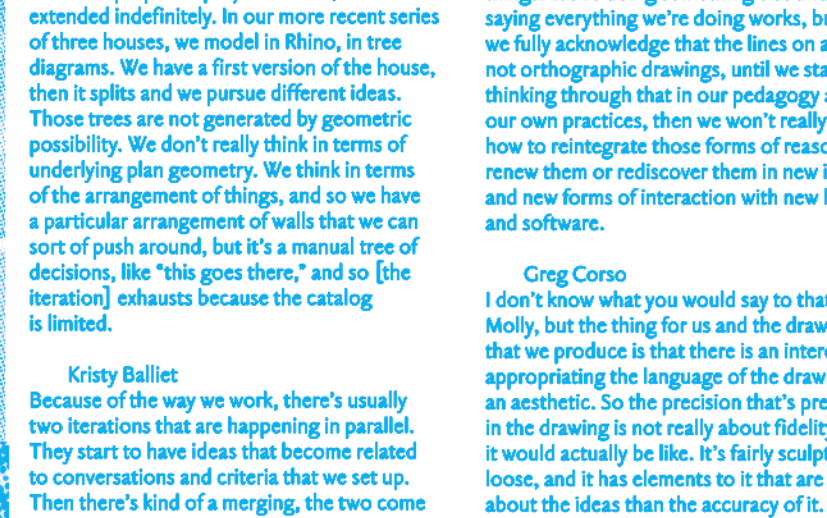
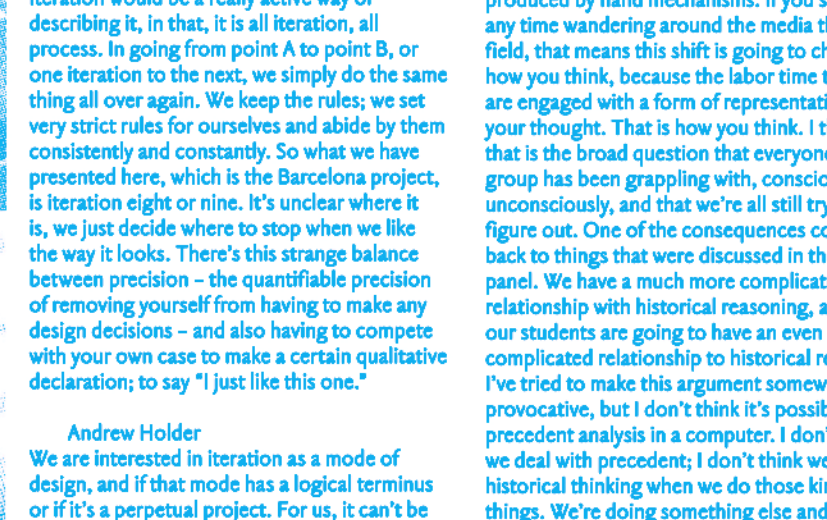
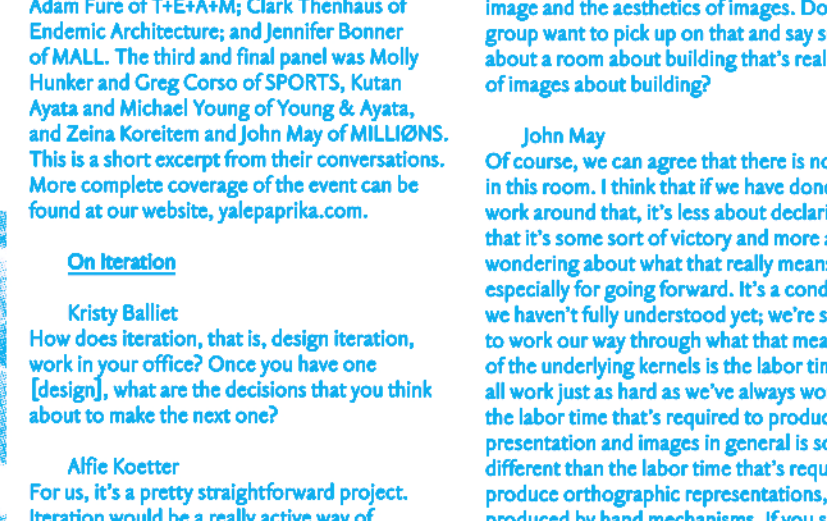
The author's suggestion of users of "controlled access" to overcrowded touristic sites and the creation of virtual replicas is frightening in its suggestion of a new economic classification system, though the details are left unclear. Who exactly is to visit the simulated Rome and the fake Venices? Who gets the privilege of "discovering" places thus far un-Instagrammed?

The piece ends with a sentimental recollection of the iconic '50s Rome Seminar as an antidote to the hurried pace of the average tour. The author identifies its students as somehow distinct from the swaths of mass tourists that infiltrate the city every summer, because they draw. But perhaps what really distinguishes a sensitive tourist is not so much their desire to sketch or take a selfie as their ability to see the continuum of history in the things they come across, a cord that tethers them to the seeming "otherness" of experiences, people, and things. The spolia freckling the Arch of Constantine are products of immense human conflict and the obelisk in the centre of the Piazza Navona is an object in exile. We perch at the edge of a long, brutal timeline.

This is not an invitation to constantly decry colonialism, which is now a fundamental fact of humanity. It is a call to be more empathetic about what we experience and who we encounter, wherever we may go. Even the ugly knockoffs bemoaned by tourists of "taste" are the latest chapter in a history of imbalanced global supply chains. We might be sensitive enough to support more local industries as we select things to take home with us, as one way of seeking moments of discovery in our now well-traversed world.

So, to answer the question posed in the title of the article, no – today's travellers need not fall off the map for the pleasure of surprise. They need only turn it around and examine their edge from its other side.

1. Diane Orson, "Yale Returns Machu Picchu Artifacts To Peru," *NPR*, December 15, 2010, [www.npr.org/2010/12/15/132083890/yale-returns-machu-picchu-artifacts-to-peru](http://www.npr.org/2010/12/15/132083890/yale-returns-machu-picchu-artifacts-to-peru).
2. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York City: Vintage Books, 1994), 9.
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York City: Vintage Books, 1979), 7.



direct collaboration, but a strong awareness of what other practices were doing and a passive but definite influence over one another. The attempts to pinpoint commonly reminded me of studio guest critics trying to define the connecting factors between two disparate projects of Clark; then he has, transforming Victorian architectural forms into a soaring music hall with the aura of an early mechanized Gothic cathedral, seems completely alien to the MILLIONS project designed by convoluted Boolean operations. A veiling critic might connect these two as exploration or experimentation with the weight of buildings – after flipping the current position.

The fluidity of this group is a strength that has allowed them to survive and take advantage of the 2008 market crash and use it as an opportunity to challenge the field from the inside. While some architects spent the recession starting an architecturally-inspired luxury ice cream company,<sup>1</sup> this group spent years sharpening skills to pull the discipline forward. Now, as many of them begin to construct work for the first time, they face new problems.

*Adjacencies* is an opportunity to reflect on the visual and material explorations of these fourteen practices and the development of new expectations for the built environment. Challenged by the anticipation of ideologies that previous exhibits at YSOA have not, it is useful to see these projects together as a set, but perhaps it serves to emphasize their similarities in a way that makes them all appear less unique or independent. Ultimately, relying on the audience to find relationships between the work might result in undomesticated revolutionary readings – but more likely, distorted perceptions.

1. <https://foodhaus.com/>

*Adjacencies*, the current exhibition at the Yale School of Architecture Gallery, is an overly and unapologetically trendy young architects show – colourful line work, pastel colors, and quasi-familiar geometrical forms are all positioned on the massive walls constructed for the exhibit. Interspersed among the illustrations are playful models, ranging from a simple wooden house to a complex, multi-story structure. The models are made of wood, with digital tools used to create a parade of diverse drawing and modeling techniques. At a quick glance, this show could be mistaken for the fetishization of kitsch or stylism, but behind the flashy imagery, each of these projects contains complex ideas on construction and imagery. Jennifer Bonner's Inna Cabinet, for example, explores material properties and construction methods, while the look of high-end finishes – like marble – but it installing vinyl and tile imposters, diverting the architect's allegiance from "truth of materials" to graphic mimicry.

Selecting and curating one project from each of the fourteen different practices created a puzzle. What connects this group of projects? All participants are "ed," based on their discipline just when computational experimentation became ubiquitous.<sup>2</sup> The work illustrates this through its control over hi- and lo-fi production, but also reveals the holes that appear as these "digital" architects attempt to bridge the gap to construction.

At each panel convened at the gallery talk, it was apparent that they had all been through an iteration or process. Each practice described design processes strikingly similar to those of the students they teach: exploration of different interests and no

Kutan Ayata  
Perhaps Image is a dangerous word as architects. The discipline is immediately suspicious of the word because it's associated with one genre of representation; it's immediately coupled with the notion of rendering. But in the broader sense, maybe for an architect the end game is never a building, it's always an image of a building.

Michael Young  
I have something that picks up on that and brings us back to the iteration/working project with a capital P thing that happened in the first group. We do a weird thing with our projects where they're never done. We just do them again differently, and it doesn't mean that they're another project. I know this sounds so wrong, and it is such a strange exhaustion of our time and energy. Sometimes we image them 50–60 years in the future, sometimes we image them after they've fallen apart, and sometimes we image them as if they were done before they were actually built. I know that sounds wrong, why would we do that? For us, it's actually trying to get at some question that the reality of a project is more than its physicality. The reality of the project is an argument that disturbs the ways in which we assume reality to be. For us, realism is not something about the fidelity of photorealism, realism is about whether you can imagine that project having a life that's actually in existence and that is a tension between reality and its representations. It's a problem that is less about verisimilitude, less about resemblance, and more about whether or not you think that object adjusted some way that you believe the world to be.

## Internal Memo

provide measurability, accountability, and the technical specificity, and models that together provide the kind of demonstrative truth that this thing can even become physical. But, what we're looking at in this room, is in a way proof to John's argument. I would say these models are not models intended to translate toward construction. The drawings that look like drawings are images of drawings that are attempting to work through different conventions and representational modes, yet are not actually operative as drawings in the way we would traditionally think about them. In that lies, as a comment on something that Kutan and I are invested in deeply, the question of the image and the aesthetics of images. Does this group want to pick up on that and say something about a room about building that's really a room of images about building?

John May  
Of course, we can agree that there is no drawing in this room. I think that if we have done any work around that, it's less about declaring that it's some sort of victory and more about wondering about what that really means, especially for going forward. It's a condition that we haven't fully understood yet; we're still trying to work our way through what that means. One of the underlying kernels is the labor time. We all work just as hard as we've always worked, but the labor time that's required to produce the presentation and images in general is so much different than the labor time that's required to produce orthographic representations, the ones produced by hand mechanisms. If you spend any time wandering around the media theory field, that means this shift is going to change how you think, because the labor time that you are engaged with a form of representation is your thought. That is how you think. I think that is the broad question that everyone in this group has been grappling with, consciously and unconsciously, and that we're all still trying to figure out. One of the consequences comes back to things that were discussed in the first panel. We have a much more complicated relationship with historical reasoning, and I think our students are going to have an even more complicated relationship to historical reasoning. I've tried to make this argument somewhat provocative, but I don't think it's possible to do precedent analysis in a computer. I don't think we deal with precedent; I don't think we're doing historical thinking when we do those kinds of things. We're doing something else and I'm not saying everything we're doing works, but until we fully acknowledge that the lines on a page are not orthographic drawings, until we start really thinking through that in our pedagogy and in our own practices, then we won't really know how to reintegrate those forms of reasoning and renew them or rediscover them in new interfaces and new forms of interaction with new hardware and software.

Greg Corso  
I don't know what you would say to that Molly, but the thing for us and the drawings that we produce is that there is an interest in appropriating the language of the drawing into an aesthetic. So the precision that's presented in the drawing is not really about fidelity to what it would actually be like. It's fairly sculptural, loose, and it has elements to it that are more about the ideas than the accuracy of it. They are not about creating the instructions for creating the building, but rather presenting an aesthetic language or sensibility about what is in the project.

Molly Hunker  
Well I think also, in this project, we were interested in this as a speculative project, but we wanted to pair those ideas with drawings that are conventionally used to communicate to a contractor. There is an interesting tension that develops between the ideas of the project that are more about those intangible or architecturalizing effects or phenomena, and these drawings or modes of representation that are conventionally used to construct this thing. That kind of tension is what was of interest.

Andrew Holder  
We are interested in iteration as a mode of design, and if that mode has a logical terminus or if it's a perpetual project. For us, it can't be extended indefinitely. In our more recent series of three houses, we model in Rhino, in tree diagrams. We have a first version of the house, then it splits and we pursue different ideas. Those trees are not generated by geometric possibility. We don't really think in terms of underlying plan geometry. We think in terms of the arrangement of things, and so we have a particular arrangement of walls that we can sort of push around, but it's a manual tree of decisions, like "this goes there," and so [the iteration] exhausts because the catalog is limited.

Kristy Ballett  
Because of the way we work, there's usually two iterations that are happening in parallel. They start to have ideas that become related to conversations and criteria that we set up. Then there's kind of a merging, the two come together in one iteration, and then split back to two as we're working on a particular aspect or detail.

Michael Young  
I think one of the most important articles written in the last couple years was by John May, "Everything is Already an Image" (*Leg 40*). I want to talk about this article because it picks up on Kate's question before. When we look at the work in this room, these are proposals for buildings. Typically, what we would see in these instances would be the representational conventions that we're comfortable with as architects in moving from design idea toward building. That is, orthographic drawings that

# In five words or fewer describe your biggest grievance against today's architectural practice or pedagogy:

- Teaching a certain "style"
- Forced labor denies any critical thought
- Not acknowledging other cultures/legacies of architecture
- "Progressive" program justifies bad architecture
- Tired tradition of overworked work
- Lack of U.S. policy discourse
- Too much meaningless talking
- Nothing
- Narcissism of the profession
- Working for free
- Licensure
- We aren't paid enough
- Formal ideas
- Cult of images; theory abandoned
- Empathic interactions discouraged
- Pointless busywork
- You have to "know a guy"
- Oversaturated egos
- Ego
- Pseudointellectualism of convoluted jargon
- Pointless productivity without knowledge
- Please train our courage
- Pay
- Hard work and no pay
- Imprecise goals and metrics
- Prima donnas/eager beavers
- Talk the talk but not walk the walk

## Editor's Note

*Anarchy*: a state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority or other controlling systems. (Oxford.)  
Following similar concepts, the notion of "Anarchitecture," introduced by Gordon Matta-Clark, is one that remains politically, socially, and theoretically challenging. In times of global political flux, it seems obvious that one would hope to indulge in ideas that explore tensions and conflicts that are an integral part of the current built environment. With that in mind, we invited our contributors to articulate their perspective on the contemporary spaces of "Anarchitecture."  
While provocative questions and celebration of expression lay within the very framework of Anarchy, it has become increasingly crucial to investigate architecture in terms of its relationship to the Anarchic forces that hide within it. "Is Anarchy inherent to anarchitecture?"

# Anarchitecture

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## On The Ground 9/12-9/18

9/12 Sign ups for the Fall Badminton Open commence, additional prizes will be awarded to best name, poster, and costume. Get ready for saucy stereotypes, name puns, and architectural memes. 2Fast4Furious presents the first poster of the season and waits for the competition to follow suit.

9/13 The first Intramural Architecture talk of the year featured Gary He, presenting "The Look and the Snigger: Eclecticism

and the Signs of the Times" – Garnier, Lapidus ... Donald Trump? Gary ended his talk by asking: How can we talk about social class in architecture? What is the role of the bourgeoisie? And how should one (have to) rewrite or rethink *Learning From Las Vegas* from the perspective of both Las Vegas and the critic, if Las Vegas replaced Washington D.C. and the Bellagio became the White House?

Most students were left without a seat at the "Adjacencies Gallery Talk."

Miguel Sanchez-Enkerlin sends an equivocal email to all M.Arch I's following the talk. Subject: "Rudy's?" Message: "What happened?"

9/14 "What happens when you go +/- two degrees C from your core body temp? ... you sweat ...? No, you die!" – Kipp Bradford  
EID Arranges a pizza party for mentors and mentees. First years are still seen working diligently on the 6th floor – are they already sick of pizza?  
GAIA and YSoA East hold their first meetings to go over their plans for the year.  
Overheard outside of Rudolph: "There must be a bar up there." – senior tourists

9/15 Advanced Studio flags go up.  
Alejandro Duran dramatically posts his weekend reading for "Parallels of the Modern" on his Instagram story.

9/17 Second years learn about thermal comfort whilst freezing in Hastings.  
"I'm taking Intro to Commercial Real Estate and Practice... I gotta understand money." – Kay Yang  
"I will NEVER understand money." – Deo Delparine  
Viz It appears to have migrated into first-year studio. Students displayed a plethora of flashy, colorful art objects in their first YSoA review. *VIZ OR TRASH: THE SAGA CONTINUES...*

9/18 GSD Core 3 walks through the unforgiving fourth floor pit as we watch them like hawks. Studio critic: John Jay puns out his chat as a method of intimidating self defense.  
The Retrospecta 4t editors begin to pass on the torch to the first years.  
"Why do I keep challenging myself to be better?" – Michael T. Gasper

Correction  
Nicolas Kemper's name was misspelled as 'Nicholas' in his contribution to last issue's On the Ground.

hundreds of years of exploitation, sexism, racism, and a litany of other problems that do not include properly detailing waterproofing membranes, the right material finish, or whatever architectural flourish we might dream up. We talk about architecture in breathless reverie, as though it is a magical incantation, but if we dispel this delusion, we can have a more serious talk about architecture's civic responsibility and how it can play a constituent role in social movements. Buildings are the result of political processes, not the cause of them. We cannot fix social problems through our work, but must engage society beyond the profession of design in order to build the world we want to live in.

This is the point in an article where the author usually proposes some type of solution or call to action to conquer the demons from the second paragraph. Unfortunately, I don't think we can solve this problem with buildings, so let me propose an alternative. Let's all stop taking ourselves so damn seriously all the time. For example, the collective reverence of canonical architects and the pedestals on which we put important-sounding names is a symptom of the mindset that architecture is "important," which precludes our creativity. "Corb said this, or Laugier said that, and Peter told me it was so, which make this right!" There is an entire world beyond these walls with infinite sources of inspiration. If trashy movies from the 1990s are what inspire you, why is that more or less valid than what some dead, white, heterosexual, wealthy aristocrat wrote 200 years ago, when balancing the four humors was thought to cure leprosy and educated people believed the female orgasm was a type of dementia? Google something instead of going to the library. Take a walk in nature instead of making another model. Watch Netflix and eat prosciutto. Wear a tank top to desk crits. Be mad as hell. Only then, design buildings.

Architecture project name generator: Self-sufficient eco relay\*

Perhaps at one point, we can elaborate upon jargon – you know the way you unnecessarily use convoluted sentence structures and demonstrate the strength of your lexicon with the hope that no one will be able to understand you, because you know, the more dense you sound, the less dense it will make you feel about yourself. (I have a proposition that could help you with that. – Wear huge gold-rimmed spectacles instead and stop confusing yourself and others.)

Have you ever read a work of fiction and gone berserk? Berserk is a strong word. I am aware. One should always be wary of strong words. But, before I ramble on, let me tell you about architecture. Side note – do people actually use "side note" in an intellectual conversation? And no, this is not going to be an intellectual conversation – six-plus years of architectural education, and I still find myself absolutely lost. Yes, I am aware, absolute is a strong word.

This conversation, and you might have already guessed, is about strong words – and partially about architecture. Do you ever use unnecessary jargon to validate the authenticity of a project? Uh oh, this is slipping over to the domain of Nomenclature (Vol. 3, Issue 12). But, you would agree that architecture can find itself overstepping boundaries into many territories. It is the opposite force of architecture, and architecture is a resultant of an amalgamation of various definitions, right?

I wonder if that is the reason architecture remains wary of the analytical forces that surround its architecture wouldn't know where to initiate this conflict. Let alone how to win it. Anarchy scares architects and the institutions that they recognize, because, according to Oxford, anarchy is a state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority or other controlling systems. Here I wonder, don't we all struggling students and architects possess a tinge of anarchy, as we try to create systems that rebel against the various standards of society and attempt to solve its many issues? (Except maybe the classical studio at YSoA, which just wants to be so "architectural" that even anarchy doesn't know what to do with it.) How about the way the majority of the architecture students strive to create spaces that attempt to be "social condensers" – have you ever considered that maybe the society does not want to be condensed? What about the battles you wage in terms of representation – your architectural drawings are so "representational" that your jurors have to struggle to read your "analogues"? I wonder if The Bloom's studio last fall was hoping to convert eleven architecture students into anarchists? (Certain conservative jurors did not understand why some student's office spaces did not have roofs.)

Now, for a very short moment, let's talk about architecture – specifically at Yale. Most of it is ripped off from the Oxbridge model, and the rest of it stands as a sore-sight for the residents of New Haven. (Repeatedly) have been told by non-architecture students how they do not understand our fascination with the walls they cannot lean against when they smoke – I respond by saying that hey, first of all, you're wrong, we aren't allowed to smoke! But you know, now that's Anarchy – Fck contextualism and originality (I know, I'm going to get roasted on this, because, what side note maybe I should have written something for "Fck that," Vol. 3, Issue 10). Also – yes, I am digressing heavily – let's pretend to pay attention to those who try to critique architecture without actually being an architect, because if there's one thing we agree on, it's how only architects know what architecture truly is. Architects go breathless and teary eyed when confronted with a marvelous structure, but you know what architects do, they say Fck this. (Anarchitects don't cry)

Merely "saving" our sensations. It is well known that some kinds of experiences are more likely to produce memories than others. Numerous studies demonstrate that unfamiliar objects or scenes are more likely to be remembered and probably in more striking detail than mundane, everyday ones. Emotion is another crucial factor. We form long-lasting memories of emotional experiences; experiences that evoke fear, rage, happiness, and sadness, for instance, are much more likely to be tucked away in our brains.

I share these insights into memory formation because I believe that, besides aiding you in remembering all your readings, as architects (not unlike us scientists), you might hope that your work is remembered by others. Based on these findings, I suggest you venture into the unknown, break the rules, deviate from the scripts, and pursue the "anarchitectural" for your work to be remembered in memoir.

merely "saving" our sensations. It is well known that some kinds of experiences are more likely to produce memories than others. Numerous studies demonstrate that unfamiliar objects or scenes are more likely to be remembered and probably in more striking detail than mundane, everyday ones. Emotion is another crucial factor. We form long-lasting memories of emotional experiences; experiences that evoke fear, rage, happiness, and sadness, for instance, are much more likely to be tucked away in our brains.

Architecture project name generator: Self-sufficient eco relay\*

## (An)Architecture of Stepwells

Priyanka Sheth

I grew up in Ahmedabad – a city where the works of Kahn, Corbusier, and Doshi are juxtaposed with traditional *havelis*, stepwells, and community-living models. During my undergraduate years in India, engaging with the city directly was a given, and the city's eclectic nature and idiosyncrasies, anarchitecture if you will, were crucial in shaping a student's architectural sensibilities.

The six years of my undergraduate education strongly focused on architecture built, designed, and constructed by anonymous architects, craftspeople, and patrons. Now at YSoA, I am slowly learning how to attune myself to a pedagogy that is linear and primarily revolves around pioneers, stalwarts, and iconoclasts, and where the line between the name of the architect and their stylistic traits is blurred. Does architecture that does not fit within this pedagogy (that is, one obsessed with styles and -isms) become anarchitecture? Is anarchy inherent to anarchitecture? Bernard Rudofsky famously writes, "There is much to learn from (an)architecture before it became an expert's art." Is all architecture that is not designed by the architect anarchitecture?

Most importantly, what can we learn from anarchitecture?

Stepwells exemplify all the qualities I look for in meaningful architecture. Stepwells are an indigenous and divergent phenomenon found extensively in regions of northwestern India. The architects of many of these structures are unknown, and only a few have plaques that denote the patrons who commissioned them. Many of the smaller stepwells were built by the community, or by rich patrons for communities that could not afford them. From the point of view of mainstream pedagogy and architectural discourse, stepwells may qualify as anarchitecture, but they are certainly not spontaneous or anarchical. They are painstakingly planned, geometric stone structures with a long, stepped corridor leading down three to five stories to a well shaft at the far end. At the surface of the earth, which defines the ground level, an unassuming entrance pavilion is all that is visible – but as one descends the stairs, the increasing complexity of its architecture unfolds.

These are structures I have visited before, during, and after I began studying architecture; each time I was equally impressed, for different reasons altogether. Stepwells combine structural ingenuity with a sensitive response to landscape, climate, society, and necessity. They illustrate a meaningful synthesis of architecture with the earth, sky, and water. The aesthetic value of sculptures, intricate carving, and filigree make the stepwell a repository of exquisite art. The galleries where people rest, socialize, or perform rituals show us how a space can serve multiple functions.

and I don't think anyone is advocating that our projects are without failures – which is why I find it odd that these shortcomings are passed over. The university dishes out tons of tuition money every year to hire world-leading critics, so why should they not state their personal opinions about our projects? They are the experts; their own design insight earned them their status as reputable architects – which is why I find it frustrating when our school's review etiquette doesn't prioritize on this. There is no way that these critics are as polite in their offices when discussing design decisions as they are on reviews, so it's upsetting when they handle us delicately and don't treat us with the criticality we will face in the field.

The prescribed programs of all of our studio projects are great undertakings, and if they someday save the world, even better, but these programs should not be the only focus of our conversations. As students, we need to demand stronger critiques from our reviewers and encourage conversations that challenge our decisions and force us to take stances and justify our design choices. Ultimately, the school and the reviewers do us an immense disservice by treating us with anything less than their professional standards.

## In Defense of Burglary

Cameron Nelson

One obvious and oft-stated way that architecture differs from "fine art" is that people get to touch it. And I don't mean just in a choreographed, choose-your-own-adventure kind of way that presupposes a finite number of decision points and options ("do I use the swinging door or the revolving door?"). People can smear their dirty fingerprints all over it, no matter how much you, the architect, try to stop them. And, perhaps, the harder you try to stop them, the more likely they are to touch. You can't always keep people behind the velvet rope; your closed-circuit television cameras won't catch their every transgression. The paraphernalia of the security state might even inspire transgressions you hadn't even considered, like EMPs for triggering localized blackouts, infrared anti-facial recognition caps, and RFID cloning. New laws and interdictions beget new anarchisms and disobediences. Instead of the swinging door or the revolving door, how about I use the fire escape, or the air ducts?

Personally, I read a supposedly secure building as a challenge. How creatively can I misuse it? How can I infiltrate a roof or a tunnel? I've spent a fair amount of my own sweat and blood in pursuit of the feeling of conquest and looting that comes with straddling airplane warning antennae high above the city lights or the gritty joy of crawling over steam pipes deep underground. "Touching" a building this way is a puzzle. Like any law, a puzzle is begging you to find its loopholes. There's a 24-story skyscraper in downtown Brooklyn that's been mothballed since the recession and has some great views from its unfinished penthouses. Standing inches from passing subways beneath its foundation offers another kind of thrill. You may have visited Hartford and marveled at the gold-leaf dome of Connecticut's capitol building, but have you kayaked the underground river that flows directly beneath its deepest basements?

To *The City*, shares some of my fascination for the ingenuity with which criminals manage to dismantle the intended uses and conditions of a building. However, he frequently forgets that you don't have to be a criminal to think like one. You needn't steal anything nor even be noticed to be a "burglar." FindLaw.com nicely sums up the legal definition of "burglary":

1. unauthorized breaking and entry;
2. into a building or occupied structure;
3. with the intent to commit a crime inside.

The site goes on to note, "The crime has to exist separately from the break-in itself. For example, if an individual uses to a fraud – which is a crime – to gain after-hours entrance to a building to view a piece of art, no burglary has taken place."

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## On Matta-Clark

Sharmin Bhagwagar

While architecture never became Gordon Matta-Clark's profession, his work was inextricably linked with architecture and urbanism as societal products. Although Matta-Clark's procedures could be considered violent – involving the literal "cutting" of buildings to create vertiginous spaces – his intentions seem to be a form of passive resistance and contemplation. It is only in the complexities of Matta-Clark's work that we see the real potential of an "in between" analysis. The complete oeuvre of Gordon Matta-Clark lies "in between" architecture and sculpture, performance and installation, photography and film, and most importantly, permanence and temporality.

In these "in betweens" we begin to see a Foucauldian heterotopology in Matta-Clark's spatiality. Matta-Clark's radical anti-architectural gestures generate questions on state-controlled distribution of property, the growing concerns of modernity, and the inefficacy of postmodernists' responses to these problems. Educated at Cornell under the legacy of Colin Rowe, Matta-Clark certainly had a formalist approach to his characteristic cuts. In many ways, Matta-Clark used modernist formal strategies to rebel against the movement's inadequacies.

"I have based my outlook and my work on those given things in the environment which have passed over into a neglected state ... just as much out of a very personal identification with the cultural and social sense of being." – Matta-Clark.

Matta-Clark's work was often criticized for challenging the sanctity of architectural space and domestic ideals. However, much like his contemporary avant-gardes, he sought to critically question urban environments through tactile and visceral cuts.

### fake Estates, 1973

Beginning in the summer of 1973, Matta-Clark purchased fifteen plots of land in New York City, fourteen in Queens and one in Staten Island. These plots of land were publicly auctioned by the city of New York for prices ranging from \$25 to \$75 each due to their "odd" shapes – some were even narrower than shoulder width. These shapes were carved out due to their incompatibility with the real estate driven ambitions of the gridded plan.<sup>1</sup> Of these odd lots, three of them were triangular plots, strips between two houses and a curb site. In "Fake Estates," Matta-Clark realized that the deviant nature of these odd plots altered their state of being. Matta-Clark saw the act of "acquiring" these "wasteful" plots as tools to creatively criticize spatial organization as an instrument of power. These plots existed due to the imposition of state-regulated zoning, and they embodied a characteristic deviation from the system itself. The act of possessing these plots, in effect, catalyzed a distinct manifestation of heterotopia. These spaces were

## (A)Political Review

Nathan Garcia

A sociopolitically-progressive building program does not guarantee an architectural project's excellence. Many architecture schools are pushing the conversation toward celebrating the program during studio reviews, while the qualities of the architecture and its critical design decisions remain on the side. Ultimately, the bigger conversation about the design development is replaced with discussion about the student's positions on the political goals of the studio, which are often predefined.

During reviews, critics seem to shy away from making statements about their personal opinions, approaches, and design ideologies. Instead, I have found that reviewers tend to avoid decisively stating their position and discussing the student's failures and successes. Anyone who claims that there are not failures in any project is probably wrong,

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## On Remembering the Anarchetypal – A Neuroscientist's Perspective

Usman Farooq

Imagine travelling to the Vatican and visiting St. Peter's Basilica. The architecture awes you while you're there. It becomes a memory you fondly recall for the rest of your life, one that drives you to do your best work, and one that might help you define the kind of architecture you aspire to design. Now, imagine not being able to remember that experience. It shouldn't take long to realize that without these memories, you can't function properly. Without our memories, we are automatons, and not even decent ones. Our memories make us who we are. They are our most prized possessions. They guide us when we are lost; they console us in times of grief. They are imprints of a better past, or even harbingers of a sad future. Memories hold such a pivotal role in our continued existence that debating their nature potentially goes as far back as recorded human history. They have captivated scientists, philosophers, and artists alike. Their nature is debated heavily to this day: What constitutes a memory? How does the brain enable memory formation? Do we retain memories for life, or do they seep away, gradually but surely, with time? Questions still abound.

We form memories of what we have sensed, or so it was believed for a long time. Memories were considered imprints of the external world on the world between our ears. However, the current scientific understanding holds that our formation of memories is a far more complicated matter than

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