Alumni Review:

Dispatch

01

by

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M.Arch '20

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The Dispatch is a new gadget in *Paprika!*'s toolbox. It encourages slowness while continuing the commitment to text printed on paper—here, green on gray. "Dispatches," the editors write in a statement, "are collections of image, text, etc. that are ambiguous in theme and format; each one responds to, analyzes, critiques or further develops past Paprika! Content and/or current events." This spring there will be fewer issues of Paprika! and a handful of dispatches to fill in the gaps. This makes sense for a semester where students remain dispersed and the pandemic still reigns.

It's notable that, in a few short years, Paprika!'s intensity has resulted in a trove of texts and positions such that the community can return to those entries and find meaning. This "compounding conversation," as the editors describe in their letter, invites internal dialogue, a necessary part of any intellectual community. This seems to indicate a healthy spirit of support when the buzzing hive of Rudolph Hall is quieted. Can a publication named after a specific carpet survive when few tread on said floor finish? Likely yes—the show must go on. At a moment where things continue to feel strange-fucked up, more accurately—it's good to see this effort continue, and especially so as a vehicle of care decoupled from some ingrained idea that we must continue to "be productive" just like we were in the before-times. Not so.

This Dispatch's survey includes snippets from the lives of others. These are fun windows into the Zoom life of the school. The difficulty of synchronous learning in different time zones is real—I too have triple-checked my muted status before hustling to my apartment's bathroom. The editors also recommend additional readings from the publication's archive as a way to prepare their audience for this semester's filings.

The bulk of the Dispatch is given over to Joshua Tan's interview with Eric Wycoff Rogers, who wrote about major and minor architectures in Paprika!'s first issue. Rogers graduated in 2015 from Yale's MED program and since then has been active putting some of the ideas encountered there to good use, including the founding of `Nookzu`, a start-up where people can rent micro-environments. There's

`http://www.nookzy.co/` also taken the post-work city, which is a timely concern (Keith Krumwiede taught a studio about it at MIT in 2017, among others who are exploring this future). The conversation ended with fantastic images of their current living space, a neon, electronic, leafy fantasy, complete with a ball pit, all concealed within a generic trailer. It was a welcome contrast to a recent `article about people in tiny houses`.

I'm grossly oversimplifying here, but there's a discernible trend from the early days of the internet—a teeming ecosystem of different sites—to today's situation in which consumption is consolidated onto a handful of platforms. It's also notable that WeWork's co-founders Adam Neumann and Miguel McKelvey grew up on a kibbutz and a commune, respectively, which provided inspiration for the communitarian snake oil that powered the company until it crashed last year.

Rogers states influence from Keller Easterling, who continues to deliver interesting books about latent ways in which our environments are designed and controlled. But Easterling's wordy indirectness gets more difficult to parse when faced with the bluntness of today's crisis. She recently filed an essay called `"On Political Temperament,"`

see Keller Easterling, "On Political Temperament," *The Double Negative*, January 18, 2021, http://www.thedoublenegative.co.uk/2021/01/on-political-temperament-keller-easterling/

which Marianela D'Aprile, in a responding essay titled `"Not Everything is 'Architecture,'"`

see Mariana D'Aprile, "Not Everything is 'Architecture,'" *Common Edge*, January 26, 2021, https://commonedge.org/not-everything-is-architecture/

summarized like this: *"Politics are currently polarized. This creates volatility and the potential for violence in the public realm. The form of political messages matters. Sometimes that form is violence, which is bad. Not everything has to be binary."* D'Aprile goes on to criticize Easterling's project as an academic one that, in its theoryspeak, shuts down action:

Easterling's obtuseness allows her to smuggle in anti-left politics. She can't be pinned down, as her language—"superbug," "sugar," "lumpy"—could mean anything. The inscrutability is both cover for a centrist politics and evidence that Easterling does not care to understand what actually goes on in the world so much as she is committed to projecting some sort of progressive-in-appearance-only theorem onto it.

Easterling's privilege is enabled by her position within academia, which traffics in ideas, versus the wider economic environment, which deals with reality. D'Aprile's brief but strong essay deserves a full read; it's a wake-up call to anyone enamored with She claims that Easterling's work "posits that we can hack capitalism, make it slightly better, design our way out of it. This is nothing but an attempt to circumvent class conflict, which is the only thing [...] that can bring about favorable change." She writes that "architects and other professionals are taught to identify first and foremost with their job; it's a great tool of capitalism to alienate us from our lives and make us servile to nothing other than profit for someone else. But all of our actions don't have to pass through the profession. We can engage with the world as people first—and as workers." In conclusion: "If you're a centrist, say it. But quit trying to hack capitalism." The "hack" here surfaces not as a revolutionary feat, but as a brief short circuit in otherwise uninterrupted flows of capital.

All of this is a roundabout way of saying that, while I learned from this interview with Rogers and appreciate their work, I grow tired of the "minor" project. When is the "major" project going to stage a comeback? It hasn't been around for a while; some might say since Manfredo Tafuri's *Architecture and Utopia* in the mid-1970s, others might cite Francis Fukuyama's "the end of history" idea from 1992. Yes, the minor project is endlessly fascinating—there are hidden stories, obscurities to crate dig, and all permutations of formal experiments to undertake—but the major project is one with the capacity to change the System.

Rogers rightfully talks about interiors trends as a form of the major, but it goes deeper than that—as they mention, a popular aesthetic easily "perpetuates itself without architects." This is the core of Tafuri's critique: To produce form without utopia is to resign the architect to a place of `"sublime uselessness."` We're all just

see Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," *Contropiano* 1 (January–April 1969), trans. Stephen Sartarelli, https://monoskop.org/images/7/79/Tafuri_Manfredo_1969_1998_Toward_a_Critique_of_Architectural_Ideology.pdf.

financial instrument decorators unless there's a larger apparatus at work. What about labor reforms that would help architects (or designers, more broadly) earn a living wage or address student debt? What about initiatives that broaden the clientele for architecture, which would increase the slim part of the population that directly engages with practicing architects? What about architecture's active role in the crises of our time, namely climate change, through the design of our buildings and cities? What architecture's role within the global history of colonialism and the embedded spatialities of racism? What about the ongoing effort to diversify the profession, which will only serve to strengthen it? What about decommodifying housing, which would define it as a right and not an investment? These are major issues! They can be approached through hacks, but systemic changes would be a rising tide that lifts all boats.

In music, there's a cadence called a `Picardy third`, in

see "Picardy Third," Wikipedia, April 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picardy_third.

which a series of minor chords resolves, unexpectedly, to a major chord. The "wrongness/grief" of the minor is terminated by the "rightness/happiness" of the major. The sound, once you know it, appears in many genres, to the extent that some label it as "unremarkable, or even clichéd." Despite all evidence to the contrary, I remain hopeful that there will be upcoming sociopolitical Picardy thirds—shifts in which the minor ideas about big change that are under discussion develop a legitimate chance of becoming major reforms. It might take some time, but it's so important.

Some of the ideas that continue to power start-up culture have their roots in the spatial experiments of the late 1960s. When Rogers describes the goal of Spontaneum as the emphasis of "the contingency of urban spaces, and [the demonstration of] the latent potentiality and abundance that saturated the city," this has the same ambitions as Haus-Rucker-Co or Hans Hollein, among others.

But the initial egalitarianism of Silicon Valley appears to be nearly extinct as companies exploded in size, VC funding, market valuation, and universal usage. The "minor" little-guy operations of the 1990s and early 2000s are now "major" digital institutions. It seems like the only site that didn't totally sell out is Craigslist. "Hacking" is how new ideas start, and remains relevant: Rogers describes the power of "the hack" as the "basis of startup culture." I know there are "subversive, radical, interesting and out-of-the-box thinkers" still left in Silicon Valley, but they seem to be small in number and their work results in fewer big contributions (`Signal is one`, though).

see Anna Weiner, "Taking Back Our Privacy," *New Yorker*, October 19, 2020, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/10/26/taking-back-our-privacy

The "hack" dims in value when we witness the huge re-shaping of public consciousness underway thanks to companies like Facebook and Twitter that now deliver so much of the content we see, which in turn makes us less engaged and knowledgeable, according to `one study`.

see Amy Mitchell, Mark Jurkowitz, J. Baxter Oliphant, and Elisa Shearer, "Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable," Pew Research Center, July 30, 2020, https://www.journalism.org/2020/07/30/americans-who-mainly-get-their-news-on-social-media-are-less-engaged-less-knowledgeable/

The conversation—and Rogers's exciting body of work—reminds me of the deep connection between architectural counterculture and the origins of Silicon Valley, a trajectory explained in Fred Turner's amazing *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism.*

see Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/F/bo3773600.html

see Danielle Braff, "The Drawbacks of Living in a Tiny Home During a Pandemic," *New York Times*, February 12, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/12/realestate/tiny-house-pandemic.html.

dealing with the pandemic.

It feels ...

Dispatch 03

Dear Readers,

As we approach the end of this semester, let us take a moment and reflect upon the weeks that just flew by and ponder upon how we managed to deal with the (semi-) virtual Yale School of Architecture. Dispatch 03: "It feels..." attempts to provide this reflection.

In this Zoom age, it is difficult for us to gather in studio and discuss the recent issues addressed in *Paprika!*. We value the different reactions towards recent issues and wish to embrace and voice this diversity of thoughts within our community.

We would also like to express our gratitude to YOU for contributing to the weekly check-ins that allowed us to record our emotional well-being throughout this semi-Zoom semester. We hope you enjoy the curation of written responses and open-to-interpretation survey results in this dispatch!

Take care!

The Power of Queerness

by

Gray Golding

(B.A. '18)

*Gray Golding, aspiring professor of architectural history and theory, enjoys things from before their time that persist into the present and future, like vinyl records, zines, and radical political theory.

I.

Orienting (pun intended)

When I was a junior in undergrad, a graduating M.Arch friend told me point blank: "The M.Arch cohorts here are so straight." My understanding of what this friend meant is still developing four years later; this statement referred to individual students, certainly, but as the recent *Paprika!* article "The Subversive Power of Queer-ish Identity" proved, it could easily be applied to a collective ideology that allows for nominally queer appeals to respectability politics. These appeals can be described as homonormative. Thus, rather than setting the record straight, as it were, I wish to offer a queer counterpoint.

As many people likely already know, in people of all genders, sexualities, and absences thereof, gender *identity* as an internally felt site of belonging and gender expression as an external manifestation coded by societal norms cannot help but interact. Identity is not equal to expression, but nor can the former be wholly distinguished/separated from the latter. A man-cis or trans, or of any sexuality-might choose expressions that are coded as masculine, feminine, or most likely some combination of the two.

Taking this as a presupposition (which I wholeheartedly do), I fail to comprehend how "a lesbian woman flirting with a male gender presentation" or "a trans man choosing to adopt feminine mannerisms" "operate within the existing cis/heteronormative infrastructure." What is cis/heteronormative about lesbian identity, transgender identity, or a gender presentation that defies expectations? The assumption implicit in the mention of a "trans man choosing to adopt feminine mannerisms"—that trans men's identity must align with a masculine presentation because if a trans man enjoys a feminine presentation, why not identify with the assigned gender that supposedly aligns with feminine presentations—is one that relies heavily on cisnormativity, but the trans man in question does not.

II.

Queer as in transgender (but not transient)

Arguably, the above section already refutes many of the integral assumptions in "Queer-ish," but it would be remiss to not also address the proffered manipulation of well-known and personally beloved queer theory.

Scholars have already observed the phenomenon where "individuals... can, may, or do operate within the existing cis/heteronormative infrastructure and societal architecture while embracing a loose and transient connection to the queer community or tenets of being queer," or put another way, the phenomenon where people who hold potentially queer identities espouse "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and `consumption`." This

Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2003, 50.

politics is popularly known not as "queer-ish," but as homonormativity.

Actively referencing Duggan's formulation, José Esteban Muñoz himself rejects homonormativity in all forms of worldbuilding (necessarily including urbanism and architecture) when he writes, "Abstract utopias falter, because they are untethered from any historical consciousness. Concrete utopias are relational to historically situated struggles, a collectivity that is actualized or potential. In our everyday life abstract utopias are akin to banal optimism. (Recent calls for gay or queer optimism seem too close to elite homosexual evasion of `politics`.)"

José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, New York: NYU Press, 2009, 3.

III.

Queer as in radically transformative

"Queer-ish" argues that "through the pervasive proliferation of queer-ish identity in contemporary culture, slight ripples, slight creases in the social fabric aggregate into an incessant quivering slightly below the framework, queer-ish identity gradually transforms the space into a fluid realm while preserving the infrastructure." Not only does this hypothesis rely on the metaphor of the "trickle-down" effect (notably, an effect that has been proven in economics to be utterly fictional and was first formulated to describe the economics of the Reagan presidency—a presidency also known amongst queer people for its enabling of genocide), but it also ignores actual, concrete examples in which the opposite has been true.

Geographer Darren J. Patrick has addressed precisely how homonormativity and physical, urban, architectural infrastructure interact. They first assert the relative prevalence of white, cisgender, gay men in urban spatial politics, using the example of the founders of the non-profit that financed the redevelopment of the High Line in New York City. They also detail the ways in which the High Line has contributed to violent gentrification in nearby neighborhoods, causing material harm to people of color/queer people who do not experience the privileges of being wealthy, white, cis, and male. In sum, "the redevelopment of the High Line consolidated an increasingly insidious and naturalized urban homonormativity, sidelining, silencing, or displacing the politics of race and racialization, class, and gender by way of normalizing white gayness as a crucial part of the survival of urban `capitalism`."

Darren J. Patrick, "Of Success and Succession: A Queer Urban Ecology of the High Line," in *Deconstructing the High Line: Postindustrial Urbanism and the Rise of the Elevated Park* (eds. Christoph Lindner and Brian Rosa), New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017, 147.

In short: accepting cis/heteronormative worlds and rejecting potentials for queer ones (knowingly or not) does not and cannot subvert literal or metaphorical structures of hegemonic power. "Queer-ish identity," also known as homonormativity, can only serve to reify these structures to the detriment of queer and trans people of color such as myself.

Weekly Check-in Survey Results

The data presented on this sheet is the result of 10 weeks of survey within the YSoA community. Quantitatively, we asked participants about their feeling of the week's stress level, productivity, motivation, and sleeping schedule. Qualitatively, we asked for a reflection of the best thing that happened throughout the week and another question that varied week-by-week.

The graphs are meant to be open to interpretation. Correlation does not necessarily mean causation. The written submissions may also inspire you, the readers, in times of boredom (during the pandemic).

Q. What kept you going through those rough times?
- Zoom catch-ups with my friends
- In-person interaction
- THE BOYZ!
- Delusion
- My section and I managed to get pretty close last semester despite social constraints- they're like a second family now
- taking a walk in the sunshine
- Sleeping
- Taking lots of breaks
- Exercising
- Architecture
- Remembering that these moments of struggle are temporary.
- making a good meal
- Can't stop won't stop

Q. Would you mind sharing with us what kept you going during stressful times this week?
- running
- Stress shopping
- Seeing peers at studio
- Talking to people and seeing them in person!
- The thought of the weekend
- Returning to Rudolph for the first time since break and feeling like our class is getting closer + more comfortable as a group. Such an encouraging start to the semester.
- My partner constantly checking in with me and asking me to talk about my stress
- disassociating

Q. Something new that I learnt from my peers?
- Washroom and bathroom are the same thing
- The WireCut command on Rhino
- How to make a section in Rhino :-)

Q. Something to rant? (fine if you don't have any :D)
- everything I say feels not relevant after saying it. that awkward pause proves it.

Q. What comforting food did you eat when you felt stressed out this week?
- hot chettos
- Anything that allows me to forget about Adam Hopfner and Tratties Davies
- Smoothies
- Burger
- Pizza
- Nutty Buddy bars
- Nutella
- Cheez-its
- Ice cream

Q. What's a critical question that you thought of this week?
- Why panopticon is still relevant today…
- Will I ever get a day to do just no school work?
- Is anyone okay?
- what does our world look like in the future?
- What the hell are we doing here (at YSOA specifically)
- Why does the concept of the weekend not exist for architects?

Q. Something you look forward to doing in portfolio week(break)?
- Sleeping, cleaning, debriefing the past few months
- Being outside
- avoiding doing any work on my portfolio
- Sleeeeeeep
- No alarms
- Actually updating my portfolio sry I'm lame

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- Had a surprisingly enjoyable afternoon of midterm reviews
- I did a 90 minute workout at Orange Theory fitness and felt completely sore but completely amazing afterward :)
- Portfolio Week
- YCBA and spring break!

Q. What was the highlight of portfolio week?
- getting out of new haven
- visiting british art museum and getting out of new haven!
- being social
- finishing my portfolio
- went biking through the city, it was such nice weather
- sleep/ mentally taking care of myself

Q. What's a nice thing you said to somebody this week?
- youre on track!
- you are beautiful
- youre the best
- great drawing!
- you do have a face behind your mask!
- casual compliments are a lot harder when you never see your classmates… :(

Q. 4 more weeks to end of sem, how do you feel about that?
- too much to do. no motivation to do. inspiration flew out the window
- too soon!!! summer no plans ~scary~
- so pumped
- auguhguhg uhguhguhguhg
- please hurry
- yikes
- leisure is collapsing under the weight of impending deadlines
- felt like it just started

Q. What's a moving movie you watched recently?
- regrettably (?), the last movie i watched was camp rock
- raya and the last dragon
- no time to watch movies :(
- nope. but lots of comfort shows happening i.e. schitt's creek
- i had a dream i watched a documentary about people crying from loving the book the little prince and i cried in my dream
- us and them, gie, someones wifeintheboatof someoneelses hsuband

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PRODUCTIVITY LEVEL

Productive / Self-motivation / 70% / 65% / 60% / 55% / Medium Productivity / Low Productivity / Motivated By Stress

MOTIVATION

HOURS OF SLEEP

STRESS LEVEL

High Stress / 3-5am / 70% / 65% / 55% / MediumStress / 1-3am / Low Stress / 11-1am

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Q. Where were you during Inauguration?
- In my parent's kitchen
- Making a Trump Pinata with some YSOA friends- which we then happily destroyed.
- In bed watching it
- havent left my apartment since march D:
- alone in my one-bedroom apartment, crying happy tears all day
- Couch quarantine

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- Tuesday movie night was a nice break (thank you TFs)
- Group work that went off surprisingly well over zoom!
- Got to meet people who were remote last semester! :)
- Feeling supported all week and then when I was feeling better, they recognized that I was and commented on that. It felt kind of like, "bad times are over"

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- Spending time with people !
- zoom cath-up with previous studio professor after an year, it reminded me of pre-covid studio.
- Sunshine
- Our appointed counselor is such a good resource and everyone should aim and see her
- Valentine's Day as an excuse to eat supcakes

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- Speaking to compassionate professors
- My BP group finally has a scheme!
- took a field trip to the Yale Forest
- Nothing
- my render looks good :)
- Friends in upper years giving wisdom <3

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- The relief of hiding self view on zoom!
- Relaxing with a movie after a long week of BP, studio, and structures
- Had a late night chat with a friend that made me realize I hope they're in my life for a long time
- My family is healthy
- Blossoming friendships

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- unsure I am moody
- The sun, getting a letter from an old friend, and making new friends at YSoA :)
- hearing your old professer use the words you strung together last year feels pretty good <3 and friends sending throwbacks from thetogethertimes<3
- the 6on7 come back!
- my mom got vaccinated!

Everybody is healthy :-)
- ngl it was a good week professionally but a shit week personally and theres no bubble :(
- a few hours of good work.
- social gathering!
- 6 on 7!
- late night music session
- brunch
- a 12-hour-long 6on7 on the lawn
- watching everybody's midterm presentation so motivating!

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- sunshine and good relationships
- getting to know my classmates better!
- fun events randomly!
- the week off
- Group work with cute friends!
- dancing with our dispatch editors in my tiny studio apartment

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- received many love and support after something bad happened
- late night walk
- i dunno im sad im sorry
- finishing structures midterm …
- basked in the sun in a park
- sleeping like a normal human being

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- getting to appreciate the longer days (even though ive been working indoors most of the time)
- made a therapy appointment
- my nephew's easter outfit was amazing
- self-quarantining so that my close friends can stay safe
- wait I just figured out that these polls might be for yale students only?!?!?!

Q. What's the best thing that happened this week for you? Remember to count your blessings :)
- got some internship offers
- got an internship offer
- getting a few interviews from the career fair. not so much excited by the interviews as i am excited that this career process is almost over :) it was a month of anxiety tbh
- V-A-C-C-I-N-E
- got a new dress
- HANDSOME DAN

Lottery Week | **Week 1** | **Week 2** | **Week 3** | **Week 4** | **Week 5** | **Midterm Week** | **Portfolio Week** | **Week 8** | **Week 9** | **Week 10**