

NOITCIFICTION

Caitlin Baiada, M.Arch '18

Due to its clear delineation from social reality, the mirror of fiction has historically allowed exploration of themes that prove too controversial when presented in everyday life. At the same time as Spinoza's expulsion from Amsterdam's Talmud Torah congregation due to his vocal denouncement of Judaism, audiences were applauding Shakespeare's depictions of incest (Pericles, Prince of Tyre), madness (Hamlet), and racism (Othello). Fiction, framed from a perspective of instigation and inquisition rather than truth, removes the subject from the statement and thus serves as invitation rather than manifesto. Invitations of literature, theater, music, dance, comedy, visual art, and even architecture hold the power to harness taboo as a *productive* social construct. Not *productive* in the sense of positive contribution, but in acknowledgement of the reflexive relationship between fiction and taboo as a mechanism for the production of social ideology. Pierre Bourdieu's 'reflexive ideology' claims a "double reality of the social world" in that humans reflexively (often subconsciously) create their own social circumstances:

> A soccer field is "not given to [the player]...but [is] present as the immanent term of his practical intentions... Each maneuver undertaken by the player modifies the character of the field and establishes new lines of force in which the action in turn unfolds and is accomplished, again altering the phenomenal field."1

Thus, as a device for social critique, allegorical parallels are powerful tools for awareness and dialog that can further embed or disintegrate existing

How architecture performs as a 'fiction' remains unclear—is it a constructed narrative, a reality, or somewhere in between? Most fictions (performed, written, or visual) are clearly delineated from the rituals of day to day life—we are aware when we sit down to read Catch-22, watch an episode of *Black Mirror*, or view a William Kentridge installation. In these contexts, we can recognize the role of fiction as a mirror to reinforce or ridicule politics, economy, religion, and other prominent realms of power. The cloudiness of architecture lies in the blurred boundaries between artistic expression, theoretical investigation, and functional service to humanity. Its financial ties to corporate and government policy further obfuscate our awareness of architecture as fiction subconsciously influencing social ideology. So we ask ourselves how does the 'fictional toolset' of exaggeration, juxtaposition, analogy, fantasy, and double entendre translate

Although PoMo used architectural invention as a sort of 'fiction', critique remained self-referential within the field of architecture, providing little commentary on society at large. On the other hand, utopian proposals such as Superstudio's, 12 Cautionary Tales For Christmas directly address the dehumanization and isolation resulting from the machine age, but fail to manifest as physical architecture, remaining within the realm of 'literature'. The National Museum of African American History and Culture, however, communicates a narrative of pride in difference, serving as a mirror for reflection upon our country's contentious race relations. Filling the last empty lot on Washington's National Mall, The National Museum of African American History and Culture, proudly stands as a 'dark presence on the mall' (Adjaye's own words) against a 'sea of white marble and limestone.'2 In today's volatile socio-political climate, architects must recognize the heightened insidious power of their work, resulting from user's subjugation without conscious choice. Unlike other artforms, the lack of awareness of architecture as fiction makes it that much more powerful, in that existing paradigms are reproduced, backgrounded, and accepted as truth. Its up to us, as architects, to take responsibility and write the fictions that will become the realities of our world.

Pierre Bourdieu, An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

Ari Shapiro and Maureen Pao, Mission Of African-American Museum Writ Large In Its Very Design, NPR, http://www.npr.org/2016/09/15/ 493909656/mission-of-african-american-muse um-writ-large-in-its-very-design

BETWEEN THE SACRED AND PROFANE

Interview with Karla Britton, Lecturer, Yale School of Architecture

You are a scholar of modern and religious architecture, can you describe what draws you to these subjects? In keeping with your theme of "taboo," my current research addresses modern religious buildings in unfamiliar and "marginal" places. I have long been drawn, for example, to the churches at the pueblos and reservations in

the landscapes of my youth in the American Southwest which have remained unaccommodated and outside the mainstream of most architectural histories. Also, the widespread territorial rearrange ments in the post-World War II period produced huge demographic movements in religion, such as the migration of Christianity out of the West and into the Global South. I'm interested in reading key examples of the architectural manifestations of this religious migration (often by followers of the Modern Movement)—in diverse places like the Navajo Nation; sub-Saharan Africa: India: and the Dominican Republic.

I'm particularly interested in how architects articulated the dissonance between universals and localized cultures; between the sacred and the secular; between theology and new building technologies; and the ways in which the religious building is used as a focal point for modernization, ritual, myth, and ancient symbolism. The focus is largely on the migration of Christianity out of Europe and North America, but there are obviously parallels with other religious traditions as well. My research also brings into relationship the two trajectories of my scholarly work: the exactitude and the ineffable.

After the most recent presidential election, the word "post-truth" has come to be a hallmark of our political environment. How do you see the architect evolving politically with this institutionalized condition?

The sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote, "If the thinker does not relate himself to the value of truth in political struggle, he cannot responsibly cope with the whole of lived experience."

By your response, it would seem that you hold the architect to a high regard as an author intimately engaged with "truth." Can you elaborate on how "truth" relates to the discipline of archi-

tecture and the architect? Speaking in broad terms, the architect has often been understood as someone who is committed to a very public role. I'm not alone in believing that the architect should be trained to have the capacity for considered thought and judgment, and an independent voice, and in the most general sense, be able to contemplate knowingly the human condition itself. The architect should, I think, advance knowledge through humane understanding and study, coming to some appreciation of what is truthful and of value through her own productive activity. Aiming to be bold in the affirmation of such humane values is especially urgent now for the architect as she participates within the current media ecosystem in which, as President Obama described, "everything is true and nothing is true."

For some architects, like Le Corbusier, religious and sacred structures seem to be a foil to an otherwise robust body of architectural work. For example, you have argued that Ronchamp is the foil to the machine-like modernism of Le Corbusier. As a typology, why are religious and sacred buildings more difficulty to place within a critical arc of work?

Sacred architecture does not fit easily within a modernist pedagogical approach to architecture which emphasizes a rational organization and clear articulation of built-form. Instead. sacred architecture often implies a different kind of genealogy which is found in sentiments, ritual, mystery, and instincts. As Rafael Moneo has said, to design a building or a church or a temple today, implies risk on the part of the architect; the architect cannot rely on a shared vision of religious space, but instead must risk offering his or her own version of sacred space.

> You've admitted you have received some opposition on your scholarship of sacred spaces within architecture. Why do you think there is a debate around this subject?

Yes, some of my colleagues have perceived the topic as unfashionable and on the fringe. Perhaps it is out of fear of the ways the topic suggests a kind of fundamentalism. Vincent Scully wrote in 2010 that fifty years ago the topic of "sacred" architecture was easier to address than it is now, for we could affirm with some confidence that the role of specifically religious structures as embodiments of the sacred was dwindling. Yet while elements of the sacred might be perceived in many kinds of modern buildings, in fact the attainment of the sacred was one of the well-hidden agendas of canonical modern architecture as a whole. Today, though, he said we are less certain of this and the issue has become more

complicated and even dangerous. Your research and coursework is also interested in the intersection of classicism and modernization. This pairing has clear lineage and has a legible stylistic language. We are now in a undefined architectural period. How can we understand ideas such as continuity and exactitude in our time? Do these ideas even exist?

Although now countercultural and even provisional, the themes of continuity and exactitude in my experience opens

up today the possibility for a self-examination of our discipline. These themes encourage reflection on the vocation of the architect; on the difference between building and architecture. Examining the practices of architects who are self-consciously interested in continuity generates discussion about the relative importance of cohesion in the profession or the need for an architect today to have a consistent

working methodology. There is no doubt we have all encountered sacred and profane spaces. However, we seldom speak of the "unorthodox" in architectural thinking and practice. In your opinion, why has the discourse of architecture been stripped of its more illicit possibilities in favor of its

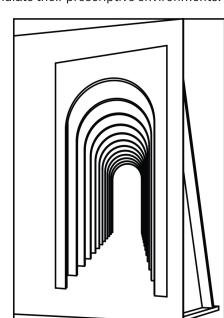
more pure intentions? I think architecture increasingly offers us the possibility for being "illicit"—if we mean by illicit that which is forbidden by law, rules or custom. Today architecture itself is in many ways a marginal and anachronistic discipline, so if we use it to hold onto concepts that are quite anachronistic to our lives—themes of serenity, the sacred, and the magical to name just a few—I think we are well within an unorthodox practice.

STAGING A DISASTER

James Coleman, M.Arch '18

"Bow or not? Call back or not? Recognize him or not?" our hero wondered in indescribable anguish, "or pretend that I am not myself, but somebody else strikingly like me, and look as though nothing were the matter. Simply not I, not I—and that's all, said Mr. Golyadkin, taking off his hat to Andrey Filippovitch and keeping his eyes fixed upon him. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Double*

In the age of big-studio "docu-dramas" influenced by indie-realism and the cacophony of surreal events in the media, certain films have shrugged-off the Stanislavski technique opting instead for testimonial accountability, arguing authenticity cannot be culled from an actor's psyche but is beholden to accuracies of others' real-life experiences. These aren't actors then, but reenactors, and they require the architectural accoutrements that best emulate their prescriptive environments.



Likewise, emergency personnel with ballooning budgets and everevolving threats of terrorism and natural disasters require simulated training environments just as accurate as their real-life counterparts, but that are capable of being thrown into confused devastation at will. In this effort, emergency personnel have found disaster film sets a more than suitable substitution.

The architectures of these simulations are therefore endowed with a responsibility to "get it right," to both use the knowledge of its actors (or participants) to inform the environment, and use the authenticity of the environment to inform its actors.

This produces a perplexing identity crisis, something Kaufman-esque, that is, the positioning of the simulation within the frame of the real that prefigures it, forcing the real to defend its realness through the framework of the simulation, which the simulation then appropriates to validate its own authenticity.1 Take the example of the following quote from the making of the film "World Trade Center" (Paramount Pictures, 2006):

"They used some of the rescue workers in the filming. The guys that dug us out were there redigging us out again in the film. They used the people that were there that day, what they saw, what they did, and how they did it, and had them doing those roles in the movie."

Through their shared liability, these two systems become architecturally linked processes perpetuating singular events.² It is therefore not farfetched to imagine a city that acts like a city, that is informed by, and informs, a real counterpart. Within these spaces, it is possible to elucidate new understandings of the relation of architecture to the urban traumatic event where—even though infused with the postmodern rhetoric of simulation—they are

indelibly tied to suffering and death, and therefore act and produce with extreme sincerity.

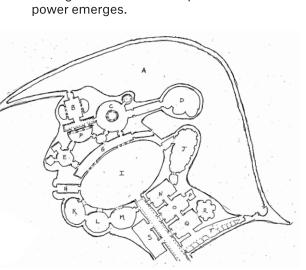
Like the remake of a film, the simulation perpetuates via consensus,3 cyclically informing its own disruptions through which it revises its architectures. This could be understood as a type of cineplastic dialogue, an architecture whose resemblance doesn't refer to a predecessor, but acts like a sibling, facilitating event not through program but through its likeness. The event then has the ability to play out in reality, changing the referent, and therefore the architecture of its simulation. In this scenario there is no longer a causal relationship between a building and its imageability, because by providing an architectural authenticity, the building works to argue the realness of the simulated environment.

"Staging a Disaster" is in response to a project prompt to design an Emergency Management Center for New York City. See Charlie Kaufman's Synecdoche, New York, where a stage director (Philip Seymour Hoffman), auditions a man named Sammy (Tom Noonan) to Sammy: "I've been following you for twenty years. So I knew about this audition. Because I follow you... I've learned everything about you by following you Hire me and you will see who you truly are." "Violence in itself may be perfectly banal and inoffensive. Only symbolic violence is generative of singularity. And in this singular event, in the Manhattan disaster movie, the twentieth century's two elements of mass fascination are combined: the white magic of the cinema and the black magic of terrorism; the white light of the image and the black rorism, London: Verso, 2002, p. 30. "This is what is called consensus. The intrinsic constitution of the system is not subject to radical upheaval, only revision." Jean-Francois Lyotard, modern Fables, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 199.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF ANGELS

Mark Foster Gage, Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, Yale School of Architecture

With perhaps a bit less drama than Alan Ginsburg I've seen the best architectural minds of my generation destroyed by a dedication to reasonable, factual, truthy data—the starving hysterical belief that architecture can only emerge from its study, its mapping, its diagramming, and its increasingly unforgiving constraints. Hillary Clinton, the Enlightenment, and the world-at-large have recently been punked by the dark, yet ironically illuminating, machinations of Donald Trump as he reveals to us the comical hilarity of this reliance—of a collective political life based in fact. As architecture continually wonders what happened to her historic and now seemingly-mythical political powers, she might learn a trick or two from the orange-toned playbook of Trumpian fictions. Every cloud has a silver lining, and perhaps architectures in this storm can be the realization that not every architectural decision needs to emerge from truthy analysis, and that architecture might perhaps re-awaken a revised relationship with the aesthetic and speculative powers of fiction—the deep well of magic from which Trumps true



Through aesthetically reconfiguring what philosopher Jacques Rancière refers to as the "Distribution of the Sensible," architecture may now have the right intellectual tools to abandon the analytical and critical in favor of the parafictional and speculatively aesthetic. Instead of relying on architecture to truthfully analyze and critique the world as it is through architecturally revealing its facts, architects might instead produce powerful fictions of their own as they speculate about the world as they want it to be. The burgeoning interest in philosophies that could productively and politically structure this potential including Object Oriented Ontology, Accelerationism, and Xenofeminismtell us that as a discipline we are unsatisfied with the ineffective impotence of design through dry reason, data, and limp critical inquiry. That these are losing strategies is hardly surprising given that, as a recent Associated Press-GFK poll reminds us, 77% of the American population believes in angels. Actual angels—not the Oprah giving away cars kind. Reason, in the form of data and it's analysis may no longer be a productive strategy to convince Americans of, well, anything, and an architecture predicated on such dedication to factual data may be far less powerful than our Enlightenmentfueled lore of architectural modernism, or even OMA, has led us to believe. What is needed now is not a louder. more hysterical emphasis on facts, but rather a new class of leaders armed

with productive political fictions

be exemplary and groundbreaking This is because they bring crucial social questions to bear on our understanding of technology. I also find it interesting that they all teach at Yale. I have never thought about that before. It occurs to me now for the first time.

In response to your last question—what I would say in response to those who are critical of studios that engage with the contemporary world—I would first want to know why they are critical. I would say that we should make these critiques more public—and that they deserve a nuanced response

We need to remind ourselves that the discussions that we're having today—about technology and design and architecture and politics—are in many ways not unique; some of the most exciting theoretical contributions to architecture from the last century came from people who had the courage to share their ideas with people who did not necessarily agree with them, who presented their arguments as forcefully and candidly as they could, but without losing their sense of respect for The Other. I think that is really important. We always need to leave room for The Other. When we foreclose this sort of opportunity, when we become too sure of ourselves, we are in deep trouble. Architecture is rich and exciting and inspirational precisely because it is messy and uncomfortable.

KEN'S BODY KEN'S CHOICE

Paul Rasmussen, M.Arch '17 What is more inherent: the body or the

Hannah Novack, M.Arch '17

mind? Ken is a product of patriarchal capitalism, presented with the "perfect" body. His corrupting sexuality is purposefully obscured. Ken is a human without any overt genitalia. Ken presents as cisgendered, but is, in fact, sexless. This has caused crippling anxiety for Ken. Ken has been able to overturn the "natural" condition of his body, and install a penis implant through the utilization of 3D technology. The Xenofeminist asserts that nature has been used to justify and perpetuate the patriarchy. The natural state is by no means sacrosanct. Xenofeminism asserts that "if nature is unjust, change nature!"





This project explores the physical implementation of Xenofeminism's extreme prophecies for technology in relation to the human body. While the objects of this project were at a human scale, we believe these same principles can also be deployed at architectural and urban scales. More broadly, the seminar challenges students to capture abstract concepts in corporeal, representative objects. These philosophical discussions are reframed through a finite, tangible lens, rooted in a physical reality.

"Ken" was produced for Mark Foster Gage's Fall 2016 Seminar "Theory Through Objects"

UNDIGESTED MORSELS

Interview with Joseph Heathcott, Associate Professor of Urban Studies, The New School

Urban studies is a very broad

discipline. Can you describe the

particularities of your research and interests? My own work these days has to do

with how we relate to the architecture and urbanism around us, less so the spectacular edifices than the nondescript precincts of our cities. You could say that I am mesmerized by the ordinary, by the stupefying rhythms of serial spaces. I pursue this work in several registers, including traditional scholarship, curatorial projects, and visual practices such as photography, mapping, and agit-prop. I make images not simply for illustration, but as a method for producing knowledge.

I've written extensively about the construction of planning and design knowledge, and how such knowledge is entwined with race, class, and the projection of urban imaginaries. To be an urbanist is to ply a curious trade:

we study the very thing that surrounds us from day to day. As an urbanist, I am not just proximate to my 'object' of study, I am constituted by it (cue Twilight Zone music).

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A lot of your research documents areas of cities that are 'damaged' in some way—the rough edges of urbanity. You also have tackled issues of race and gender in relation to urban development. To what extent do you feel the 'fear' of exploring taboo subjects restricts progress in our urban environments?

By taboo I will assume we mean more than simply forbidden, because whatever is forbidden tends to be foremost on our minds. Rather, we are probably talking about things repressed, forgotten, fugitive, disimminent. Of course, we ignore these subjects at our peril, because what we ignore comes back to haunt us, like undigested morsels sending signals up through our

Here I would point to three lacunae in the bestiary of underexplored architecture and urbanism: one categorical, one typological, and one ontological. The first is what I will call the lacunae of the vernacular. Architects design very few of the world's buildings; most emerge out of manifold small-scale, self-organizing endeavors—what we call "the vernacular." Architectural education, however, focuses primarily on the tiny sliver of singular, expert-designed buildings. Very few studios devote effort to the serial and the mundane where most of us dwell.

The second lacunae is that of the mundane program. We seldom challenge architecture students to confront the ordinary typologies that comprise the bulk of the urban landscape—the equipment sheds and storage facilities, warehouses and light industrial plant, trucking depots and call centers, gas stations and fast food joints. And we don't invite students to bury themselves within and to wind through extant architecture, to make it recombinant, absurd, ugly, or routine. Nor do we ask them to grapple with property systems, land use policies, real estate laws, and the political economy of materials. We tend to reduce these to "context," but they are more: they are constituents of design—they are design.

The third lacunae is what I will call the problem of the forlorn subject. Who uses our architecture? Who adapts it to new uses, when, and why? Who dwells there, loves there, eats, sleeps, and dies there? Are our designs neutral fields on which actors flow smoothly, or do we project and conjure those actors—indeed their very subjectivities—through our architecture? We seldom design for the day laborer, the waste collector, the magician, the sex industry worker, the circus performer, the custodian, the house cleaner, the chanteuse or the charlatan.

Much of your work explores themes that counter pristine images of urban development -subjects that are undesirable to many or overlooked and frequently ignored. What is it that you find in these themes that unlocks something about the city which you feel is vital?

Well, I think a lot of it has to do with growing up in the deindustrializing Midwest, I think that more than anything has bent me toward the banal. So when I use techniques of architectural photography, for example, it's not to celebrate iconic buildings, but to explore the bland landscapes that surround us day after day after day. When I spent five weeks in Mexico City recently, my main goal wasn't to ogle the Centro Historico, but to see the Abasto—the city's great wholesale food market.

So why is the mundane so important? If you begin with the premise that the city is greater than the sum of its parts, but that the whole is ultimately unattainable, this raises the stakes for exploring the margins and interstices. If the city is an uncanny cipher, you have to look for it through its trace—through its signals and noise, layers and edges, ghosts and hoaxes, fetishes and dreams. These collude and unravel at the margins, and it is there that we see the city's backstage take shape as a weird scene of hasty utility, of make-do'ness, unencumbered by aesthetic pretense or pomposity.

So there I am, searching those interstitial spaces and recombinant environs that best reveal something of the urban.

Your urban research looks not at the urban traditions (rule book) but mainly presents sometimes uncomfortable realities of our cities. Do you feel that much of urban planning's tendency to use historical precedent (i.e. avenues) has created a framework which ignores the exploration of urban failure?

Absolutely, though I would go a step further and say that we don't even have proper language to describe success and failure. We are bamboozled by our own categories, flummoxed by our lack of imagination. We explored this in the film The Pruitt-Igoe Myth, but I don't think we went far enough. The problem isn't that we ignore failure, it's that our very notions of "success" and "failure" are overdetermined by

the epistemological frameworks of charing and design. That said, I am indeed interested in the "rule book," as you put it, but more so in how it was constructed over time. That is, I am not so interested in describing how planners engage the world, but rather uncovering the knowledge they construct about the world in order to engage it.

Your work appears to be concerned with the forgotten audiences and constituents of architecture. At times, this complex, chaotic, and even messy entanglement of actors overwhelms the architect's vision of control, however artificial it may be. How do you manage this complexity and chaos in your own research and guiding students with their representations of the city?

What if exploring this complexity and entanglement WAS the purpose of architecture? We have received a vision of architecture as a clarification of the world, grand statements in stone or steel. But architecture can be so much more, and perhaps so much less too. Invisible global threads, and small things forgotten.

For my part, I wouldn't say I have a handle on how to manage complexity, but I do find it essential to be immersed in it. This involves several interlocking processes, and students who work with me learn this from the get-go. First, we have to account for all of the actors, interests, and networks that converge in the sites or processes we study. We map these actors and networks in detail, along with the laws, policies, and politics that organize the world. Then we complicate these on the ground through fieldwork and community engagement techniques. Only then do we make tentative proposals, which may or may not result in "architecture" in the standard sense, but could yield processes, flows, networks, routines, and other soft tissue.

Can you offer a few references of underrepresented urban projects that can serve as nuanced precedents?

I suppose that depends on what you mean by "urban projects." If you are talking about built form, there are certainly examples that I consider qualified successes. The most interesting of these are spatially modular, temporally incremental, and legally open-source, like Alejandro Aravena's Quinta Monroy houses in Chile, or Jo Noero's community-driven design and construction protocols for township houses in South Africa. In Aguascalientes, Mexico, a new linear park is taking shape on a right-of-way for a Pemex pipeline. The municipal government is investing funds, but a lot of the work is being done by people in the surrounding barrios. Creating superb cycling infrastructure in Bogotá didn't involve massive infrastructure construction, it was simply a matter of closing a set of streets to traffic.

All that said, I tend to be much more excited by projects that call attention to architecture, planning, and design by crafting experiences that are decidedly not these things, but something else. Parking Day is a good example, where people feed the meter to rent a space designed for an automobile for use as a public space. I look to artists a lot for these things, like Juliana Herera's project of filling potholes and sidewalk cracks with gorgeous colored yarn. Or Eve Mosher's effort to trace the high water mark in coastal cities using a lime-depositor; she trains people in coastal cities around the world to do this, as a way to bring attention to climate change. And we need more things like "Upendu Hero," a masked superhero who is a "sworn defender" of Kibera, the massive informal settlement in Nairobi.

More than anything, I feel that architects and planners have much to learn from so-called "vernacular" world, the ways and means by which ordinary people shape and inhabit space. This includes practices like the weekly gathering of Filipina domestic workers at the HSBC headquarters in Hong Kong—the best use I can think of for that building, designed by Norman Foster for a transnational corporation deeply involved in crashing the global economy. Or what about desire paths? I am obsessed with those little dirt tracks worn into grass by repeated use. These lovely filaments provide direct critiques of planned landscapes. I also love adaptation, that is, how people take architecture they didn't create and refine it for their purposes. If you go to Levittown on Long Island today, you can see this in astonishing detail. Or in Amsterdam, every architect should visit the hidden Catholic church carved out of the interior of several merchant houses—faith literally driving a worship community to worm their way through architecture.

ON THE GROUND

Hey, you: Submit tips to On the Ground at otg.paprika@gmail.com

3/30: On Thursday the art historian Maria Gough packed an impressive body of research on Malevich into a lecture that was as prim as its title: "Architecture As Such." Were the Moscow Mules at the reception a bland

choice, or is Suprematism also just a bit basic?

3/31: The graduating class threw a farewell 6 on 7. They brought back loved elements such as free food. a mariachi band, and an ice luge. Faculty witnessed students in their natural habitat as they spilled alcohol on the #paprika carpet.

4/01: Judging from the attire at prom, the only spices architects have in their pantry are salt and pepper.

4/02: Prom hangover, beautiful day. 4/03: Career fair in the air. Students increase their chance of getting a job by wearing a blazer.

Classy Affairs This week, in conjunction with the theme of Taboo, OTG wandered the studio floors asking students about their challenges in studio and what is at stake in their projects, which had the unintended consequence of several mini panic attacks. Below are some of their responses.

First Years

"How estranged can we make a homeless population through architecture?"

"1000 square feet is hard to work with."

"The fucking site is a huge blockade." "Ensuring that what we're building is flexible enough to accommodate many different means of living yet is not just a

blank slate." "The true test might be when our clients open their front door for the first time and say 'What the fuck?"

"A lot is at stake. No, literally a lot."

Second Years "One challenge is to find a vision, and to avoid genericism at an urban scale."

"The migrant population in Lowell had a large role in shaping the city, so how can our design address some of their socio-economic issues?"

"There are more stakeholders at the urban scale. The shift in scale also applies to time, you have to consider much more of the past and future.

"We are grappling with switching between looking through the eyes of an architect/planner to a citizen. Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk

"A big question that we are dealing with is how can the design of affordable workforce housing contribute positively to the public realm?"

Francine Houben "What is the role of a New York City library in the 21st century? At the same time as the rise of digital information and technologies, libraries have also become more social. How can the library typology evolve to accommodate that shift?'

Tatiana Bilbao "What is the future of public space and recreation in Mexico City?"

"How to convey a vision for a better future while also acknowledging the grit that exists in the society. Figuring out an architecture that builds on rather than wiping away. If I can't convey that grit, then my project could potentially be applied to anywhere rather than be site specific to Mexico City."

Patrick Bellew/Andy Bow "We are dealing with environmental issues in the design of a sake brewery in Kyoto. What does sustainability actually mean and how to represent that without divorcing them from the architecture?"

"What's at stake is a shitty building."

Keller Easterling "Nobody knows"

"Flipping the narrative on existing patterns on preconceived notions of migration."

doing this for?"

"The question of audience. Who are we

"The fate of 55 million people."

"These obstacles are currently being worked on; they are not overcome yet."

Pier Vittorio Aureli "What are the issues of domestic space? Challenging conventions of domesticity is harder than you think. Forcing people to live collectively is not

"What's at stake is nothing and everything."

GTFO The much anticipated Apartment Crawl is happening again this Friday, ushering in another weekend of drinking and unproductivity.

If you're in NYC this weekend, check out John Hejduk's Jan Palach memorial, which is currently installed outside of the Cooper Union in conjunction with the exhibition inside, Hélène Binet—John Hejduk Works. The exhibition runs through April 29th, but the memorial will stay up until June 11th.

FROM THE DARK DEPTHS OF EMOTIONAL DESPAIR AND HILARIOUSLY FAKE INFRA-STRUCTURA PROMISES, MAYA VERATION **4VVIER, FICTI-**SLY BLAZING D VICIOUS CHITECTURAL GELS ARISE.

ARCHITECTURE IS RICH AND **EXCITING AND** INSPIRATIONAL PRECISELY BECAUSEIT IS MESSY AND UNCOMFORTABLE.

of their own. Progressive fictions. Architectural fictions. Architecture, as a discourse with a deep history in speculation, only momentarily forgotten, may be surprisingly and uniquely qualified to out-Trump, Trump. To use speculative fiction politically is not a development to be mocked and lamented, but rather the only way forward—a tool that architecture might claw back from its own deep history in a re-energized effort to be politically re-empowered. From the dark depths of emotional despair and hilariously fake infrastructural promises may a new generation of savvier, fictitiously blazing and vicious architectural angels arise...

- MOSTLY EMPTY VAULT FOR KELLYANNE CONWAY'S SOUL IMPERIAL SPRAY TAN BOOTH (ORANGE MARBLE) STEVE BANNON'S CONTROL ROOM-NO ACCESS TREMENDOUS ROOM #1 ROSIE O'DONNELL'S REMAINS GALLERY OF TWEETS IMMIGRANT DETECTOR / ENTRANCE HALL RALLY SPACE FOR LARGEST CROWDS, EVER HALL OF CAGED NASTY WOMEN UNKNOWN (OWNED BY VLADIMIR PUTIN)
- SHRINE TO JAMES COMEY PAUL RYAN PLAYROOM HALL OF ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS
 TACO SALAD CAFETERIA

EXTREME TORTURE DUNGEON FOR NAUGHTY U.S. CITIZENS BEST ROOM IN HUMAN HISTORY CLIMATE SCIENTISTS PRISON resisting forest people.

DARK INVASIONS: A REPORT FROM **SWEDEN**

Todd Reisz, Daniel Rose '51 Visiting Assistant Professor, Yale School of Architecture

Like other exported Swedish crime dramas, "Jordskott" has its fair share of sublime morbidity. I haven't finished the series, so I will betray here only a partial spoiler. Like other Swedish crime dramas, this one follows a sharp, socially awkward, beautiful, and preternaturally tough protagonist. The plot focuses on Eva's return to her hometown Silverhöjd, which is being strangled by the forest. She learns that ingesting a nasty-looking parasite can save your life in Silverhöjd and even clean up a rash on your supermodelproportioned forearm.

A mirrored society of non-humans haunts Eva's hometown. These other creatures are of the forest while the humans are of the town once built with wood fairly harvested from the forest. There once existed a symbiosis between the two societies (town and forest). But then Silverhöjd's industrialists became stricken with capitalist areed for more forest access, which led to a xenocide campaign to clear out the

At great risk, police officers, miscreant children, and loggers enter the contentious forest. Its cushiony floor is blanketed in a disarming misty green. But that's a ruse. Festering heaps of organic rot conceal chutes to caverns below where shadow people mix potions to kill some people and heal others. The protagonist probes this underground, searching for clues about an aboveground epidemic of throat-slittings and kidnappings. She becomes entwined in a forest resounding with darkness, decay, transgression, and most of all, pending environmental catastrophe.

There are a few lessons in "Jordskott." One is a horror tale about the need for forest stewardship. Another is the discovery of dank passageways that drip muck, channel rancid stenches, and lead eventually into the hallways of the town's houses. Until the discovery that the town is penetrated by the damp hollows of nature, it might have seemed that civilization had been safely severed from the dark, that modern ideals of assured profits and hygienic lifestyles would reign. In a last effort to protect this appearance of nature's submission, the industrialists of Silverhöjd are ready to take out the forest and its mirrored society by total annihilation. Once and for all, civilization would rule.

I don't know vet if the annihilation plans will be successful, but it's difficult to imagine a world where

fetid tendencies have been entirely eliminated. The forest, whether it is filled with the mirrored race or our own feral selves, must creep into our perfect systems. Not simply because of neglected "design flaws," but because it has to. Effluent pipes will burst, mold will paint itself on to pristine interiors, and creeping plant life will take over war zones. Putrid surfaces and scents need to be let into our well-drawn plans. Our grids and our systems are sold to us as the countermeasures to nature's fecund mush of decay and life. Knowing better, we should instead seek out a regular dose of dark invasion.

PRIMA MATERIA

Caitlin Thissen, M.Arch '16 Edward Wang, B.A.'16

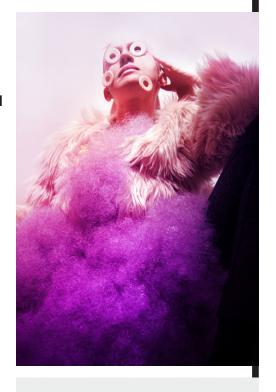
Opposing atmospheres, references, themes, symbols... The ambiguous nature of the work, the who, the when, the where, and the why, elude control, precision, resolution, and/or reduction.

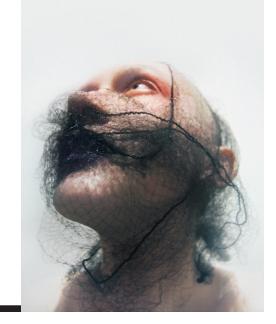












WHAT WILL YOU BUILD?

Gentley Smith, M.Arch '18

What will you build? Prisons, abortion clinics, barracks, worship-houses? Will you replace trees with a house, houses with a stadium? How about weapon facilities or parking lots? Is there a moral imperative to your work?

Unlike doctors and lawyers, architects don't always stick to well-defined ethical codes. Some of us focus on community building or intellectual production. Others work on space-planning or technical innovation. Architecture is neither black nor white, but usually an awkward shade of collaborative grey. Where do you

When we face controversial clients and a stubborn industry, we can look the other way or we can try to change a few minds. Rather than merely insisting on change, we can work hard with good intentions. Or we can say no, even if it means watching a lower bidder do worse. Bold actions have ripple effects in contentious spaces. Will you work or will you walk?

"AGAINST THE SLOPE" A REVIEW OF NOAH'S ARK: ESSAYS ON **ARCHITECTUR**

Robert Smith Waters, M

Noah's Ark: Essays In Architecture publication is the most recer rporation's Writing from Anyone Q **Architecture** eries. Edited, translated and in roduced by Anthony h's Ark is a collection of Vidler, No. 13 essay by philosopher Hubert Damise 1 that span between 1963 05. The subjects explored hout the book deal with theoal questions about architecture. general ideas of structure—both uistic and anthropological aning, origin and material ermeate the entire collection. amisch's exploration into architecure represents an alternative and ometimes taboo way of thinking about architecture which makes this book an essential additional to anyone's library who wants to have a broader understanding of our art.

In the introduction, Vidler makes a distinction that is fundamental to understanding how Damisch thinks about architecture:

> "His aim is both more philosophical... and less systematic. Here, the conjunction that appears often in his titles -with- is symptomatic: His aim is not to treat architecture and philosophy, but to discuss, to formulate a discourse of architecture with philosophy."

This distinction shows that architecture can exist outside of the structures of both philosophical and linguistic analysis to which architectural thought has so often been beholden too. For Damisch, essays on architecture appear with, between, to the edge of, and against other disciplines.

In keeping with the topic of this issue, it is not surprising that one of the essays by Damisch is a contrarian and counterintuitive examination of La Tourette called Against the Slope. Within this essay, Damisch builds a reading of La Tourette as a "theoretical object" and hypothesizes that La Tourette has a space within it to hold 'something resembling thought.' That is, that La Tourette has the capacity to be both a built architectural object and an abstract conceptual object for the mind to occupy. Damisch deconstructs the phenomenological and physical structures of La Tourette, analyzes them with his own experience and thought, then concludes that, La Tourette is indeed a conceptual work, from "the top down and from the inside out." He references Le Corbusier's explanation of the project as the most explicit summation:

'Walking is from the first a part of the phenomena constituted in perspectives through the play of all the kinesthesis together. And this occurs already in closed spaces, in which everything becomes accessible in the normal way and everything is thus constituted in the same way as real things spatiotemporally exterior to one another."

Here, by citing Le Corbusier directly, Damisch attributes the material experience of space in La Tourette to the controversial rationalist. If you take anything away from this review, let it be that Damisch is a "displaced philosopher" viewing architecture from an alternative perspective. His views are as unique as they are intuitive and *Noah's Ark* creates a new platform to examine the discipline. It s a must read for anyone interested in theory today.

~ NOWADAYS, THE ARCHITECT **MUST RECKON** WITH THE FACT THAT TODAY'S **DESIGN TOOLS** CAN BE TOMOR-BOW'S TRASH.

QUALITY CONTROL

To start off, can you describe

Interview with Nader Vossoughian Associate Professor of Architecture, New York Institute of Technology

your current and ongoing research interests? And also your various relationships to architecture as a scholar and educator? I am a Germanist, philosopher, and architectural historian by training, and I have always been attracted to research topics that blend these disciplines. I currently teach architectural history and theory at the New York Institute of Technology, and I was a guest professor at the University of Kassel a year ago. I had the privilege of studying with Keller Easterling at the Jan van Eyke Academy about five or six years ago. It inspired my current work on standardization, which I consider my

> During Keller Easterling's studio midterm review you challenged yourself to rethink how tenuous even "taboo" subjects are taught in a theory seminar or architectural studio. Why do you think in architecture school that there are issues that are considered forbidden?

life's work.

This is a fascinating question. I don't believe that the existence of taboos are unique to architecture schools. Virtually all institutions have them to some degree. I also believe that the existence of taboos is not a bad thing per se. Freud suggests as much in Totem and Taboo, and I find myself agreeing with him. Taboos can indeed be oppressive, but they can also bring continuity and provide boundaries.

What I think that I wanted to say with my remark about taboos is that the election of Donald Trump represented a violation of a number of taboos—or at least it felt that way to me. It was depressing and demoralizing to witness, particularly given the way in which he utilized bigotry and misogyny to gain votes. Yet it also galvanized many of us. My seventy year-old mom has become an activist, which was never the case while I was growing up. We're also seeing just a lot of people stepping out out of their comfort zones artistically and professionally as well as politically. To some extent, Roger Waters was right when he said that, "the only thing... that's positive is that a new kind of anarchy is going to

And as a scholar and educator, is there subject matter that you believe should be more widely considered as part of the pedagogy of an architecture school?

I think that schools need to rethink the one-size-fits-all model of design education: we need to create spaces for less structured and more selfguided forms of inquiry. The Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht did this beautifully under the directorship of Koen Brams. He did away with academic degrees; he also did away with "students" and "faculty." Everyone was a researcher. Researcher-driven projects were the norm at the school. Effectively, if you wanted to organize an exhibition, write a book, put together a colloquium, or invite a guest speaker, the resources were available to you. A person simply needed to come up with a convincing proposal. It was exciting, and it was kind of lawless, in a good way, with artists squatting in the main building, etc. It produced philosophers, artists, designers, and historians of the highest caliber. It stimulated some very exciting and memorable discussions that continue to this day for me. There

> Your body of work has shown that you are able to negotiate many disciplines in the pursuit to understand transcendent models of space-making. Is it possible to describe how you understand

was a strong sense of community.

your own model of interdisciplinary research?

Thank you for saying this. I've always thought of myself as a bit of an intellectual nomad, and my scholarly interests probably reflect this to a degree. I studied philosophy and German in college, as I already mentioned, and I was lucky enough to be able to take classes in a range of disciplines, from German studies to comparative literature, from art history to architecture, during graduate school. I am not sure I work with any one model as a scholar. A main theme for me, however, is that I have always been fascinated by language-particularly universal languages such as those developed by Otto Neurath, among others. My work on standardization is a product of this interest. It has brought into play ideas and protagonists that span various disciplines. It allows me to think about the design of design-the systems, practices, technics, and institutions that shape how it is that architects think and act. It also permits me to engage theoretically with the ideas of Keller Easterling, Reinhold Martin, Markus Krajewski, and a host of other individuals whose ideas matter a great deal to me. All of these researchers have introduced important methodological innovations. I've tried to build

> ticism around studios like Keller topical or "hot off the press," in so far as that they are responding to developing issues and unpredict-

ical distance to history for models of design, but are trying to invent their own. How have you observed our rapid fire world influencing the design process or even the parameters employed by the architect? What would you say to those who are critical of studios

that operate in these ways? I wish that more professors had the courage to engage topical issues! I am grateful to Keller for that. I also think it is a mistake to believe that historical research can ever give us "models of design." It needs to be seen rather as a Gesprächspartner or interlocutor. It should foster critical reflection—it

Keller's work is deeply historical, in my opinion. I also consider her to be an artist, designer, and theorist of the highest caliber. She embraces the standpoint of the *Flâneur*, which has its roots in the writings of Baudelaire, among others. The Flâneur has inspired some of the most nuanced and profound analyses of modern capitalism-most notably Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project, for example. It has paved the way for a number of highly incisive contributions to architectural theory, for example Rem Koolhaas' Delirious New York in addition to Keller's 2007 book, Enduring Innocence. It influenced at least one very noteworthy contribution to the history of technology, namely Sigfried Giedion's Mechanization Takes Command, This represents a study of "anonymous history" that I see as a precedent for my work today.

In response to your question about how our world has influenced the design process or the parameters employed by the architect, I have a couple of thoughts to offer. First of all, I think that "the world" (however we construe it) is always an ever-present force in design and architecture. The two can never be separated. Having said that, one noteworthy thing that I think that new technologies are reminding us is the fact that design is itself designed. And it is today more so than ever. It used to be that the architect had a relatively stable set of representational tools and instruments at his or her disposal (e.g., T-squares, pencils, drafting tables, plans, sections,

etions, etc.) This gave the designer a feeling of mastery and control, artifia feeling of mastery and control, artificially perhaps, but still. Nowadays, the architect must reckon with the fact that today's design tools can be tomorrow's trash. Digital son ware applications obsolesce at a dramatic rate. What is more, these tools have a direct impact on the quality and character of one's work. They are influencing choices about materials, costs, and labor needs.

Take some of the new maybe now not so new) plug ins, for example. Every student has so tware at his or her disposal that allow him or her to import manufactur er-issued specifications at the cli of a mouse. These specifications are time-saving tools that help with meeting deadlines. They help assure compliance with code and safety requirements. They automate the selection of materials and the placement of fabrication orders. They also, however, erode the value of the architect's expertise. They represent a form of automation. They enforce specialization. They standardize standardization on an entirely new level.

Nearly a century ago, an architect had to pick up a copy of the Sweet's Catalog to partake in this process. Deciding on whether to embrace prefabrication and automation was a conscience choice. Today, under the current economic circum stances, it is not a choice at all. It is almost indistinguishable from design itself. What we call "architecture" is increasingly a cut-and-paste job that requires at least as much administrative and logistical expertise as it does artistic imagination or cultural acumen. What is more, the fact that architects are succumbing to these shifting expectations so readily in academic settings—and with little to no theoretical reflectionsdemonstrates a lack of historical imagination, at least in my opinion.

The Germans have in fact a beautiful word for what I am describing—it is called *Typisierung*. Typisierung could best be translated as "templatization." That is to say, it is about using templates in deriving architectural solutions. This is not necessarily a bad thing-usage of templates can actually enhance quality in design, as architects such as Hermann Muthesius argued over a century ago. But it appears to be consuming design theory and practice today in ways that are just unprecedented. Details that once represented earnest and serious design problems—office furnishings, for example—are now just called "equipment." The equipment, moreover, is often what gets used to signify the program, as though having a toilet bowl icon and sink icon in a drawing is enough to signify "bathroom." Now I don't want to suggest

that educators are responsible for promoting this sort of thing. On the contrary, I'm sure it bothers my designer-colleagues more than it does me. I also don't want to sound like a technology-naysayer. I accept that the very tools of standardization that are rationalizing and automating the design process can also work to democratize prosperity, at least to a degree. Having said that, I regret that architects are not spending more time today talking about the *infrastructure* of design—they are not talking about the design of design itself. I also think that questions about *labor* need to be foregrounded in the discussion. This is because the technology questions of today are also labor questions—they are reorganizing the workplace in profound and unmistakable ways.

I should say that I consider the writings of architects and theorists such as Keller Easterling, Peggy Deamer, and Pier Vittorio Aureli to

