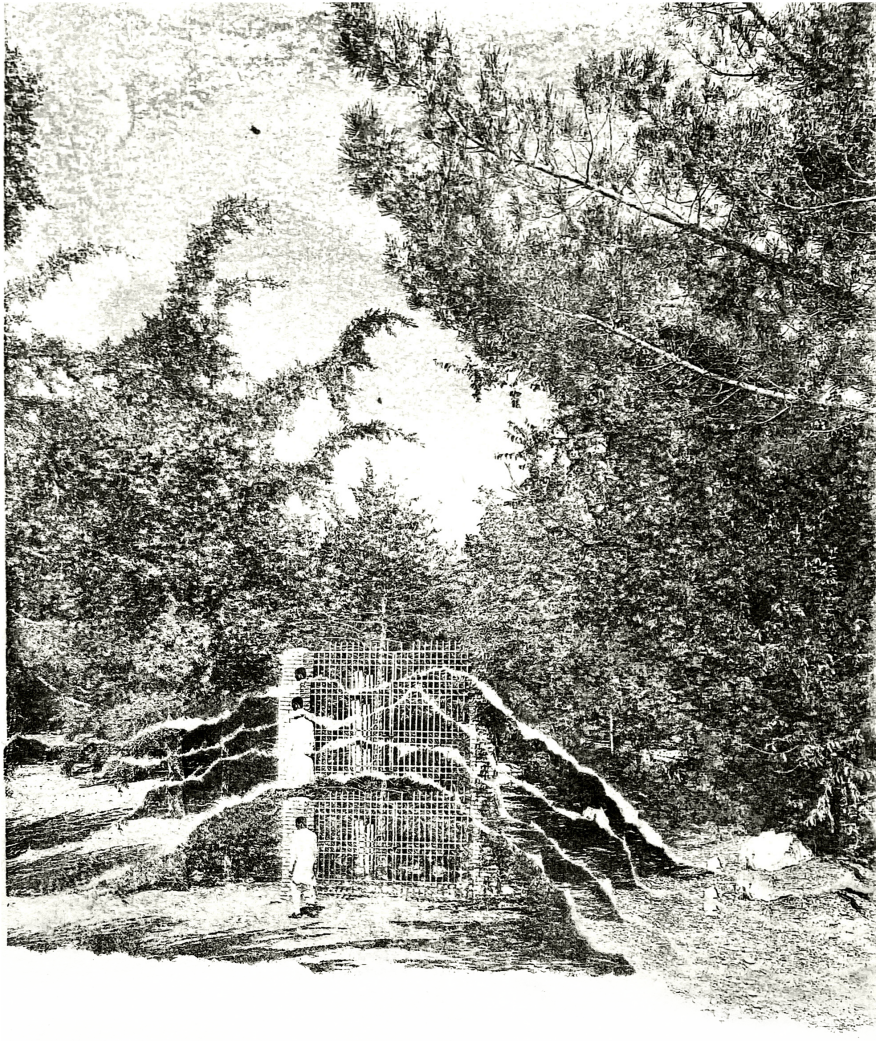


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Disenclosure

Nicholas Frayne
and Jerry Chow

Architecture has never been a neutral discipline.

Inextricable from histories of inequality that continue to perpetuate injustice, architecture has long sustained the brutal enclosure of life. Responding to this, architecture is also being reimagined for its potential to act otherwise — to approach what postcolonial scholar Achille Mbembe has called the 'disenclosure of the world'.[1] Disenclosure describes an opening,[2] a putting in-common, resisting processes of unfettered exploitation, dehumanisation, and coercion by foregrounding the interdependencies and relations that are integral to the construction of a more just collective future.

But what would disenclosure mean for architecture, which has for so long been defined by its limits, by how it responds to the contingencies of time, money, material, and space? Do restraint and refusal have a place in the necessary work of opening architecture? Where do the edges of enclosure lie — and are they fences or spaces?

Following this call, the contributors to *Scroope* 33 take the decolonial conception of disenclosure as a provocation to be articulated, contested, and extended through architectural thinking. Whether through critical explorations of maritime space, design praxes, humanitarian architecture, or labour in the profession, the articles collected here each challenge the discipline we share, and suggest alternative ways of both making and seeing architecture. Taken as a whole, these incisive, hopeful, and at times experimental essays draw our attention to the potential for moments of passage to emerge from even the most enclosing of spaces.

We hope that you enjoy this issue, and that it raises new questions for thinking and enacting architecture in our present world.

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1 Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*, trans. by Daniela Ginsburg (Columbia University Press, 2021).

2 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. by Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (Fordham University Press, 2008).

Table of Contents

Foreword
Flora Samuel **18**

Between Ship and Sea and Shore: Spatial Practices from the Black Pacific
Caroline Imani Collins and K. Wayne Yang **22**

Worship at the Margins: On Violence, Enclosures, and the Reformed Church of Paris (1555–1562)
Tom Joashi **46**

Predators and Cannibals: The Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro
Annette Spiro **70**

Disenclosing the Mare Clausum*: Critical Spatial Practices on the Sea*
Yifei Zhang **92**

Shelter Disenclosed
Christian Nakarado **110**

Of Soil and Stone
Ajay Manthripragada **116**

A Landscape, a Ledge, and a Shadow
Ghania Shams Khan
120

Insistence
Chris Cornelius
166

Fixing Lines on a Drifting Coast: Architectural Crystals of Destin, Florida
Stephanie Tang
178

Edible Empires: Redesigning Power, Place, and Resilience in the US Food System
Justin McElderry
202

Climate Migration and Postcolonial Perspectives: Enclosure, Territory, and Rights
Malkit Shoshan
224

In Conversation with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi
258

Colonial Persistence
Samia Henni
280

Apostrophe Ess: Meditations on Writing and Editing during a Genocide
Ozayr Saloojee
286

In Conversation with Yasmeen Lari **308**

'Absolute Beginners': The Achievement Society and the Disenclosure of the Architectural Profession **324**
Joshua Tan

Forwards: In Conversation with the Editors **342**
Nicholas Frayne and Jerry Chow

Colophon **350**

Contributors

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Landscape in the Sahara (2024). She is the editor of *Deserts Are Not Empty* (EN, 2022; IT, 2024) and *War Zones* (2018). She is also the maker of exhibitions, such as *Performing Colonial Toxicity* (Amsterdam, Zurich, London, Providence, 2023–24), *Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria* (Zurich, Rotterdam, Berlin, Johannesburg, Paris, Prague, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Charlottesville, 2017–22), *Archives: Secret-Dėfense?* (Berlin, 2021), and *Housing Pharmacology* (Marseille, Paris, 2020).

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Foreword
Flora Samuel

Where to start when discussing enclosure, the ways in which in/justices are embedded in the discipline of architecture and mediated by its processes and objects? Well we have to celebrate that this is a topic of discussion at all. It certainly would not have been on the agenda when I contributed as a student to the first edition of *Scroope* back in the day, although I felt injustice here every day of my life as a woman student from a state school and a women's college, though I had no ability to articulate this feeling, experiencing it instead as a constant feeling of oppression — enclosure if you will.

My first thought when approaching the subject of disenclosure has to be the enclosure of land previously owned by the commons. This copy of *Scroope* is wonderfully international in scope — disenclosure being so closely aligned with the decolonisation agenda — so I focus briefly on disenclosure in the local context, that of England, a specialist in the annexing of land that nobody had the right to own and where there is no Right to Roam. Here most land is still owned by the aristocracy, often paid for by the blood of slaves, passed down through men through rules of male primogeniture. Here we are disenfranchised from the natural environment through the presence of the 'Private, No Trespassing' signs that permeate our countryside and through the hostility of agribusinesses and the new phenomena of 'fortress farms' — surely this generation will be judged by its treatment, not only of the land, but also of our so-called 'live stock'.

This constraint on space, in cities as well as countryside, constrains our bodies. Our homes are getting smaller and less affordable. We have no time to live well. Our diets are limited by the supply chains of global agglomerates. Local authorities have no funds to maintain green spaces and facilities for young people in particular are closed or under threat while prisons are bulging. If autonomy is an essential element of wellbeing then it is no surprise that there is an epidemic of dis-ease in our bodies and our minds — what Jay Griffiths calls 'the privatisation of the

mind'.[1] The journey of scientific knowledge was predicated on an enclosure of thinking, ruling out much that was inexplicable, bodily, and often female.

In architecture, as in many fields, the profession was formed around an enclosure of its knowledge base — arguably not so much based on what it knew — more that it knew who it wanted to exclude from the field. The 'professionalisation' of architecture and the protection of its title through an extended education excludes the amateur and the self-taught from the field. But all this is changing — the opening up of UK architecture to new formats and the slow diversification of its demographic being one manifestation of this.

In the building of walls and gated communities architects have long been complicit in the segregating of communities. In many ways it is what we do. At the same time these walls protect, conserve, and sometimes delight. It always comes back to ethical practice, not taking the job because somebody else would do it anyway or — what I often hear — 'we have mouths to feed in the practice'. As I argue in my book *Why Architects Matter* it is better to lose jobs, to acknowledge the failure of the profession, than to keep talented and highly trained young architects working on miserable, unsustainable buildings that can only harm communities and people. To be a professional is to work to an ethical code of conduct, so why do we condone unethical practice everywhere?

We need a disenclosure of the profession. A collective acknowledgement of how we got here. I take heart in the idea of disenclosure as an upswelling, a bursting through the borders, a delighted leap over fences, a dance of joy and a laughter at the archaic structures that have brought us to this place.

1 Jay Griffiths, *Kith: The Riddle of the Childscape* (Penguin, 2013).

Between Ship and Sea and Shore: Spatial Practices from the Black Pacific

Caroline Imani Collins and K. Wayne Yang

> I want to draw a map, so to speak, of a critical geography and use that map to open as much space for discovery, intellectual adventure, and close exploration as did the original charting of the New World — without the mandate for conquest.
>
> — Toni Morrison[1]

Toni Morrison, in laying out her audacious project of mapping race and the literary imagination, could well have been describing Mbembe's practices of disenclosure — an opening of the world without the mandates of extraction and conquest.[2] Following Morrison, we desire to draw a blueprint, so to speak, of a critical architecture that facilitates human spaces for self-discovery and exploration that are too often contained by racism and colonialism. Morrison's words might also describe Black spatial practices, that is, the navigational maps and blueprints that Black people draw, learn, and deploy to make selves and make freedoms despite racial enclosures. We offer that a critical architecture might be realised by designing with Black spatial practices in mind. This provocation resides in our brief analysis of maritime environments traversed by Black people during the Age of Sail (mid-sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century) and shortly thereafter.

In her essay 'Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature', Morrison attends to a simple adjective whose racial meanings were left unscrutinised for over a century of literary analysis of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*: the *white* whale. In doing so, she uncovers Melville's allegorical aim of hunting down and destroying 'the very concept of whiteness as an inhuman idea', a purpose that

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1 Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 3.

2 Achille Mbembe, 'Disenclosure', in *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (Columbia University Press, 2021), pp. 42-89.

Melville helms with Captain Ahab and his non-White crew.[3] Indeed, Morrison discusses how Black characters are often surrogates for taboo subjects in the White literary imagination — a critical point that we will not go into here. However, Black mariners were also more than allegorical. Representing nearly twenty to thirty percent of multiracial seafaring crews, they were part and parcel of colonial and commercial maritime activity. And, as Morrison insists in her essays and demonstrates in her novels, Black people have their own reasons for living other than hunting down the great myth of whiteness. Suffice to say, Black mariners were real people, with their own maps, and their own allegorical whales to hunt.[4]

Melville's 1851 book was inspired by the notorious, true story of the *Essex*, a whaling ship from Nantucket, Massachusetts that, because of decimated sperm whale communities in the Atlantic, in 1820 rounded Cape Horn on the southern tip of the Americas to hunt in the Pacific, only to be sunk by a vengeful whale. The Black seamen aboard the *Essex*, despite playing critical roles including retrieving the navigation instruments from the sinking ship, all perished, adding to the notoriety of the story in the race-sensitive Quaker society of Nantucket.[5] Melville's writings were also informed by the daily lives of seamen in Richard Henry Dana's highly popular memoir *Two Years before the Mast,* in which he narrates his undergraduate pause from Harvard to work and travel on the *Pilgrim* and the *Alert*, brigs carrying trade goods between Boston and Mexican colonial California from 1834 to 1836. Dana also directly references Black crewmembers, although more sparingly and often in condescension.[6] It is a prominent text that not only reflects an adventure-filled maritime entry within the American literary

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3 Toni Morrison, 'Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature', *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 28.1 (1989), p. 16.

4 Morrison, *Playing in the Dark.*

5 Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (Viking, 2000).

6 Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years before the Mast* (Modern Library, 1936).

canon. Dana's travelogue also helped shape the cartographic imagination of its contemporary readers in ways that aided and abetted expansionist rhetoric, at times acting as an 'unofficial guide for emigrants traversing the largely unmapped far western territories in the wake of the Mexican–American War'.[7] Black mariners were but a rare, shadowy presence in these popular stories, yet their spatial understandings and navigational practices have much to teach us about how people create openings despite the enclosures of racial capitalism, extraction, and imperial expansion.

We write together to think about another critical mapping that, while often unrecognised and 'unspoken', also occurred within this oceanic context during this period: specifically, how Black mariners deployed Black spatial practices to navigate the social structure of the ship as well as the vast ocean and its many shores. Here, we consider sixteenth- to nineteenth-century ships as built environments that are not quite emplaced. The ship travels with sovereignty (the flag country), pausing at multiple sovereignties (the ports), through an indigenous sovereignty (the sea). In recognizing indigenous sovereignties of the sea, we do not mean that Indigenous governmental entities own the sea. Rather, we align with critical geographers such as Michele Lobo and Meg Parsons, who in turn follow Black and Indigenous writers, in understanding more-than-human worlds as indigenous, sovereign-to-themselves, and existing for their own reasons.[8] At the same time, we acknowledge that nation-states regularly claim sovereignty over parts of the sea through colonial-capitalist frameworks organised around owning and dismembering this world.

The ship, then, is a curious assemblage of corporation and

7 Steffen Wöll, 'Voyages Through Literary Space: Mapping Globe and Nation in Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast', *Polish Journal for American Studies*, 14 (2020), pp. 197–271 (p. 197).

8 Michele Lobo and Meg Parsons, 'Decolonizing ocean spaces: Saltwater co-belonging and responsibilities', *Progress in Environmental Geography*, 2.1–2 (2023), pp. 128–140.

state, dependent on trade routes and capitalistic extraction, as well as international and territorial laws. Given the prominent role of vessels as critical technologies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the ship may seem like an unlikely architecture for Black self-determination. Yet, Black spatial practices have long been in the business of building freedom under sovereignties often antithetical to Black life.[9] In attending to the spatial practices of Black people who (often voluntarily) took to the sea, and particularly the Pacific, we begin to sketch out primary elements of a map — the ship, shore, and sea — that may speak to the theme of this special issue on disenclosure. In other words, if we recognise that situated contexts such as race and power not only coproduce space which individuals may experience differentially but also may distinctively *read* and survey unevenly, what potentials could we open if we designed and studied architecture with Black spatial practices in mind?

Our Pacific Positionalities

We write from the shores of the Pacific in Kumeyaay territory, which spans the border between the United States and Mexico, and includes the regional areas surrounding the cities of San Diego and Tijuana. This area was claimed by the United States in 1848, Mexico in 1821, Spain in 1769. It has been and is still in Kumeyaay stewardship since time immemorial. We think together through our Black Like Water collaboratory at UC San Diego in which students, faculty, staff, and community members attend to Black fluidity of identity, relationships to land and water, and ways of knowing as they flow through cultural and historical experience via offerings including scholarly talks, art shows, and embodied water activities.

Finally, this brief essay is rooted in the overarching Black

9 We are influenced by Katherine McKittrick's writings about the plantation as a place where Black people created futures. See McKittrick, 'Plantation Futures', *Small Axe: A Journal of Criticism,* 17.3 (2013), pp. 1–15.

Pacific Project, a research initiative led by Dr Caroline Collins. Currently, as we write, Collins' travelling banner exhibit, *Take Me to the Water: Histories of the Black Pacific*, is wending its way through museums and libraries on this coast. Its large-scale physical gallery version will open at the Maritime Museum of San Diego in late summer 2025. These exhibits feature Black peoples' long connections to what is now the US Pacific: California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii.[10] Black mariners are significant actors in the roots and connective routes of the Pacific coast, beginning with early sixteenth-century colonial activity where African descendents, both enslaved and free, journeyed on Portuguese and Spanish colonial ships.[11] Today, Black people continue to play integral roles in the United States' maritime enterprise upon the Pacific, though dominant conceptions of oceanographic space often neglect their inclusion. This project joins emerging scholarship of the Black Pacific which reimagines notions of race, migration, and diaspora.[12] Much of this work engages with, and builds upon, the foundational theorising of historian Paul Gilroy who, in the late twentieth-century, popularised the Black Atlantic as a transnational and transcultural diasporic framework extending

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10 For information about *Take Me to the Water*, see Caroline Collins, 'Water Berth: My Journey to the Black Pacific as a Site of Memory and Futurity', *Public: A Journal of Imagining America*, 7.1 (2023). For the Black Pacific Project, see <https://www.blackpacificproject.com>.

11 Matthew Restall. 'Black conquistadors: armed Africans in early Spanish America', *The Americas*, 57.2 (2000), pp. 171–205. Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, 'Atlantic history and the slave trade to Spanish America', *The American Historical Review*, 120.2 (2015), pp. 433–461.

12 Black Pacific is a capacious term used in multiple ways by many scholars. For a sense of some of its usages, see: Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, 'Extract from "Water, Shoulders, Into the Black Pacific"', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 18.2–3 (2012), pp. 263–276.; Nitasha Sharma and Simeon Man, 'The Black Pacific: Contributions to Histories, Concepts, and Methods', *Ethnic Studies Review*, 44.3 (2021), pp. 24–30; Robbie Shilliam, *The Black Pacific: Anti-colonial struggles and oceanic connections* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Gary Y. Okihiro, 'Toward a Black Pacific', *AfroAsian Encounters: Culture, History, and Politics* (2006), pp. 313–330.

across Africa, Europe, and the Americas.[13] The focus of this brief essay are Black mariners involved with merchant and colonial activities such as whaling during the Age of Sail and shortly thereafter — a temporal framing generally perceived as the height of maritime culture within the national imagination, and one that we offer to provide a rich lens in which to examine Black spatial practices.

Black Spatial Practices

We understand Black spatial practices to encompass the various ways Black subjects imagine, negotiate, and move through space, as well as Black place-making both material and metaphorical. Our attention to these ways of knowing and being reflect Black epistemologies which have long been concerned with the collision and coproduction of space, place, race, and power. Our thinking is made possible from foundational literature by scholars in Black geographies including Clyde Woods, Katherine McKittrick, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Latoya E. Eaves, Camilla Hawthorne, and contributors to the seminal anthology *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*.[14]

Black subjects upon and near the waters of the Pacific during the so-called Age of Sail by necessity developed a Black spatial literacy. Many Black sailors could converse in dominant tongues of colonial powers.[15] Just as Black mariners were often

13 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1993).

14 See: Clyde Woods, *Development arrested* (Verso Books, 2017 (1998)); Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag* (University of California Press, 2007); Latoya E. Eaves, 'Black geographic possibilities: On a queer Black South', *Southeastern Geographer* 57.1 (2017), pp. 80–95; Camilla Hawthorne, 'Black matters are spatial matters: Black geographies for the twenty-first century', *Geography Compass*, 13.11 (2019); Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (South End Press, 2007).

15 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

polyglots navigating multiple languages, many also exhibited the necessary ability to effectively read, analyse, and respond to multiple sovereignties that were spatially organised across ships, seas, and shores. Sixteenth- to nineteenth-century ships traversed manifold nation-state jurisdictions and also contained their own distinct sociocultural structures. Black subjects had to become literate about the rules that governed these multiple perilous spaces when attempting to negotiate power over one's destiny within White supremacist frameworks. Such literacies, in tandem with a myriad of complexities outside of individual mariners' control, could tip the scales between forging a new life in distant environs or (re)abduction into enslavement, between grasping a higher social status or imprisonment. Black spatial literaries, then, include not only the seafaring knowledge to cross vast oceanic space, but nuanced world-faring knowledge of differences from port to port, ship to ship, and within discrete portions of individual vessels themselves. In deploying these knowledges, many of these mariners turned spaces of seeming enclosure into vehicles of agency and opportunity.

In gesturing to their journeys, we might map a critical geography, which we summarise as the Black ship, the Black sea, and the Black shore. Such nomenclature does not mean that we position these places as 'Black' in a purely possessive sense (though in some distinct cases, levels of possession applied).[16] We acknowledge social productions of Blackness in which colonial projects invent racialised identities to serve the needs of capitalist extraction and incite practices of escape. However, we align with theorists who remind us that escaping racialising structures is not a natural condition of Blackness. Indeed, Black subjects like all racialised people might lean into racial structures and identities depending on context. In other words, Black life is not just a response to or a resistance to anti-blackness. Thus, Black ship, sea, and shore refer to the varied ways Black people enter, inhabit, navigate, leave, and map these spaces.

16 See later discussion on Paul Cuffe, who owned or partially owned multiple trading vessels, for example.

These mappings are akin to GIS layering which illustrates multiple geographic realities or blueprints under blacklights that reveal obscured passageways and hazards, and even forms of leisure, play, and privilege that comprise the complex range of human experience. This perspective centres Black senses of place — and specifically Black spatial practices — to better appreciate the contours of built environments structured by race and sovereignties, as well as the passageways for human agency that are less evident within colonial-capitalist enclosures. Such spatial tools and practices reveal the possibilities and limits of disenclosure within architectural thinking.

The Black Ship

> In the course of my lifetime […] the question has often been asked of me: Where were you educated? To these well-meant inquiries, I have almost invariably answered: in the forecastle; in the forecastles of a hundred ships.
>
> — James H. Williams (1864–1927), African American whaler[17]

In some ways, a vessel at sea was a contained society to its own. Many of the ships that we examine from the Age of Sail, whether whaling vessels or brigs carrying trade goods, were built to be lived on for months or years at a time by ostensibly all-male crews that might even change from port to port.

These vessels themselves structurally contained different societal hierarchies often demarcated spatially — who lived where and what areas of the ship one could or could not occupy. However, the dangers of the sea also meant that these boundaries could be eroded by necessity. 'All hands on deck' is a phrase from the sea, a call issued when urgent situations required total

17 James H. Williams, *Blow the Man Down!: A Yankee Seaman's Adventures Under Sail* (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2018 (1959)).

effort from the entire collective, regardless of rank (and race). Survival at sea depended upon the reliability of this moment of exception. As such, the vessel was a contained social unit. There were no other people from which to draw; labour could not simply be fetched from some external source. Seafarers, then, depended upon one another's knowledges and capabilities not only for their livelihoods, but for their literal life and death. Such 'sea-sense' as Black whaler James H. Williams described the embodied and spatial 'talent that [could] only […] be developed by long practical experience and intensive training', created moments of integration and interdependence, compared to more absolute forms of segregation on the shore.[18] Because of this context, other types of societal barriers could break down even as the hierarchy on the ship was absolute.

Despite — and often because of — this social isolation sharpened by mutual dependencies, some Black seamen perceived vessels as vehicles towards possible disenclosure. For these Black mariners, such a structure afforded complex but real opportunities to participate in a society that might not be as readily available on land. By complex, we mean that the social order on a ship was never democratic. Rank and role mattered, impacting senses of animosity or camaraderie. Various historians, however, also write about the space of the whale ship as a meritocracy in which knowledge and skill could eclipse race and social class in career advancement opportunities.[19] Though certainly ableist and gendered, and often still in the service of colonial and extractive projects, Black mariners deciphered passageways for human agencies within these complex spatialities.

In some cases, Black mariners seized these opportunities via captaincy, and even actual possession, of ships. Whaling captain, merchant, and abolitionist Paul Cuffe, for example,

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18 Ibid.

19 Skip Finley, *Whaling Captains of Color: America's First Meritocracy* (Naval Institute Press, 2022).

was born in 1759 to a Wampanoag mother and a formerly enslaved father. Cuffe not only typically led all-Black crews, he also owned or partially owned multiple trading vessels out of Massachusetts. At least one of his ships sailed to Pacific whaling grounds in 1810 under the hired captaincy of another officer.[20] Cuffe was among more than fifty whaling captains of colour.[21] Most of these men were based out of the Eastern Seaboard, though they ventured to Pacific waters as overhunting depleted Atlantic whale populations. One Black captain, however, was based on the Pacific coast in northern California: Captain William T. Shorey, later dubbed the 'Black Ahab' likely due to his intrepid whaling career spanning over three decades.[22] Among the many ships that Shorey commanded, the *John and Winthrop* notably had at one point an all-Black crew. Shorey married a woman from a prominent Black family in San Francisco. They settled in Oakland and often sailed on Shorey's ships with their children in tow. Like Cuffe, Shorey was also mixed race. Born in Barbados in 1859 — nearly a hundred years after Cuffe — Shorey was born to a Scottish planter father and a Barbadian creole mother. These lineages also gesture to the role colourism may have played in Cuffe and Shorey's particular navigation of, and ascensions within in, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century maritime spaces.

While some Black mariners ascended to positions of heightened authority within ships from lower officers to captains, most generally comprised the crew.[23] Acting in many capacities on sailing vessels including common seamen, Black sailors often

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20 'Paul Cuffe Voyages', Westport Historical Society, n.d. < https://paulcuffe.org/voyages/>.

21 Finley, *Whaling Captains of Color.*

22 A late twentieth-century historian, E. Berkeley Tompkins, likely first bestowed the moniker 'Black Ahab' upon Capt. William Thomas Shorey. For this reference and more regarding Shorey, see: E. Berkeley Tompkins, 'Black Ahab: William T. Shorey, Whaling Master', *California Historical Quarterly*, 51.1 (1972), pp. 75–84; and Finley, *Whaling Captains of Color*.

23 For reference to a Black mate of Captain Shorey's, see Walter Noble Burns's memoir *A Year with a Whaler* (Macmillan, 1919).

served as cooks and stewards.[24] Richard Henry Dana wrote about the spatial arrangement of the *Pilgrim:* the cabin locations and access to parts of the ship delineated different classes among the sailors — from the everyday workers to the Captain's quarters which were generally off limits to sailors. He writes with gratitude for, and amused condescension of, the ship's cook, who he explicitly identifies as Black yet equally explicitly fails to name, referring to him instead through racialised language including 'our […] darky' and 'a simple-hearted African' who regularly read his Bible on the Sabbath.[25] The cook is only named in a crew appendix of a later edition of the text where he is listed as forty-year-old Thomas Curtis, a sailor from Boston with a 'Black' complexion and 'wooly' hair.[26] Dana also dedicates time to discussing the ship steward, who had access to the captain's quarters, who lived adjacent to the cabin, and thus was physically and socially distant from the common seamen. As a result, Dana explains that stewards, by way of this general proximity, were not trusted by the other sailors as they not only had the ear of the Captain, but were 'mongrel[s]' of sorts existing within a liminal plane within the ship's social structure.[27] Dana himself writes in disparaging terms about the steward, whose race he never describes.[28]

Though providing potential for disenclosure, the vessel was by no means a racial oasis and moments of integration and interdependence could be tenuous. Black sailors during the Age

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24 Mary Malloy, *African Americans in the maritime trades: a guide to resources in New England* (Kendall Whaling Museum, 1990).

25 Dana, *Two Years before the Mast,* p. 7.

26 The Library of Congress version of the book includes the crew appendices. For further reference to the cook, Thomas Curtis, see: Richard H. Dana, Jr, *Two Years Before the Mast; a Personal Narrative* (Houghton Mifflin company, 1911) <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/calbk.139>.

27 Dana uses the term 'mongrel' to describe a seaman who resides in the steerage near the captain as opposed to the forecastle with other sailors where they are 'free'; see: Dana, *Two Years before the Mast,* p. 51.

28 Though the revised appendix refers to him as a sailor from England with 'light' complexion and 'dark' hair, see: Dana / Library of Congress.

of Sail experienced discrimination often exacerbated by their subjection to the unquestionable authority of various ship's captains — especially those known as a 'Negro driver'.[29] Most Black sailors doubtless understood the critical ways their experiences at sea could vary depending not only on which territory they dropped anchor, but on who helmed their ship. Such an awareness highlights collisions of spatial sovereignties Black mariners consistently navigated. That is, when we think about water abutting land, erosion often comes to mind: the sea breaking down certain features on the shore. However, through these complex relationships and hierarchies onboard we can perceive the inverse of these dynamics as well — where terrestrial understandings could at times erode existing social structures on the vessel. Such erosion was especially relevant to forms of Black sovereignty created at sea. Despite these risks, Black mariners continued to take to the water — viewing the sea, like the ship, as a possible space of disenclosure and, at times, of potential transformation.

The Black Sea

> We are sailing slowly along the coast of Peru. The Lat is 200 38' Long. 910 52' [...] I felt as peaceful as the ocean with which I was surrounded. There not a wave was seen rising abruptly, from any part of our ship; all rolled smoothly and gently along. The succeeding night was beautiful beyond description; and all was peace within.
>
> — Betsey Stockton, African American missionary and educator during moments of calm on the Pacific, 20–26 March 1823[30]

29 Dana recalls the captain of the *Pilgrim* referring to himself as a 'Negro driver' while whipping a White sailor after a heated exchange, see Dana, *Two Years before the Mast,* p. 101.

30 From the journal of Betsey Stockton, see: Constance K. Escher, *She Calls Herself Betsey Stockton: The Illustrated Odyssey of a Princeton Slave* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2022), pp. 57–58.

The spatial practices of the Black Pacific at the core of our discussion were created *between* the ship and shore and sea. Open water in the Age of Sail was an expansive site of mobility in which people, goods, and sentiments traversed great distances across oceanscapes often unclaimed by state powers. Like the land, the sea is indigenous. Terrestrial colonial philosophies of the period deemed that Indigenous territories were made productive when claimed within the project of a settler nation-state. However, beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, vast swathes of the world's oceans were, and continue to be, considered international waters located beyond territorial zones and governed by a 'freedom of the high seas' that included the right to unobstructed navigation.[31] Indeed, such a shared claim to oceanic space furthered the abilities of imperialist nations to sustain the trade, extraction, and commercial enterprises required for terrestrial projects across the globe.

Given the broader stakes of oceanic travel within the Age of Sail, navigating the high seas became a colonial imperative of which Black mariners participated. In 1565, Afro-Portuguese mariner Lope Martín became the first navigator to sail from the Americas to Asia and back.[32] Martín's historic journey required a mastery of skills often referred to as the Art of Navigation, a scientific practice requiring expertise in mathematics, astronomy, and cartography. Martín was not the only Black navigator of the period. Other early Black seafarers charted vessels' courses. Maritime captains particularly respected the navigational abilities of Krumen sailors of West Africa. British ships often hired them, including on Pacific voyages and anti-slaving vessels.[33]

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31 Renisa Mawani, 'Oceans as Method: Law, Violence, and Climate Catastrophe', *The Funambulist: Politics of Space and Bodies*, 39 (2022), pp. 16–19.

32 Andrés Reséndez, *Vuelta: Conquering the Pacific* (Mariner Books, 2021).

33 Jarvis L. Hargrove, 'Krumen and the suppression of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade from West Africa', Liberian Studies Journal, 36.2 (January 2012), p. 72.

Beyond gauging opportunities to navigate oceanic space upon ships as means of employment, Black mariners recognized the sea itself as a possible site of disenclosure. Just as Black sailors comprehended the insulation of the contained vessel which at times operated apart from social structures from shore, so too could they perceive the opportunities of so-called international waters untethered from the jurisdiction of territorial entities. Such a spatial recognition meant not only that free Black mariners often took to the water, but that enslaved Black subjects also regularly sought emancipation by sea. When viewed within Black spatial literacies, the Pacific Ocean transmogrified into an oceanic zone of escape from enslavers with the ability to transport, and transform, formerly enslaved individuals in destinations including Alaska, Vancouver, Hawaii, and Alta California.[34]

Life on the water certainly contained peril, labour, extraction, strife, and uncertainty illustrated by the need for Black seafarers to attempt to outmanoeuvre chasing enslavers or produce documents to protect their free status onboard. But moments at sea also included periods of respite and appreciation of the natural world. Betsey Stockton, a previously enslaved African American missionary and educator, reveals these simultaneous realities of enclosure and disenclosure. In November 1822, Stockton boarded a whaling vessel, the *Thames*, for a five month journey to the Hawaiian islands. To protect her from enslavers and patrollers, her written contract clarified she was not a runaway taking to the sea but instead engaged as a missionary — a project with its own colonial aims.

Her journal entry about a time of peace off the Pacific coast of Peru, written during that maritime journey, describes a moment of simple humanity in relation to the sea. Stockton's travels and

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34 Ian C. Hartman and David Reamer, *Black Lives in Alaska: A History of African Americans in the Far Northwest* (University of Washington Press, 2022); Crawford Kilian, *Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia* (Harbour Publishing, 2020); Rudolph M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (Yale University Press, 1995).

words resonate with Achille Mbembe's as he also reflects on other Black writers, such as Édouard Glissant: 'the veritable disenclosure of the world is thus the encounter with the world's entirety: what Glissant calls the *Tout-Monde* [*All-World*].' And Paul Gilroy: 'the shape of a new planetary consciousness […] one that gives a central place to the ethics of mutuality, or, as Gilroy suggests, to conviviality, being-with-others.'[35] In parallel with these ethics, we meditate for a moment on Stockton's being-with-the-sea, and what the sea had to offer in that moment, 'an Other always there, from the outset'.[36] Such a meditation aligns with calls from Black studies scholar Marlon Bailey and geographer Rashad Shabazz to attend to the humanity of Black subjects in space. As Black geographies scholar Latoya E. Eaves reminds us: 'Black geographies promotes the humanization of place'; '[e]xpanding humanistic examinations of Black life into the everyday experiences offers important and metamorphic insights [into] Black subjects' negotiations with societal structures, communities, […] other human beings' — and the natural world including the expanse of the sea.[37]

While this expansive sea may seem timeless, life upon it was not. Voyaging is a transitory experience, and for Black mariners during the Age of Sail, one that was met by the realities of eventually leaving the sea by will or force. The spatial literacies needed to gauge when and how to leave, or not, leads us to the final geography of our map: the Black shore.

35 Mbembe, 'Disenclosure', *Out of the Dark Night*, p. 76

36 Ibid.

37 Eaves, 'Black geographic possibilities', pp. 86, 88.

> I took passage on board the Isabella Capt. Wm. H. Davis & came to the Sandwich Islands in 1811 & here came ashore with permission and lived four months with Hevaheva the high Priest of the Islands.
>
> — Anthony Allen, African American mariner who self-emancipated to Hawaii[38]

Back in port, the liminal spaces of the ship and the sea collided with terrestrial sovereignty. Like ocean winds, racial dynamics which scaffolded complex jurisdictions of various nation-states could shift from port to port. Such dynamics demanded the deployment of Black spatial literacies that informed possible decisions to stay aboard, temporarily disembark, travel home, dialogue with other Black folks at port, or even desert. Some regions of the United States in the nineteenth century, for example, explicitly worked to suppress the terrestrial mobility of incoming Black sailors. After African American seamen were suspected of acting as vital communication channels in a thwarted large-scale slave revolt in South Carolina in 1822, southern states across the US passed a suite of Negro Seamen's Acts meant to prevent Black mariners from communicating with other Black subjects — especially enslaved individuals — both at port and in points inland.[39] These laws not only illustrate the critical roles that Black mariners played in Black information networks of the day. They also remind us of the stakes of Black spatial literacies and the complexities of decisions made via their processing. In

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38 In 1822, Anthony D. Allen wrote a letter to Dr. Dougal, the son of his former enslaver. Dougal had read about Allen's generosity and success in a missionary article. Dougal wrote to Allen and Allen chose to respond. In his letter to Dougal, Allen details his life since emancipating himself by sea. He describes Hawaii, its cultural differences, and his new family. For more, see: Anthony Allen, letter to Dr. Dougal, 11 Oct. 1822, Hawaiian Historical Society.

39 Philip M. Hamer, 'Great Britain, the United States, and the Negro Seamen Acts, 1822–1848', *The Journal of Southern History*, 1.1 (1935): pp. 3–28.

addition to jailing scores of individuals, the government of South Carolina executed thirty-five people in response to the thwarted uprising. During the Age of Sail, Black mariners deployed Black spatial literacies in ways they saw fit according to their distinct personal assessments, knowledges, contexts, and ethics. No amount of analysis, however, provided fail-proof protection against the full weight of state sanctioned racial violence.

Though perhaps more well-known in popular history through their connections to the American South, these Negro Seamen's Acts were not spatially bound to the Eastern Seaboard. Black sailors pulling into ports in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-nineteenth century faced legal discrimination meant not to prevent uprisings of enslaved individuals, but to keep Black mariners out of the territory's settler project. Oregon territorial laws in effect by 1849 prohibited Black sailors from leaving their docked vessels without written permission or supervision. The second Oregon Black Exclusion law of 1849 contained an ensemble of restrictions intended to prohibit Black sailors from jumping ship and permanently settling in the US territory including language stating, 'it shall be the duty of masters and owners of vessels having brought negroes or mulattoes into Oregon […] [to ensure] such negro or mulatto to leave this territory with such vessel […] or from some other vessel within forty days'.[40]

Attempts to arrest such settlement highlight the potential power and agency represented in the act of desertion — a spatial practice exhibited by mariners of various races. As historian Rudolph Lapp describes the practice in California during Mexican rule: 'In the 1830s the number of American ships,

40 Oregon Exclusion Law, 1849. A BILL TO PREVENT NEGROES AND MULATTOES FROM COMING TO, OR RESIDING IN OREGON (enacted by the Oregon Territorial Legislature, 1849). For more regarding Oregon's Black exclusion laws, see: Quintard Taylor, 'Slaves and free men: Blacks in the Oregon country, 1840–1860', *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 83.2 (1982), pp. 153–170; and Kenneth R. Coleman, *Dangerous Subjects: James D. Saules and the Rise of Black Exclusion in Oregon* (Oregon State University Press, 2017).

especially those from New England, that touched the California coast increased, and so did the number of black and white deserters.'[41] Like many decisions, however, racial dynamics could complicate the contours of this practice for Black mariners when compared to their White counterparts, requiring that they draw upon Black spatial literacies to decipher optimal contexts, locations, and possible allies for desertion. At times, previous relationships forged across colonial regimes could impact the future of Black deserters as could social constructions of race within new destinations of choice.

A young man named Anthony Allen, for example, fled bondage in New York in 1800, circumventing a circuitous and treacherous route to his eventual settlement in the Kingdom of Hawaii. Born enslaved in pre-revolutionary New York in 1774, Allen spent his early years in or near Schenectady with his enslavers, the Dougals. At first, Allen fled 'on foot', as he phrased it.[42] He made it to Hartford, Connecticut where, like many other enslaved Black people before him, he sought his freedom by sea. Allen journeyed by sea to other locations. He later wrote that, 'I worked my passage to Boston, where I expected to find my father [who was also a seaman], but not finding him I shipped on board the *Henry*.'[43] Allen traversed the Eastern seaboard from Massachusetts to South Carolina. He travelled abroad, visiting ports in Havana, Bengal, and France. And he negotiated an array of experiences from clashes with pirates to escaping near re-enslavement in Norfolk to finally reuniting with his father in Boston when his father returned wounded after a three-year voyage to British Columbia. When Allen sailed to what he and others called the Sandwich Islands aboard the *Isabella*, it is likely that he was not only attracted to the islands' tropical weather and natural landscapes. We can also imagine that after visiting ports around the world during a decade at sea,

41 Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, p. 4.

42 Allen, letter.

43 Ibid.

the Hawaiian Kingdom's more amenable racial climate may have also factored into his decision to permanently settle on Oahu. Allen eventually resettled in Waikiki where he served as an advisor to Kamehameha I, married two native Hawiian women as was 'the custom of the country', and owned a six-acre oceanfront compound including lodgings and a hospital for wounded sailors.[44] There, he became part of a broader chain of emigrants of African descent in Hawaii whose settlement both preceded him and would continue well into the nineteenth century.

In fact, in 1822, Allen met Betsey Stockton, another African American settler through his newly established, and likely strategic, relationships with American missionaries in the Hawaiian islands (whose presence he predated). Stockton had become the first unmarried and first African American woman to serve as a missionary in Hawaii. Upon meeting him in 1823, Stockton wrote in her journal of Allen, 'Mr. Allen was very kind to me, and seemed happy to see one of his own country people.'[45] Again, Mbembe's writings on disenclosure could well be describing both Stockton's and Allen's spatial practices, 'in going forward to meet the world, and in being able to embrace the inextricable web of affiliations that form our identities and the interlacing of networks that make every identity necessarily extend out in relation'.[46]

We offer these brief examples of navigations of shore to illustrate how Black mariners deployed Black spatial practices in ways that were cognisant of sovereignties as systems of contradictory enclosures through which degrees of personal humanity and privilege and authority might be made possible.

The Black shore is a map of colliding sovereignties. For Black people in most man-made territories, disenclosure is not a place. It is a practice. Our provocation is whether a

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44 Ibid.

45 Escher, *She Calls Herself Betsey Stockton*, p. 40.

46 Mbembe, 'Disenclosure', p. 64

critical architecture can design with a spatial awareness of sovereignty and sovereignties and of Black spatial practices and cartographic imaginings that seek to disenclose.

Implications for a Critical Architecture

The ship and sea and shore, as mapped by Black spatial practices, might offer useful methods and questions for a critical architecture. Black mariners had to develop spatial practices to navigate multiple sovereignties, any of which could become deadly. Moreover, they found routes between and within these sovereignties to pursue their goals, whether they were geographic exploration, social mobility, settlement, or simply being human despite social systems which consistently challenged the humanity of Black subjects. Perhaps a methodological benefit exists in analysing other built environments as 'ships' that travel through multiple human and Indigenous sovereignties. Such a method might produce new principles for designing and analysing built environments.

From the metaphor of the ship, we notice how hierarchies that are scaffolded into the built environment might actually provide unexpected opportunities for individual Black self-determination. In addition to the optimism of designing for democracy that might assume similarly empowered and equally right-ful actors, can we design for Black spatial practices that create transportative possibilities within unequal societies? In already built environments, can we shine a blacklight on their blueprints, to find passages, hidden rooms, and escape routes within the complicities of capitalist enterprises?

From the metaphor of the shore, we consider how ports and pockets of sovereignty become more apparent when we consider Black spatial practices. In US cities, we think about how homes in public housing have often been subject to warrantless, non-consensual searches. We think about how some estates include private roads where even police have to stop at the gate.

We think about corporate campuses and public university campuses, and consider how people seek disenclosures in unexpected places. We are reminded by the lyrical insights by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney:

> We went to the public hospital but it was private, and we went through the door marked 'private' to the nurses' coffee room, and it was public. We went to the public university but it was private, and we went to the campus barbershop, and it was public.[47]

Whether through overseas routes or by underground railroads, Black freedom-makers have travelled through multiple private and public sovereignties, proving how man-made sovereignties can be repurposed. Can a critical architecture make transparent the sometimes colluding, sometimes colliding, often contradictory authorities over Black life?

From the sea, we marvel at how more-than-human sovereignty has taught humans to practise solidarity. Drawing upon Indigenous epistemologies, the sea is teacher, ancestor, connector, and sovereign.[48] We wonder how a critical architecture can learn to design with a respect for Indigenous sovereignty. Can we imagine built environments that are not insulated from the natural environment, such as communities trying to make themselves immune to climate change, but rather require collaboration for mutual survival and livelihood?

Surrounding but slightly beyond this essay are Indigenous-

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47 Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, 'Debt and study', *E-flux Journal*, 14 (2010).

48 See: Epeli Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean* (University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Heather Ponchetti Daly, Alexandria Hunter, and Eva Trujillo, 'The Kumeyaay: Original Stewards of our Lands and Sea', in *San Diego Seafood: Then and Now* (forthcoming 2025); Luhui Whitebear, 'Pen of Molten Fire', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 46.1 (2023), pp. 115–128; Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* (AK Press, 2020).

Black relationships, that is, epistemological, cosmological, pedagogical, and spiritual relationships to land and water. In the Pacific, where Black people have sought, found, and created some kind of a personhood, many of these settlement practices were based on capitalist systems of extraction or in state-based governmentalities. The ships we examine in this essay are not Indigenous. Indeed, the whaling ship was dependent on the commodification of death of our non-human relatives.[49] Yet Black spatial practices were not just about navigating up the ranks of seamen, but fundamentally about being more fully human, and in many cases, about being in relationship with a disenclosed world, an Indigenous world. Black people sought and sometimes experienced disenclosure in the vast interconnectedness of the sea and within Indigenous nations. Thinking about Indigenous architecture with Black spatial practices in mind, can built environments help restore, revive, maintain, and protect relationships to Indigenous-Black places and peoples?

Black geographies are not only disenclosures, but complex maps that reflect resistant, complicit, and other possibilities with respect to colonial and capitalist enterprises. We build off of scholars of Black geographies to think about how Black spatial practices are also capacious in their desires. As capacious as Morrison's vision for a map of the world, as capacious as the sea for Black mariners. As capacious as re-imagining capitalism, refusing to be contained by its overdetermining forces.

49 And eerily echoes with Christina Sharpe's analysis of the slave ship *Zong*.

Worship at the Margins: On Violence, Enclosures, and the Reformed Church of Paris (1555–1562)

Tom Joashi

On the evening of 4 September 1557, when a secret Protestant gathering was discovered in a home opposite the Collège du Plessis on Paris' Left Bank, around a hundred attendees were arrested and taken in chains down the grand Rue Saint-Jacques to the Châtelet prison. The Reformed pastor Antoine de la Roche Chandieu recounts that the group was greeted by an 'infinite multitude of people spread along the street'; Catholic Parisians pelted their victims with street muck and tore at their hair as they trudged.[1] It was thus only when they had arrived at prison that these unfortunate men and women were able to find some respite from the tribulations of public life. Placed all together in the Châtelet's most insalubrious dungeon, they were able to calm their nerves with the collective singing of psalms — much to the astonishment of passers-by outside.[2] In a certain light, then, their night seems to have ended as it started. The community was gathered once again in a confined, yet sanctified space. In the end, though most were later released, seven of the group were burnt at the stake for heresy.

The story of the Reformed Church of Paris is neither a successful nor a hugely long one. Established in 1555 in the home of Jean de la Ferrière (Fig. 1), the Church weathered five hard years of secrecy before a change of tack in royal policy saw the introduction of a more tolerant climate in the capital.[3] Such a climate, however, was short-lived: the semblance of religious pluralism fostered by the 1562 January Edict, which permitted Protestant worship in Paris' faubourgs, was only to last several months. In May that year, just as civil war broke out in the kingdom, Charles IX pronounced the city as Catholic and Catholic alone, and the Church went underground. A decade

1 Antoine de la Roche Chandieu, *Histoire des persécutions et martyrs de l'Église de Paris: depuis l'an 1557, jusques au temps du Roy Charles Neuvième* (Unknown, 1563), p. 10. Hereafter HPM. All translations are my own.

2 Ibid., p. 11.

3 Jean-Pierre Babelon, *Paris au XVIe siècle. 'Nouvelle histoire de Paris'* (Association pour la publication d'une histoire de Paris, 1986), p. 414; Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 119.

later, the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre wiped out the vast majority of the Protestants who resided in Paris at that time, as well as thousands of others across France.

Ultimately, the capital's Protestant community cannot be said strictly to have enjoyed a 'disenclosure of the world'.[4] Its constituents' spatial experience was tied up with borders, boundaries, and their inability to transcend them. Nevertheless, contemporary developments in Urban Studies may signify new possibilities for interpreting the complexities of the past. Taking inspiration from Oren Yiftachel's writing on 'gray space',[5] this essay seeks to uncover the possibilities of life at the edge in sixteenth-century Paris. 'Enclosures' in this context are understood primarily as the limited sites in which expressions of Reformed faith, banished from the public realm, were possible. They appear both literally and figuratively in the written accounts pertaining to the years of 1555 to 1562: as prison cells, private homes and temples, but also as open sites beyond the respectability of the city walls. This essay will first present important context to the French Reformation and Paris' Catholic hostilities, followed by a discussion of the Protestants' corresponding spatial practices and identities. It will deploy gray space as an analytical framework, demonstrating the ways in which even the most stifling of enclosures could be reimagined as spaces of communal agency.

4 I follow Achille Mbembe's definition as discussed in 'Disenclosure', in *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 42–89.

5 Oren Yiftachel, 'Critical Theory and "Gray Space": Mobilization of the Colonized', *City*, 13.2–3 (2009), p. 250, doi:10.1080/13604810902982227.



Fig. 1. A detail from Truschet and Hoyau's *Plan de Bâle*, showing the neighbourhood of Jean de la Ferrière. Reproduced from Basel University Library, via Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Paris_by_Truschet_and_Hoyau_-_Basel_University_Library.jpg> [accessed 8 December 2024].

In the early sixteenth century, several decades prior to the establishment of Paris' Reformed community, criticisms first levied by the German theologian Martin Luther (1483–1546) against the malpractices of the Roman Church sparked the beginnings of tumultuous religious schism in Europe. Far exceeding their author, Luther's ideas triggered reformations across the continent of differing colours, finding their way to France principally through the writings of Geneva-based Jean Calvin (1509–1564). Put very briefly, Calvinists — French Protestants, later 'Huguenots' — regarded the Bible as the sole authoritative text of the Christian faith, to be studied in the vernacular by men and women irrespective of their education. They criticised all rituals and customs not detailed within the Bible as apocryphal, moreover. Purgatory and the intercession of saints were both denounced as inventions of the papacy, while the Lord's Supper was deemed a spiritual, not transubstantial process; contrary to Catholic tradition, Christ was not believed to be made *physically* present in the Blessed Sacrament through the performance of Mass.[6] The extent of this interpretation was that all notions of an innate material sanctity on Earth were summarily rejected. Churches possessed no more holiness in and of themselves than latrines, as the various waves of Protestant iconoclasm in the early 1560s sought to demonstrate. Calvin informed his followers that sacred space was only to be found within themselves and the act of communal worship. For this reason, temples tended to be designed with a central emphasis on the pulpit, signifying the importance placed on the Word, and decorated austerely, with no worldly distractions (Fig. 2). The absence of a purpose-built structure would cause only minor difficulties, though, since any site could in theory be made sacred

6 Cf. French Reformed Churches, 'The French Confession of Faith A.D. 1559', in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century* (The Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 137–59.

through the gathering of the flock.[7]

Some sites were likely easier to repurpose than others all the same. Sixteenth-century Paris was one of Europe's largest, most densely populated cities, and one of its most Catholic at that. The vast majority of Paris' residents lived in narrow gabled townhouses, several stories high, which lined the city's streets and its bridges over the Seine. Multiple families often shared these buildings, of which the walls, doors, and floors were thin and flimsily built. Arlette Jouanna writes that '[i]n an overpopulated city, with its cramped and poorly insulated dwellings, everyone knew about the activities of their district's inhabitants'.[8] Conflicts frequently arose over the uses and occupation of land in Parisian neighbourhoods, as residents sought to preserve the thin boundaries encircling what they believed to be their own. Secrecy was thus as scarce as space itself.[9] The Parisians themselves were furthermore pious to the point of zealotry. The cartographer François de Belleforest claims in 1575 that

> Paris possesses a people so moved by holy things, so acquainted with devotion, and so reverent towards its priests, that [he] regard[s] the Parisians' godliness to be as significant as the great number of churches in the holy territory of Rome.[10]

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7 Randal Carter Working, *The Visual Theology of the Huguenots: Towards an Architectural Iconology of Early Modern French Prvotestantism, 1535 to 1623* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), pp. 63–103.

8 Arlette Jouanna, T*he Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: The Mysteries of a Crime of State* (24 August 1572) (Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 126.

9 Yvonne-Hélène Le Maresquier-Kesteloot, 'Le voisinage dans l'espace parisien à la fin du Moyen Âge: bilan d'une enquête', *Revue historique*, 122.1 (1998), p. 60.

10 François de Belleforest, *L'ancienne et grande cité de Paris* (A. Quantin, 1882), p. 32.

Spectacular processions would file through the capital's narrow, shrine-studded thoroughfares on a daily basis, bearing relics for the public adoration of onlookers. Church bells dominated the city's soundscape, the staging of Passion plays its open spaces, and radical preachers its public discourse.[11]

The extent to which the capital's public sphere was actively *policed* is perhaps unsurprising in this light.[12] Religious non-conformists were punished by municipal authorities and vigilante groups alike with the utmost severity. On the Place de Grève and the Place Maubert, 'heretics' such as Anne du Bourg, a prominent magistrate, were burned alive in front of large, gawping crowds (Fig. 3).[13] Rather less officially, Parisian children are said in 1559 to have erected Marian statues on street corners as a means of singling out the passers-by who failed to genuflect before them or bare their head out of respect. Those unfortunate enough to be caught found themselves 'suddenly attacked by certain men lying in wait in nearby houses.'[14] Similarly, the moderate Catholic Pierre de Paschal recounts how in 1562 crowds disinterred a corpse that had been buried according to Reformed rites in the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, throwing it 'into the great road, right in the middle of the muck'.[15] The performance of Catholic identity, whether peaceful or aggressive, was constant and near-ubiquitous; in an urban environment defined by the orthodoxy of its rhythms, making space for Protestantism — portable though it was — was inevitably an uphill battle.

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11 Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 9–49.

12 Diane Roussel, 'L'espace public comme enjeu des guerres de Religion et de la paix civile. Réflexions sur la notion d'espace public et ses métamorphoses à Paris au XVIe siècle', in *L'espace public au Moyen Âge, Le Noeud Gordien* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2011), pp. 131–46.

13 Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, p. 52.

14 Louis Régnier de la Planche, 'Histoire de l'estat de France tant de la république que de la religion sous le règne de François II', in *Choix de chroniques et mémoires sur l'histoire de France* (no publisher, 1836), p. 237.

15 Pierre de Paschal, *Journal de ce qui s'est passé en France durant l'année 1562, principalement dans Paris et la Cour* (Société de l'Histoire de Paris, 1950), p. 7; 13. Hereafter JPF.



Fig. 2. *Le Temple du Paradis*, oil painting by Jean Perrissin, 1573. Currently held at the International Museum of the Reformation, Geneva. Reproduced from the International Museum of the Reformation <https://www.musee-reforme.ch/en/temple-of-heaven/> [accessed 8 December 2024].



Fig. 3. 1559 Execution of Anne du Bourg, from the *Recueil de combats, massacres, sièges, entrées de villes et plusieurs autres actions arrivées sous les règnes des rois Henry II, Charles IX et Henry III, tant en France que dans les Pays-Bas* (1635), engraving by Frans Hogenberg. Reproduced from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica Digital Library <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84467681/f7.item> [accessed 8 December 2024].

But who exactly made up the Parisian Protestant community, and how did these people navigate the city's hostilities? As this section suggests, the Reformed image seems largely to have been intertwined with the various enclosures in which the practice of heterodox identities was possible. Contrary to many of today's persecuted urban communities, records of arrests on religious grounds in Paris' criminal archives indicate that the new faith was somewhat more prevalent among wealthier, educated individuals, particularly those in literate professions. What is more, they show that these individuals were far from a community apart. If slightly concentrated in the Quartier Saint-Séverin and the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the Protestants appear to have been situated fairly evenly in homes throughout the city, in amongst their Catholic neighbours.[16] For those seeking communal worship, however, going off the proverbial beaten path was clearly a necessity, and secrecy was key. In a letter to Calvin, pastor Jean Macard writes that he was travelling between five houses per day to perform services for small groups, thereby avoiding the risks posed by a large congregation.[17] Many of these services were held at night, using the obscurity of unlit streets for cover, with locations changed regularly. Preference was given to spots in the grassy, less built-up *faubourgs* on the other side of the city walls, such as in homes leading out onto the Pré-aux-Clercs meadows. Worshipers were granted the reassurance that, should their gatherings be discovered, the neighbouring fields would provide them with a quick means of escape.

For, in these marginal sites, trouble was often close at hand. The *faubourgs* bore disreputable connotations; the Protestants may well have encountered sex workers, drifters, and duelling

16 Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, pp. 110–112.

17 Jean Macard, 'Letter of 7 February 1558', in *Précis de l'histoire de l'Église Réformée de Paris* ([no publisher], 1862), I, xxv–xxvi.

students as they skulked about in the shadows.[18] In an edict of 1543, François I promoted the urban development of the capital by emphasising his desire to accommodate his subjects within its ramparts, thereby sparing them from 'the wicked young men and the indecent people' that lay beyond them.[19] Nevertheless, it is evident that Parisian Protestant identity was in some ways bound up with these edges — at once topographically open and socially 'enclosed' — of the city. This was increasingly the case in the brief, more clement period from 1560 to 1562, during which Reformed temples in the *faubourgs* grew popular. Privileging the formative role of material conditions over theological doctrine, Jérémie Foa has described French Protestants as having arrived at their sense of self quite literally 'step by step'. To be a Huguenot meant performing one's exclusion for all to see: after the 1563 Edict of Amboise granted the community a number of distant extramural worship sites, Reformed townspeople began banding together to undertake the long, perilous journeys out through the city gates that were required to reach them, often singing loudly as they marched.[20] And though no such sites were permitted in the vicinity of the capital, the earlier toleration of worship in Paris' *faubourgs* for a few months of 1562 seems to have triggered shorter excursions of comparable effect. Paschal emphasises the great theatricality that seized the city at this time, describing how, on one occasion, Protestants had gathered close to the Hôtel des Tournelles, up against the Porte Saint-Antoine, as the Queen Mother was nearby: 'There was a great number of them, greater than normal. Some came out of curiosity to see the assembly; others came so that the

18 Diane Roussel, 'Limites vécues et pratiques sociales des marges de Paris au XVIe siècle', in *Les limites de Paris (XIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2017), pp. 131–48.

19 François I, 'Ordonnance du 3 Septembre 1543', in *Histoire de la ville de Paris, by Michel Félibien* (Chez G. Desprez et J. Desessartz, 1725), v, p. 768.

20 Jérémie Foa, 'Devenir Huguenot pas à pas. La contribution de l'espace urbain à l'incorporation des identités confessionnelles au temps des Guerres de Religion', in *La religion vécue: les laïcs dans l'Europe moderne* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013), pp. 45–65.

Queen would know how large a group they had become.'[21]

Conversely, Catholic frustrations with the Protestants' interior activities demonstrate the conceptual significance of enclosures on the other end of the confessional divide. Following the aforementioned 1557 affair of the Rue Saint-Jacques, rumours quickly circulated among the populace of the indecencies that had been committed both at the townhouse gathering and later on in the cells of the Châtelet. The Catholic priest and memoirist Claude Haton describes how, in the first instance, after they had finished their rites, 'it was permitted to the men to approach the women and the women the men, each of them led by their desire.'[22] Confined Protestant spaces were thus scandalised as sites of orgiastic pleasure in the Parisian popular imagination through the cover that the surrounding walls afforded them. What exactly, asked Catholic propagandists, are our wicked Huguenot neighbours plotting in the privacy of their own homes? Chandieu's account of the martyrdom of Jean Beffroy speaks similarly to this spatial definition of social otherness. Beffroy, an ironmonger on the Rue de la Mortellerie (Fig. 4), is said first to have stoked the ire of his neighbours by refusing to decorate his house's façade in preparation for a procession — an occasion on which those Catholics 'carry their God through the streets', Chandieu writes — and later by working noisily with hammers on a feast day. Owing to their austerity or their porosity, the edges of his abode marked Beffroy out as a Protestant — he was later burnt for his crimes.[23] As such, if the Protestants viewed the stigmatised *faubourgs* as the circumscribed areas in which godly behaviour was possible, their Catholic detractors, pointing accusatorily to secret, insulated spaces, seem to have furthered the community's associations with the enclosed. How, then, could the Protestants look beyond these boundaries?

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21 JPF, p. 4.

22 Claude Haton, *Mémoires contenant le récit des événements accomplis de 1553 à 1582*, ed. by Félix Bourquelot, 2 vols (Imprimerie Impériale, 1857), I, p. 48.

23 HPM, pp. 352–352.



Fig. 4. A detail from Truschet and Hoyau's *Plan de Bâle*, showing Rue de la Mortellerie. Reproduced from Basel University Library, via Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Paris_by_Truschet_and_Hoyau_-_Basel_University_Library.jpg> [accessed 8 December 2024].

Stepping back now, we might return to the theoretical framework introduced in this essay's opening lines. It has been shown thus far that sixteenth-century Paris was constructed as a bastion of all-encompassing Catholicism through an array of ritual and social mechanisms. Aggressive displays of faith kept the streets clean and any manifestations of Protestantism out, for the most part at least (Fig. 5). Responding to these conditions, members of the Reformed community developed strategies of navigating the city's many edges. Praying in whispers, clinging to the shadows, and fleeing the bustle of life within Paris' walls were all part and parcel of practising a minority religion. As will be discussed, however, these men and women do seem to have experienced some glimmers of hope in spite of their predicament. Drawing on Oren Yiftachel's work on gray space and Bedouin Arab groups, I contend that such glimmers were often tied up with the spatial experience of marginalisation itself. Some elaboration of Yiftachel's approach is thus in order.

Let it first be noted that while period differences foreclose exact comparisons between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries, themes of violence, agency, and urban space are common both to this discussion of the Reformed Church and Yiftachel's own. At the heart of the theorist's work lies Henri Lefebvre's celebrated enquiry: who, it is asked, has a right to the city when the forces of capital are given centre stage?[24] Significantly, though, Lefebvre's work is taken up by Yiftachel under a new heading, reformulated as an issue of ethnic interrelationships in space. He has coined 'urban ethnocracy' to describe a setting in which 'a dominant group appropriates the city apparatus to buttress its domination and expansion'. This group's access to the rights of planning sees the exclusion or segregation of oppositional minority groups; the latter are housed

24 Cf. Henri Lefebvre, 'The Right to the City', in *Writings on Cities* (Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 147–59.

insalubriously, often temporarily, with the physical form of their deprived neighbourhood becoming the 'signifier' of the social 'other'. This is not to say that the enforcement of this othering is purely architectural. The exertion and maintenance of ethnocracy is constituted via 'forceful seizure, formal legislation, cultural discourse, and invisible apparatuses of control'.[25]

It is through his close inspection of urban ethnocracies that Yiftachel later arrives at the concept of 'gray space', which 'refers to developments, enclaves, populations and transactions positioned between the "lightness" of legality/approval/safety and the "darkness" of eviction/destruction/death'.[26] We can narrow this broad concept down to the ontological experience of communities at the margins of urban life, neither fully welcomed into the city nor forcefully evicted from it. A combination of 'deeply embedded institutional, material and spatial systems' are said to ensure their socio-spatial fixity, including the preferential treatment of more 'favoured' counterparts — 'private "settlers" in areas of ethnic conflict, bohemians and artists in areas of urban control'. Where this framework becomes most relevant to our discussion, however, lies in Yiftachel's description of the fundamentally polyvalent nature of gray space, rich in both the negative connotations of exclusion and the possibilities of new agencies. He cites the practice of Sumood ('steadfastness') espoused by Bedouin communities in Israel's Negev desert, arguing that 'subaltern groups' tend to 'respond to their persisting oppression by articulating anti- and counter-hegemonic struggles and identities'. In this way, the conditions of life at the edge are reimagined as the necessary foundations for creating a means of resistance.[27]

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25 Oren Yiftachel, 'Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli "Mixed City"', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 21.6 (2003), pp. 673–93, doi:10.1068/d47j.

26 Yiftachel, 'Critical Theory and "Gray Space": Mobilization of the Colonized', *City*, 13.2–3 (2009), p. 250, doi:10.1080/13604810902982227.

27 Yiftachel, 'Theoretical Notes On "Gray Cities": The Coming of

Naturally, adjustments are necessary when bringing these lines of thought to bear on Protestantism in early modern Paris. Up until the massacres of 1572, members of the Reformed Church remained insistent on their fealty to the king. The sort of 'resistance' displayed by these men and women was enacted more in response to the silencing power of violence than to the authority of the Crown. Further, it has been noted above that these individuals were far from segregated from Catholics in their day to day. The colour of their skin, their language, and their houses were indistinguishable. Comparisons with minority groups in the Global South consequently require a good deal of caution. And yet, if Yiftachel argues that 'planning citizenship' is denied to modern gray communities, something similar can perhaps be said of the Protestants.[28] Defined as the right to determine one's own relationship with the built environment, echoes of this citizenship were evidently sought by the community in their 1559 'French Confession of Faith'. Insisting on the recurrent issue of worship houses, the leaders of the Church expressed their desire for 'a place where anyone may see what passes in [their] assemblies', so that they might 'thereby be absolved from the charge of the enormous crimes with which these same assemblies have been defamed'.[29] And while their spatial experience was typically a good deal 'darker' than it was 'light', marked more by violence than peace, it is evident that the Protestants found new ways of reinterpreting and sublimating their marginalisation by working, crucially, with the sites that confined them. It is in this way that I wish to *build* upon Yiftachel's thinking in the following section: by emphasising the inscription of space within the Protestants' assertions of strength.

Urban Apartheid?', *Planning Theory*, 8 (2009), pp. 88–100, doi:10.1177/1473095208099300.

28 Ibid., p. 90.

29 'The French Confession of Faith A.D. 1559', p. 142.



Fig. 5. *Procession de la Ligue sur la place de Grève*, oil painting by an anonymous artist, c. 1590. Currently held at the Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Reproduced from the Musée Carnavalet, via Wikimedia Commons <https://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Procession_de_la_Ligue_1590_Carnavalet.jpg> [accessed 8 December 2024].



The final task at hand is to consider how experiences of 'gray space' may have offered new opportunities for the expression of agency among the Protestant community, along with the ways in which this expression was tied up with the Parisian built (and unbuilt) environment. It has been indicated once already that the community may have begun to take pride in the margins to which it was restricted. On 27 December 1561, a violent skirmish broke out in the Faubourg Saint-Médard between congregants from the Reformed Patriarch temple and Catholic priests from the nearby parish church. The former accused the latter of purposefully disrupting their services with the loud tolling of church bells. In a published account of the events, an anonymous Protestant chronicler insisted on the legality of their gathering in the suburbs — even though it was not until January of 1562 that such gatherings were officially tolerated. Later that year, Paschal recounts how Huguenots now rightfully gathered at the same temple on Good Friday 'placed […] mortar pots and clay butter pots in the windows of the house where they were assembled' so as to mimic and thus ridicule, with quite some temerity, the artillery that had been placed at the nearby Porte Saint-Jacques.[30] Undoubtedly, worship in the *faubourgs* remained a far cry from the open, more centralised expressions of faith they most desired. The Protestants' anger at Catholic noise pollution illustrates nonetheless how certain members of the community sought to protect their rights over the limited patch of land they now believed their own. Such examples as their makeshift construction of window-sill weaponry, as noted by a bemused Paschal, are further evidence of the ways in which restricted spaces were used for the articulation of presence.

Prior to these years of greater confidence, the Crown's dogged pursuit of the community seems to have elicited comparable efforts at the reinterpretation of enclosures. Falling

30 JPF, p. 13.

back on their faith, the Protestants observed parallels in the simplicity of their hideouts and the persecution that drove them outwards with the experiences of the early Christians under the yoke of pagan Rome. In this way, their martyrdom was located on a long biblical timeline of emancipated victimhood, as Raymond Mentzer has argued.[31] Chandieu writes of the ancient Church:

> Sooner we now recognise that the caverns and forests were sacred spaces, receiving such holy congregations; that the Word of God among them made of night the brightest day; and that the presence of God was more than sufficient for them to flee all the things of normal, honest men, even if this meant journeying to the edge of the world.[32]

The flock's experience of exclusionary violence from within the city walls facilitated a new, emboldening sense of proximity with the ancestry of their faith. Calvin's teachings on the flexibility of sacred spaces were moreover affirmed in the locations of their worship and the acknowledgement that their Christian forefathers had managed in much the same situation. Recounting a near miss with the city guard on 20 September 1558, reformed pastor Jo Rachamus writes: 'We fled from the city into the open countryside towards midnight, and under the light of the moon and the stars we thanked God for His having protected us from the fury of the people.'[33] Rachamus fuses wild, pastoral imagery with a statement of election; it was away from the troubles of Paris, in the innocence of the fields and the dead of the night, that he and his flock felt close to the divine.

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31 Raymond Mentzer, 'The Social Construction of Early Huguenot Identity', in *L'identité huguenote. Faire mémoire et écrire l'histoire* (XVIe–XXIe Siècle), ed. by Philip Benedict, Hugues Daussy, and Pierre-Olivier Léchot (Droz, 2014), p. 50.

32 HPM, xliii.

33 Jo Rachamus, 'Letter of 24 September 1558', in *Précis de l'histoire de l'Église Réformée de Paris* (no publisher, 1862), I, lvii–lviii.

At the extremity of this logic was the discovery of fortitude within the enclosure of the prison cell, where the trace or promise of violence was most pronounced. Held in the Conciergerie or the Châtelet, Protestant prisoners found themselves positioned at both the city's heart and its very limits simultaneously. In a letter to Calvin, pastor François de Morel paints a vivid picture of these carceral spaces, recalling how the prisoners' skin would burn and wither under the constant sunlight that shone into their dungeons. Others were held in oubliettes, described as being 'narrow, dark and absolutely deprived of air'.[34] Nevertheless, it is evident that the severity of the dungeons was manageable, even profitable, when viewed within a Reformed logic. As the young imprisoned Huguenot Jean Morel is said to have aphorised, '[m]ay no-one thus fear being taken to prison, given that it is the place in which God fully deploys his graces'.[35] Chandieu is more explicit in his reasoning:

> Since in prison, we are exempt from the fear of encountering idols in the streets; in prison, one does not have the temptations of the world before one's eyes; one can pray to God in peace and sing psalms to the Lord; *such that prisons are often more churches than prisons* [emphasis mine].[36]

The brazen conviction with which many Protestants went to their death on the pyre, preaching or singing psalms as they burned lest their tongue was cut out, suggests that these descriptions were far from affected.[37] Void of worldly distractions, at the edges of public life, cramped cells were construed as the antithesis to the excesses of the Catholic capital. In a certain

34 A. Bernus, 'Le ministre Antoine de Chandieu d'après son journal autographe inédit (1534–1591)', *BSHPF*, 37.2 (1888), p. 60.

35 Jules Bonnet, 'Trois ans de l'Église Réformée de Paris (1557–1559)', *BSHPF*, 29.10 (1880), p. 445.

36 HPM, pp. 254–255.

37 Cf. David Nicholls, 'The Theatre of Martyrdom in the French Reformation', *Past & Present*, 121, 1988, pp. 49–73.

light, their sparseness rather resembles the aesthetic ideal sought by the iconoclasts in later years, as they pillaged Catholic churches, 'purging' them of images and statues. Gathering in the *faubourgs*, retreating to the meadows, and praying in the confines of prison were far from powerless acts. Reaching back to Yiftachel's tools of interpretation, it can be said that the Protestants thus redefined the imposed limitations of gray space as ones, conversely, of strength.

Openings

At first glance, reading the plight of the Reformed Church in relation to the writings of Achille Mbembe would perhaps support the case for more synchronic approaches than the one adopted here. The closest thing to a 'disenclosure' experienced by Protestants in sixteenth-century Paris was likely the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre itself. Over the space of a few days in late August that year, all distinctions between public and private were dissolved when Catholics invaded Protestant homes, looting and slaughtering *en masse*. Mack Holt has shown that the careful delineation of borders between the two faiths was in fact key in ensuring peace during these years of civil war; Dijon remained relatively stable in 1572 on account of such precautions.[38] On the other hand, the harm caused by walls in modern conflict zones in entrenching divisions between social groups is now commonly cited. The virtues of religious pluralism — or the free, unbounded interaction of religious groups — can be celebrated today in a way that for the most part simply was not possible in early modern Europe.

The case of the Parisian Protestants remains a significant one nevertheless in this context. Although the limits that enclosed or excluded them did not crumble, the Protestants

38 Mack Holt, 'Religious Violence in Sixteenth-Century France: Moving Beyond Pollution and Purification', in *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 52–73.



Fig. 6. The Church of Saint-Médard, from Truschet and Hoyau's *Plan de Paris* (1550).

made use of difficult spaces to express identities in excess of their containers. Yiftachel has shown how cities can function in such a way as to preclude the possibility of the development of heterodox identities within them. With its processions, its preachers, and its hostile Catholic populace, sixteenth-century Paris was certainly no exception. And while the Reformed Church, banned in 1562, was ultimately unsuccessful in laying down roots in the capital, the spaces carved out by unlit streets and great stone walls appear to have allowed its constituents some resistance to the norm. In the hopes that modern cities will eventually be disenclosed, but with the acknowledgement that borders continue to be erected, we might consider the example of the Reformed community beyond its historical moment. Limits, this example suggests, can on occasion become openings.

Predators and Cannibals: The Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro

Annette Spiro
Translated by Thomas Skelton-Robinson

In 1922, one hundred years after the founding of the Empire of Brazil and independence from Portugal, the *Semana de Arte Moderna* took place in São Paulo. Like a clap of thunder, the cultural week ushered in Brazilian modernism and in retrospect can be seen as the starting point and a seminal moment in what was an autonomous cultural development. Every newly founded nation and society with a colonial past is faced with the question of its own identity — an issue that continues to be bitterly bargained over, particularly recently under new omens.

In the following essay, the focus rests on a particular building, and with it a whole country in which the ancestral population lacked the resources with which to resist the colonisers, and that was profoundly marked by both its European conquerors, and the African slaves they forcibly brought with them. The cultural impact of Africa was deep and the roots tangled, no better personified than in the unique figure of Antônio Francisco Lisboa, known as 'Aleijadinho', the greatest master builder and sculptor of the Brazilian baroque, whose mother was a Black slave.[1]

The architecture of colonialism, and in particular Brazilian baroque, has been thoroughly researched and its particular manifestations are widely recognised. Similarly to its baroque architecture, the country's classical architecture and its École des Beaux-Arts derivatives were largely inspired by European models. At first glance, this might also be said to apply to Brazilian modernism in the sense that like much else it too was a European import. Many of the key Brazilian architects trained in Europe, or at least in schools based on the École des Beaux-Arts system. Gregori Warchavchik, the pioneer of Brazilian modernism, studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome; Rino Levi at the polytechnic in Milan and under Marcello Piacentini in Rome; Lúcio Costa completed his studies at the Escola de Belas Artes in Rio de Janeiro. Costa, later the planner of the new capital

1 Flanking him is Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, the most important and influential figure in Brazilian literature, founder and director of the Brazilian Literary Academy, who was similarly a descendant of Black slaves.

Brasília, was also the central figure in the building of the new Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro, planned and built from 1939 to 1943. It was likewise Costa who in 1936 invited Le Corbusier to join the consultations for the new building, thus triggering a momentous encounter.

Le Corbusier had already once travelled to South America in 1929, giving lectures in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The journey was undertaken at the urging of his friend the poet Blaise Cendrars. Both men came from La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Swiss canton of Jura. Cendrars was acquainted with the most important protagonists of the *Semana de Arte Moderna*, the writers Mário de Andrade and Oswaldo de Andrade, and with the painter Tarsila do Amaral. It was this circle of friends who were responsible for Le Corbusier's invitation and his first journey to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. At this point in time it might have been more obvious for Brazilian intellectuals to invite a Bauhaus representative, such as Walter Gropius, or Frank Lloyd Wright from the USA, to give a lecture series, especially considering that Le Corbusier was only just beginning his career. His writings and his journal *L'Esprit Nouveau* were more well-known than his early buildings. As it was, the encounter between the Swiss pioneer and the young Brazilian republic proved to be an astonishing match in numerous regards.

What Le Corbusier discovered in Brazil was a country brimming with optimism about the future: audacious, inventive, ready for the new — precisely what the young architect found lacking in Europe. South America provided him with the opportunity — at least on paper — to sketch out his utopian visions, plan new cities and implant projects in the midst of verdant nature, untrammelled by the opposition of traditionalists. His lectures were lapped up enthusiastically by the local architectural community. Le Corbusier, who travelled over the Atlantic on a steamship (amongst the fellow passengers was the American dancer Josephine Baker, whom he drew a portrait

of), for the first time climbed into an aeroplane and made bird's-eye sketches of the untouched South American landscape (Figs. 3–5). This totally new perspective inspired his new urban design ideas, which without the new form of transportation might never have come about as they did. Le Corbusier sketched urban visions for São Paulo and Montevideo, or projects such as the six-kilometre-long apartment block in Rio's hilly surroundings, traces of which stretch down to the architecture of Oscar Niemeyer or Affonso Eduardo Reidy (Fig. 6).

However, Le Corbusier's second trip to Rio de Janeiro in 1936 proved to be even more seminal in terms of Brazilian architectural discourse, asked this time by Lúcio Costa to assist in planning the ministry building in Rio de Janeiro. After the competition for the new ministry had been decided in favour of a project designed in the Beaux-Arts style, the newly appointed education minister Gustavo Capanema had pushed for the winner to be paid the prize money but to entrust the further planning to the losing Costa and his modernist proposal. The latter insisted that his fellow competitors who had likewise submitted modern designs should join him in the realisation, with the result that a team of young architects was formed, led by Costa and consisting of Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Ernano Vasconcellos, Carlos Leão, Jorge Machado Moreira, landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, and the youngest of the group, the trainee Oscar Niemeyer. Le Corbusier spent a whole month with the team. He suggested an alternative location for the new building, situated at the seashore close to what is today the Santos Dumont airport. The open situation seemed to him to be ideal for a modern freestanding edifice. Nevertheless, the city-centre site was stuck to — a lucky happenstance, as hindsight clearly shows. The consultations concluded with a new proposal. Le Corbusier's sketches show the first idea, the positioning of the architectural volume and equally the later deviations from the original plan. The positioning, building form, volumes and proportions were all amended as the design process proceeded (Fig. 7). The individual stages are

documented in the drawings, the most interesting of which is the final alteration undertaken by the team of Brazilian architects. The high-rise slab became thinner, taller, and was sited perpendicular vis-à-vis the original design. Instead of standing at the edge of the open quadrangle it now stood in the middle of the building plot. Facing Araújo Porto Alegre street, a forecourt emerged; on the other side of the building, a city plaza. This modification produced a new constellation, and with it one of the most astonishing and impressive sequences of public spaces in the modernist canon.

The ministry was the first civic building in South America to be built in a modernist style and the first curtain-wall building on the entire American continent (Figs. 9–11). That Le Corbusier's 'Five Points' from his programme for a 'New Architecture' would be applied was never in doubt. He himself had yet to realise a similarly large building based on his premises. The roof garden, the free facade design, the open ground plan, the ribboned windows and the pilotis on the ground floor — all five aspects were utilised, including brise soleils.

However, the most significant contribution to Brazilian modernism is to be found in the open ground floor of the ministry. Here a minor change was undertaken — one not foreseen in Le Corbusier's sketches but that would have an enormous impact on the dynamics of the surrounding urban space. What was originally planned was a passageway with four-and-a-half-metre-high columns as a pedestrian access route to the square behind. According to reports, it was Oscar Niemeyer who argued that the columns be raised. With this, the high-rise slab was lifted further up and the mass of the pilotis more than doubled. The effect is striking, whereby the plan alone hardly does justice to the resulting impact. It is only when one stands underneath the building, or even better if one approaches the open plinth from the street or the square, that the significance of this ostensibly tiny alteration becomes truly apparent. The overly raised ceiling of the passage between the two urban settings creates more than

simply a connection between two spaces. Instead the spatial sequence around the building becomes a single, huge urban scene and the airy space beneath the tower harmoniously blends in to become one of the most beautiful roofed urban squares in the whole of architectural history. It is serendipity that the proposed building site remained where it was in the city centre, thereby providing the stage for an urban *tour de force*. And, almost as an afterthought, a solution to one of modernism's perpetual dilemmas was found: how can towers or free-standing buildings, intended in the spirit of modernism as free volumes in space, hold their own in traditionally conglomerate urban surroundings? This is a question that concerns not only the urban silhouette but also the immediate vicinities — the city at eye level — to which the ministry building provides a consummate and ideal response. Moreover, it did not remain the only example of its kind, instead reappearing as a leitmotif throughout Brazilian modernism. To give two examples: Lina Bo Bardi's art museum in São Paulo, which with a daring static gesture covers the former belvedere on Avenida Paulista; and only a few metres away, Paulo Mendes da Rocha skilfully and surgically cut through the base of Rino Levi's tower to create an astonishing urban space connecting Avenida Paulista with the lower lying Alameda Santos.

A glance at the decoration of the space underneath the ministry tower reveals further extraordinary elements that would later become characteristic of Brazilian modernism. The exterior walls of the base are covered in ceramic tiles — a monumental mural by the Brazilian painter Cândido Portinari evoking the nearby sea and its living inhabitants with a joyful ease and a nod to the ornamentation of Brazilian baroque churches. The roof garden of the lateral wing is where landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx created one of his first works. The garden is redolent with the feeling of an abstract painting, with the flowers daubed as patches of colour. This and other projects by Burle Marx positioned Brazil at the forefront of landscape architecture. Last but not least, the curved exterior facade of the lecture hall

is throned by Jacques Lipchitz's sculpture *Prometheus Unbound*. In total, the interior and the exterior are a showcase of commissioned works by contemporary artists — art and architecture fused to create an ideal whole.

Seen in terms of both urban planning and design, the building defies orthodox modernism. There is no knee-jerk aversion to the ornamental or the decorative. On the contrary: traditional patterns are readily adopted, thus forging a bond to history and the existing historical surroundings. To take the example of Portinari's mural, ceramic tiling originates from Portugal, but even there is part of a convoluted 'colonial heritage' that runs far deeper. Tile-making techniques were passed on as a part of the centuries of Arab rule over the Iberian Peninsula. From there it reached Brazil with the colonisers, where it took on — like many other 'imports' — its own expressions, forms, and patterns. In the course of the Brazilian baroque the Arab-Iberian heritage assumed its tropical manifestation, only then, with the ministry building, to be naturally transported into the architecture of modernism.

Ceramic tiles are not the only elements to emerge from Portugal's Moorish past. Wooden latticework, the *muxarabis*, was another adoption, refined to become a variation of the brise soleil. Serving primarily in Arab architecture as a visual screen and to protect the intimacy of private rooms, here it was interpreted as a type of sun-shading, varied using innumerable different forms, techniques, and materials. Brise soleils, *muxarabis*, and lattice brickwork are today important means of generating shadows and improving ventilation.

Not far from Rio's city centre are Lúcio Costa's apartment blocks, situated in Guinle Park They are eloquent testimony to how inventively these elements can act to provide privacy and shade. The one example could be multiplied endlessly. Eduardo Reidy also used them in his gargantuan block in Pedregulho to shield against the sun, as have, more recently, the architectural office MMBB for a school campus in Campinas.

The new ministry building was inaugurated in 1943. In the same year the Museum of Modern Art in New York staged the exhibition *Brazil Builds*, accompanied by a book with the same title.[2] The exhibition reached a global audience, making Brazilian architecture instantaneously famous. Prior to this, Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair had already attracted considerable attention, but it was only with the MoMA exhibition that Brazil advanced to represent a beacon of modernism. While in the reissue of his *Space, Time, and Architecture* the architectural theorist and author Sigfried Giedion continued to stress the importance of Finland (and in particular Alvar Aalto) as the prime innovator in architectural modernism,[3] he also accorded Brazil a similar standing, praising both its prominent talents and the farsightedness and resolve of the country's state and private clients in boldly believing in a coming generation of architects.[4]

In hindsight this marked the beginnings of an unparalleled architectural epoch, culminating in the construction of the newly founded capital Brasília, only to then be equally swiftly followed by harsh criticism. The po-faced protagonists of European modernism took exception to the new architecture as formalistic — the exuberant freely curved forms, the expressive columns, were too frivolous for their tastes. These critiques were often obtuse, with the architecture and its architects being tarred with problems that were not of a formal nature but rather had social or political roots. As meteorically as it had burst onto the world's stage, Brazil then just as dramatically and unfairly disappeared from the architectural landscape again for many years to come.

To return to our example. As coincidence would have it, at the same time as the MoMA exhibition, there stood the newly

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2 Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old, 1652–1942* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1943).

3 Sigfried Giedeon, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, 3rd enlarged ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

4 Sigfried Giedeon, preface, in Henrique E. Mindlin, *Neues Bauen in Brasilien* (Munich: Georg D.W. Callwey, 1956), pp. ix–x.

completed ministry building, witness to Brazil's pioneering spirit and the awakening of modernism. But precisely what had happened to Le Corbusier's sketched proposal? The sequence of the drawings shows the Brazilian architects' appropriative transformation of the specifications drawn up by the European mentor. As an ingenious exploiter of foreign 'loot', Le Corbusier possessed an uncanny ability to absorb impulses from around him and reiterate them as his own. A predator par excellence![5] And yet this time it was him who fell prey to precisely the same fate! The group of young architects took his idea and transformed it into an entirely original object. The carnivorous predator had met his match.

In order to fully understand this metamorphosis it is worth casting a glance further back to 1922 to the *Semana de Arte Moderna* in São Paulo mentioned at the outset. The cultural week held in the city theatre encompassed all the arts: painting, sculpture, architectural models, poetry, theatre and concerts. The *Semana de Arte Moderna* was an avant-garde endeavour, with many of the contributions revolving about the question of distinct, specific Brazilian forms of expression. The artist Tarsila do Amaral created an iconic painting depicting a human figure. Its title *Aboporú* means 'the human that ate people' in the language of the Indigenous Tupí. Amaral's picture inspired the poet, author, and playwright Oswaldo de Andrade to pen the 'Cannibalist Manifesto'[6] In it he explores the image of the cannibal who acquires his power by devouring his enemies. This syncretic vision mirrors the self-perception of a culture that absorbs everything foreign only to then regurgitate it as its own. There is no trace of aversion or even rejection vis-à-vis their own colonial legacy. On the contrary, the cannibal annihilates

5 André Corboz gave a talk titled 'Le Corbusier, das Raubtier' (Le Corbusier, the predator) during a series of lectures on Le Corbusier at ETH Zurich. See Franz Oswald and Werner Oechslin, eds., *Le Corbusier im Brennpunkt: Vorträge an der Abteilung für Architektur ETHZ* (Zurich: vdf, 1988), pp. 8–19.

6 The 'Manifesto Antropófago' by Oswaldo de Andrade was published in 1928 in the journal *Revista de Antropofagia*, which he himself founded.

everything he encounters and then exploits it to create something new. What an audacious vision! And that at a time when entire nations and peoples in Europe became consumed by the madness of racial and cultural purity, and by violently asserting their own identity over that of others set off one of the greatest catastrophes in human history.

The year of the 'Cannibalist Manifesto' also marks the appearance of a novel by the author Mário de Andrade with the title *Macunaíma: The Hero with No Character*, a similarly daring and subversive work that had a comparable impact to the text of his unrelated namesake Oswaldo de Andrade.[7] The story also describes a hero who mocks traditional morals, exercising a fascinating yet disturbing appeal that still echoes today. As such the author described the hero of his novel in a letter, outlining his lack of character as the distinguishing quality of Brazil as a whole:

> What interested me about Macunaíma was to discover the national unity that Brazilians share. After a long struggle, one thing became apparent to me: the Brazilian has no character. With the word 'character' I mean not only an ethical reality, but rather the permanent psychological being that expresses itself in everything — in the customs, the behavioural habits, in the feelings, in the language, the history, in both the good and the evil.

In essence, Mário de Andrade argued, the Brazilian resembles a twenty-year-old, caught on the threshold between youth and maturity, with a tendency to resort to improvisation.[8] A

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7 Mário de Andrade, *Macunaíma, o herói sem nenhum caráter* (São Paulo: Oficinas Gráficas de Eugênio Cupolo, 1928).

8 The letter is reprinted in the translator's epilogue to *Macunaíma: Der Held ohne jeden Charakter*, trans. by Curt Meyer-Clason (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2013). The extended quote reads: 'The Brazilian has no character, because he lacks both his own civilisation and a sense of tradition. The French possess character, as do the Yorubas, the Mexicans. Perhaps these peoples have

provocative thesis; but also an enticing one, in the sense that it invites us to invent ourselves. With the cannibal, with Macunaíma and Aboporú, new figures emerged that to date were unimaginable — the descendants of Brazil's Indigenous culture as messengers for a return to the origins, noticeably devoid of a nostalgia for or a romanticisation, or for that matter denial, of the colonial past. Macunaíma, the son of an Indigenous mother, changes the colour of his skin while bathing. Not only is he devoid of character, the visible signs of his ethnicity are also fickle.

Whether the twenty-year-old grew up or whether he remained suspended in a state of semi-animation is neither here nor there. But this spirit of improvisation and of 'inventing oneself' would nevertheless appear to be constant aspects of Brazil's existence. What Andrade writes about his hero is more than intellectual self-reflection; instead it goes to the very heart of Brazil's everyday culture. No one has been able to fathom this so revealingly and precisely than the Italian-Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi. She too came over the Atlantic on board a ship to a land that was entirely other than war-torn Europe. With the open-minded eye of the outsider she explored the world of Brazilian folk art. '*Cultura do lixo*', the culture of rubbish, she called it, referring to Brazil's specific craft culture of making utensils and commodities out of what could be found. The newly born state had no medieval craft guilds, no master craftsmen who could pass down their knowledge and skills over generations. Even the country's industrialisation was imported, and its products unaffordable to most. And so, inventive and unaffected as they were, Brazil's craftspeople set about creating new things out of what was to hand — from today's perspective, a joyous and durable form of recycling. Lina Bo Bardi resolutely rejected the

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character by having contributed to their own civilisations, due to imminent threats and centuries of consciousness. Not so the Brazilian. He is like a twenty-year-old: one can perceive general tendencies in him, but nothing concrete. This lack of psychological character leads to our lack of ethical character — and above all our existence based on improvised solutions.'

idea that there was a difference between high art and folk art. For her the suggestion was illogical — a mark of a redundant bourgeois mindset that had nothing in common with the reality of the young country.

The concept of the cannibal is therefore more than simply an intellectual conceit — it encapsulates the essence of an entire culture. The Ministry of Education and Health marks the beginning of this key development for Brazil and an extraordinary exhibit of exchange and absorption, in turn perhaps describable as the search for independent identity. The result of this quest remains open and individual identity perhaps only a phantom. That said, faced with today's ideological battle lines and vehement answers, fantasy and questions that remain open are more vital than ever. And a far more interesting promise for the future. Concerning cultural appropriation and the question of who has claims to which cultural means and traits, the concept of the cannibal could be an interesting alternative, and in the glance backwards to the past an invitation for the future.

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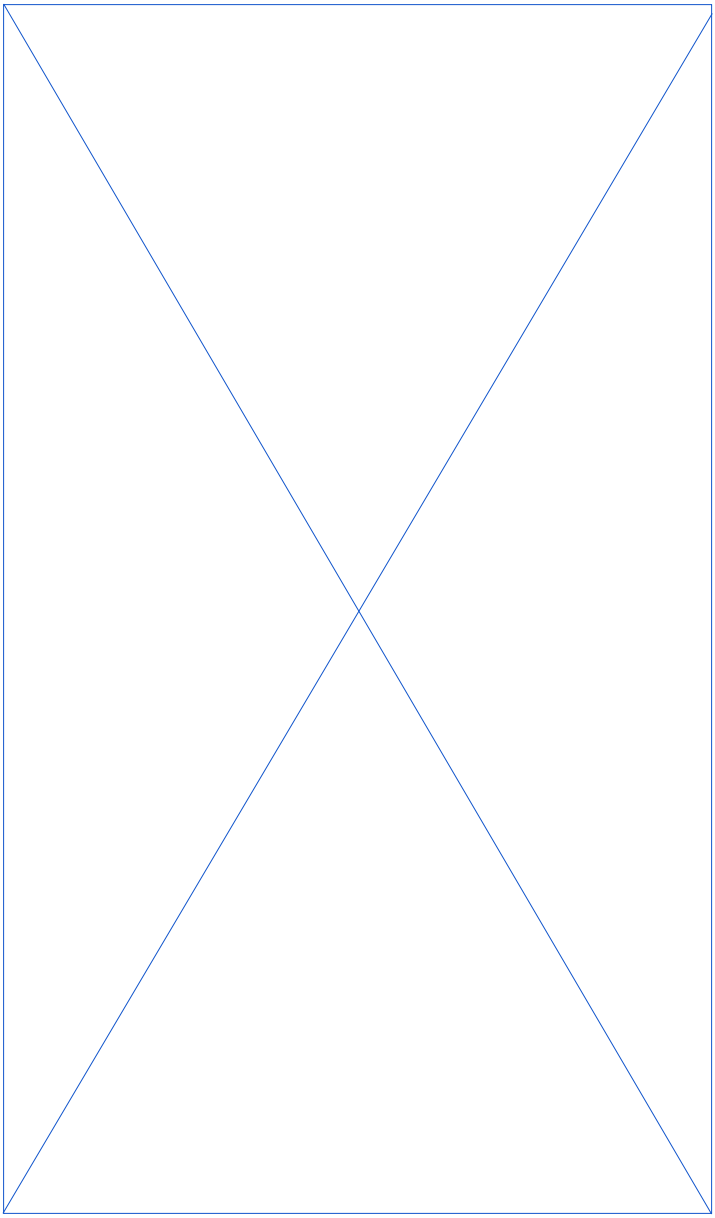


Fig. 1. Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, cover image for the catalogue *Semana de Arte Moderna*, São Paulo (1922).

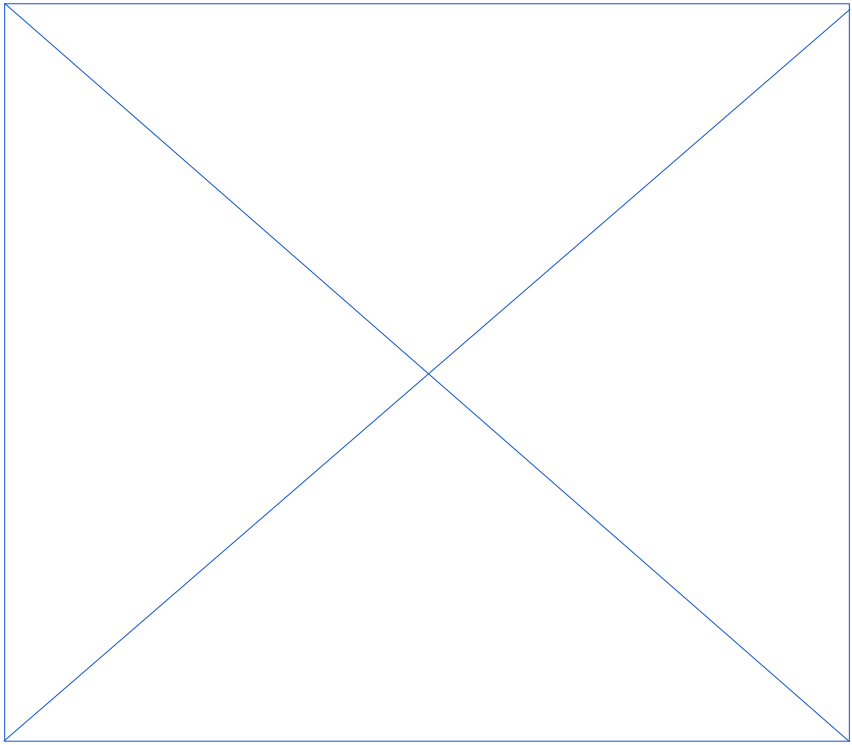


Fig. 2. Le Corbusier, Le Corbusier and Josephine Baker in Rio de Janeiro (1929). From Le Corbusier, *Carnet B 4*, no. 239.

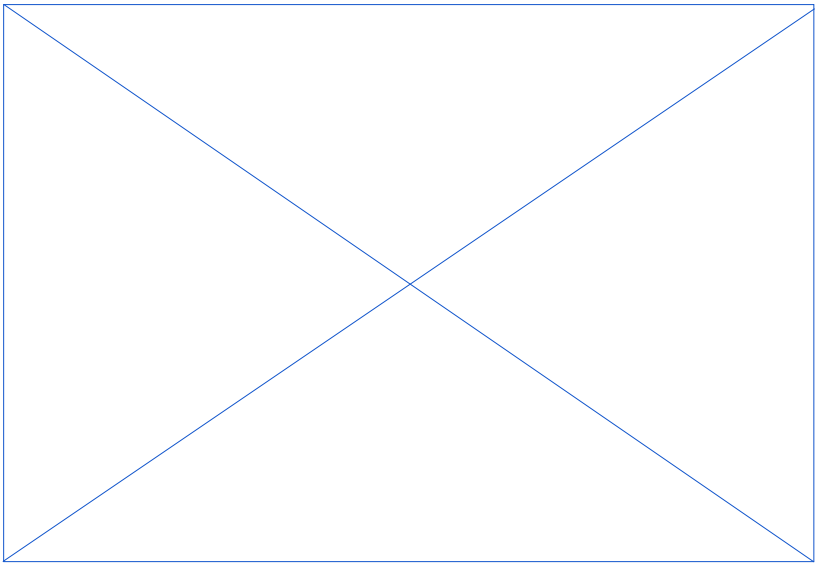


Fig. 3. An aerial view. From Le Corbusier, *Aircraft* (The Studio Publications, 1935).

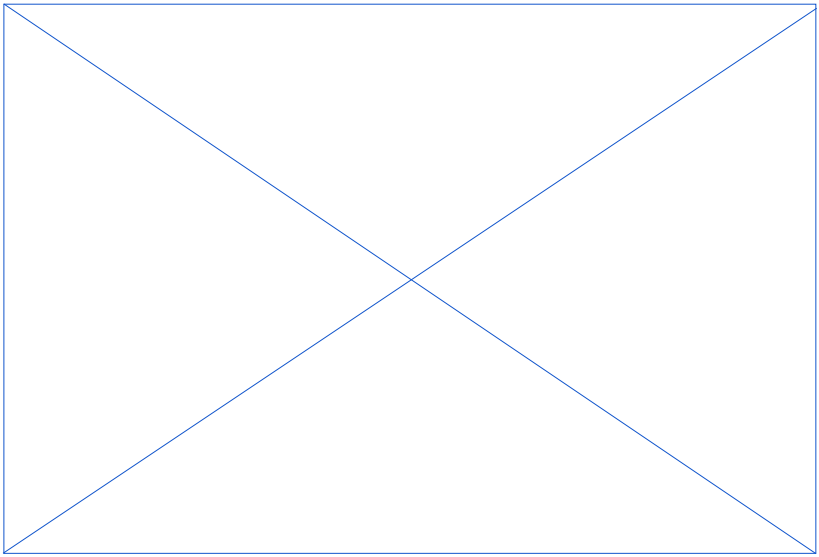


Fig. 4. Le Corbusier, Aerial Sketch at Departure Time from Bogota (September 1950). From Le Corbusier, *Carnet C 16*, no. 208.

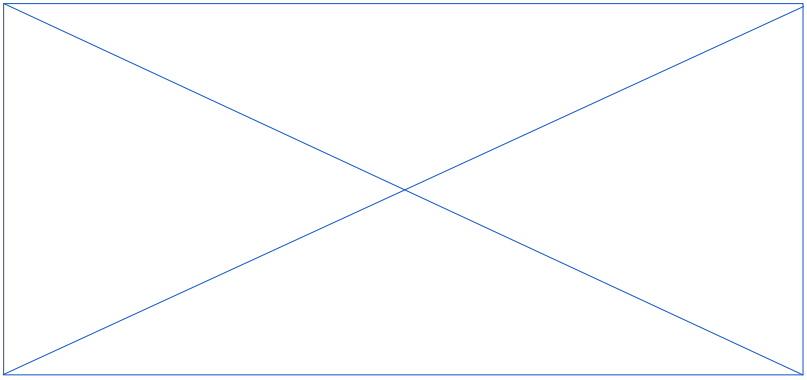


Fig. 5. Le Corbusier, Sketch for a Modern Airport (1946). From Le Corbusier, *Œuvre complète, 1938–46*, p. 199.

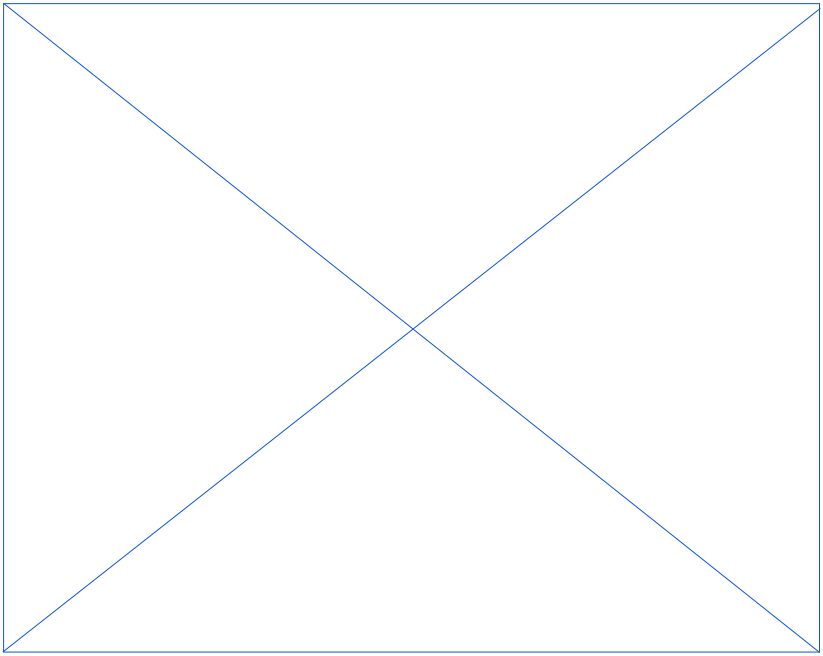


Fig. 6. Le Corbusier, Proposal for the Pilot Plan of Rio de Janeiro (1936).

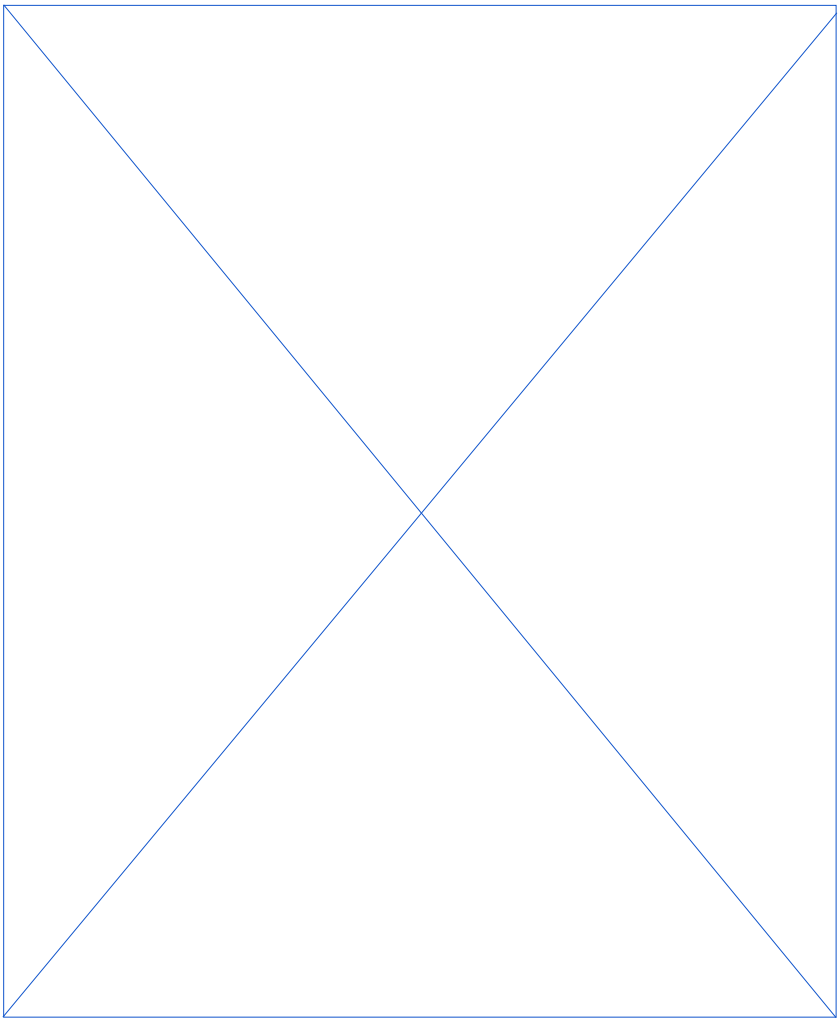


Fig. 7. Development of the designs for the Ministry of Education and Health, Rio de Janeiro, 1936–37: a) sketch by Lucio Costa's group, b) Le Corbusier's sketch for the building complex near the airport, c) Le Corbusier's sketch for the current complex, d) final sketch by the Brazilian group. From Henrique E. Mindlin, *Neues Bauen in Brasilien* (Callwey, 1956).

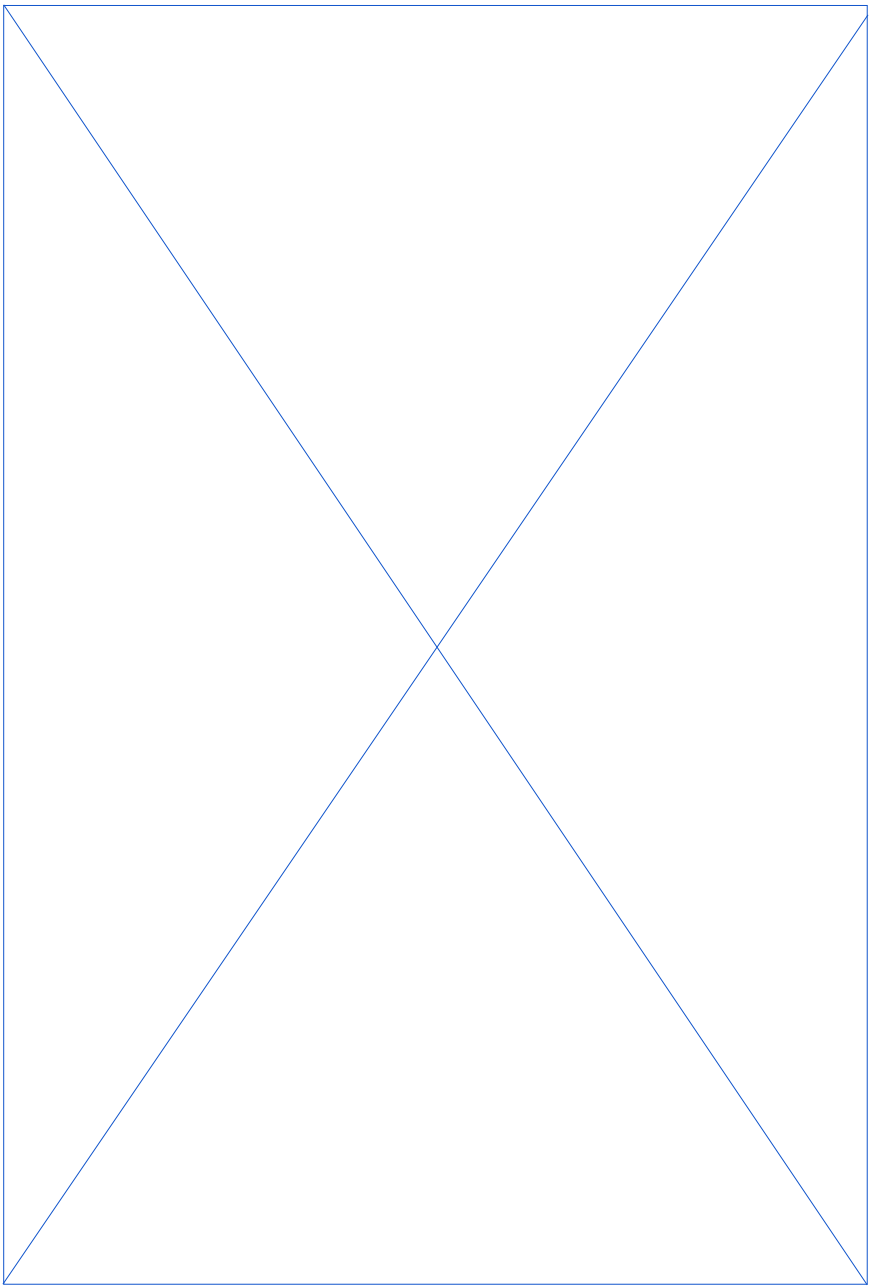


Fig. 8. Le Corbusier, diagram of the Ministry of Education and Health on the present site, Rio de Janeiro (1936), and diagram of the present project from the Brazilian architects, from Henrique E. Mindlin, *Neues Bauen in Brasilien* (Callwey, 1956).



Fig. 9. Ministry of Education and Health (1937). Photograph taken by Annette Spiro.



Fig. 10. Ministry of Education and Health (1937). Photograph taken by Stephan Gantenbein.

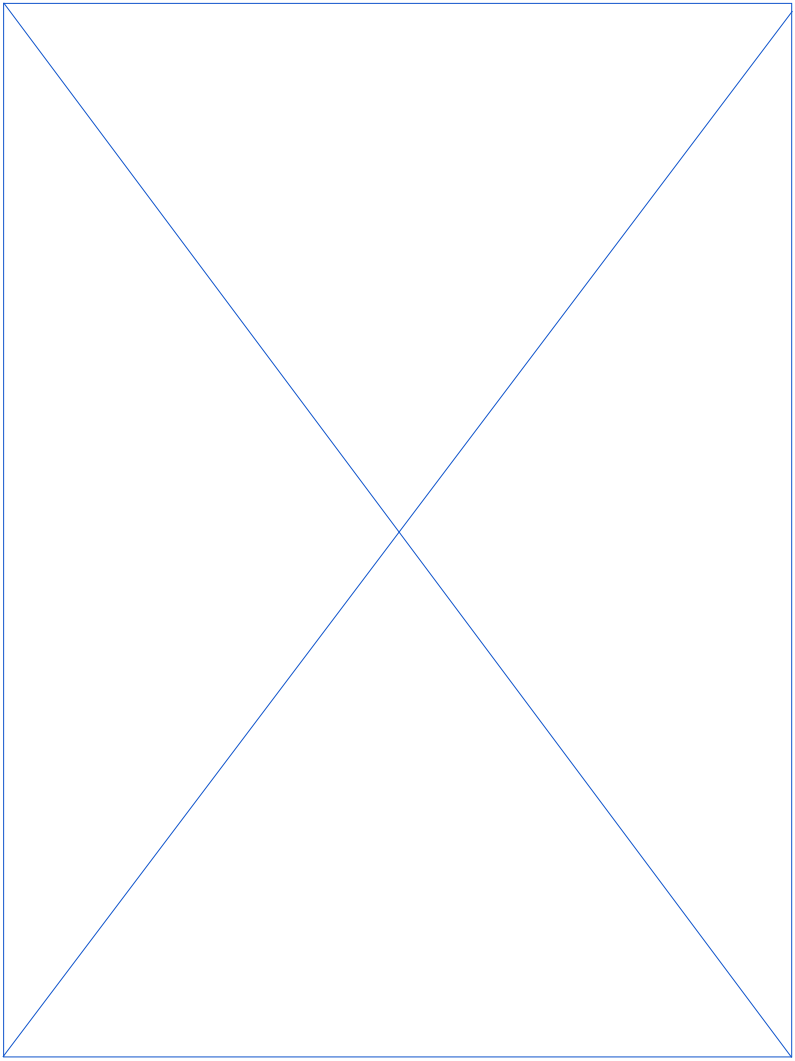


Fig. 11. G. E. Kidder Smith, Ministry of Education and Health, photograph. From Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds* (Museum of Modern Art, 1943).

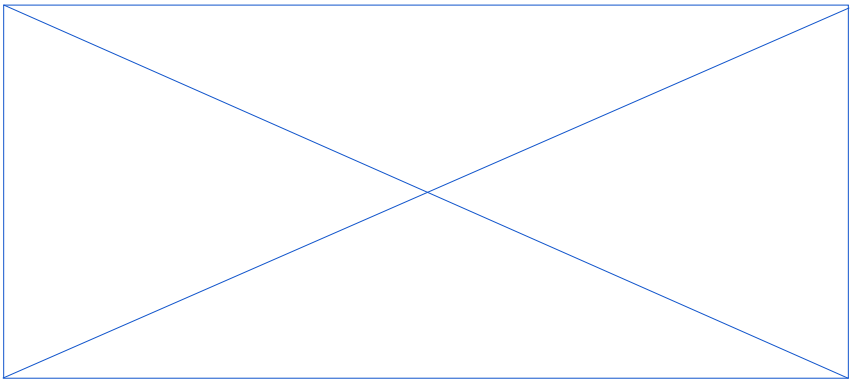


Fig. 12. Roberto Burle Marx, plan for the roof garden of the Ministry of Education and Health (1937).

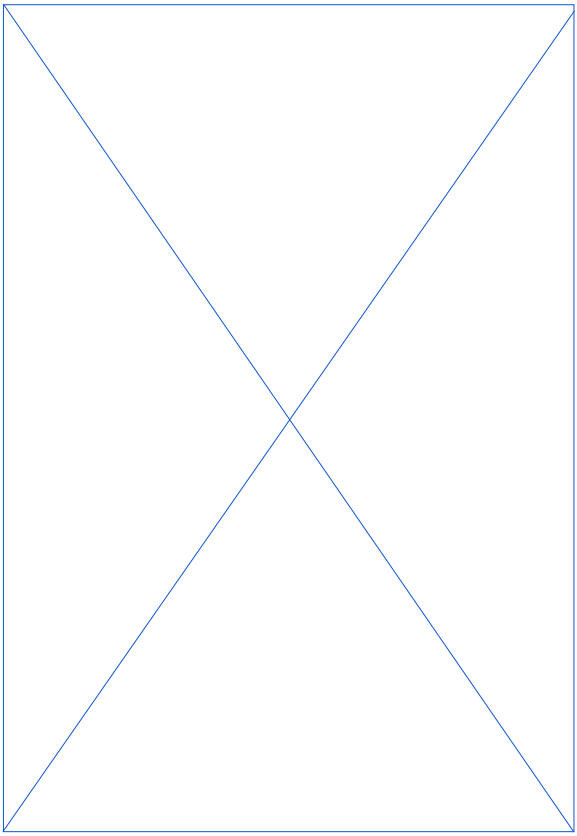


Fig. 13. From *Revista de Antropofagia*, 1.1 (1 May 1928).

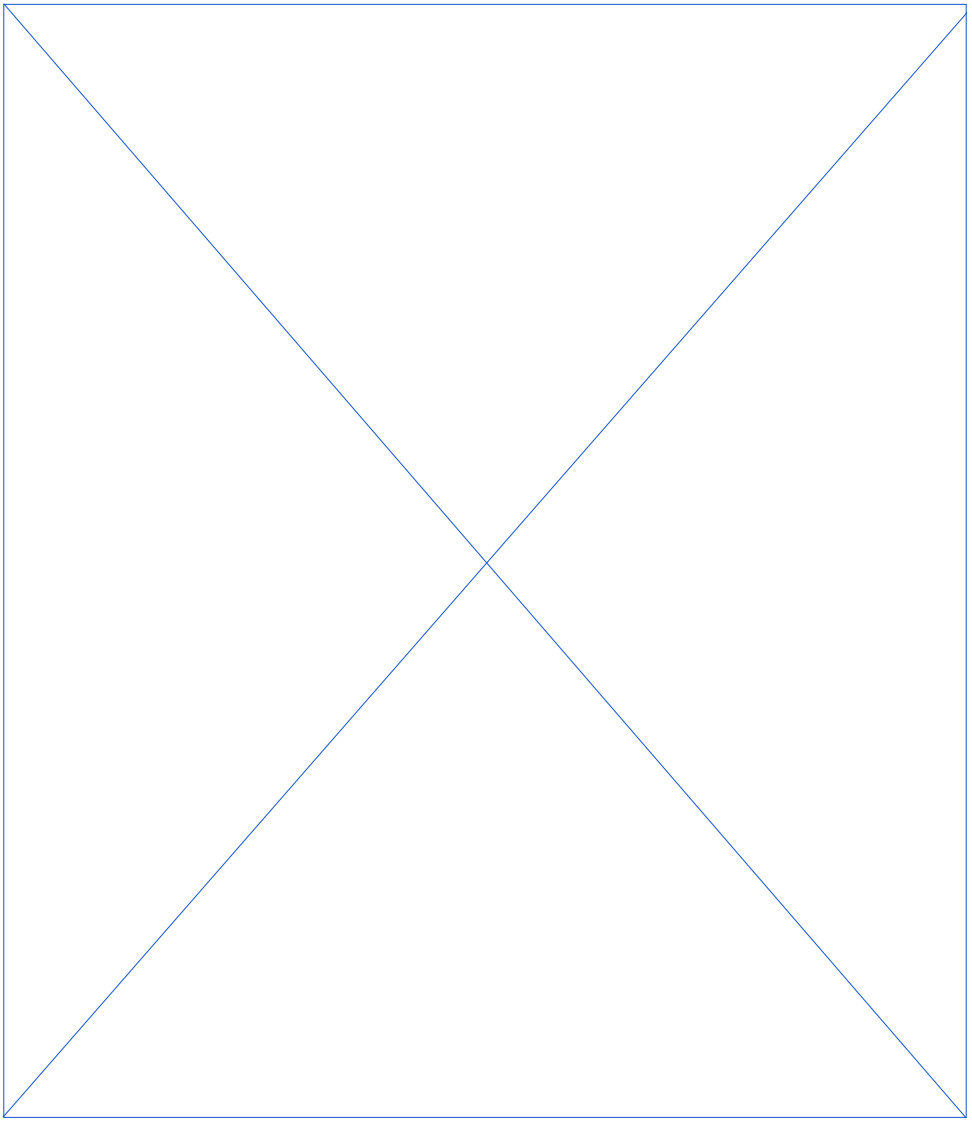


Fig. 14. Tarsila do Amaral, *Abaporu* (1928), oil on canval, 85 × 73 cm. Collection MALBA, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires.

Disenclosing the Mare Clausum*: Critical Spatial Practices on the Sea*

Yifei Zhang

> At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an 'open sea'.
>
> — Friederich Nietzsche[1]

'Dis-enclosure', a term first coined in English by the translators of Jean-Luc Nancy's 'déclosion', implies a three-fold process: the original state before the enclosure, the act of enclosure, and finally, the final act of disenclosure.[2] The sequential acts of closing and opening implies both a temporal succession and a series of spatial changes. For Nancy the process of disenclosure is not a simple form of reversing the enclosure—the 'dis-' here is more than a mere negativity. Disenclosure is not a compensatory act, as the result of disenclosure exceeds the limits of its prior enclosure, and what has been formerly enclosed is now opened to a boundless infinity. Nancy's inaugural remarks on his neologism emphasises the illimitable 'opening up':

> It is not a question of reviving religion, not even the one that Kant wanted to hold 'within the limits of reason alone.' It is, however, a question of opening mere reason up to the limitlessness that constitutes its truth. It is not a question of overcoming some deficiency in reason, but of liberating reason without reserve.[3]

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1 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science; with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. by Walter Kauffman, 1st edn (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 280.

2 Michael B. Smith, 'Translators' Foreword', in Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. by Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), ix–x.

3 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. by Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 1.

Later, Nancy strengthens the spatial character of disenclosure. He identifies the vessel as exemplifying the essence of disenclosure. The vessel is both an instrument and an agent; a space that closes in itself, yet a location that is constantly delocalised by its voyage; a space of limited enclosure that ventures into the infinite purview of the horizon. With the character of the vessel Nancy ended the discussion with Ariadne, whose starry crown — the *Corona Borealis* — led Theseus out of the enclosure of the labyrinth, and instigated his subsequent escape to sea: 'It is she who makes possible the escape from the sinister enclosure and the return voyage on the vessel bucking the bitter waves full sail toward the open sea.'[4]

Nancy's characterisation of disenclosure through spatial terms is not a passing analogy. Investigating the sea and the vessel through this apparent oxymoron follows a long line of prominent thinkers theorising the sea. Nancy's formulation of the vessel and its mobile spatiality echoes the collapse of place and space in Foucault's idea of the 'heterotopia'. As Foucault famously claimed, 'the ship is the heterotopia par excellence'.[5] Nancy's employment of maritime themes recalls seventeenth-century debates on the sea's relation to private ownership; the conditions of 'open' and 'closed' parallel the ideas of *Mare Liberum* (free sea) and *Mare Clausum* (closed sea). The advancement of maritime technologies motivates writers to provide, on theoretical terrain, the legitimate basis for the primitive accumulation of capital overseas. The notion of *Mare Liberum* was championed by Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in 1609, who insisted on an 'open sea' preordained by divine nature, which must be left for universal access and freedom of navigation.[6] Grotius maintained that the

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4 Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 161.

5 Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, originally 'Des Espaces Autres', March 1967, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (October, 1984).

6 Monica Brito Vieira, 'Mare Liberum vs. Mare Clausum: Grotius, Freitas, and Selden's Debate on Dominion over the Seas', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64.3 (July 2003), pp. 361–377 (p. 363).

liquid, shifting nature of the sea, its abundance for universal access, as well as the impossibility of establishing lasting demarcation, makes any claim of a private dominion impossible.[7] Grotius's thesis is a defence of the Dutch against Portugal's domination of the West Indies under the pretext of free trade and navigation.[8] Additionally, Grotius's constant appeal to the divine, the intuitive, and the natural speaks to a pre-enclosure absence that theorises on the lack of a definitive legal framework of the sea in the seventeenth century Europe, a time of rampant growth of maritime colonial powers.

The Englishman John Selden's 1635 response to Grotius, *Mare Clausum*, bears the unmistakable sense of enclosure conspicuously in its title. Invoking biblical references, Selden proposes a projective dominion of the sea from the coast: as the sea is said to be the bound of land, what is bounding, Selden maintains, is part of what is bound.[9] The sea to Selden is never limitless; rather, as land is bound by the sea, so the sea is in turn bound by land — a simple inversion of the figure-ground.[10] Nor is the liquidity of the ocean to Selden admissible as a valid argument: the sea can be dominated, at least from the legalistic point of view, in the same way the air above a piece of land can be claimed via the enclosure of architecture.[11] Selden's refutation of Grotius anticipates the British domination of the sea. His claims are symptomatic of an age where the advent of advanced navigational and cartographical instruments enclose the sea into fixed, immobile, seizable objects of exclusion for a foreseeable future.

Despite their distance from our age, the dialectic debate between the two visions: the free and the closed, remains unchanged as principles for the legal foundations over the sea.

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7 Vieira, 373.

8 Vieira, 369.

9 John Selden, *Mare Clausum: The Right and Dominion of the Sea in Two Books* (London: Andrew Kembe and Edward Thomas, 1663), p. 136.

10 Selden, p. 137.

11 Selden, p. 133.

The two schools of thought retain an indispensable hold of maritime imagination to this day: any political and juridical discourse of the sea must first retrace the lineage of thought from Grotius and Selden. If the *Mare Liberum* of Grotius can be regarded as the pre-enclosure state of the ocean, Selden's permissive *Mare Clausum* encourages a Lockean enclosure into a liquid homestead. Today, the postwar international framework established through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that designates layers of oceanic zones (territorial sea, contiguous zones, and Exclusive Economic Zones) are measured via Selden's projective claim of the sea from the shore, while the freedom of navigation in the international waters derives from Grotius's *Mare Liberum*.[12]

The contemporary discourse on disenclosure of the sea testifies to the enduring relevance of the old debate while opening up new horizons from their temporal underpinnings. Within the layered, patchy, and contested coexistence of the two imaginations of the ocean, this essay explores the possibility of a third act — disenclosure — that follows and surmounts the dialectics of the open (original state) and the close (enclosure). The text attempts to show, given the unmistakably *spatial* nature of oceanic thought, the strength and power of critical practices that engage with the ocean. The three case studies here serve to manifest that the sea, a vast domain of space often overlooked by practitioners of the built environment, can nevertheless offer viable and fertile ground to inspire and to create meaningful change. As Jean-Luc Nancy has demonstrated, disenclosure is not a return to the pre-enclosure, nor a reversal of the enclosure, but to acquire and mobilise the knowledge of enclosure to open it up, and to navigate into the boundless possibilities resulting from the disenclosure.

12 United Nations, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982 <https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2024].

In a frequently quoted endnote of *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes notes that the sea is a 'non-signifying field' that 'bears no message'.[13] Barthes's short note of the sea professes a semiologic treatment of the attitude that the sea, like the desert, is empty.[14] Paradoxically, despite its vastness, it is devoid of meaning, unfathomable and rejects any interpretation. Yet Barthes does not stop there: 'But on the beach, what material for semiology! Flags, slogans, signals, sign-boards, clothes, suntan even, which are so many messages to me.'[15]

The lack of meaning of the sea to Barthes is only contrasted by the profusion of meaning on the shore, where meaning explodes with the aggregation of signifiers. If this contrast only reinforces the meaninglessness of the sea, British artist Jason deCaires Taylor's sculptures, submerged under water, brings the profusion of meaning into the sea. Starting from Grenada in 2006, deCaires Taylor's sculptures have spread to the seabed of Mexico, the Bahamas, the Canary Islands, Indonesia, and beyond. The sculptures are most notably human figures assuming various quotidian positions, made out of pH-neutral marine concrete with porous surfaces that are hospitable to the inhabitation of corals and other forms of marine life. Like shipwrecks, the surfaces of the sculptures gradually accumulate layers of algae, coral, barnacles, sea urchins, and oysters originally displaced by pollution and divert the traffic of tourists from natural coral reefs.[16]

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13 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (1957; repr., Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 160.

14 The thought that the sea was an empty desert was not unique to Barthes and can be found from writers as diverse as Jules Michelet and Carl Schmitt. Immanuel Kant, for example, has thought that the sea was a barrier like the desert that obstructs the communication of mankind and must be mastered. For a summary of Kant's thinking on the ocean, see Daniel Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), pp. 126, 154, 181–84.

15 Barthes, p. 160.

16 Linda Weintraub, 'Jason deCaires Taylor', in *What's Next? Eco Material-*

However, the strength of deCaires Taylor's sculptures is beyond the intended ecological effect. Soon after the inauguration of his first project in Grenada in 2006, the human figures in the bottom of the seabed were widely thought to commemorate those who died traversing the Middle Passage, the transatlantic journey that saw mass abduction and murder.[17] The weathering of the sculpture's surface echoes Édouard Glissant's famous poetics of modernity, 'whose time is marked by these balls and chains gone green'.[18] In one set of sculptures, the structural steel bar that supports the figures at the wrist was interpreted as shackles.[19] The overwhelming emotional power from deCaires Taylor's human portraits that fosters the link to the Middle Passage may come from the fact that all the sculpted figures have their eyes closed. DeCaires Taylor makes the sculptures through a concrete cast of local residents, who participate as models while the sculptor applies plaster as a mould onto their bodies.[20] The liquid material that encloses the residents produces a natural facial reaction to liquid (closed eyes), which is then faithfully reprinted onto the concrete later immersed under water. As such, the stunning uncanniness of the underwater sculptures reproduces a natural state of submersion, eliciting a fearful doubt as if the sculpted bodies would open their eyes and come to life. The gradual decomposition of the bodies also presents a daunting similitude to corrupting corpses.

The underwater sculptures and their association with the Middle Passage recall Sigmund Freud's essay on the 'uncanny',

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ism and Contemporary Art, (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2019), pp. 200–206 (203).

17 Inez Blanca van der Scheer, 'Everything is Alive: Jason deCaires Taylor's Vicissitudes', in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*, ed. by T.J. Demos, Emily Eliza Scott, and Subhankar Banerjee (New York: Routledge, 2021), pp. 376–383 (376).

18 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 6.

19 Van der Scheer, 377.

20 Jason deCaires Taylor, *The Underwater Museum: The Submerged Sculptures of Jason deCaires Taylor*, with Carlo McCormick and Helen Scales (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2014), p. 9.

a type of fear in the human psyche where the distinction between the familiar and the strange, life and death, reality and fantasy, becomes blurred. Freud lists two interconnected sources of the uncanny: the return of previously surmounted fear (omnipotence of thoughts, instantaneous wish-fulfilment, secret harmful forces, the return of the dead), and the return of repressed childhood complex (the castration complex, the womb fantasy).[21] While the process of the concrete cast produces a faithful resemblance of real-life human figures that evoke the image of human corpses and their appalling return, the closed eyes elicit a fear of losing one's sight. This fear was theorised by Freud as the castration anxiety on the scopic level.[22] For the spectators of deCaires Taylor's sculpture (scuba divers and snorkelers), the fear of the optical castration is strengthened by the precarity of losing sight while enclosed by the flux of ocean currents; the womb fantasy is played out as the fear of the transforming of the self into the blinded figures, immobile and submerged, buried alive in water. The two types of fear that figure prominently in Freud's essay are unleashed in full force in the shallow waters surrounding the statues.

To Freud, a particularly strong motif of the 'uncanny' is the notion of the double, the doppelganger. A developed ego identifies itself in its double while regarding it as an object of terror, the harbinger of death.[23] The human figures in deCaires Taylor's project encompasses figures of different gender, height, age, body types and races, non-exhaustive but nonetheless representative of a wide range of global communities. This diversity of casts facilitates seeing our own faces within those submerged under sea. Do we not see the horror of the Middle Passage as a form of violence whose legacy enchains humanity altogether? Do we not see in the constantly corrupted concrete figures bearing an uncanny resemblance to us a submarine future with the

21 Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock, ed. by Hugh Haughton (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), pp. 154–55.

22 Freud, pp. 139, 150, 154.

23 Freud, pp. 142–43.

apocalyptic rise of the sea level? The collapse of distinction between fantasy and reality in the statues pushes us to confront the most deep-seated fear of the Freudian uncanny, disenclosing an infinity of meaning beneath the commonly enclosed and foreclosed meanings beneath the waves.

The Left-to-Die-Boat*: Peeking through the Crack*

In Jason deCaires Taylor's sculptures the emotional power comes from a gesture that frightens the gaze, bestowing new meaning to Barthes's vast 'non-signifying field'. The uncanny quality of the sculptures below the briny deep exploits the human psyche's inner thalassophobia, while skillfully channelling and sublimating such energy into a *tour de force* of a vision. The proliferation of visual meaning in the sea thus breaks away from the sea-desert. In this regard, the employment of vision finds echoes in the work of Forensic Architecture, although in drastically different ways. While the British artist constructs underwater sculptures which (albeit unintentionally) solicit a variety of gazes from the audience with redoubtable emotional power, Forensic Architecture employs an active gaze into the sea. Eyal Weizman, the founder of the London-based investigative architectural practice, describes their vocation through the figure of the building surveyor, whose work is to find and analyse the crack of built structures:

> If the figure of the detective was the nineteenth century's response to the density, complexity and alienation of the modern metropolis, the building surveyor must be the indispensable figure for understanding the present condition of urban life as that of urban warfare. […] When architectural surveyors study cracks or other aspects in the structural pathology of a building, they tend to interpret their findings in relation to a narrowly circumscribed set of conditions. […] An analysis that would expand outwards

> from the crack should not only seek closure and reparation, but should articulate new claims for justice.[24]

Yet the idea of the surveyor and the crack does not only apply to cases where the metaphor corresponds exactly to the object of study. A crack is an accident, an exception to an otherwise perfectly homogenised surface, a void within the material. The surveyor's gaze to the crack is thus simultaneously a gaze towards the material and the lack thereof, to a field of forces that manifests at the crack and beyond. The crack is the failure of an enclosure, both as an inadequacy of the architectural membrane and the manifested symptom that warrants the labour of the surveyor, where Weizman has noted that the cracks are an '*entry point* through which one must navigate, connecting and composing sets of relations between different structures, infrastructures, objects, environments'.[25]

Forensic Architecture's project the *Left-to-Die-Boat* can be seen as an investigation of a crack into an otherwise homogeneous *Mare Clausum*. In March 2011 a boat carrying seventy-two migrants sailed from Tripoli northward into the Mediterranean, heavily patrolled by Western warships in the height of the embargo against Libya. The ship ran out of fuel after the first day and, only halfway to Lampedusa, drifted in the Mediterranean for fourteen days without food or water before finally being stranded in Zlitan, 150 km east of Tripoli. Only nine migrants survived the perilous journey.[26] The question is how such a humanitarian disaster could occur in waters enclosed by embargo and the heavy

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24 Eyal Weizman, 'Introduction: Forensis', in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed. by Forensic Architecture (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), pp. 9–34 (pp. 16–17).

25 Eyal Weizman, *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* (New York: Zone Books, 2017), p. 58. Emphasis added.

26 Charles Heller, Lorenzo Pezzani, and SITU Research, 'Left-to-Die Boat', in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed. by Forensic Architecture (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), pp. 637–656 (pp. 639–40).

presence of military power. The task of the researchers from Forensic Architecture researchers was to construct a coherent narrative masked by the seemingly unfathomable sea: Where did the ship drift, and who failed the UNCLOS-ordained obligation to rescue?

Compounding the account of a survivor, published maps, online data, and open-access documents, researchers from Forensic Architecture traced the trajectory of the deadly journey with a drift model of the currents off the Libyan coast. Additionally, by tracing the dissemination of the migrants' distress call, they were able to identify the authorities and maritime vessels who were aware of the perilous situation of the ship.[27] While the various governments, agencies, and news media published the digital maps, data sets, and photographs, their effective and skilful combination by Forensic Architecture disenclosed them from their original meaning and allowed them to speak as a material witness for infinite 'new claims for justice':

> We established with certainty that the Italian and Maltese Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers, as well as NATO command, were informed of the location and distress of the migrants, and that there were several naval assets in the vicinity of the boat that had the ability to detect and assist it. None of these actors intervened in a way that could have averted the 63 deaths.[28]

The migrants' journey into the Mediterranean can be regarded as creating a crack into the heavily patrolled water, out of desperation relating to the Libyan civil war or the coercion of the Gaddafi regime.[29] The task for the 'building surveyor' here

27 Heller, et al., pp. 648–652.

28 Heller, et al., p. 651.

29 Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, 'Liquid Traces: Investigating the Deaths of Migrants at the EU's Maritime Frontier', in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed. by Forensic Architecture (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), pp.

is to study the crack as a symptom of a greater phenomenon that must be addressed. Forensic Architecture's research reveals that the Mediterranean of 2011 is not inherently a natural lethal abyss but was only made as such. The presentation of the various research armatures and the complexity and multitude of published resources which enabled Forensic Architecture to digitally recreate the journey post-facto reveals the existence and availability of diverse surveillance apparatus. The sea is rendered as a media infrastructure, an omniscient *Mare Clausum* that would topple Hugo Grotius's remark that 'a ship sailing over the sea no more leaves behind itself a legal right than it leaves a permanent track'.[30] Retracing the preserved and publicly accessible tracks reveals that there is nothing 'natural' or 'accidental' about the death of migrants: they were effectively left to die under the omniscient gaze of the European authorities.

Nevertheless, to a public either uninitiated or blasé to the sophistication of investigative technology, the task of the building surveyor is to reveal, mobilise, and disseminate the crack to the public. The surveyor's piercing gaze is presented to the public as an image. After mapping the journey of the ship, its trajectory off the Libyan coast has been retraced, cropped, and adapted by major news agencies and circulated through the society as an icon.[31] For the public, the trajectory is perhaps the most imaginable media that illustrates the cruelty of the 'left-to-die', the crack that the European and NATO authorities left as an open wound. Against the background of the Mediterranean, Forensic Architecture's work produces a recognisable figure, which injects meaning onto an otherwise frail linework. As noted by Anselm Franke 'every forensic act is an act of "figuration," tracing a lost figure within an already almost undifferentiated ground as in the process of exhumation'.[32]

657–684 (p. 673).

30 Hugo Grotius, *De iure praedae*, I, ch. xii, 240, quoted in Vieira, 372.

31 Heller, et al., 'Left-to-Die Boat', p. 652.

32 Anselm Franke, 'The Forensic Scenography', in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed. by Forensic Architecture (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014),

A form of exhumation indeed. While mourning the loss of migrants, Pope Francis said that the Mediterranean sea has become 'Europe's largest cemetery'.[33] His metaphoric language was rendered cartographically by Forensic Architecture's project WatchtheMed, an interactive online platform that maps various reports of distressed migrants crossing the Mediterranean and connects them with an alarm phone platform with vessels close to their physical location.[34] This new project following the *Left-to-Die Boat* investigation steps into the void of rescue operations of European states often accused of deliberate negligence. It moves beyond revelation and reparation, exploiting and assembling the public infrastructure for the avoidance of future tragedy.

Women on Waves: A Satire on Territoriality

If the *Left-to-Die Boat* is a skilful exploitation and alchemy of the often obscure and technocratic data for the claim of justice, the work of Women on Waves is to challenge the notion of territory and jurisdiction in the domain of the sea, and to put it to the most conspicuous, theatrical display. The technical dimension of Forensic Architecture allows a certain distance between the investigators and the sea; the appeal to forensics and investigative findings also lends an air of scientific authority and seriousness to the images presented. Women on Waves, on the other hand, has completely reversed this mode of practice. An NGO based in Amsterdam, Women on Waves champions for abortion rights, reproductive health, and sexual education. The name of the NGO derives from its famous seafaring campaign: upon the

pp. 483–494 (p. 486).

33 'Pope Decries "Tragedy of Indifference" in Wake of Migrant Deaths', Vatican News, August 2023 <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-08/pope-tweet-migrant-tragedy-indifference-policies-protection.html> [accessed 15 June 2024].

34 Heller, et al., 'Left-to-Die Boat', p. 654.

invitation of local activist groups, a ship (often registered as Dutch) sails into a port of the country where abortion is restricted, picking up women within forty-five days into pregnancy who have made an appointment with prior consultation with gynaecologists of Women on Waves. They then sail into international waters (by UNCLOS convention, twelve nautical miles off the coast) where they are offered abortion pills, before returning to the port.[35] Starting with Ireland in 2001, Women on Waves have launched several maritime campaigns in such fashion including to Poland (2003), Portugal (2004), Spain (2008), Morocco (2012), Guatemala (2017), and Mexico (2017). The time span and wide geographical coverage gained the NGO *succès de scandale* as the one that operates the 'abortion ship'.[36]

The maritime campaigns are squarely legal. Off the territorial waters of the country, the ship is under the jurisdiction of its flag state—the Netherlands—where abortion is legal and early-stage abortion by pills is determined safe and viable on sea.[37] When the abortion pills are brought out from the Netherlands, they are physically sealed off by the Dutch customs, clearly stating that they are not for distribution outside of the Netherlands, which complies with the law of the landed country.[38] This maverick operation not only makes territoriality mobile, where a distant jurisdiction is brought through the voyage of the vessel, but also portable, able to be enclosed within the official seal of the custom. A twelve-nautical-mile journey off the coast makes it a viable daytrip. The conceptual inconsistency between the weight and gravity of the sovereign border and the easily surmountable maritime boundary, without any visible demarcation, fences, barbed wires, or guards, challenges the

35 Rebecca Gomperts, *Women on Waves: Poland* (Amsterdam, North Holland: Women on Waves, 2003), unpaginated.

36 'Campaigns', Women on Waves <https://www.womenonwaves.org/en/page/517/campaigns/> [accessed 15 June 2024].

37 Rebecca Gomperts, *Women on Waves: Poland* (Amsterdam, North Holland: Women on Waves, 2003), unpaginated.

38 Gomperts, *Women on Waves.*

legitimacy of the former. The limited territorial water is dwarfed by the expanse of the high sea, rendering the restrictive law impotent and seemingly provincial. The journey into the international waters — a brief self-imposed exile — opens up space for freedom repressed within the enclosed territory and its fixated liquid appendage: in this way the 'emptiness' of the high sea, a legal vacuum only, allows it to become fertile ground for liberty. The juridical absence of the international waters is disenclosed with new meaning — the sea is empty when meaning is foreclosed, yet through disenclosure it is made into a field of infinite possibilities.

The power of the maritime campaigns has spread far beyond the women who gained access to abortion on international waters. The imagery of the notorious 'abortion ship' inserts a threatening, invading icon to the imagination of anti-abortion politicians. Challenged, they often respond with 'disproportionate reactions',[39] further dramatising the situation and rekindling the debate by raising the visibility of abortion rights. The campaign in Portugal was met with harsh reaction from the government where two warships were summoned in 2004 to deny the 'abortion ship' entry into Portuguese waters, while the left-wing party in Portugal called for an emergency parliamentary meeting. The Portuguese minister of defence called the ship a threat to national security, while Portuguese TV channels reported live from the ship via a chartered boat. Meanwhile, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs met with his Portuguese counterpart in Brussels to request the entry of the boat into Portuguese territorial waters.[40] The escalation of the situation with the imaginary of a maritime invasion, military mobilisation, diplomatic feud, live TV coverage, and parliamentary crisis elevates the status of the campaign to an international sensation. The maritime border

39 Susan Davies and Rebecca Gomperts, 'On Deck for Abortion Rights: Women on Waves Sails to Portugal', *Thresholds*, 34 (2007): pp. 26–28 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43876584> [accessed 15 June 2024].

40 Rebecca Gomperts, *Women on Waves: Portugal* (Amsterdam, North Holland: Women on Waves, 2003), pp. 14, 25 26.

is thus converted into a media stage that anticipates its global dissemination by modern media, which only helps to spread the message of Women on Waves and reopen the nationwide debate on abortion. Achille Mbembe wrote with melancholy that our age is one in which culture has been endlessly commodified into leisure and entertainment that loses its critical possibility.[41] Off the coast of Portugal, the spectacle has been actively staged (that is, with the unintentional help of the Portuguese government) precisely for its critical power.

The strategy of Women on Waves is ingenious but simple. The gesture of disenclosure was amplified infinitely through its theatricality, which testifies to the power of 'opening-up', as described in their narrative for the 2008 maritime campaign in Spain:

> Women are coming to the ship asking for help, after seeing the news coverage. This shows how many women are falling through the *cracks* of the system currently in place, and are unable to get help due to economic, social, or legal reasons. […] It's one of those social issues that is so pushed down by public pressure and stigma, and always discussed in a moralizing manner, that when you *open a little space* for people to see a bit of hope, or a way out, or a space for open dialogue, people start showing up, start moving, start talking.[42]

Spaces, cracks, openings, gaps … the spatial nature of analogies and metaphors have all been alluded to in the three case studies surveyed so far. What is particularly powerful in the three cases

41 Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*, trans. by Laurent Dubois (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), pp. 24–25.

42 'Suddenly Women Start Showing Up at the Ship Seeking Help', Women on Waves <https://www.womenonwaves.org/en/page/2031/suddenly-women-start-showing-up-at-the-ship-seeking-help/> [accessed 15 June 2024]. Emphasis added.

is their creative agency that goes beyond the literary device. Space, both in its physical dimension and discursive usage, is enlisted as a vessel to initiate meaningful change, an opening that seeks not to return to a past but expand toward a horizon of infinity and possibility, perhaps one that has no better name but ‘disenclosure’.

Shelter Disenclosed

Christian Nakarado

On a rectangular plot of land in central Michigan stand seven crumbling brick buildings. Formerly home to the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, the walls of these structures once represented powerful boundaries that the US Government placed between Indigenous children and their cultures and families. But today, more than ninety years after the institution they housed was closed, several of the classrooms and dormitories have begun to turn the corner towards ruin. Their boundaries have begun to fall apart. Many of their oppressive spaces are no longer enclosed.

This deterioration of building envelopes — the perforation of borders meant to keep out the rain, cold, and snow — might seem a case for historic preservation or restoration, simply requiring repair and maintenance. When there is a leak in a roof, or a hole in a wall, you fix it. To do otherwise would go against one common understanding of the term *shelter*. But in this place the situation is not so simple. Many boarding school survivors and their descendants would prefer these structures were instead left to decay. Some would like to see them gone. The architectural remains of a federal program of forced assimilation, they are potent reminders of the dispossession of land, culture, and language that characterise much of the history of Indigenous peoples' experiences with the United States. These specific building enclosures separated much more than just interior from exterior. As they begin to erode through the entropic forces of weather and time, perhaps their walls don't need restoration. The cracks that appear might allow for the reconnection of Native people to the culture and land that these buildings were designed to hold apart.

Despite its benevolent reputation, architectural preservation reflects several more sinister colonial impulses. The desire for restoration runs parallel to a desire for order, a desire for ownership, a desire for comfort, a desire for material accumulation, and a desire for control. While on their surface the common architectural acts of renovation, rehabilitation, and

reconstruction each seek to make things whole, at their core they all represent an inability to simply let things be.

Of course, these colonial impulses extend beyond projects of preservation. They shape most of how we think about design. The practice of architecture continues to mean the exertion of power on a large scale, the shaping of the natural environment into the built environment, and the creation of forms that embody a singular creative will. Such acts of creation require equivalent acts of destruction, at sites of material and energy extraction often located a great distance from those who design and construct them — what Kiel Moe refers to as their material and energetic *empire*.[1] As architects attempt to address our role in the climate emergency, we have become more conscientious about the sources of our materials and the impacts of our energy, but we have yet to do away with our obsession with enclosure. Indeed, the *airtight high-performance thermal boundary* seems to be the primary area of focus for those who seek to build responsibly. But as any physicist or geographer can attest, every boundary requires continuous energy to maintain. The simple act of marking an edge establishes an unequal condition, the division of an inside from an outside, and the start of a long fight against entropy. In the short term, this goes well. Bedrooms stay warm and basements stay dry. But over decades and centuries, even the perfect envelope breaks down, and it is at this point of decline that we so often move to restore, repair, and renew.

But what if we let our buildings be? Or what if we didn't insist on drawing such clear boundaries in the first place? If decolonising and re-Indigenising architecture means adopting a fundamentally different set of values, then one version of such a design practice might mean opening up our buildings: rejecting the artificial permanence of their arbitrarily located edges; giving up some control; allowing them to become disenclosed. There is less need for a conventional sense of enclosure, separation, or *shelter*, when the world outside our buildings is also considered our home.

1 Kiel Moe, *Empire, State & Building* (Actar Publishers, 2017).

Across the forests and lakes that stretch for hundreds of miles around the boarding school buildings, throughout *Anishinaabe Aki*, just such a porous understanding of spatial boundaries is found in the powerful precedent of the *midewigaan* — the *Mide* lodge — traditionally built from bent and tied saplings anchored directly into the ground. Constructed without a built-up floor, the land runs continuously in and across the building's footprint. The lodge defines its significant interior space through a repeated frame and eastern and western doorways, but its top and sides are left open, allowing for free passage of light, air, and weather through its wall and roof boundaries. It also allows for free passage through time, as the *midewigaan* exists in a blurry architectural state somewhere between construction and dissolution — a lightweight structural skeleton which acknowledges its inevitable return to the earth. Sometimes built in a single day, such structures are expected to last for a handful of years, not decades or centuries. The lodge therefore can't retain lasting meaning as an aesthetic achievement, or accrue value as real estate or land improvement. It instead derives its significance from community, from ceremony, from the act of being built, from the process of people coming together to create, inhabit, and care for it, each other, and the land that sustains them all. The *midewigaan* is not designed to be renovated and restored — it is designed to complete its cycle and pass back out of existence.

What would it mean to design all our buildings this way? It would mean living and thinking in a manner quite different from the path we've followed across much of the globe for the past century. It would mean living without skyscrapers, hospitals, or laboratories in the familiar polished forms we've come to expect — gone would be the era of continuous airport reconstruction. It could mean cities built within a forest, with parts of them growing and expanding while others simultaneously decay and recede. It could mean an end to the incredible ecological poverty of human life as currently lived across most of the urbanised world. Yes, it might mean more vulnerability, as our homes — our shelter —

might be less fortified against extreme weather, and less insulated from intense heat. But it will also mean a greater sense of urgency, a new sense of obligation to the earth, an increased sensitivity to the climatic changes which so many of us still have the luxury to ignore.

To live in architecture that is disenclosed is to create a better relationship with the world outside our walls. It is to construct a state in which we are less isolated, both thermally and socially. Architecture is not form. It is not boundary. It is the coming together of people to make collective meaning through space and material, and to shelter together. It is not the designing of a great work, the possession of an imposing building, or the preservation of a piece of history that makes architecture significant. It is the repeated making of shelter, and the continuous cycles of living within it. The land persists. The culture persists. Between them it is merely buildings that fall apart. Architectural symbols are not permanent. They should not be mistaken for the cultures that built them.

Disenclosure means to come to touch the environment upon which we are all ultimately connected and dependent. The world that supports our lives. The land from which we came, and to which we must all return.



Fig. 1. A lodge built on the site of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School. Photograph taken by the author.

Of Soil and Stone

Ajay Manthripragada

> What I have called indurated clay […] is one of the most valuable materials for building. It is diffused in immense masses […]. It is full of cavities and pores, and contains a very large quantity of iron in the form of yellow and red ochres. […] It is so soft, that any iron instrument readily cuts it […]. It very soon after becomes as hard as brick, and resists the air and water much better than any brick that I have seen in India. […] The most proper English name would be laterite.
>
> — Francis Buchanan-Hamilton[1]

The Scottish polymath Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, in his 1807 *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, posits a name for a strange but regionally abundant material. The word *laterite*, from the Latin *later* or *lateritis* (brick), ambiguously labels a grouping of materials, ranging in chemical composition and geographic location. Even the category of material undeniably lateritic — that which Buchanan-Hamilton encountered in southern India — is itself ambiguous, existing somewhere between soil and stone, or exhibiting properties of both at the same time.

Laterite formation begins with the weathering of rock. As rainwater percolates through soil, it becomes slightly acidic due to dissolved carbon dioxide. This acidic water reacts with minerals in the parent rock (below the soil layer), causing them to dissolve and break down. The most soluble elements are leached away first, leaving behind less soluble elements like iron. As this process continues, the remaining oxides accumulate and form a concentrated layer, or cap. Over time, these oxides can harden and form a crust, which is often resistant to further erosion. These stages give laterite its distinctive characteristics — the airy texture a result of the percolation, the reddish-brown colour

1 Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, *A Journey From Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, 3 vols (London: East Indian Company, 1807), II, pp. 440–441.

coming from the iron oxides, and its changing durability stemming from varying environments.

The process of laterite extraction for construction purposes is an astoundingly ordered act of drawing on, and from, the mountain. A laterite cap is first levelled to form a plateau. A grid — sized to the desired construction block dimensions — is inscribed onto the relatively soft resultant surface. Workers guide mechanised saws along the grid lines and remove a layer of the material. The process is repeated, cutting blocks directly from the ground in layers, with each stratum, initially soft enough to cut, gaining strength and hardness upon subdivision to blocks and exposure to air.

The environmental impact of laterite extraction can be significant when industrial scale mining operations deplete the resource solely for its metal oxides. The process described above, however, when practised at smaller scales for regional construction, represents a symbiotic interplay of geologic and human actions. If carried out responsibly, as more local agents are committed to doing, it can be a sustainable process in its simplicity and efficiency, to say nothing of its relationship to traditional approaches.

Given this, it is confounding to see a total change in the cultural value of such a material in the contemporary neoliberal context of cities like Mangalore, on the Malabar Coast. Prior to the Portuguese, British, and Swiss presence in the region, laterite's softness and ubiquity made it moldable to the symbolism and stylisations of local temple traditions and vernacular domestic architectures. Waves of colonial dominance saw laterite's appropriation to rewrite the narrative — it was just as moldable to other, imported symbols and styles.

It would stand to reason that the use of laterite today could resuscitate an ancient, expert knowledge and appreciation. Instead, while heavily used, laterite is almost exclusively relegated to an infill material for concrete moment frame structures, the full assembly of which is covered in a layer of smoothened concrete

plaster or stucco. On those rare occasions where the laterite is left exposed, it is usually constructed like a concrete masonry unit wall, with concrete mortar slathered between bricks. This is anathema to the original method of stacking with little or no mortar, whereby the seams between the units of laterite slowly deteriorate over time. What is left is a representation of the underlying structure, recalling the horizontal grid laid down at the extraction site. In lieu of this robust, abstract, and beautifully weathered surface, a false sense of permanence and 'European-ness' is favoured — the stucco decoration usually evokes a watered-down version of an Italianate villa. Ironically, the coat of plaster suffocates the laterite, often resulting in mildew and staining that requires ever more maintenance in a way the original walls never needed.

Enclosure — in this case, unquestioned construction norms providing a uniform appearance — weakens the structure. But if contemporary building practice were to eschew the faux cover in favour of leaving the brick exposed, the material would be allowed to weather, which is exactly what gives laterite its strength and durability. Such uncovering would bring the material back into contact with its geo-cultural context, connecting its beauty and logic to enduring ancient correlatives.



Fig. 1. Laterite quarry, Karnataka, India, 2024. Photograph taken by Ajay Manthripragada.

A Landscape, a Ledge, and a Shadow

Ghania Shams Khan



Fig. 1. A prayer space at a rest stop in between the beautiful landscapes of Balochistan.

In December of 2023, I travelled to the western province of Pakistan called Balochistan. Due to the lack of tourism infrastructure and general political unrest, it is an unexplored part of the country where people rarely travel. The landscapes of Balochistan are distinct to the region and move into the neighbouring countries of Iran and Afghanistan, where the colours of the land and the shape of trees change. I travelled by road, commuting between two cities, Quetta and Ziarat. While pausing at a rest stop, I found a prayer space that sat gently at a descent from the stop. Pausing outside the prayer space for a while, I observed its orientation towards the *Qiblah,*[1] and witnessed the light filtering into the large windows — casting a shadow of its ledge inside the space. My eyes witnessed the landscape again, and the lips uttered — *SubhanAllah.*[2] A word that glorifies God in the beauty of His creation. In this act of utterance and remembrance of *Al-Khaliq*,[3] I witnessed three interconnected things: a landscape, a window ledge, and a shadow the window ledge casts. In the unique landscape of Balochistan, I witnessed the beauty of the *Al-Khaliq*'s creation. In between the landscape, a moment of reflection became anchored by a simple prayer space defined by its very ordinary window ledge.

Wujud…

…is everything. This sentence is rooted in the philosophy of *Wahadat-al-Wujud* (Unity of Being), by Ibn Arabi, an eleventh-century philosopher, scholar, poet, and mystic.[4] Ibn Arabi has

1 *Qiblah* is the Arabic word for direction. Every Mosque or the act of prayer is directed towards the Holy Kaabah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

2 Arabic for 'Glory be to God'.

3 The Arabic invocation of God as the creator.

4 William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-ʿArabi and the Problems of*

had great intellectual implications on Islamic traditions, and with this particular philosophy, many influences have been within the Sufi traditions of Islam. In this philosophy, our physical world has no existence but the only existence is the Divine existence. Ibn Arabi discusses that the world of forms exists only to *know* him.[5] A form in this context represents a meaning which is the Divine existence and in this phenomenon, *form is annihilated*.[6]

The window ledge that I begin with is seen in the light of the day which casts a shadow of its ledge into the prayer space. Here, I see it with my physical eye, and I witness the shadow *of* a window ledge. In the relationship of form and meaning rooted in Ibn Arabi's philosophy of *Wahadat-al-Wujud*, there is another way to see the relationship between light and shadow. One of the ways to remember the Divine in Islam is as the Divine Light — *An Nuur*.[7] When Ibn Arabi speaks of the *annihilation* of form — everything physical that is perceived in this word is perceived as *a shadow of the Divine* and the only real Light is the *An-Nuur*.[8] Our physical eye sees a light that cannot be known until it casts a shadow of an object — a shadow that can only come from this light. Placing this relationship in parallel to Ibn Arabi's philosophy, the Divine Light exists with or without the shadow. It is only when *An-Nuur* wants to be known, that He is known

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Religious Diversity (Suhail Academy Lahore, 2001), pp. 15–23.

5 Cyrus Ali Zargar elaborates on this idea of witnessing through a famous Hadith which Ibn Arabi refers to quite frequently. 'I was a Treasure — I was Unknown, so I loved to be known. Hence I created the creatures, and made myself known to them, so they knew me.' This Hadith is important to understand the context of *Wahadat-al Wujud.* Further, scholars like Henry Corbin and William Chittick have been a great resource in understanding this philosophy and how every physicality of the world exists only as a way to *see* or to *witness* the Divine Existence. See: Cyrus Ali Zagar, *Sufi aesthetics: Beauty, love, and the human form in the writings of Ibn 'Arabi and 'Iraqi* (University of South Carolina Press, 2011).

6 Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, p. 59.

7 One of the ninety-nine names used to invoke / remember the Divine. *Al-Khaliq* is the Arabic word for 'The Light'.

8 Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taosim: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Suhail Academy Lahore, 2005), pp. 89–98.



Fig. 3. View of the mountain range, towards the north.



Fig. 2. View of the mountain range, towards the south.

through His shadow, which is the physical world.[9]

Everything in this world exists as His shadow — in this philosophy and a way of seeing the world, one can contemplate how we perceive the materiality and the physical manifestation of a window ledge. The shadow that falls from a window ledge is not just a shadow of a ledge — it is 'the shadow, of a shadow, *of* the Divine'. *How does one perceive a window ledge in this phenomenon?* This question addresses the phenomenal enquiry posed in this paper where the physicality of the world is not the only way to perceive a reality; it can also be perceived through a world of spirit which is a far greater reality in Islamic cosmological beliefs.

The Space of Imagination

One way to begin rendering this phenomenon can be rooted in 'Imagination'. In *Fihi Ma Fihi,* a book of discourses by Maulana Rumi (R.A.), he writes that imagination is a space where one perceives a *reality*, and the consequence of this perception is a physical manifestation — which is our materiality. Materiality is first perceived in the space of imagination before it manifests into its physical form and Maulana Rumi in his discourse confirms this foundation: '*Dunya khayaal par qayam hai* — the world is built on imagination.'[10]

The material existence as a result of imagination, can be understood through the discourses of Ibn Arabi who has a stance on what the reality of this world is. In Ibn Arabi's philosophy, the spiritual reality — the Divine existence — is the only reality. Reiterating the concept of *Wahdat al-Wajud*, physicality is only a means to *know* the spiritual reality and *the space of imagination* exists as an intermediary space that helps one perceive the

9 Ibid.

10 Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, *Discourse of Rumi (Or Fihi Ma Fihi)*, trans. by A.J. Arberry (Omphaloskepsis, 2020), pp. 217–218.

spiritual reality.[11] As sensory beings, we perceive through our senses, through the haptics of a thing.[12] Ibn Arabi's discussion of the world as a world of shadows takes this perception a step back into the space of imagination that Maulana Rumi has spoken of — it is here that we are to perceive a *reality*. This is an intermediary space between the material and the immaterial, also called the imaginal realm by Henry Corbin.[13] This intermediary space embodies two kinds of worlds — the spiritual world which Ibn Arabi defines as the only reality and the physical world, through which the spiritual world is known.[14] The space of imagination is an essential space of perception where one can perceive between the two worlds, and it may help us illustrate the following question: *Can the space of imagination perceive the window ledge as a shadow, as described by Ibn Arabi?* This question places this research within a phenomenological grounding. Based on this grounding, I can perceive the physicality of a window ledge through the shadow of a ledge and the ledge itself as a shadow.

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11 Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds,* p. 70. 'As already noted, imagination can be considered on three basic levels: as the cosmos itself, as an intermediate macrocosmic world, and as an intermediate microcosmic world. Its outstanding feature is its inherent ambiguity. On whatever level it is envisaged, it is always a *barzakh* — an isthmus or interworld-standing between two other realities or worlds and needing to be defined in terms of both.'

12 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, 3rd ed. (Wiley, 2012).

13 'Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal – Association Des Amis de Henry et Stella Corbin', Association des Amis de Henry et Stella Corbin, 2021 <https://www.amiscorbin.com/en/bibliography/mundus-imaginalis-or-the-imaginary-and-the-imaginal/> [accessed 10 June 2024].

14 This premise of defining the physical world is rooted in the previously mentioned philosophy of Ibn Arabi where *'form is annihilated'*.

A drawing reveals a meaning which may be hidden…

Henry Corbin is a French philosopher and a Sufi whose philosophical enquiries sit between Martin Heidegger and Shihab Al-Din Suhravardi, bringing together Western thought and philosophies from the Iranian Islamic tradition.[15] Corbin defines a phenomenon of revealing something hidden as follows:

> In philosophical and religious disciplines, the phenomenon is found in technical terms containing the Greek root phany: epiphany, theophany, hierophany, and so on. In Persia, the phenomenon, phainomenon, is the zahir, the apparent, the exterior, the exoteric. The thing that reveals itself while hiding itself in the zahir is the batin, the interior, the esoteric. Phenomenology consists in 'preserving the phenomenon', preserving the appearance while disengaging or unveiling the hidden thing that reveals itself beneath that appearance. The logos of the phenomenon, the phenomenology, is therefore the hidden, the invisible thing beneath the visible. It allows the phenomenon to reveal itself as it does to the subject to whom it is revealing itself. [16]

In architectural praxis, drawings are a way to negotiate between the form that exists in our imagination and the physical world. Like Corbin's definition of phenomenology, a drawing becomes

15 'From Heidegger To Suhravardi: An Interview with Philippe Némo', Association des Amis de Henry et Stella Corbin, 2017 <https://www.amiscorbin.com/en/biography/from-heidegger-to-suhravardi/> [accessed 10 June 2024].

16 Henry Corbin, 'The Question of Comparative Philosophy' in *Spring 1980: Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought*, ed. by James Hillman (US: Spring Publications, 1983), pp. 1–19.

an important tool in mediating tensions between meaning and form by revealing *or* visualising meaning, through its ability to exercise intuitive marks on a paper. The meaning which may be hidden in the form can be brought forth with the help of a drawing tool while also acknowledging the phenomenological position that is taken here: meaning precedes the form as we see the window ledge as 'the shadow, of a shadow, *of* the Divine.' In the philosophical context of Ibn Arabi, we are presented with a starting point for a drawing practice — *how does one draw a form when it is annihilated?* This question is a foundation for the drawing process that unfolds in this research exercise and with this foundation, the attempt is always to draw *beyond* the physical form.

In this question, the word *form* can be interchanged with the *zaahir* defined by Corbin as the exterior and the outward form and meaning with the *baatin* which is the interior and the inward form. In this research, I will also place these two words in parallel with Ibn Arabi's philosophy, 'Unity of Being'. Here, the *baatin* is the spiritual world which is the *only* reality that he speaks of and the *zaahir* is the world of forms that exists only to know the *baatin.* With these two terminologies, a question that is also threaded through the unfolding drawing practice is — *how does one draw the zaahir from the baatin?* Drawing the *zaahir* from the *baatin* is a rethinking of form and perceiving it not just through our physical senses. But from this space of imagination where meaning comes first and the manifestation of meaning takes place through form.

Cyrus Ali Zargar, a scholar of Islamic studies, in a chapter, 'Perception according to Ibn Arabi', from his book *Sufi Aesthetics* writes:

> This reexperiencing of meaning through the medium of matter and form is precisely the experience of shuhud/witnessing. Thus matter, according to Ibn ʿArabi, since it allows for form, makes perception

> through the human faculties possible; each of the faculties (comprising imagination, reflection, memory, form-giving, fantasy, and reason) has a certain type of 'matter' that corresponds to it. Knowledge acquired outside of matter is profound, overwhelming and pure, but — lacking any reference point in the known world — it cannot be expressed.[17]

Materiality corresponds to meaning and serves as a reference point for meaning to be articulated. A drawing practice that unfolds in this research constantly negotiates while looking at the *zaahir* as a reference point for us to articulate meaning. This rethinking of form can also help us understand that something as ordinary as a window ledge and its shadow holds together the experience of a landscape of Balochistan. The question of 'How does one draw the *zaahir* from the *baatin*?' sets the premise that 'form' is not the only subject of drawing, instead, the articulation of meaning that comes before the form of a window ledge becomes an aim for this exploration.

This study is not a spiritual experience enacted by symbols or rituals, or to find a transcendental definition of meaning. This meaning is rooted in a subjective experience of my belief as a Muslim who is interested in looking at the details of the world around me through a phenomenological lens, where phenomenology does not just begin from the Western, Heideggerian canon. As a spatial thinker and an architect, drawing is the most immediate tool I have to communicate and understand a space. The drawing practice explored in *Drawing Exercises I*, *II* and *III* offers a way to rethink how we visualise space. In the *aesthetic experience* of drawing, the process moves between two mediums — architectural drawings and the printmaking studio.[18] It is through this movement that the window

17 Cyrus Ali Zargar, 'Perception according to Ibn ʿArabi: God in forms', in *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writing of Ibn ʿArabi and ʿIraqi* (University of South Carolina, 2011), pp. 17.

18 On aesthetic experience, see: Jacques Rancière, 'Prelude' in *Aisthesis:*

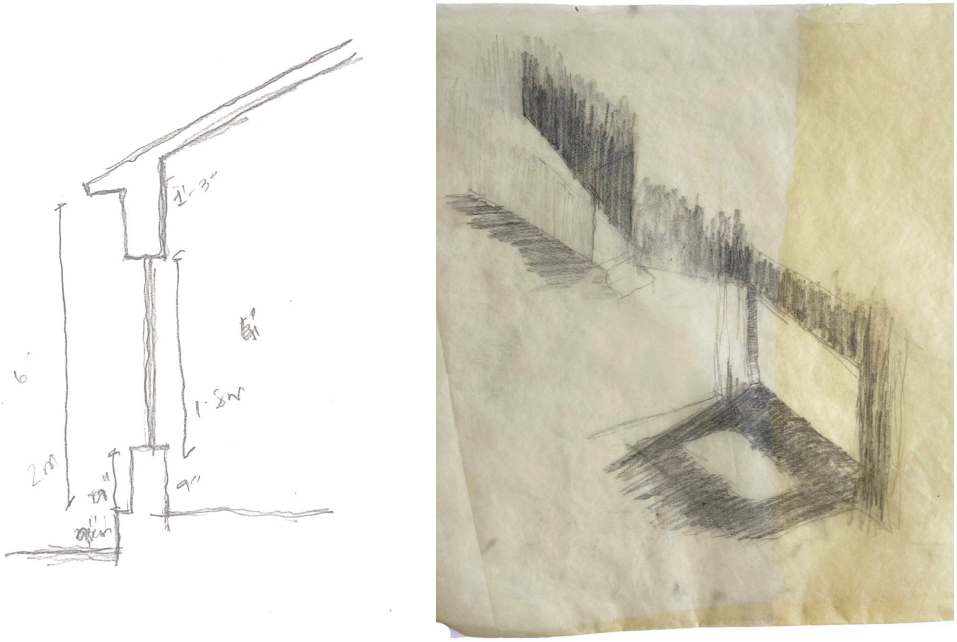


Fig. 4. (Left) On-site sketch and documentation of the window ledge of the prayer space. (Right) On-site sketch shadow studies of the thresholds to the prayer space.

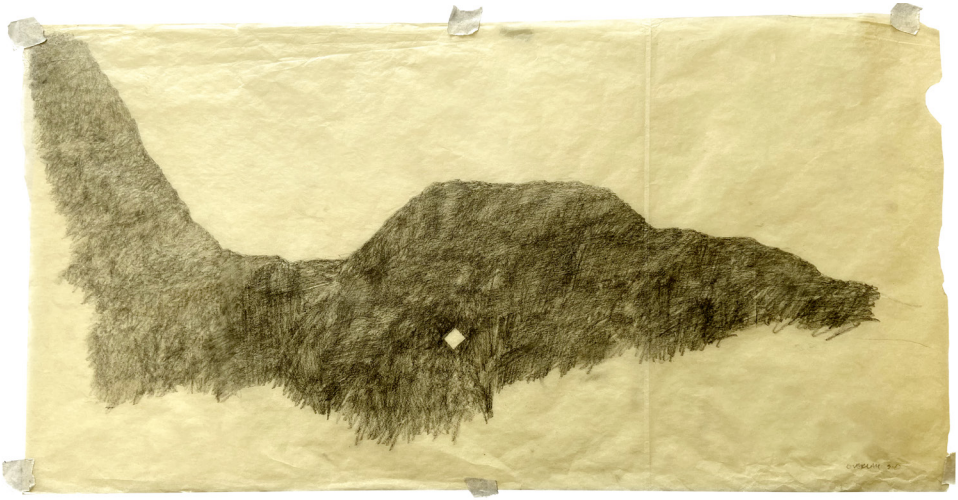


Fig. 5. In an intuitive drawing, I recall the experience of the contoured landscape around the prayer space whose window ledge was witnessed. The contours are not physically measured. They are recalled from the way I had walked across the land and here manifest in an imaginary sectional drawing to communicate an experience that was felt.

ledge is [re]presented, opening and disclosing that which is hidden, the interior.

The Opening *of Architectural Drawing*

The window ledge as 'the shadow, of a shadow, *of* the Divine' — this visual analogy is explored throughout the research as a drawing practice in three drawing exercises. *Drawing Exercise - I,* brings measured documentation and photographs into the printmaking studio. This studio evoked my curiosity due to its many different techniques used to create a mark and the emphasis laid by its instructor on the affects of mark-making. Every line in an architectural drawing implicates a certain meaning and every mark made in the process of printmaking adds information to the image. This technique allowed me to think of the line as not just a tool to 'draw' a space, but a mark that will implicate and give meaning to the space. In the printmaking studio, the control of an architectural drawing is relinquished to the methods of printmaking, and here new forms of knowledge emerge that help illustrate the different tones, details, and intensities of a shadow.

In *Drawing Exercise - II*, the measured drawings are critiqued through oblique representations of these drawings. With this layer of critique, shadows are rendered and I begin working with 'the shape of a shadow'. Measured ways to draw are woven with intuitive drawing practices and both of these methods are hinged together by the shape of a shadow.

Drawing Exercise - III is a coming together of the different techniques developed between the two spaces of the printmaking studio and the architectural drawing board. Lines become shadows on paper, and shadows become the line that guides an intuitive way of measuring a space. Working between the two has created openings for a pedagogical tool to be developed for the practice of architectural representation and education.

Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art, trans. by Zakir Paul (Verso 2013), pp. 9–16.

The exercises are accompanied by reflective 'Drawing Notes' that speak of new forms of knowledge learned through the *experience* of the drawing itself. In the representation process, a drawing exercise tends to become purely a print — yet, still lies in the realm of architectural drawings. The aesthetic experience of the drawing allows me to open up the space of architectural representation itself.[19]

Drawing Exercise - I

The first exercise begins with documentation and photographs brought into the space of my university's printmaking studio. Every printmaking process involves a *matrix* that has been worked on for some time. A matrix is a chosen surface that is worked on through different techniques and materials. This surface is then inked and printed onto paper or another surface. In printing the matrix, the image that was created on the matrix is reversed onto another paper or material. With this reversal, the printmaker has to harmonise their imagination, the hand that assembles and draws, the heart, and the mind that rationalises ideas with the reversal of this matrix into a mirror image. It is this process of reversal that drew me into the printmaking process. This inclination is in a very simple way connected to the idea of the whole world that in a spiritual belief exists as a reflection of the Divine Existence.[20]

I approach this printmaking studio as a complete beginner. Here several more iterations of the drawing practice unfold as I begin to familiarise myself with new techniques. In the first exercise, I started to experiment with *image transfers* as a method of drawing. Photographs are taken of different anchors on the site that are indicative of different points of *intensity*. These points of intensities are where a *hierophany* is felt and meaning manifests

19 Ibid.

20 In a personal belief, in the larger context of Muslim belief, and in many Sufi practices, the whole world is seen as a reflection of the Divine Existence.

itself into a form.[21] A point of intensity on this site is an opportunity to address the question mentioned earlier, 'How does one draw from the *baatin*, the *zaahir*?'

The images taken on two trips serve as constant references. To make these references a part of the drawing process, image transfers become a starting point. An image transfer negotiates where the drawing begins. I am not starting the drawing with a line, but a whole image of the site being transferred onto paper. It negotiates the start of an architectural drawing by placing consciously the first mark on paper — the first mark in this case is the photograph that was captured on site. The whole scene appears at once on the paper, without any of the markings that I would make of my own.

Drawing Notes 01

A new medium brings with itself new techniques, new tools and new materials. The space of the printmaking studio is shaped by its tools and the way the medium works. In the studio, there is a surface for every step of each technique. A surface for working on a selected plate, a surface for inking the plate, a surface for tearing up paper, and the surface of the printing press which is used in most techniques as the last step.

To these surfaces, I bring with me a theoretical grounding and a pre-existing architectural drawing practice.

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21 Mircea Eliade speaks of a hierophany as an appearance of a meaning. This acts as a fixed point or an 'Axis Mundi' around which a sacred space can manifest. See: Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Harvest, 1968).

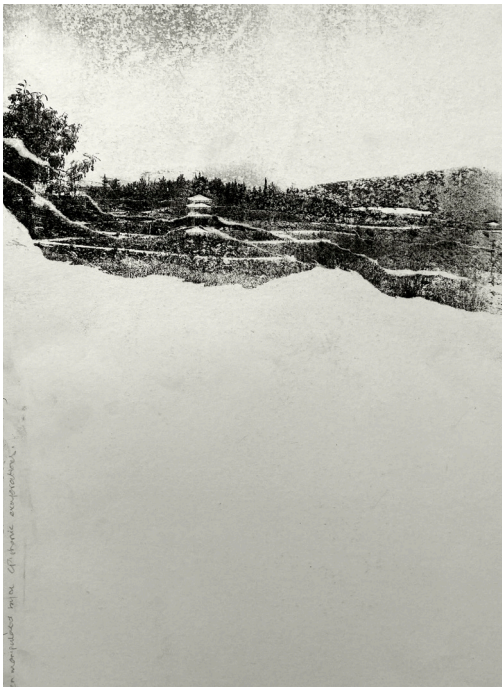


Fig. 6. Image transfer of the prayer space seen while approaching the rest stop on the way back from Ziarat.



Fig. 7. Image transfer of the prayer space



Fig. 8. Image transfer of a gate to a juniper grove.



Fig. 9. Image transfer from between the grove. A slope and a water reservoir in the clearings of the juniper trees.



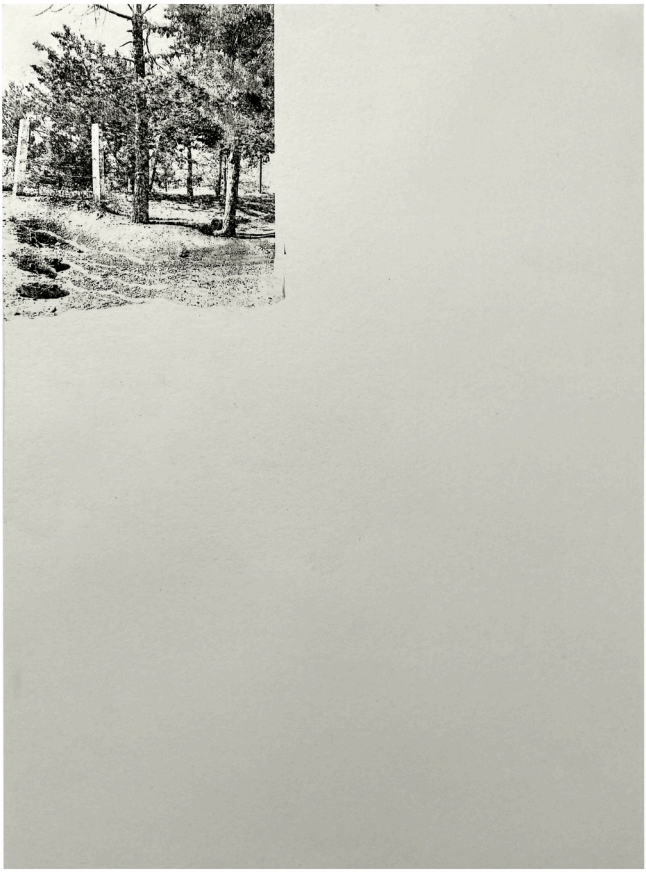


Fig. 10. Image transfer from between the grove. A small water channel opens up towards the trees.

The different surfaces have allowed me to inevitably slow down the process of creative representation, providing pauses for reflection as I move from one surface to another, from one technique to another. The technique of image transfer requires one surface for laying out the photocopy of the photographs that need to be transferred. On another, I tear up the photocopies according to the image I desire to transfer onto a blank paper. The tears that I make are intuitive and grounded in the felt experience of the particular place that has been photographed.

The image transfer is completed on the printing press.

As I move between multiple surfaces, beginning from where the images are laid out to finally the printing press, I keep thinking about my experience of the site in these images that I contemplate between three different surfaces.

A transfer is simple.

It is the same image that was taken on the site, crisp in its quality as a black and white photograph, having taken on the grainy quality of a sketch made with a pencil, transformed in its representation on paper through the transfer.

Architectural drawing methods include the plan, section, elevation, and oblique projections to convey information about a particular space. These methods are also an important part of architectural pedagogy where spaces are drawn and communicated through such methods. Drawing methods are spaces of thinking in-and-of themselves — there is always an intention behind the marks made on paper that communicate the physical details of a space. In the usual practice of architectural representation, as we know it in design schools today, the intention is to represent the space with as much clarity as possible. A sectional drawing of a window ledge (see Fig. 4) can show the details of how the ledge sits within the measured contours of the site. It can show the relationship between light and shadow that the eye can witness. But how can such a drawing represent the experience of a window ledge which is the 'shadow, of a shadow, *of* the Divine'? This question reiterates the previously mentioned question of 'How does one draw a form when it is annihilated?'. Within these drawing exercises, this question urges me to rethink the line drawings that are always aimed at the clarity of communication of physical space and to think of the ways a drawing exercise can become rooted in the phenomenological enquiry of the *baatin* and the *zaahir*.

In the second drawing exercise, parallel projections serve as an important method of drawing to represent the interventions on the site. In an axonometric drawing, one can see all the information on a single plane.[22] With all of the

22 Ray Lucas, *Drawing Parallels: Knowledge Production in Axonometric, Isometric and Oblique Drawings* (Taylor and Francis Group 2019), p. 310. 'It is important to remember, however, that unlike axonometric drawings, isometric projections do not preserve any "real" angular dimensions. Furthermore, a "residual" observer is always present, as orientation seems to change the "nature" of the represented object. Jopling was fascinated by the fact that each of the objects in his treatise may be viewed in at least six different ways, so that the diagrams "may be considered equivalent to about one thousand representations of different objects." He emphasised that appearance "depends entirely upon the orientation





Figs. 11 and 12. The first attempt to do the image transfers for my drawing practice was done on a printing press. I am completing the transfer here by passing it through a press.

information coming onto a single plane, the drawings also remain measurable.[23] This measurement can be more than just a quantitative measurement, but also has the space for a qualitative measurement, in this premise an imaginary narrative. An example to understand parallel projection representations can be Persian miniature art. In this practice, manuscripts are illustrated to create a certain narrative, while using architectural representation in oblique methods to expand on the narrative.[24] These narratives draw on the imaginative ability of the illustrator and what they wish to show, by working on planes in multiple directions coming together on a single surface to represent a narrative across time and space.[25] The Persianate practice speaks of a representation that is a 'visual description of the built world as it was experienced and imagined through time and space, rather than an objective snapshot'. [26] The following folio from the *Shahnama*, depicts a story titled 'Haftvad and the Worm' (see Fig. 13). The architectural clusters are drawn over multiple oblique angles to move the eye across the page depending on the narrative of the story which begins from the bottom left depicting Haftvad's daughter in red.[27] The use of parallel projection allows

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of the image in relation to the observer" and the representation often flips from concave to convex, transforming the image from a space to a mass.'

23 Lucas*, Drawing Parallels*, p. 4. 'As a genre of engineering drawing, it is clear that parallel projection solves certain problems of representation. Parallel projection shows a three-dimensional image whilst being measurable, making it an easier working drawing than a perspective, for example. Parallel projections in an oblique convention are used in the West from the Middle Ages in both mathematical treatises and military engineering [Filippo Camerota, 'Renaissance Descriptive Geometry', in *Picturing Machines 1400–1700*, ed. by Wolfgang Lefevre (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), pp. 175–208], coming to particular prominence in the sixteenth century.'

24 Margaret S. Graves, 'Inside and outside, pictures and page: The architectural spaces of miniature painting', in *Architecture in Islamic Arts: Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum*. (Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 2011), ed. by Margaret and Benoit Junod, pp. 293–305.

25 Graves, 'Inside and outside, pictures and page: The architectural spaces of miniature painting', pp. 293–305.

26 Ibid.

27 Graves, 'Haftvad's Daughter and The Worm' in *Architecture in Islamic Arts: Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum* (Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture,

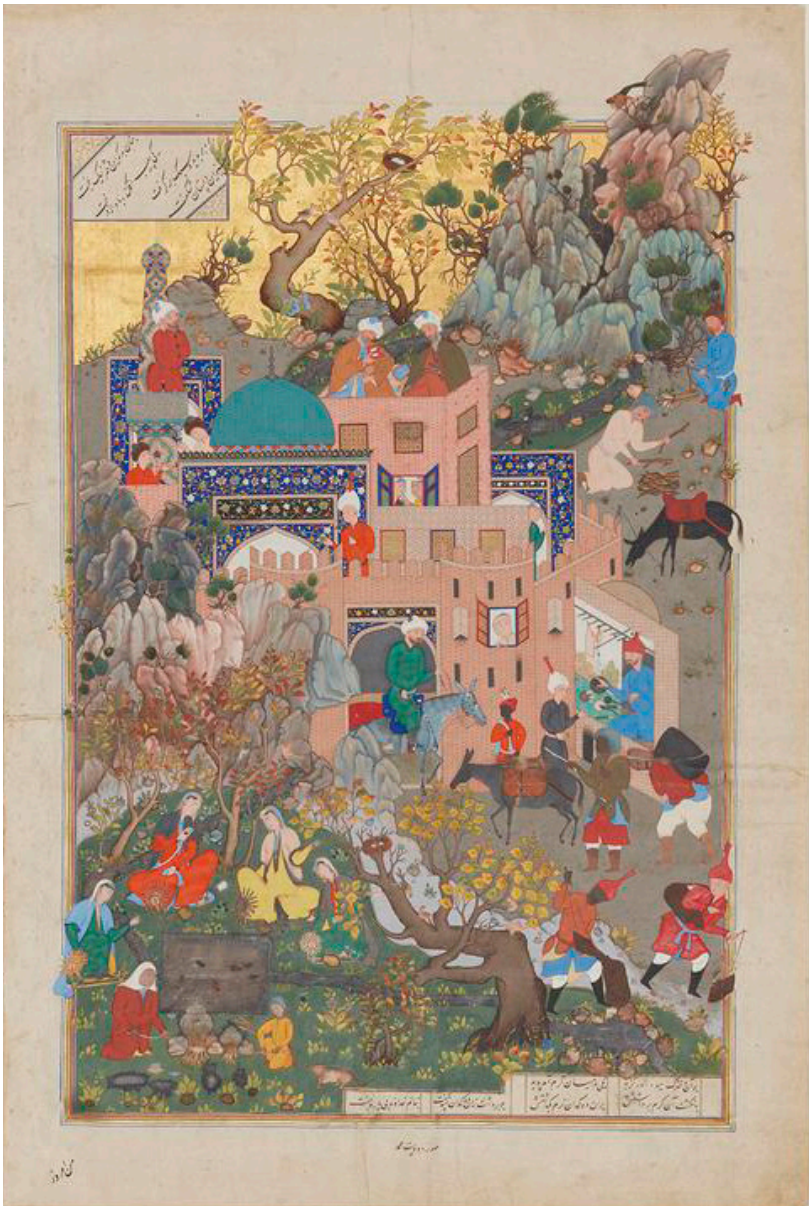


Fig. 13. Attributed to Dust Muhammad, *Haftvad and The Worm: Folio from The Shahnameh (Book of Kings) of Sah Tahmasp* (ca. 1540), opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper, 45 × 30 cm. © The Aga Khan Museum.

for a narrative to be visually traced according to the story.

Axonometric drawings — a selected method of parallel projections — allow me to represent a narrative that draws from the imaginal realm. This method allows for the planes of the object represented to be revealed on a selected angle which results in perspectival depth manipulating the measured surface. For example, at an angle of 36° 50′ and 36° 50′, the planes on the x-axis are revealed on a 1:1 proportion which is true to the measured surface. The y-axis is also on a 1:1 proportion, true to the measurements. On this angle, the surface drawn on the z-axis becomes skewed and is drawn on a 3/4th proportion of its actual measurement (Fig. 14). Working with different angles to reveal the measured surfaces can allow for new openings to become part of the drawing.

The decision to choose an angle for the axonometric projection is based on the experience of walking through the site, the directions taken and the forms revealed throughout the walk. This decision also allows for the shadows that are traced onto these axonometrics to change shape. Through these shapes emerging from a measured drawing, an intuitive decision becomes rooted in the logic of an axonometric drawing.

The most important aspect of an oblique drawing is to bring multiple kinds of information onto a single plane of drawing without making a singular aspect of space the objective. Oblique drawings have a way of challenging the one-point

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2011), ed. by Margaret and Benoit Junod, p. 178. 'Haftvad's daughter (in red) holds up the apple from which the story will grow. Behind, a walled town, tiny but containing all the elements of urban life and decorated in jewel-like splendour, appears to grow before our eyes. Food is sold in a shop; men gather wood and bring it to the town for sale; sages read and write in a tower; women converse inside a room, and a muezzin performs the call to prayer. The architectural aggregate clusters together a massive dome, *pishtaqs* (arched portals) with tile revetments, a minaret, a city gate with towers, windows with *mashrabiyya* (latticed screens), and walls of plain and patterned brickwork. The disconcerting two-dimensionality of the structural elements, a common feature of Persianate miniature painting that is seen most clearly here in the shop-front that projects from the right of the town wall, contributes to a sense of impermanence that is in this case quite appropriate, for the town and its prosperity will not last.'

perspective of Renaissance methods, where this method is a commonly practised way to add *depth* to the image. This depth here is about what the eye sees as depth in a perspective. Yet, the depth that I am looking to render exists *in the whole world measured through the space of shadows*. This conversation begins to critique the one-point perspective and Cartesian ways to represent a space.[28] This critique unfolds in the following drawings where axonometric tools are used to represent four selected points on a site and different oblique angles come together to see what the drawing reveals according to the chosen angle.

As discussed, shadow does not mean the absence of light. A shadow in Ibn Arabi's analogy is the *form* of the whole world. As an example, my drawing exercise extends into experimentation. The axonometric drawings that I create are overlaid with shadows. As an exercise, I separate the overlay of the shadows from the axonometric drawing which gives us a form that is the shape of the shadow itself. The form here has a reference only when it is overlaid onto the drawing and has no reference when separated from it. The shadow is reduced to a form in itself without any reference to the measured drawing. This new form in some ways is derived from the physical form, but it has no physical implications on its own.

28 Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 'The Space of Architecture: Meaning as Presence and Representation', in *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture (*William Stout Publishers, 1994), p. 16. 'Renaissance artists, as is well known, developed an interest in geometrical perspective, or *perspectiva artificialis*. In painting, the visible rendering of reality soon represented geometric space to display the mathematical structure of depth. This event was invariably an ontological disclosure, always given with a "thickness" resistant to monocular vision and homogenization.'

The shape of a shadow drawn on a trace and overlaid on a line drawing reads as part of the same. One can find its reference in the base of a measured axonometric drawing.

I remove the trace from the base drawing, and the shape of the shadow becomes an ambiguous form. In my drawing practice, I have the comfort of knowing where this shape comes from, yet in its monolithic and ambiguous form, how can I anchor this ambiguity into a reality?

I find a need to give some porosity to this shape, to let the references come through. To let lightness become a part of this form. To let this stark shape of a shadow become a little softer.

To signify the world as a shadow, *witnessing* the world is not *of* the shadow but *through* the shadow.[29] The shape of the shadow that I am working with is an intermediary layer in the act of witnessing. Thinking through this layer, which is the shape of the shadow itself, and in between the two ways of drawing the shadow is hinged. The first method is the measured and scaled axonometric, which allows intuitive decisions to be rationalised at scale. The second method in this experimental exercise is image transfer. The shape of the shadow becomes a protagonist in the drawings as it becomes a way to think about the image that I am rendering on a surface.

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29 Cyrus Ali Zargar, 'Perception according to Ibn ʿArabi: God in forms', in *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writing of Ibn ʿArabi and ʿIraqi* (University of South Carolina, 2011), p. 14. 'This description of *mushahadah*/witnessing parallels the definition of *ilm* (knowledge) by classic Islamic philosophers as the "presence of a thing's form in the intellect." Just as (for the philosophers) things and the relationships between them leave traces of their forms in the intellect, so too, according to Ibn ʿArabi, does that which is witnessed leave a trace of its form in the soul.'

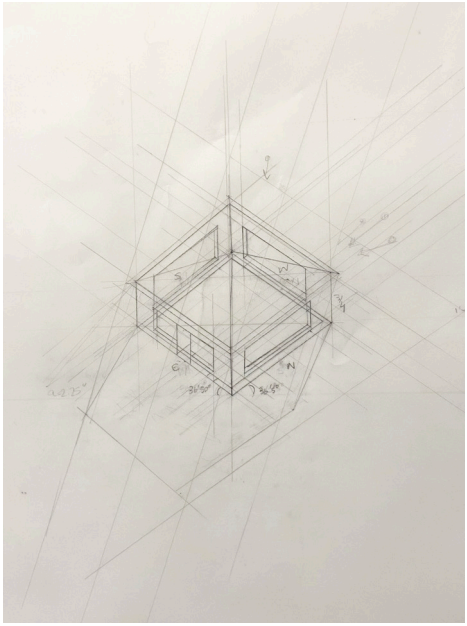


Fig. 14. Axonometric drawing of the prayer space on a chosen angle of 36° 50′ and 36° 50′.

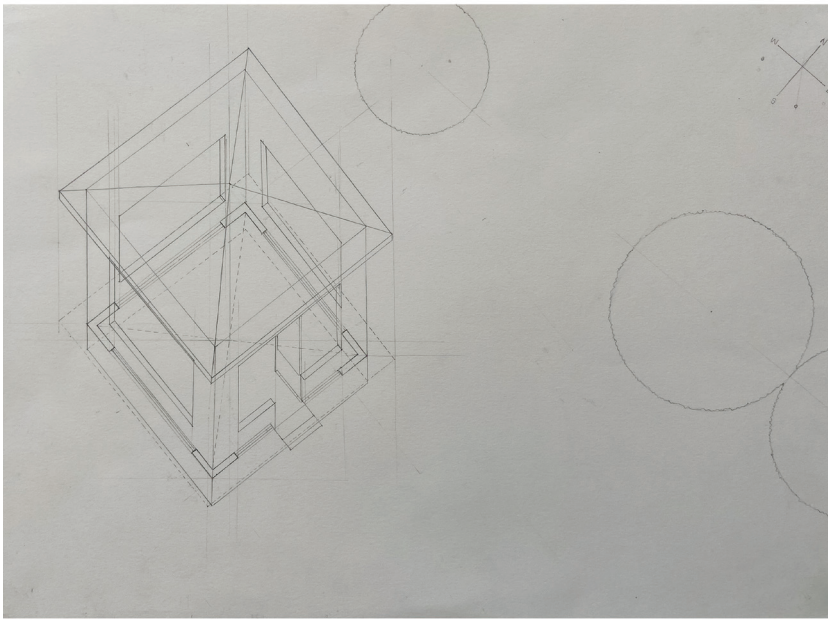


Fig. 15. Axonometric of the prayer space. Drawn at an angle of 45° and 45°.



Fig. 16. Shadows of the space traced onto a parchment, without the base drawing.

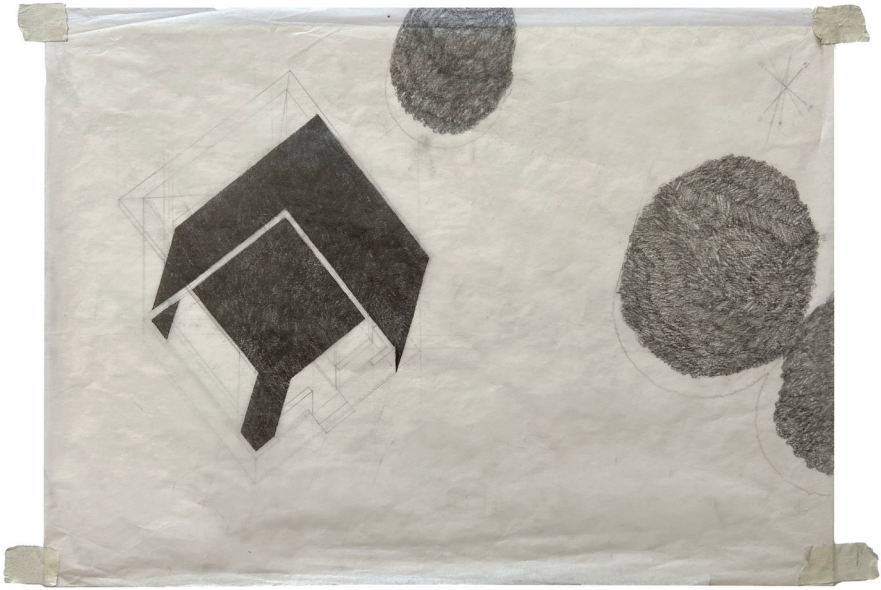


Fig. 17. Shadows of the space traced onto a parchment overlaid on the base axonometric drawing.

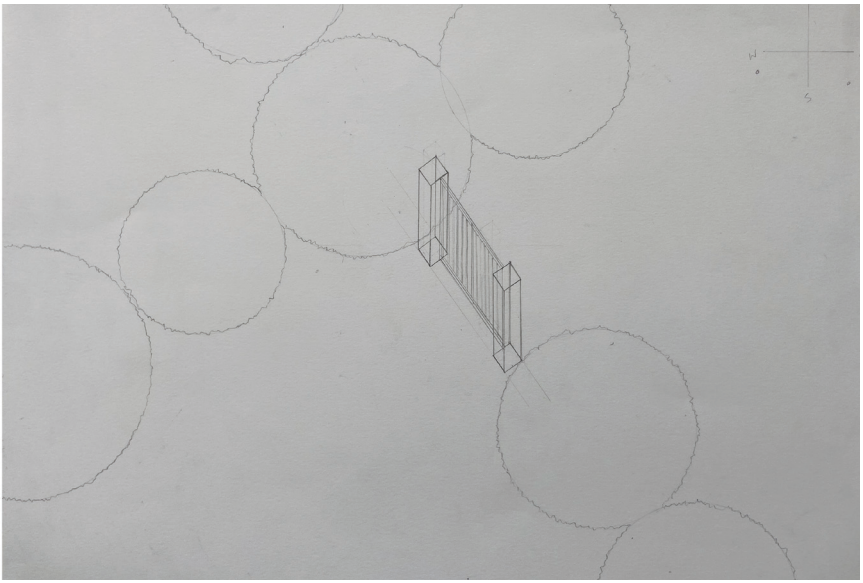


Fig. 18. Axonometric of the gate leading to a juniper grove. Drawn at an angle of 45° and 45°.



Fig. 19. Shadows of the space traced onto a parchment, without the base drawing.

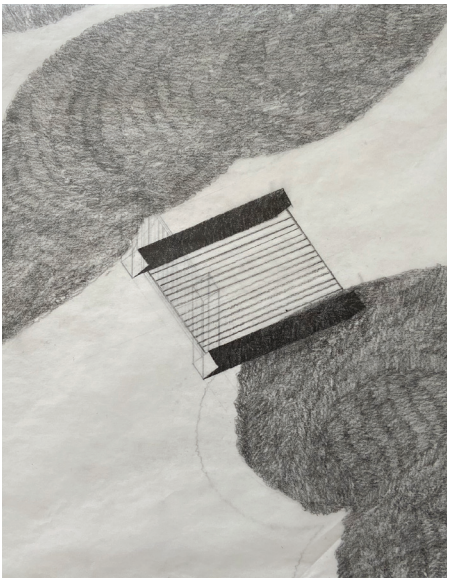


Fig. 20. Shadows of the space traced onto a parchment overlaid on the base axonometric drawing.

Drawing Exercise - III

In the third drawing exercise, three kinds of drawing methods come together: the architectural drawing board, the embossing on a piece of wood ply (a thin wooden sheet), and image transfers. Each method in the space it occupies and in its technique creates a thinking process for the drawings and as the exercises unfold, these spaces and techniques overlap with each other to bring new knowledges and insights to the fore.

The architectural drawing board, and the tools which are used to make the drawing, constantly refer to a physical space which can be measured in quantitative ways. In such a way, the drawing offers scientific clarity to the experience of a space. On an architectural drawing board, we can create plans, sections, and elevations as line drawings that represent the physical details of the space. This training as an architect is also rooted in the Western tradition of Descartes's way of separating the mind from the body.[30] The lines can depict what the eye sees and what the mind attempts to rationalise. To critique this way of drawing, in this space of an architectural drawing board, axonometric representation can bring forth a way of drawing that sits between quantitatively measured representations and qualitative representation.

The second space of drawing that comes together in the third exercise is the space of embossing the lines of an axonometric drawing — the line is relinquished to the medium of printmaking. A line is only seen when the paper is placed under a light source and the emboss casts a shadow on the paper. The drawing is placed under different angles of light sources, and

30 This conventional way to represent space comes from the Cartesian ways of separating the mind and the body. In a larger framework, it is an idea rooted in colonisation which gave way to industrialisation and high modernity — science becoming the highest form of thinking. See: Robert S. Nelson, 'Descartes's Cow and Other Domestications of The Visual', in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 1–20.

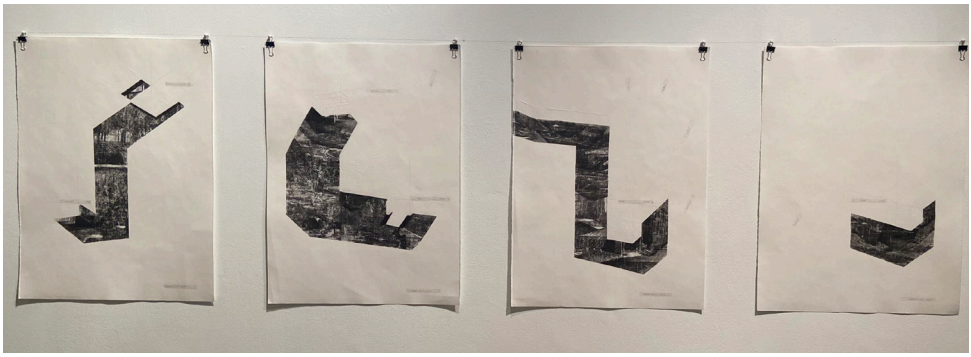


Fig. 21. Four drawings of the ‘Shapes of A Shadow’.
Emboss and image transfers on acid-free paper.
15 in. × 20 in.

Right to left
Shape of A Shadow: *A Prayer Space*.
Shape of A Shadow: *A Descent from the Rest Stop*.
Shape of A Shadow: *The Juniper Grove*.
Shape of A Shadow: *Clearing in A Juniper Grove*.

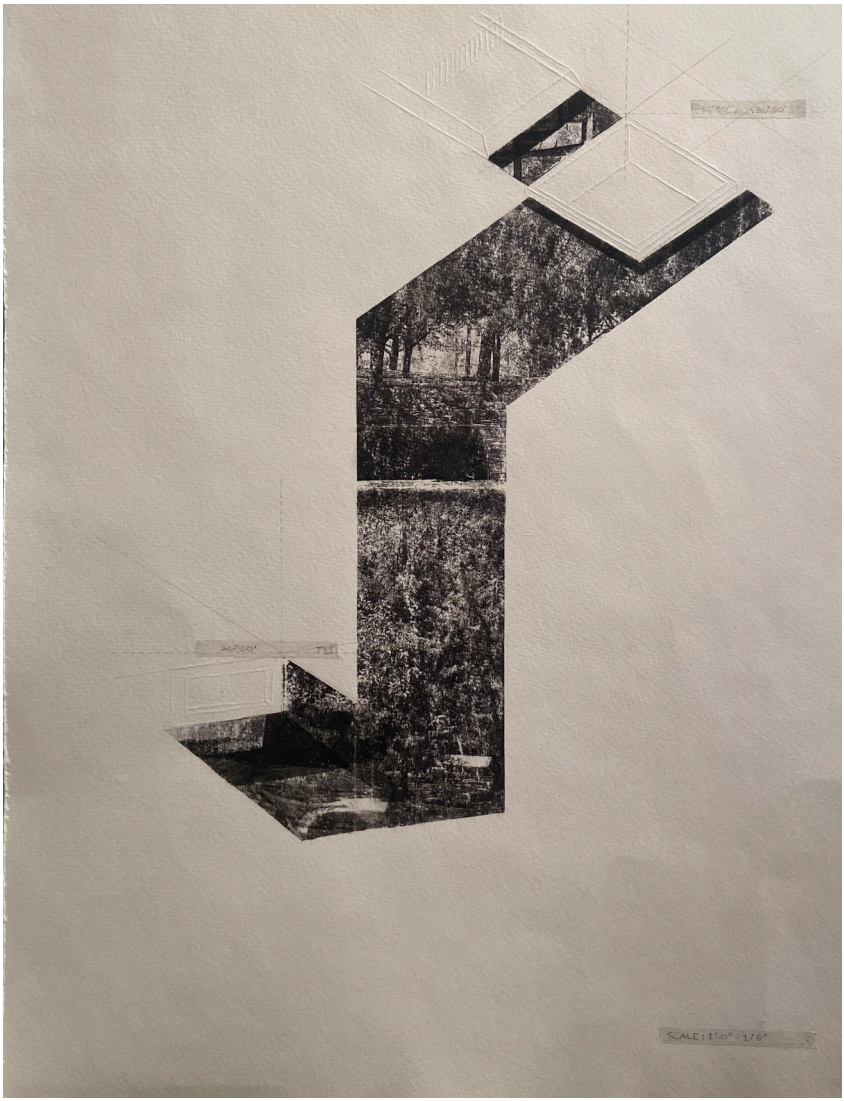


Fig. 22. Shape of A Shadow: *Clearing in A Juniper Grove*.
Emboss and image transfers on acid-free paper,
15 in. × 20 in.

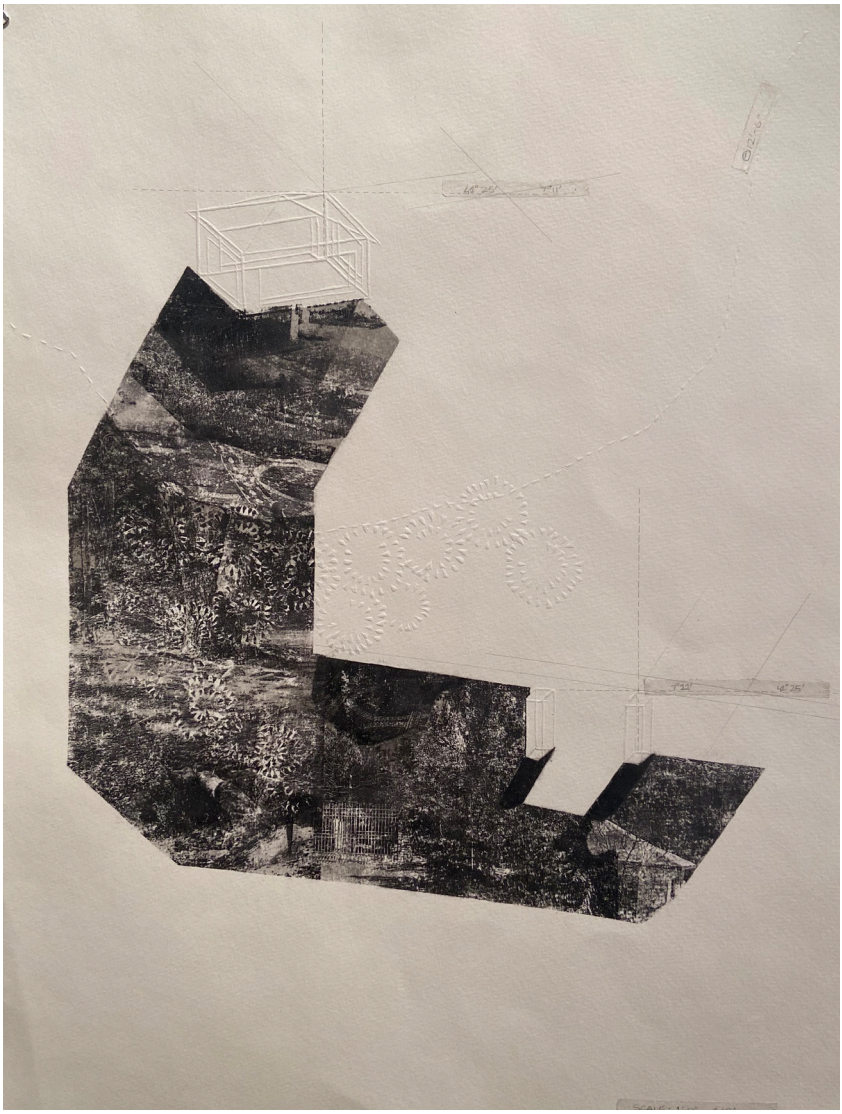


Fig. 23. Shape of A Shadow: *The Juniper Grove*.
Emboss and image transfers on acid-free paper,
15 in. × 20 in.

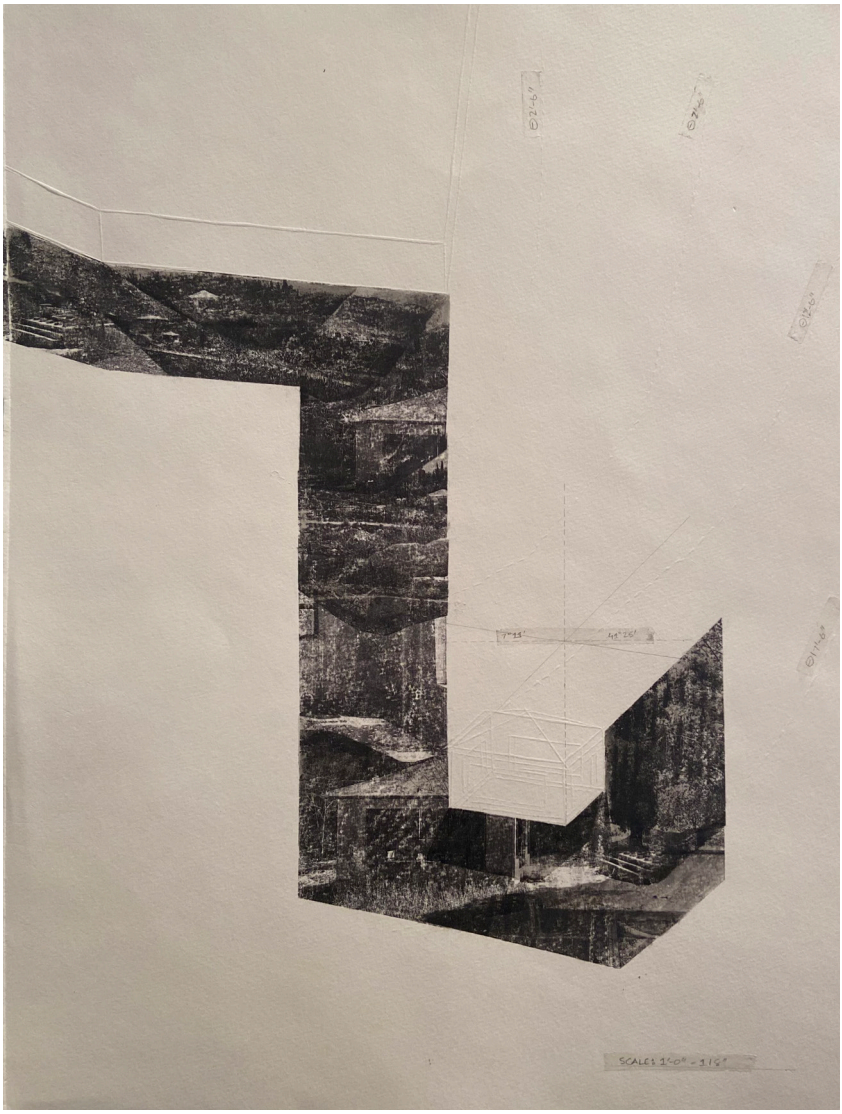


Fig. 24. Shape of A Shadow: *A Descent from the Rest Stop*.
Emboss and image transfers on acid-free paper,
15 in. × 20 in.

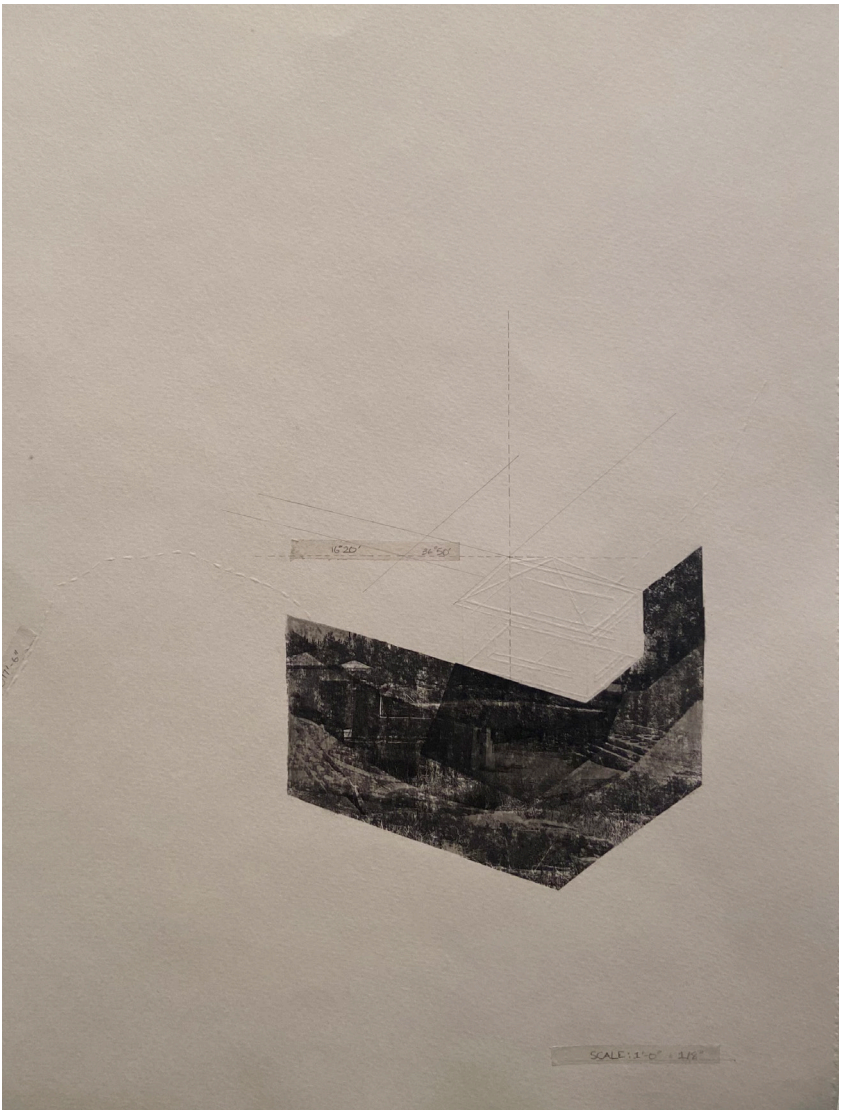


Fig. 25. Shape of A Shadow: *A Prayer Space*.
Emboss and image transfers on acid-free paper,
15 in. × 20 in.

with every change of direction, the quality of the line also changes. The line — while visualising a space — is subject to forces outside of the surfaces of the paper. This makes me pause and consciously decide the way that I chose to draw a line as a *mark* made on a piece of ply. Embossing slows down the process of the line drawing and this slowness allows for one to reflect over the lines that are made. The intention of bringing such attention to the line and placing it in the action between light and shadow is to find visual ways of letting the *baatin* come before the *zaahir*.

The third space of the drawing is the space of image transfers. This is the first technique I was introduced to in the printmaking studio and it has served as a constant companion throughout the drawing process. Sometimes it is fully present on the surface of the paper, and sometimes it remains in conversation with new techniques as I open up the process of an architectural drawing. In this drawing exercise, the image transfer is burnished by hand which allows for some control over the parts that I chose to transfer. The parts chosen point to my experience of the site, particularly those anchor points where architectural forms have a sense of presence and affect. The images transferred are of the context around the architectural forms.

The embossing of an axonometric drawing as part of the negative space of the paper helps me decide where to place an image transfer as a reference for the transfer. The images are transferred around the emboss and sometimes seep into the tactile surface of the emboss. In the previous drawing exercises, I had traced the shape of the shadow from the axonometric drawings as well. Where the axonometric cast this shape of the shadow, I have chosen to transfer the same image multiple times. In doing so, a shape emerges from within the transfers of the images of the site.

A line made on a surface tells one what to see. It translates what one visualises in their imagination for others to see on a surface. A line is a mode of communication. A line visualises what we imagine.

A line in an architectural drawing is a tool that can give clarity to the drawing when a crisp and clear mark is made with a sharpened pencil. A straight line is drawn with the help of an architectural scale that measures up to fifteen feet. The line tells us that these fifteen feet can be turned into a three-dimensional intervention. When perpendicular, parallel, and angled lines measured along the scale meet, they come together in the form of plans, sections, and elevations.

The same line, which can be measured by a scale, is embossed onto the surface of a paper. The line that helps one measure a surface, the line that helps one give clarity to an architectural drawing, is a line that can only be seen in the way in which light that onto the surface of the paper, and the shadow that the emboss casts onto that surface.

The shadow measures the space. The forms of shadows created in image transfers begin to appear as spaces in themselves. On a closer look, one can see the line that anchors the shadow. The image transfer is always referenced in the measured sensory space.



Fig. 26. Three working spaces that have developed while working in the prin-making studio. On the right, image transfers were made. On the left is an architectural drawing board on which the measured drawings were made. In between the two is a desk which was used for embossing pieces of ply. The space photographed is from the printmaking studio at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

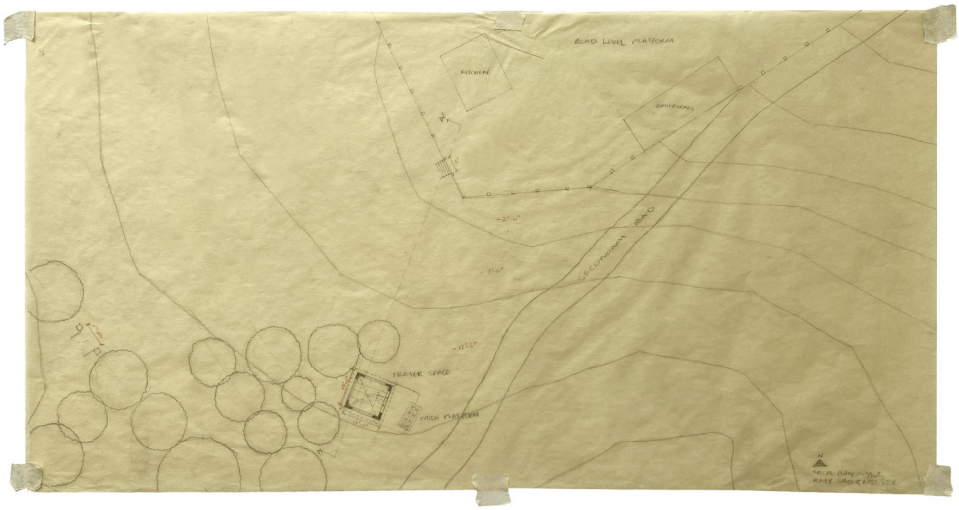


Fig. 27. An architectural plan of the rest stop and the prayer space sitting at a small descent from the platform of the rest stop.
Scale: 1/16″=1′-0″

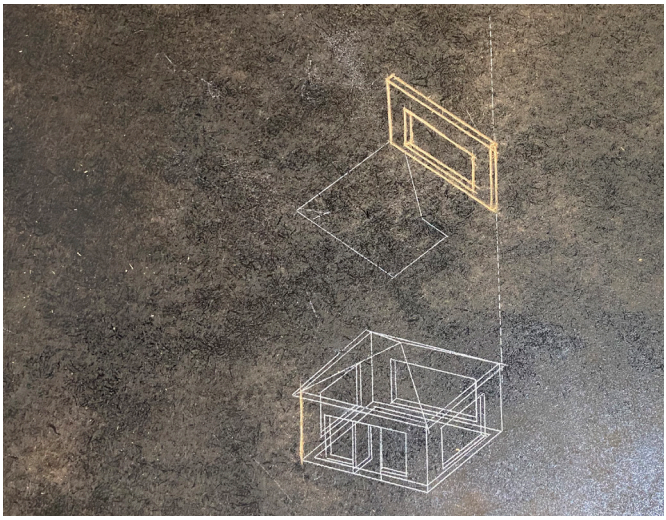


Fig. 28. Emboss of a wood ply. I have used a V-tool (woodcarving tool) supported by a scale to carve the lines in the ply

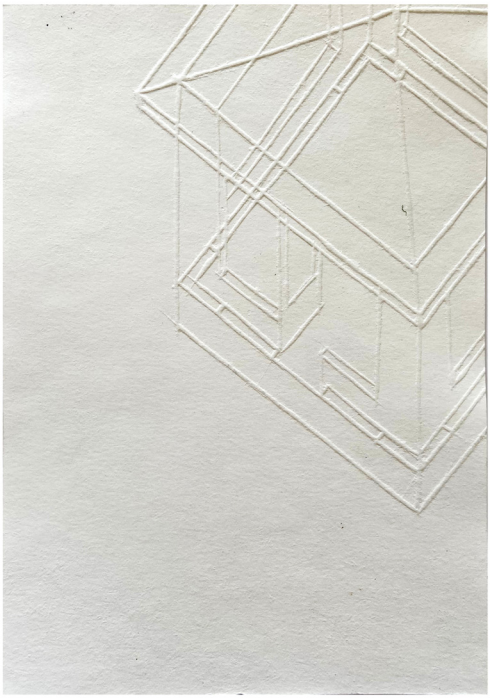


Fig. 29. Emboss of the prayer space on paper. 4 in. × 5.5 in.

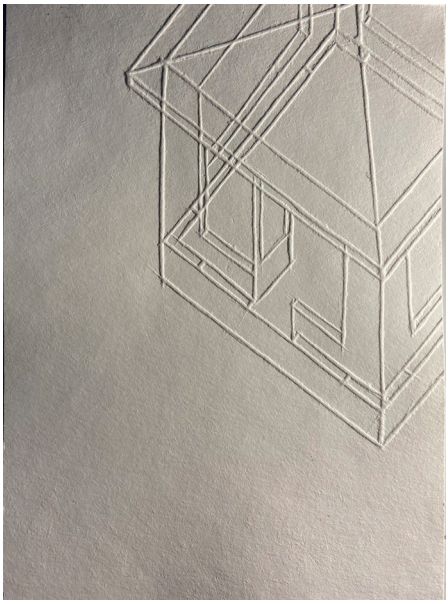


Fig. 30. Working with different light sources under which the embossed axonometric is placed.

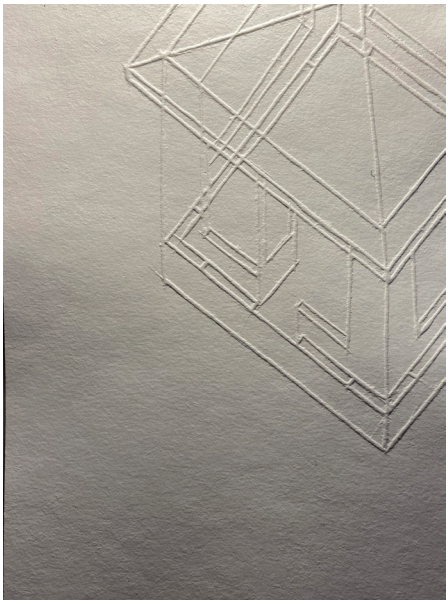


Fig. 31. Working with different light sources under which the embossed axonometric is placed.

A Window Ledge as an Opening

The [re]presentation of the *experience* of a window ledge in the landscapes of Balochistan has opened up the space of architectural representation to allow mindful practice and slowness to become a part of the visualisation of form. As spatial thinkers, we think of the materiality of the built in the light of the day which casts a shadow. In the three drawing exercises, this act of visualisation is taken a step back into the space of shadows. In the first exercise, image transfers bring photographs onto paper as shadowy renders made of graphite. This straightforward technique becomes a *starting point* for the drawing process. To have a starting point does not mean that the process is linear. As the practice takes its course, image transfers make their way back into future methods. In the second exercise, I start to render *the shape of a shadow.* This shape — rooted between the measured axonometric and intuitive ways of rendering a site — becomes a mediator between the different drawing methods. In the third exercise, image transfers become extensions of the shape of the shadow and expand a shape into a space itself. A space that comprises references from the site — the *zaahir*, the physical forms. The representation of the measured physical forms are the lines embossed onto the paper which can only be seen upon a close reading of the visual — when a light is cast onto the paper. Multiple techniques coming together on one surface, they begin to create details that are connected in an intimate relationship, where every relationship elaborates on the idea of the world as a shadow of the Divine Light.

Architectural practices focus on how a form may look, and the drawing practices revolve around the complete clarity of a physical form. Are our representational practices *enclosing* and *coercing* the thinking opportunities that a drawing process allows? This research is a '*disenclosure'* of our constant attempts

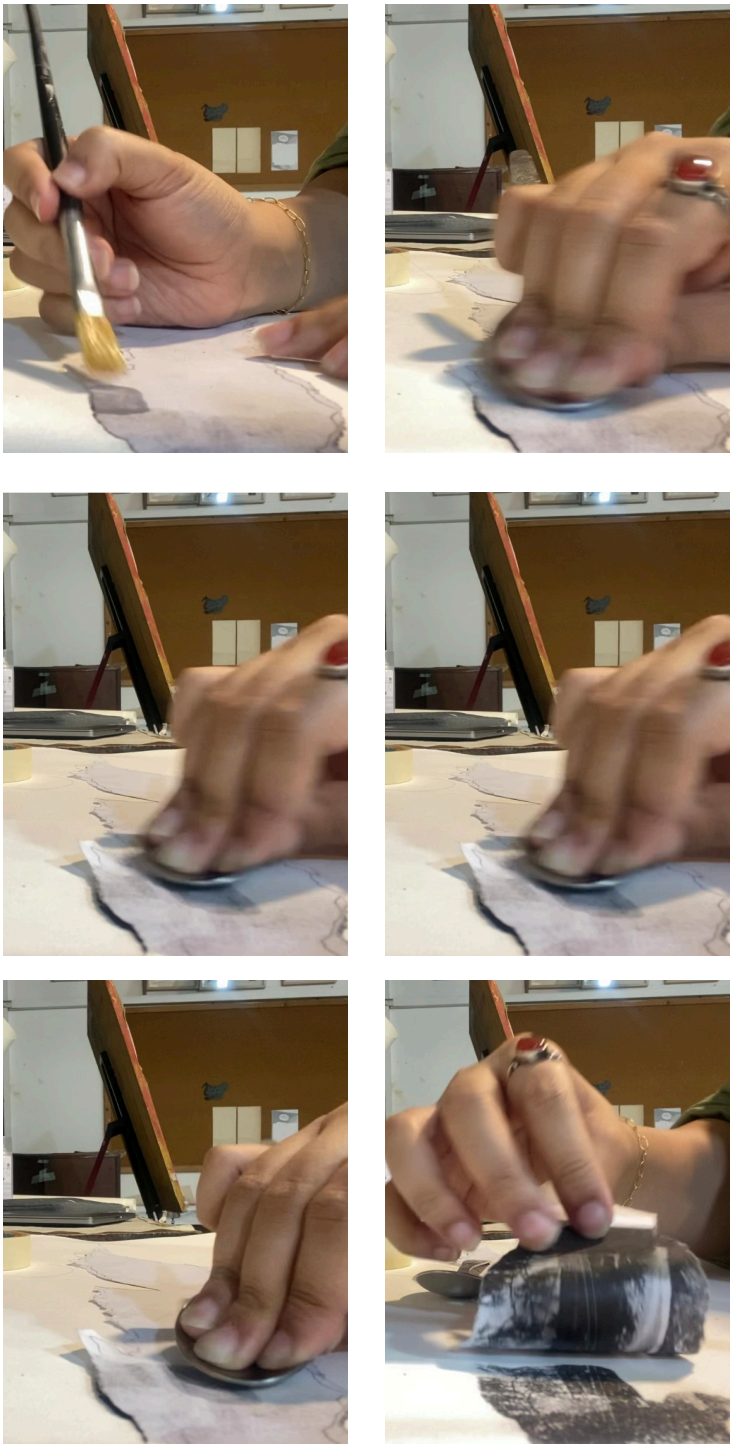


Fig. 32. The process of transferring the image: applying acetone to the back of the photocopy and burnishing the image with a spoon.

to render every physical detail into a linear result of spaces as *products* to be *seen*.

The phenomenological premise of the *zaahir* revealing the *baatin* defined here as per Henry Corbin is carried out in the aesthetic experience of the drawing process. The drawings, beginning from the images of the site, traverse the question of representing the forms through line drawings. From the rethinking of representing forms, the drawings begin to *reveal* a shadow in various ways, in the shape of the shadow, in the shadow of the emboss and the many layers of image transfers. The phenomenal *baatin* is rendered in the process and it *reverses* how we see an ordinary physical object, a window ledge. It opens up a coerced linear way of representing space by rendering the shape of a shadow as a protagonist of the drawing — which in the architectural documentation might have been drawn after the line drawings were made. This reversal is significant in that it critiques architectural representation in both practice and architectural education today. As a studio instructor, I urge my students to communicate the realities of the site in not just its concrete existence, but through the intangible aspects which may lead to a more mindful design conversation. In the drawing practice exercised here, non-existence is where meaning lies in an architectural intervention: a window ledge. To reduce architecture to its quantities, to ignore the shadows, impoverishes our conceptions of space and the ways that we make meaning from it. The world of shadows, in the phenomenon of *the whole world as the shadow of the Divine,* gives us a way to open up a space for the extraordinary meanings that even such an ordinary intervention holds.

Acknowledgements

This paper is an outcome of a year-long MPhil thesis in Art and Design at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. The articulation of thoughts, outcomes and learnings in this thesis could not have been possible without the guidance of my advisors Currim Suteria and Dr Valerie Gonzalez. They have always pushed me to pursue new ideas with a shared passion and dedication. I will always be thankful to them and to dear friends who have been an important part of my research journey.



Fig. 33. The slight contours of the rest stop in which a juniper grove is present, photographed on my way back from Ziarat. I caught a glimpse of the prayer space anchored within the contours.

Insistence

Chris Cornelius

There is an inherent insistence in architectural drawings. I learned this insistence early in my training and education as an architect. I was introduced to it in my high school drafting classes and was steeped in it during my undergraduate education in the 1990s. The insistence I speak of makes a distinct statement about how the designed object is and must be. Things like thickness, material, joints, seams, connections, layers are all communicated with things like: scale, lineweight, linetype, hatching, notational clarity, projection (orthographic, parallel, or perspective). I was drawn (pun intended) to this insistence and thrived in it. That continued beyond undergrad when I was working in an office and they knew I could put clear drawings together. But there was more.

Stan Allen[1] writes about and references Nelson Goodman's[2] concepts of the autographic and the allographic. Goodman characterises, and Allen expands upon, the 'curious mixture' of the two that is found in architectural drawings. The autographic is that which can only be made by the author and the allographic is that which can be reproduced, like a script or musical score. Insistence is embedded in the allographic form of architectural drawing because these types of drawings become a contract. I was taught in architecture school that the allographic contained a hegemony of pragmatism. Draw what can be built; you will need to know this to get a job. Insistence seemed integral to the allographic — but could it be embedded in the autographic?

As an architecture student I was enamoured with another kind of insistence: the insistence embedded in the drawings of practices like Diller + Scofidio, Neil Denari, Enric Miralles, and Morphosis. Miralles' insistence in using no variation in lineweight creates a wonderful obfuscation of hierarchy that I could only characterise as poetic ambiguity that requires the viewer to work a bit harder to decipher. They elevated what architectural

1 Stan Allen, *Practice: Architecture Technique + Representation* (Routledge, 2009).

2 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Hackett Publishing Company, 1976).

representation could be and yet, what they made was from the same genealogy of drawing that I had worked so hard to perfect. The insistence of these architects was for us to see the drawing as speaking in another way, and it was the viewer's task to learn how to listen to the way the drawings were speaking. The autographic creates the voice of the drawing and imbues it with authority. So much so that it is virtually impossible to recreate. This is one of the foundational concepts in Goodman's thoughts about the autographic. The allographic can be reproduced and speaks a quasi-universal language that can be duplicated and/or translated by others.

In my undergraduate and graduate education more than one of my classmates had walked away in a huff after seeing my drawings. I can only guess it was because of the drawn precision. I had an undergraduate professor dismiss a drawing I submitted for a summer research project that required drawing skills. He claimed it was a plot from a CAD drawing — Nope! I am just that precise about my drawings. When I went to the University of Virginia (UVA) for graduate school I was still working in a manner that could only be characterised as drafting. One of my UVA professors noted, 'Chris, you need to be more messy.' I started to watercolour my drawings, but that was still 'between the lines'.

Upon graduating I received the Artist in Residence Fellowship from the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (NMAI). I had proposed to do an architectural translation of the Oneida Creation Story (Fig. 1). The work, *Cosmological Documents* (2004), a play on Construction Documents, mixed the drafting insistence I was comfortable in, and the exploration of, 'How am I going to draw the beginning of the universe?' My sketchbook became my trusted companion; I could tell (draw) my un-comfortabilities to and ask (draw) profound queries like, 'How thick is the Sky World?' I trusted it so much I stopped erasing and simply drew over, beside, or near. To me, my sketchbook was now an integral interlocutor.

I had started the smaller sketchbook format a year earlier in Rome and started my NMAI experience right after returning from Rome a second time. The edges of Roman ruins are less insistent and require an eye-hand that doesn't follow the drafted edge. The insistence of the subject required me to draw differently and really see the imperfect edges and translate them in a new way. In many ways the precise drafted edge presents a world of unattainable perfection.

After many drawing and rendering projects, I started *Radio Free Alcatraz* in 2013 as a research endeavour to explore the complexities of colonisation on Indigenous people in the US and perhaps discover the possibilities of what could be (Fig. 2). I decided to start with the medium I knew: Mylar drafting film, graphite, dry-transfer lettering, Letratone, and Pantone film. I have a cache of all these items like a doomsday prepper might hoard food for an uncertain future.

I purloined the insistence of architectural lineweight, linetype, form, shape, and notation, and leveraged them as decolonial apparatus — there is nothing more insistent than colonisation! Colonisation erases the existence of the Native along with their lifeways and epistemologies and supplants it with those of the settler as if nothing had existed before.[3] The insistence that there is only one way to read a drawing infers that all drawings speak in the same way — they don't.

The allographic language insists that only one thing can be true, like a colonial mindset. An autographic language believes multiple things can be true, like Indigenous epistemologies. As a designer, I don't need to wait to know what it is before I start drawing it (as I did during my time as a student). I can begin drawing in a proto-language and allow the design to be birthed from the graphic utterances — thus creating a new syntactic system that makes the familiar unfamiliar and decolonises the line. The drawing surface becomes the place where true/false and

3 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society,* 1.1 (2012), pp. 1–40.

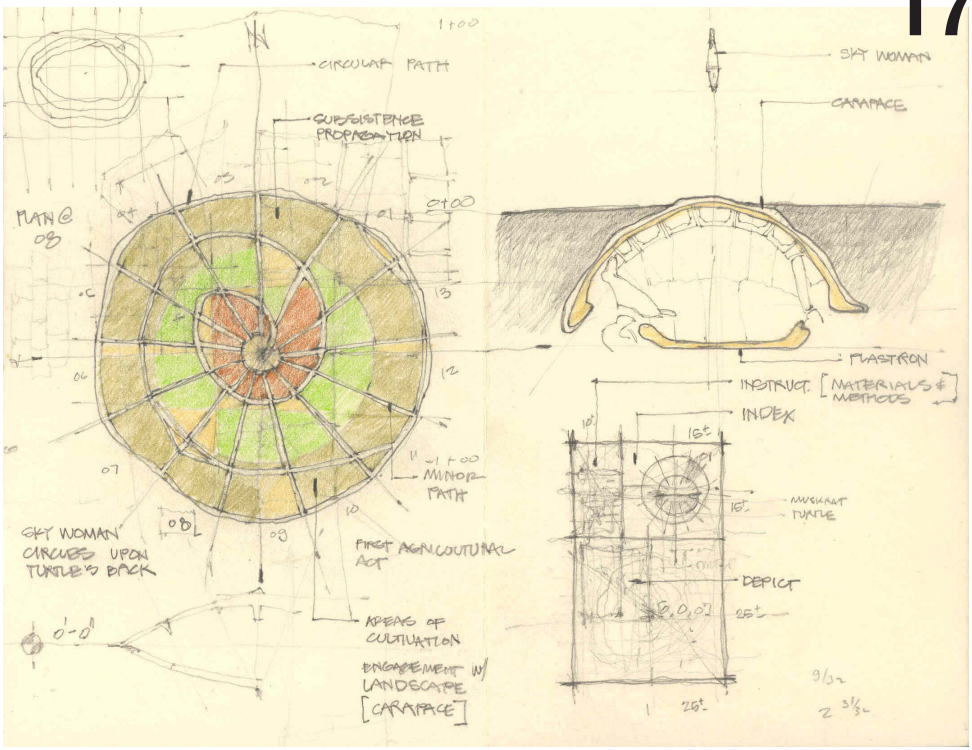


Fig. 1. Chris Cornelius, *NMAI Sketchbook*, 2003.

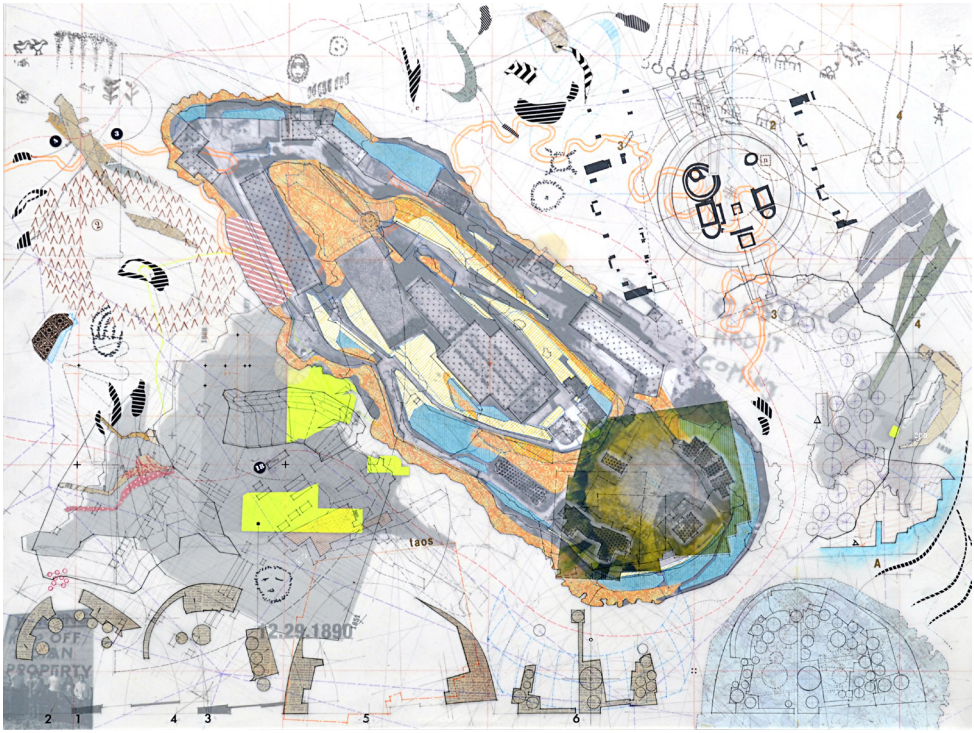


Fig. 2. Chris Cornelius, *Radio Free Alcatraz: Territories*, 2013.

fiction/non-fiction may coexist. The rejection of erasure forces the literal and figurative coexistence in the syntactic system, much like the Indigenous oral tradition where stories are not only entertaining but are also purveyors of culture, values, and epistemological systems.

The *Radio Free Alcatraz* drawings visually demonstrate how I am thinking about the 'project' of designing something on the site of Indigenous occupation while wrestling with the complex history of settler colonialism. Each thematic drawing posits my own thoughts of, 'I don't know how to deal with all of that, but let me draw the shit out of this drawing!'

I believe you can think your way into a million (design) problems, and you can draw your way out of any (design) problem. Waiting for the idea to arise before drawing will not move the work forward. You can begin drawing (anything) and ideas will come forth. Just like critiquing the apparatus of colonisation from the outside will not make it change — taking on the apparatus by dismantling and reassembling it will effect change.

The real insistence lies in trusting yourself to draw something that has never been, and you may have never known. This is something I try to impart upon my students (Fig. 3). I teach them a methodology of drawing, like *Radio Free Alcatraz*, that requires a blind trust in believing that drawing is an active partner in ideation. That process includes developing a shape language, procedural glyphs, glyphic offspring, notational riffs, and shape inhabitants. While the process, on the surface, seems procedural, it requires building the author's (student's) subjective facility to create autographic success. This way of drawing is not intended to follow the same choreography as drawing first and building second but allows students to trust their pre-drawing minds and to render graphic utterances visible. The syntactic system makes the designed object better because the design is informed by more than the contingencies of site, program, structure, enclosure, etc.

A group of my students at Columbia GSAPP in Spring 2024 were concerned that their drawings were not 'architectural' enough (Fig. 4). I understood the subtext of the concern as, 'We are about to graduate architecture school, shouldn't we make architectural drawings?' I let them know that they are, and more. That was the very moment I formulated this thought about the unrelenting insistence that can be embedded in architectural drawings. The insistence was almost willing the architectural drawings into existence. The drawings they made were embedded with texture, sense, and material characteristics, and to me that was architectural. They were drawings that implied line with a carefully calibrated set of marks. They were hand-drawn axonometrics with poetic verbal thoughts. They were indexical prints of the physical model, conflating the work-subject. The exquisite drawn works of these three students were a visual translation of Indigenous culture as only they could understand as being respectfully outside.

My insistence now, as a maker and teacher of drawings, is to present both the allographic and autographic knowing that drawing is ultimately the way we see the world around us as designers. And that we need to learn how a drawing speaks to understand what it may be trying to tell us. I suggest that drawings like *Radio Free Alcatraz* have plastic truth that depends on context and may rely on the viewer's place in life. Perhaps I inherently understand this from being Indigenous and knowing that stories may have been entertaining when I heard them as a child, but when I hear them again and again as I mature, they contain new salient lessons. I have had the pleasure of learning new things from these drawings every time I publicly talk about them. They insist I keep listening to them.

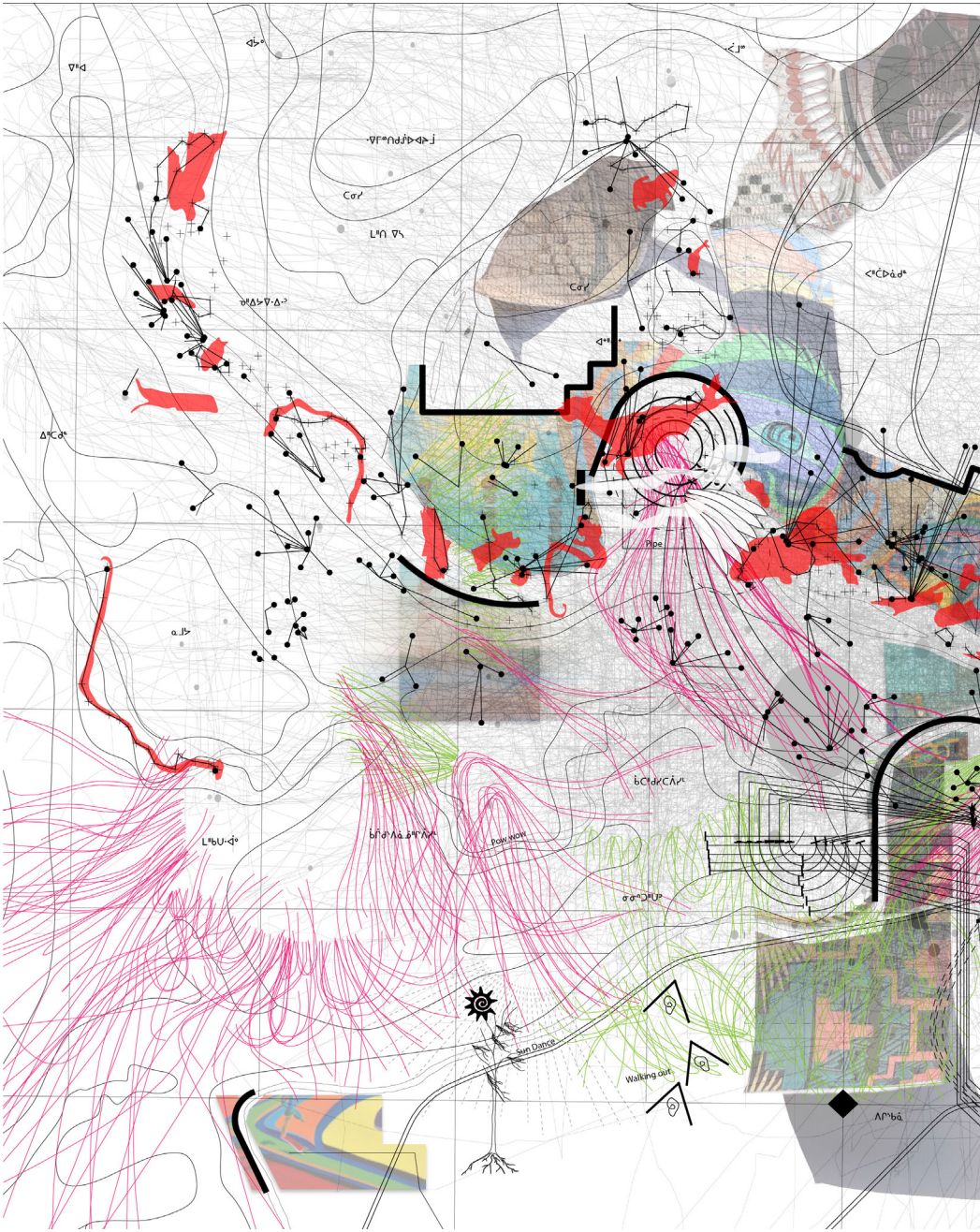


Fig. 3. Yale student Ruike Liu's mapping research of the Opaskwyak Cree Nation in Manitoba, 2021.



when you're not indigenous
Water is responsible
for most of
alteration and transportation work
chemical reactions paint
the soil colors.
Wind-blown dust,
solids dissolved
or suspended in
raindrops slowly
Beneath these old are soils that
developed thick, red- clayey
passage of time, soil horizons
argillic horizons
depends on soil age,
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sits and
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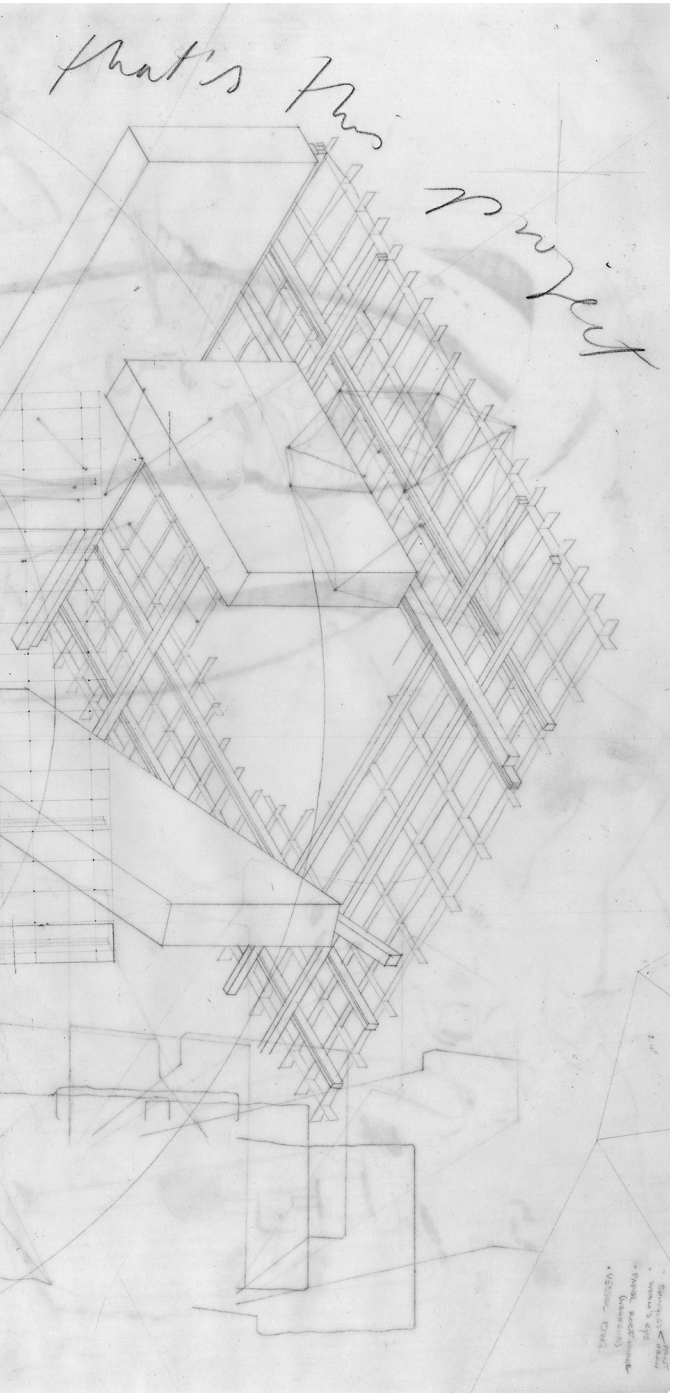


Fig. 4. GSAPP students Zackary Bryson, Anoushka Mariwala, and Juliana Yang, *when you're not Indigenous that is this project*, 2024.

Fixing Lines on a Drifting Coast: Architectural Crystals of Destin, Florida

Stephanie Tang

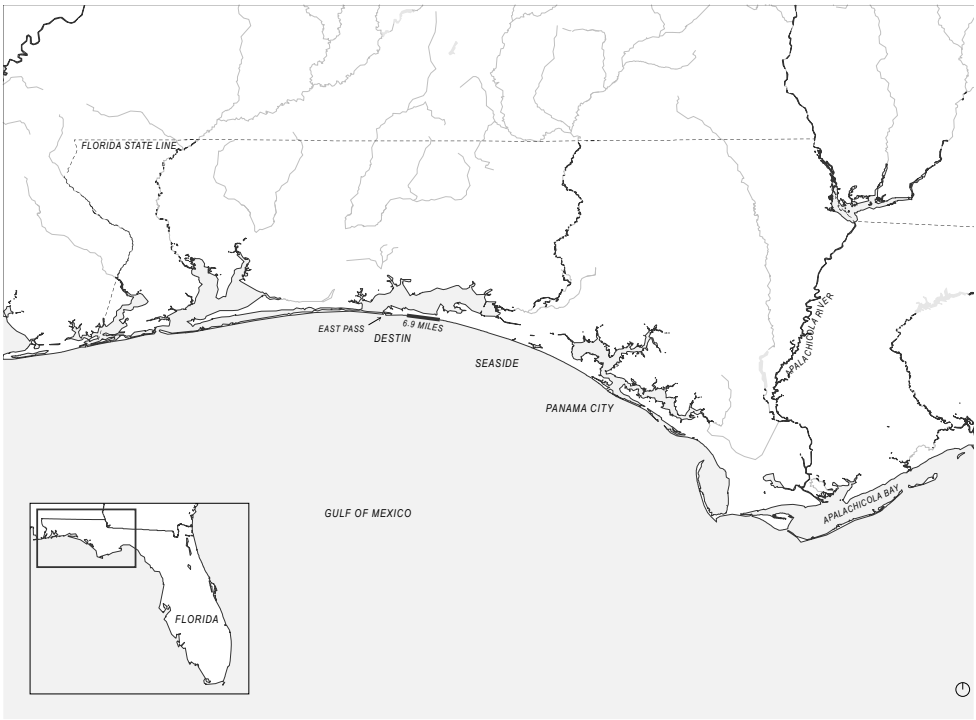


Fig. 1. Map of Florida panhandle. Location of Destin, Apalachicola River, East Pass, and the 6.9-mile stretch in question of *Stop the Beach* legal case. Drawing by author. 2024.

The quartz crystal sands of Destin beaches, considered some of the finest in the world, lie uniquely at the forefront of a story about geology, property law, and architecture. Formed over thousands of years in the Appalachian Mountains, the crystals drifted down the Apalachicola River to the Gulf of Mexico, washing deposits in the form of bright white powdered beaches along the Florida panhandle (Fig. 1). When New England fisherman Leonard Destin ventured into the Gulf waters of Florida Territory prior to statehood in the 1830s and came upon the stunning white beaches (Fig. 2) and its adjacent rich fishing opportunities, he returned to stake his claim by building a New England colonial home, foreshadowing a future of extensive beach property development.[1] Today the iconic crystalline white sands attract tourists and well-to-do second-homebuyers, and even give name to several of its architectural neighbours, from Crystal Villas to Crystal Sands Condominiums to Crystal Palace. These structures stand as a wall of fixed enclosures lining nearly the entire stretch of Destin and Walton County coastline.

Crystals, on the other hand, are a metaphor introduced by law professor Carol Rose in her essay 'Crystals and Mud in Property Law' used to describe 'hard-edged doctrines' of property — fixed entitlements, hard-drawn lines, contracts, and agreements — intended for straightforward interpretation and delineation of ownership.[2] Rose recounts how these 'crystals' often turn to 'mud' when brought into question in judicial courts, where disputes introduce 'exceptions and equitable second-guessing' and judgments of 'maybe or maybe not'.[3]

The US Supreme Court case *Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (2010),* central to this essay, is an especially applicable

1 Andrew Rice, 'A Stake in the Sand', *New York Times*, 19 March 2010, section Real Estate <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/realestate/keymagazine/21KeyBeachfront-t.html> [accessed 1 May 2024].

2 Carol M. Rose, 'Crystals and Mud in Property Law', *Stanford Law Review*, 40.3 (1988), pp. 577–610, doi:10.2307/1228813.

3 Ibid., pp. 578–80.

case of Rose's crystal-mud theory in more ways than one. In 2003, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection proposed a beach renourishment project to add 75 feet of public beachfront to a 6.9-mile stretch of hurricane-eroded beach. Six property owners formed Stop the Beach Renourishment (STBR) and filed suit against the Department in 2006 for the unconstitutional taking of their littoral (beachfront) rights. The case eventually made its way to the US Supreme Court in 2010, where the court ruled in favour of the state.

In the *Stop the Beach* case, attempts to assign fixity to dynamic environments through measured lines and legal definitions uncover the mud of property law and shed light on settler agendas that the very idea of property upholds. The crystal quartz sands of Destin turn out to behave like mud — they shift, drift, and erode in the frequented path of hurricanes. So, too, do the property laws which try to delineate claims of ownership. These notions of fixing property take root in the centuries-old origins of property theory. John Locke (1632–1704, United Kingdom), famously argued for man's need to appropriate the 'fruits' of the world, which, though naturally provided in common by God, are unfathomable for any use or benefit to man unless claimed as his own.[4] As Rose describes, '[Locke] pointed out that life depends on property in a very primitive sense; if one cannot literally *appropriate* those berries and fruits, one will simply die'.[5] Property's clarity continues to rely on perfect conditions of unmoving land in Destin today, where a line drawn on paper needs to match that of a line drawn on sand, to cleanly delineate claims of ownership to one side and another. But no such land is entirely static, at least on a geological timescale, and lines drawn on paper are not existent in real space — that is, without

4 See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

5 Carol Rose, 'Property as Storytelling: Perspectives from Game Theory, Narrative Theory, Feminist Theory', in *Property and Persuasion: Essays on the History, Theory, and Rhetoric of Ownership* (Westview Press, 1994), pp. 25–46.

architecture. Architecture gives solidity, materiality, and form to property, emerging as the firmest crystal in the story.

When the distance between architecture and thresholds in the land can be readily felt and perceived, property is at stake. At Destin's beaches, property is faced with conditions that threaten to undo its claims — fast-paced erosion by repeated hurricanes and tidal patterns make land unpredictable and detrimental to ideas of land ownership and the economies built upon them. This essay unpacks the *Stop the Beach* case, aiming to make the cracks of property law legible — how concepts of property are enclosed by architecture which overlooks the inherent changing patterns of land, climate, natural systems, and are complicit with property's inherent ideas of exclusion. Questions are raised about architects' operations under the assumption of property law — an act which is by no means neutral. Anthropologist and professor Anna Tsing has stated that 'property dictates land transformations', and 'property makes land safe for colonial modernity'.[6] Architecture as a form of enclosure therefore, too, is complicit in ensuring settler safety by controlling form and informing land-making.

I proceed with a contextual overview of the *Stop the Beach* legal case. Technical terms directly reference definitions from the court opinions throughout, serving to demonstrate how the case deployed language as a tool for making crystalline order of non-property-behaving land characteristics. The piece concludes with a discussion on architecture and property's role in land transformations and how architecture might refuse Lockean notions of fixed property. Could architects instead embrace drifting enclosures, or find reference in environmental cues, thresholds, and patterns of events?

6 Anna L. Tsing, 'Making Property at the Edge of the Anthropocene' (unpublished keynote lecture, Harvard–Yale Southeast Asian Studies Graduate Conference, 29 March 2024).



Fig. 2. Fun in the waves at Gulf Beach - Destin, Florida, July 1981. Mary Lou Norwood. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/12632> [accessed 18 August 2024].

On 17 June 2010, the US Supreme Court announced its opinion for the case *Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection*, an opinion which would decide the fate of the form of the land as well as its adjacent architecture — specifically, along a 6.9 mile stretch of beach in Destin and Walton County, Florida. The events leading up to the case trace back to early development on the shoreline in the 1960s, which saw significant increases in condominium, home, and resort town construction.

While tidal fluctuation sometimes gifted settlers with prospective new territories of dry sand such as Holiday Isle,[7] coastal conditions at Destin more often posed a threat to prospects of safe enclosure. Hurricane Opal severely eroded Destin's quartz crystal beaches when it made landfall in 1995 (Fig. 3). The Category 3 storm 'wiped out 20-foot dunes and cut into the beach like a knife, changing its former tidal patterns'.[8] Hurricane Georges followed in 1998, Tropical Storm Isidore in 2002, and Hurricane Ivan in 2004 (Fig. 4).

Each successive storm made the crystalline coast more muddied, eroding public beach area while tourism and investments were on the rise. Eventually, the erosion was considered so severe that Florida Department of Environmental Protection declared this 6.9 mile stretch of Destin and Walton County 'critically eroded shorelines'.

> critically eroded shoreline: 'The Florida Administrative Code defines "critically eroded shoreline" as a segment of

7 In the early 1980s, tidal conditions led to the emergence of a new spit of sand today known as Holiday Isle. Condominium developers and home buyers rushed in to build along this 60+ acre stretch. Today, structures such as the Jetty East Condominiums, must conduct regular boundary maintenance and deploy sea barriers for protection. See Rice, 'A Stake in the Sand'.

8 Ibid.

> shoreline where natural processes or human activities have caused, or contributed to, erosion and recession of the beach and dune system to such a degree that upland development, recreational interests, wildlife habitat or important cultural resources are threatened or lost.'
>
> — *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, 1108 (Fla. 2008)

This was more than just a verbal determination by the Department; the declaration of 'critically eroded shoreline' permitted the commencement of a series of actions to restore the beach, with the State funding up to 75 percent of the costs for renourishment.[9] The power to make such declarations was granted to the Department through the Beach and Shore Preservation Act; at the time of its enactment in 1961, the Legislature had foreseen the threat of erosion to its beaches, ever important to its economies which attract herds of tourists, spring breakers, and property buyers every year. To safeguard the beaches, the Legislature raised the Act, declaring it 'a necessary governmental responsibility to properly manage and protect Florida beaches from erosion' and to provide funding for beach nourishment projects.[10] Coastal erosion posed 'a serious menace to the economy and general welfare of the people of [Florida]'.[11] It is perhaps this act which gave developers confidence rather than deterrence to continue building at the tails of Hurricane Opal's tracks. Rather than post-hurricane retreat, the government's robust storm reconstruction efforts supported a sharp increase in building construction — 1,067 Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) building permits were submitted in 1996 after Hurricane Opal, whereas less than 200 were submitted the year prior.[12]

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9 *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, 1108, (Fla. 2008).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Division of Water Resource Management Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *2004 Hurricane Re-*

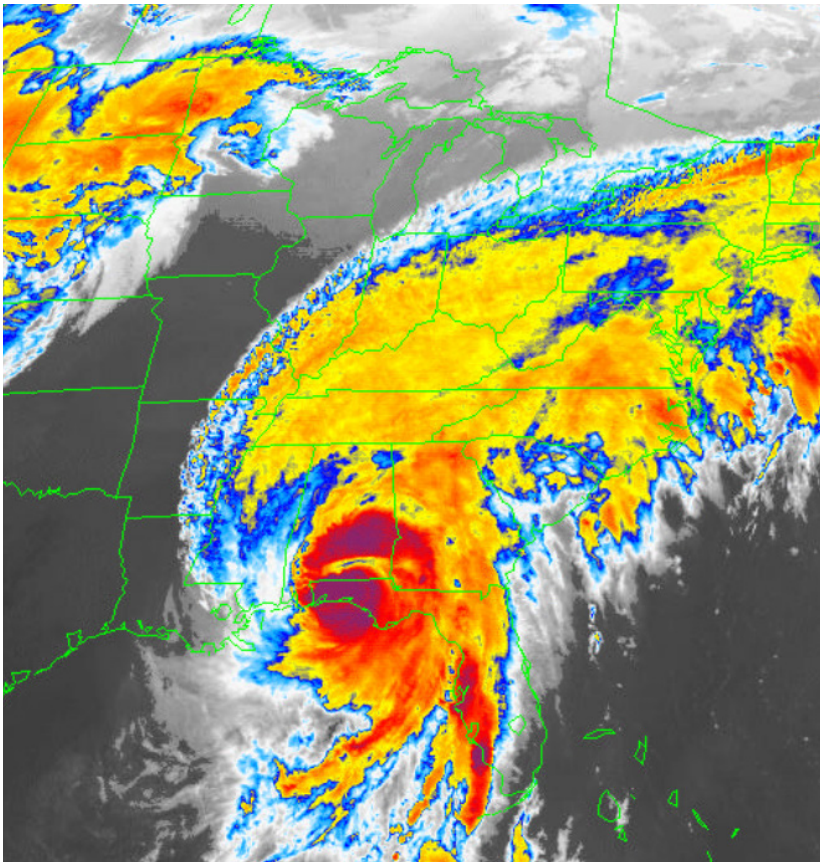


Fig. 3. Radar image of Hurricane Opal, 1995. National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 'Hurricane Opal', 4 October 1995, < https://www.weather.gov/mob/opal> [accessed 10 June 2024]

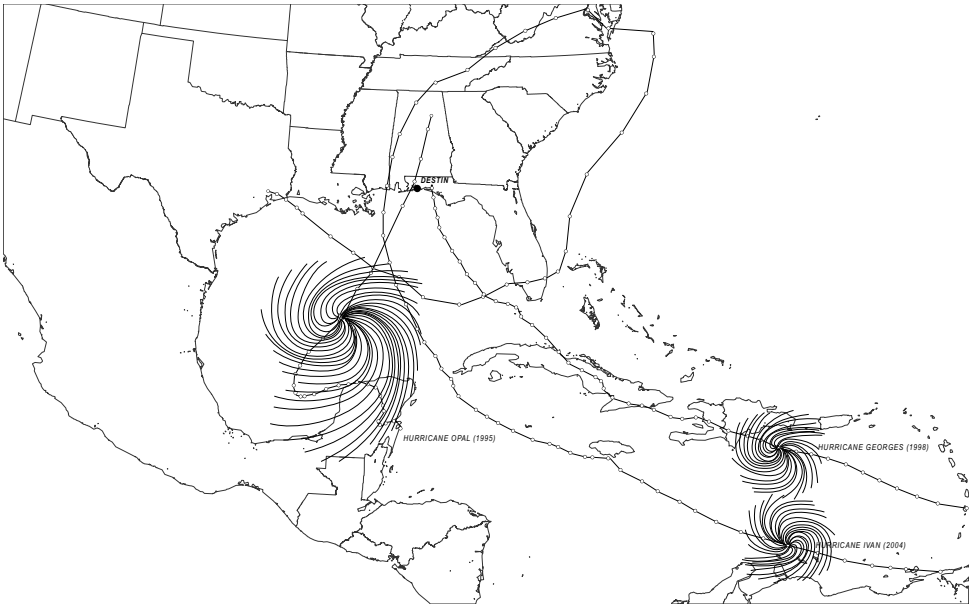


Fig. 4. Map of hurricanes affecting Destin, Florida since Hurricane Opal in 1995, 2024. Hurricane path data adapted from National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Drawing by author.

Today, the Destin shoreline is almost entirely lined with private properties — two-to-three storey New England-like homes raised on pier-and-beam foundations, mega condominium complexes, and luxury beach resorts — with a few public beach access points that break this architectural line. Typically, the boundary between this private upland property and submerged state-owned public land is determined by the mean high water line (MHWL). In a proclaimed effort to restore the eroded Destin beaches, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection issued a Notice of Intent to issue a permit for beach renourishment on 15 July 2004. The proposal would add 75 feet of sand to a 6.9-mile stretch of shore destined to become public beachfront. As common protocol for permit preparation per the Beach and Shore Preservation Act, the Department proceeded to conduct surveys to establish an erosion control line (ECL) — a fixed line which would override the MHWL from this point forward. The proceedings of the Beach and Shore Preservation Act made the shoreline artificially mobile — a line which could be newly determined at the Department's discretion. Meanwhile, the adjacent homes were anything but mobile; instead, the structures stood as rigid enclosures of architectural crystals in the sand, reinforcing their property lines whose locations suddenly fell out of favour.

> mean high water line (MHWL): the ordinary boundary between private beachfront, or littoral property, and state-owned land. The MHWL is a calculated average water line over a nineteen-year period known as a tidal epoch, the approximate number of years it takes for tidal behaviour to cycle.[13]

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covery Plan for Florida's Beach and Dune System, 30 November 2004.

13 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Ocean Service (NOS) as well as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Survey and Mapping maintain a network of tide stations to conduct regular tidal measurements used to calculate the MHWL. See Donna R. Christie, 'Of Beaches, Boundaries and Sobs', *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*,

erosion control line (ECL): a located water line determined by the Board of Directors for the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, per section 161.161(3) of the Beach and Shore Preservation Act.

'In locating the ECL, the Board is "guided by the existing line of mean high water, bearing in mind the requirements of proper engineering in the beach restoration project, the extent to which erosion or avulsion has occurred, and the need to protect existing ownership of as much upland as is reasonably possible." §161.161(5).' The located ECL then 'replace[s] the fluctuating mean high-water line as the boundary between littoral and state property.'

— *Stop the Beach Renourishment Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection,* 560 U.S. 702, 702, 710 (2010).

— *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, 1108 (Fla. 2008).

Outraged by the prospect of 75-foot depth of public beachfront separating their homes from the water line, hundreds of homeowners banded together in opposition. These included Linda Cherry, who led efforts to form Save Our Beaches, Inc. (SOB) with over a hundred other residents, and Slade Lindsey, one of six property owners who formed the not-for-profit Stop the Beach Renourishment (STBR). SOB filed suit against the Department in 2006 to contest the newly recorded ECL as unconstitutional taking of their littoral rights in *Save Our Beaches, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (2006)*, citing that the Department would violate their rights to *accretion* and contact with the water.[14]

25.1 (2009), p. 33.

14 While Save Our Beaches, Inc. (SOB) successfully challenged the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the lower First District court of Florida in 2006, the association was later dismissed from inclusion in further cases of higher courts, as not all members could be proven owners of littoral property that would be affected directly by the beach renourishment project in question. Hence, only Stop the Beach Renourishment (STBR) moved forward to the Supreme

littoral: 'the term "littoral owner" applies to waterfront owners abutting an ocean, sea, or lake.'

— *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment,* 998 So. 2d 1102, 1113 (Fla. 2008).

littoral rights: 'Littoral owners have, *inter alia* [among other things], rights to have access to the water, to use the water for certain purposes, to have an unobstructed view of the water, and to receive accretions and relictions (collectively, accretions) to the littoral property.' (See *accretions* below.)

— *Stop the Beach Renourishment Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection,* 560 U.S. 702, 702 (2010).

The First District ruled in SOB's favour, agreeing that the Beach and Shore Preservation Act's institution of an erosion control line that could override homeowners' rights to accretion was a violation of their littoral rights. But Walton County successfully contested this ruling with the Supreme Court of Florida in *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. (2008)*, quashing the First District's ruling by a 4–2 majority amongst the sitting justices. The majority contended that the lower court failed to consider rules of avulsion as opposed to accretion. Unlike accretion, avulsion is defined as sudden drastic changes to the land. In cases of avulsion, the boundary between private and public lands remains unchanged and the mean high water line (MHWL) is upheld.[15] The justices considered the beach renourishment project a case of avulsion, albeit an artificial one, and therefore not an infringement on the homeowners' littoral rights.

Courts. See *Save Our Beaches, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection*, 27 So. 3d 48 (2006).

15 *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, at 1108 (Fla. 2008).

> accretion: 'the gradual and imperceptible accumulation of land along the shore or bank of a body of water. … "Gradual and imperceptible" means that, although witnesses may periodically perceive changes in the waterfront, they could not observe them occurring.'
>
> avulsion: 'the sudden or perceptible loss of or addition to land by the action of the water or a sudden change in the bed of a lake or the course of a stream.'
>
> — *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment,* 998 So. 2d 1102, 1113 (Fla. 2008).

In blistering dissent, Justice Lewis, one of the six Florida Supreme Court justices on the case, argued that the majority opinion dismissed the inherent definitions of littoral rights — maintaining contact with the water. To make his point, Justice Lewis cited four definitions: contiguous, abut, border, and adjoining — terms that bridge both the disciplines of law and architecture. To Justice Lewis, these definitions were the facets of crystal rules of littoral property rights. But to the majority, the Beach and Shore Preservation Act 'eliminate[d] the rights to maintain direct contact with the water'.[16]

> contiguous, *adj.*: 1. Touching at a point or along a boundary.
>
> Black's Law Dictionary 338 (8th ed. 2004)
>
> abut, *vb.*: 1. To join at a border or boundary; to share a common boundary with.
>
> Black's Law Dictionary 11 (8th ed. 2004)
>
> border, *vb.*: 2. [T]o touch at the edge or boundary.
>
> Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 133 (10th ed. 1993)

16 *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, at 1108 (Fla. 2008).

> adjoining, *adj.*: Touching; sharing a common boundary.
>
> Black's Law Dictionary 44 (8th ed. 2004)
>
> — Dissenting opinion by Justice Lewis, *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment,* 998 So. 2d 1102, 1122 (Fla. 2008)

The case was denied a rehearing at the state level, and instead was pushed all the way to the national stage of the US Supreme Court in *Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (2010).* STBR claimed that the Florida Supreme Court instigated an unconstitutional taking, citing the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause which states 'nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation'. But the Florida Supreme Court's decision was unanimously upheld by the federal court.

With the dispute settled, the proposal was back on track for sand to be extracted from an ebb shoal (an accumulation of sand which result from currents at the mouth of tidal inlets, commonly used for beach renourishment for their sand's 'accessibility and compatibility with native beach material'[17]) west of the site south of East Pass (Fig. 5). The tactics would deploy dredges (large powerful sand excavators) to mine the ebb shoal of sand and deliver it to the 6.9-mile site at a rate of about 300–500 feet/day (Fig. 6).[18] The dredges themselves pose an almost militaristic visual, fitting for the Legislature's warfare-like language of declared responsibility to protect Floridians from the 'menace' of eroded beaches, and the fact that these dredges appear in several issues of *Military Engineer* journal.[19] The renourishment project

17 Mary A. Cialone and Donald K. Stauble, 'Historical Findings on Ebb Shoal Mining', *Journal of Coastal Research*, 14.2 (1998), pp. 537–63.

18 *Walton County v. Stop the Beach Renourishment*, 998 So. 2d 1102, at 1106 (Fla. 2008).

19 J. R. Peyton, 'A Unique Type of Dredge Cutter-Head', *Military Engineer*, 16.88 (1924), p. 295.

proceeded, and a vast stretch of public beach sand was transferred to the 6.9-mile site, distancing homeowners' private property and their architectural enclosures from the shoreline.



Fig. 5. (a) Historical satellite image of Destin with location of East Pass, 2003. Maps Data: Google, ©2024 Maxar Technologies.



Fig. 5. (b) Aerial view of East Pass at Destin with ebb shoals visible where water is lighter in colour, twentieth century. Grey's Photographic Service. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/268813> [accessed 18 August 2024].

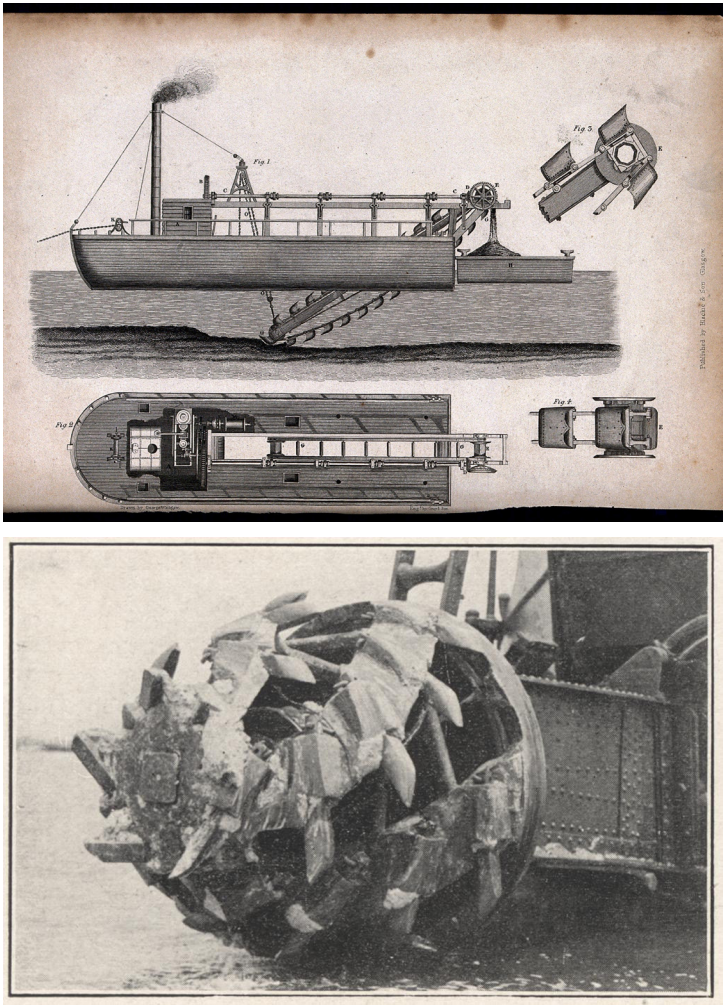


Fig. 6. From top: (a) Civil engineering elevation and plan drawings of a common ‘dredging machine’. Whitelaw, George, and O. W. Gray & Son. *Civil Engineering: A Steam-Powered Dredger in Side Elevation and Plan, with Details of the Scoop. Engraving by Gray & Son after G. Whitelaw.* Engraving. Wellcome Collection, <https://jstor.org/stable/community.24856241> [accessed 18 August 2024]. (b) Photograph of a steel cutter head dredge. J. R. Peyton, ‘A Unique Type of Dredge Cutter-Head’, *Military Engineer*, 16.88 (1924), pp. 295–295, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44693658> [accessed 18 August 2024].







Fig. 7. Condominiums and residences in Destin, Florida. Photographs by Patrick Wilson, 2024, 2022.

Property, and subsequently architecture, are proven to be catalysts for land transformations in the *Stop the Beach* case. The case's concerns are *citing* not *siting* — the court opinions detail citation after citation of legislative acts and dictionary definitions at length, but forgo bigger picture questions about the 6.9-mile site itself such as, 'Is the act of renourishment simply a means of protecting our belief in notions of property and encouraging life in property-made enclosures?' Disputes over land ownership generate consequences for the environment well beyond the bounds of property lines — in this case, they encourage pushing the limits of tourism-related construction and the practice of ebb shoal sand mining. Ebb shoal mining has been a widespread practice for beach renourishment programs across the US for over a century, as the sand accumulation at water inlets is often seen as excess — a perfect opportunity to redistribute sand of similar quality and character to its adjacent beaches. The *Journal of Coastal Research* reported that since the 1920s, the US has moved over half a billion cubic metres of sand through ebb shoal mining[20] despite its potential unsettling of local ecosystems. Ebb shoal mining may place water inlet systems out of equilibrium,[21] and erosion has shown to occur faster at restored beaches.[22]

Stop the Beach allowed Florida to continue its beach renourishment endeavours throughout its 1,350-mile-long coast, the longest coastline of any state in the US And with the court's heavy reliance on common law principles to support the opinion, the decision also paved the way for approval of similar renourishment projects in other states. Only three months after the *Stop the Beach* court decision, a similar takings challenge was brought forward to the New Jersey Supreme Court, and the

20 T.J. Campbell and L. Benedet, 'Beach Nourishment Magnitudes and Trends in the U.S.', *Journal of Coastal Research*, 2006, pp. 57–64.

21 Cialone and Stauble, p. 537.

22 Rice, 'A Stake in the Sand'.



Fig. 8. Architectural crystals of Destin near Scenic Highway 98. Drawing by author.

justices used the *Stop the Beach* case as precedent to push forward with their own local beach renourishment project.[23]

While property law is at the centre of the case, architecture is directly at its side. Elisa Iturbe writes of architecture as *carbon form,* describing how architecture gives form to our energy systems — from fast food chains to natural gas pipelines to 'petro-culture tailgating'.[24] Since architecture gives solidity to property boundaries which are intangible otherwise, Iturbe's principle can be applied to architecture and property. Law professor Donna Christie aptly phrases this concept of intangible boundaries to the Florida case, describing the 'confound[ment] at the complexity of the dynamic boundary between land and water', and the unease 'that "property" could be defined in terms of limits that are not only "hypothetical," but also virtually "unknowable" at any given moment'.[25] But if the common practice of architecture reflects and reinforces the hard-drawn lines of property, and property is instead 'unknowable', are dynamic geological processes begging for an architecture of disenclosure?

Architects might find comfort in thinking their practice is neutral, for they are not the ones physically dredging the sand. But every time a house is built along the shoreline in Destin, the line of private properties is reinforced, and the stakes grow higher. More homeowners and municipal agencies are incentivised to protect their properties and economies that depend on the permanence of land that wants to shift. Homebuyers want returns on their investments and the promise of crystal rights to land, even if that land is near a moving shoreline. Systems of property and their architecture ensure permanence, give a sense of security, and give shape to the American Dream of ownership and

23 Ian Fein, 'Why Judicial Takings Are Unripe', *Ecology Law Quarterly*, 38.3 (2011), pp. 749–95.

24 Elisa Iturbe, 'Architecture And the Death of Carbon Modernity', *Log*, 47 (2019), pp. 10–23.

25 Christie, pp. 20–21.

'settling down'. But architecture cannot be separated from the subsequent land transformations it induces.

Architecture solidifies property by taking direct reference from it. Hard-drawn lines of a construction document set represent thresholds of enclosure — walls, doors, windows, decks, and driveways — and are often informed by the extents set forth by property lines, building setback requirements, and rules of building code. By taking form in reference to property, architecture shows its complicity with these established systems of land ownership. As architects, we draw, make, and build according to conventions, but seldom do we ever try to unpack how those conventions came to be and what the stakes are of using them, and what worldviews they represent. It matters what our references are, as architecture gives solidity and form to its references. Architecture's physical walls and elements have implications for access and land transformations that follow.

If Lockean notions of fixed property were questioned — even refused — could architecture find new reference? What would it mean for architecture to instead take reference from the land itself and its (sometimes unpredictable) behaviours? Iturbe also writes of the potential and urgency for architecture to overcome carbon form to take an active role in combating our climate crisis:

Thus architecture that is operative in the prelude to energy transition, rather than its wake, must be catalytic of new spatial, social, and energetic organizations and not rely on energy for the derivation of its form. In other words, we must denounce carbon form for its reduction of architecture to an epiphenomenon so that the overcoming of carbon form can bring about new sites of architectural agency, a necessary precondition for addressing the climate crisis.[26]

In line with Iturbe's suggestions for architecture and energy systems with regard to architecture and energy systems, could architecture's complicity with property similarly be overcome,

26 Iturbe, p. 22.

distributing ‘new sites of architectural agency’ with regards to the climate crisis? Perhaps architecture could take on muddied form, instead of maintaining itself as a crystal to be protected. Just as Rose’s crystal rules of property dissolve into mud in practice, so too can architecture transition from rigid complicity to more responsive forms that honour natural processes over static ownership. While architecture reflects the way we live, it also has the power to inform new ways of living. Architecture needs new form that embraces disenclosure, changing extents, and an acceptance of land’s non-static behaviour of land as a fact of life. Architectural crystals have the potential to actively inform the systems of its making.

Edible Empires: Redesigning Power, Place, and Resilience in the US Food System

Justin McElderry

The US food system is plagued by the structural rigidity of centralised food distribution networks, crop monocultures, and unequal access to nutritious foods — all issues that disproportionately affect marginalised communities. These challenges are only worsened by colonial legacies that prioritise price, profit, and efficiency over sustainability. To address these problems, a fundamental rethinking of how food systems are structured and managed is essential.

This paper examines the US food system through a postcolonial lens, arguing that decolonising food infrastructure is vital for fostering a more resilient and sustainable future in the US. Utilising the concept of *disenclosure* as introduced by Jean-Luc Nancy[1] and further developed by Achille Mbembe,[2] this paper defines the term as the process of dismantling spatial and ideological constructs that maintain colonial and capitalist control over resources, including food. In this context, disenclosure requires constructing new forms of regional autonomy and fair resource distribution. The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to contribute academically to the discourse on decolonisation and (2) to advocate for practical architectural interventions that can facilitate resilient futures. By bridging theory and practice, the paper provides a framework for reimagining food infrastructure in ways that disrupt colonial power dynamics and introduce new modes of architectural practice.

This paper focuses on a singular, overarching inquiry: What role could architects play in reimagining the deeply colonial and fragile US food system? This central question is explored through the structure of four sub-questions, each contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the subject:

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1 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity* (Fordham University Press, 2008).

2 Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (Duke University Press, 2019).

a. How do theorists conceptualise decolonisation within the built environment?
b. How is the US food system colonial, and what does this imply?
c. What are the spatial dynamics of the food system, and how does it relate to colonialism?
d. What unique contributions can architects make in reimagining food systems?

The essay also provides specific architectural case studies to stretch the boundaries of the profession and create decentralised, contextually appropriate food systems. For practitioners, in particular architects and urban planners, the paper provides actionable insights into how they might contribute to the future of the US foodscape. And, for theorists, it offers a critical perspective on how built environments reflect and perpetuate power dynamics. The paper advocates shifting from top-down, centralised models towards more regionalised, resilient approaches that prioritise positive health, environmental, and economic futures.

Theoretical Perspectives on Colonisation in the Foodscape

Understanding the structural fragility of the US food system leads to an interrogation of the incentive structures driving myopic decision-making. While often expressed in the context of world conquest, colonial strategies produce results that often outlast the coloniser. These expressions of aimless dominion fundamentally alter the physical, spiritual, cultural, and systemic construction of our collective future. Building on the views of theorists Jean-Luc Nancy and Achille Mbembe, colonial ideals thrive in consolidated, prideful, short-sighted cultures, and do not welcome diversity. Therefore, these same philosophies unsurprisingly become embedded in the physical landscape over time. In

this way, food systems become more than value-stream arenas for land stewardship. Instead, physical and social landscapes become *terra firma*: where control, exclusion, and exploitation are continually reproduced.

In Nancy's philosophy of 'disenclosure', he suggests that the world should not be reduced to a single logic or order, but instead remain open to diverse possibilities. This perspective encourages moving beyond rigid, uniform systems that enforce control, advocating for resilient methods of food production and distribution. Mbembe builds on this idea by highlighting how colonial and capitalist systems create 'enclosures' that restrict autonomy and perpetuate inequalities.[3] In food systems, these enclosures manifest as centralised, large-scale agricultural practices that prioritise prices for end-consumers and undermine health, ecological, and cultural outcomes.

While the goal of optimising food systems for price and efficiency after World War II was driven by a desire to ensure food security and economic growth, this approach has had unintended consequences. In practical terms, supply-chain decisions over time led to the concentration of land and resources in the hands of a few, the marginalisation of indigenous and local food practices, and the imposition of monocultures that erode biodiversity and cultural diversity. Evidently, the focus on cost efficiency did not fully account for long-term externalities. These hidden costs are now borne by society through adverse health outcomes, supply-chain vulnerabilities, and environmental damage. What were once considered solutions to immediate postwar needs have become problems of their own, underscoring the need to rebalance the scales for the benefit of all. Thus, addressing these challenges today requires more than just a focus on equity; we also need to consider building resilience and ensuring the longevity of food systems for future generations.

By applying these decolonial critiques to the US food system, we can see the deep-rooted inequalities and power

3 Mbembe, *Necropolitics*.

imbalances that shape food production, distribution, and consumption. The centralisation of food infrastructure — from vast industrial farms to distribution networks controlled by a few multinational corporations — mirrors the colonial model of extraction and exploitation. Reimagining food systems involves more than merely redistributing land or resources; it necessitates a fundamental rethinking of the spatial and economic logics that prioritise short-sighted thinking over long-term resilience.[4]

Alternative models proposed by decolonial theorists focus on regional autonomy, economic opportunity, and ecological sustainability. For instance, the concept of food sovereignty emphasises the right of communities to control their access to food and agricultural resources. This approach challenges the hegemony of global supply chains and supports diverse, resilient food systems that align with ecological and cultural contexts.[5]

In *What We Owe the Future*, William MacAskill reminds readers of the vastness of our future and how human influence over it may be greater than expected.[6] He argues that the risk of not considering our long-term impact is far greater than the uncertainty in predicting the future. MacAskill suggests that while the far future is inherently uncertain, this uncertainty does not justify inaction. Instead, it makes it even more critical to engage in proactive, thoughtful planning. The concept of 'expected value' plays a crucial role here: by considering the potential high stakes of our actions, we recognise that the cost of neglecting long-term considerations could be catastrophic. This perspective underscores the importance of designing food systems with a long-term view — one that values sustainability and resilience over short-term efficiency — ensuring that they serve not only present needs but also the well-being of future

4 Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Harvard University Press, 2014).

5 Walter D. Mignolo. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Duke University Press, 2011); Mbembe, Necropolitics.

6 William MacAskill, *What We Owe the Future* (Basic Books, 2022).

generations.

Each of these frameworks introduced above encourages a shift towards more resilient, sustainable food systems that reflect diverse cultural practices. And, ultimately, this shift challenges architects, urban planners, and policymakers to rethink the design of the US foodscape and the broader socioeconomic systems that perpetuate inequalities.

Scoping the Problems within the US Food Infrastructure

From the materials we use and the zoning laws we enact to the building codes we enforce, the colonial underpinnings of the US food system have profound implications for the reshaping of cities, borders, and landscapes. For generations, food infrastructure has played a pivotal role in shaping human settlements, evolving from agrarian societies where proximity to farmland was critical, to contemporary knowledge economies where convenience and efficiency often take precedence. Fundamentally, the design of our built environment is tied to the accessibility of essential resources like food, water, and shelter.

However, along the way, US citizens experienced a tipping point where globalisation, car dependency, and population growth silently shaped development patterns and severed many communities from their traditional foodways, leaving them reliant on the food practices and consumption patterns imposed by a colonial legacy rather than those of their cultural heritage or local ecology.[7]

Wendell Berry, in his essay 'What Are People For?', argues that the industrialization of agriculture and the centralization of food production have led to a profound alienation of people from the land and from each other.[8] Berry critiques the reduction of

7 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1990); Mignolo, The Darker Side of Western Modernity.

8 Wendell Berry, *What Are People For?* (North Point Press, 1990).

humans to mere economic agents within a capitalist framework, which he believes strips away the deeper, more meaningful connections that people once had with their environments and communities. He suggests that this disconnection is not merely an ecological or economic issue but a fundamental crisis of culture and identity. Berry contends that as food systems became more industrialised and commodified, the essential human practices of farming, cooking, and sharing food were diminished to mere transactions, stripping away their roles as expressions of community, culture, and ecological stewardship. According to Berry, the focus of the industrial food system on efficiency and profit over care and sustainability has led to the degradation of local ecologies and the erosion of cultural knowledge tied to place and practice. He calls for a return to more localised, ecologically sound farming practices that reconnect people with their land, food, and each other, advocating for an agrarian model that sees humans as stewards of the earth rather than exploiters of resources. This argument challenges readers to reimagine food infrastructure not merely as a supply chain but as a community-centric system that honours ecological limits and cultural traditions.[9]

To illustrate the scale of the issue, consider that approximately 895 million acres in the U.S. are dedicated to agricultural use, accounting for about 40 percent of the nation's total land area.[10] Yet, much of this land is devoted to industrial farming practices characterised by large-scale monocultures, such as corn and soy, which are designed for maximum yield and profit rather than nutritional diversity or ecological sustainability.[11] This approach is not unique to the US: globally, around 75 percent of the world's food is produced from just twelve plant species and

9 Berry, *What Are People For?*.

10 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 'Major Land Uses', 2021.

11 Stephen W. Martinez, et al., 'Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues', *USDA Economic Research Service* (2010).

five animal species.[12] This alarming lack of biodiversity not only affects dietary health but also ties food production to specific regions and farming methods often incompatible with sustainable long-term practices.[13]

The current US food infrastructure — from co-packing and aggregation to distribution, warehousing, farming, and retail — is fundamentally shaped by centralised and exclusionary practices that reflect a colonial mindset. For example, observations in relation to this study have shown that most co-packing facilities today are optimised to serve large-scale producers, marginalising small, local farmers who cannot afford to use these services. This dynamic limits the availability of locally sourced, fresh food, reinforcing a system that prioritises large-scale, industrial agriculture over localised, diverse food production. Moreover, through discussions with farmers across the Midwestern United States and interactions with the USDA's Regional Food Business Centers, I have listened to countless stories legitimising the decline of small-scale canneries and production facilities. This reduction in small processing facilities means fewer opportunities for small farms to process their products locally, leading to increased dependency on large-scale processors and limiting the ability of communities to support diverse, localised food systems.

All of these factors further restrict food access in underserved regions, contributing to a food landscape dominated by only a few major corporations.[14] This infrastructure not only perpetuates unhealthy eating habits but also reinforces

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12 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 'The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture', 2019; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 'Agroecological and other innovative approaches: for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition', 2019.

13 Sara Usha Maillacheruvu, 'The Historical Determinants of Food Insecurity in Native Communities', *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities* (4 October 2022).

14 Jessica Clendenning, Wolfram Dressler, and Carol Richards, 'Food Justice or Food Sovereignty? Understanding the Rise of Urban Food Movements in the USA', *Agriculture and Human Values*, 33.1 (2016), pp. 165–177.

economic inequalities by denying smaller, local food enterprises the opportunity to thrive. The focus of industrial farming on monocultures primarily aimed at export markets reduces local food diversity and contributes significantly to environmental degradation.[15] Small-scale and urban farmers, who could provide more diverse and locally adapted food options, often lack access to land and resources, further entrenching the inequities built into the system.[16]

Each of these spatial exclusions perpetuates cycles of poverty and food insecurity, disproportionately affecting marginalised communities.[17] Thus, the US food system's colonial characteristics are embedded not just in its historical roots but in its contemporary practices and policies, which continue to shape how food is produced, distributed, and consumed.

The Spatial Dynamics of the US Foodscape

While exploring the US food system, it is essential to recognise that the problems are not just financial, technological, or legal — they are fundamentally spatial and ecological. These are adaptive problems that require systemic change and a fundamental rethinking of how spaces for food production, processing, distribution, and consumption are organised, accessed, and governed. Unlike technical problems, which can be solved with straightforward solutions or technological fixes, adaptive problems involve complex challenges that require shifts in values, beliefs, roles, and relationships. These decisions profoundly impact ecological health and societal resilience, all deeply tied to the historical patterns of colonialism and economic exploitation

15 Graham Gordon, 'Three Ways Colonialism Contributed to the Breakdown of Our Modern Food System', *CAFOD*, 29 September 2022 <https://cafod.org.uk/news/international-news/three-ways-colonialism-contributed-breakdown-food-system> [accessed 27 August 2024].

16 Sassen, *Expulsions*.

17 Craig Gundersen and James P. Ziliak, 'Food Insecurity and Health Outcomes', *Health Affairs*, 34.11 (2015), pp. 1830–1839.

that have shaped our current food landscape.[18]

However, many well-intentioned efforts to use architecture as a tool for change miss the mark because of a failure to grasp the complexity of these adaptive, spatial problems. Often, design interventions focus on aesthetic enhancements, agrotourism, or high-end urban farming projects that serve as green showcases rather than addressing the deep structural issues that plague the food system. These technical solutions can provide temporary relief or surface-level improvements but do not address the underlying, systemic issues that perpetuate food inequities and ecological harm. By prioritising spectacle over substance, these approaches can inadvertently reinforce inequalities, neglecting the needs of the communities most affected by food insecurity and failing to recognise the critical role that farmers and local food producers play in sustaining a resilient food system.

The real spatial challenge lies in understanding that design is not just about creating beautiful spaces; it is about rethinking how these spaces are financed, how they are accessed, and who benefits from them. It is about addressing the power dynamics that dictate land use and food distribution and ensuring that the spaces of the future are fair, resilient, and supportive of both ecological health and human well-being. This involves a shift from top-down, designer-developer-driven projects to more collaborative approaches that genuinely engage with farmers, community members, and other stakeholders directly involved in the food system.

One crucial aspect of this spatial rethinking is the integration of sustainable career pathways into the design of food systems. As Van Jones argues in *The Green Collar Economy*, creating 'green-collar' jobs — sustainable employment opportunities that contribute to environmental and social well-being — is key to building a more just and resilient economy.[19] In

18 Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2002).

19 Van Jones, *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems* (HarperOne, 2008).

the context of food systems, this means developing career paths that not only support farmers but also integrate them into broader spatial decisions about land use, urban planning, and ecological restoration. For instance, urban and peri-urban agriculture can be designed not just as a source of local food, but as a hub for green-collar jobs that offer living wages, health benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

However, achieving this requires moving beyond superficial design fixes. The creation of sustainable career pathways must be embedded in the spatial and ecological decisions that shape food systems. This could involve supporting the growth of mid-sized, regenerative farms too small to compete with industrial-scale operations. These farms play a critical role in bridging urban and rural food networks, providing local food while supporting biodiversity and soil health through regenerative practices. Investment in these 'missing middle' farms, particularly those on the fringes of cities, is a major lever for revitalising regional food systems and creating stable, rewarding jobs integrated into the local economy.[20]

Moreover, recognising the spatial problem in the food system also involves understanding where design can reinforce or dismantle existing inequalities. For example, while urban farms and community gardens are often celebrated for their potential to provide fresh produce in food-insecure neighbourhoods, they can also become catalysts of gentrification. Design interventions that focus solely on beautification without considering the socioeconomic context can drive up property values, displacing the very communities they were meant to serve. This highlights the importance of approaching design with a deep awareness of the spatial and social dynamics, ensuring that ownership and incentive structures are aligned with a future of shared resilience.

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20 Yuki Kato, 'Not Just the Price of Food: Challenges of an Urban Agriculture Organization in Engaging Local Residents', *Sociological Inquiry*, 89.3 (2019), pp. 400–425.

Ultimately, the spatial dimension of the food system involves more than just land use; it encompasses the broader question of how cities and corporations prioritise resilient agriculture. This requires a fundamental societal mindset shift in how we think about architecture — not merely as an aesthetic overlay but as a tool for systemic change.

The Role of Architecture and Design in Reimagining Food Systems

As discussed, architects have a unique opportunity to engage with food systems by expanding their role beyond traditional building design to create interventions that push the boundaries of conventional architectural practice. By understanding the food system as an interconnected network of spaces and practices, architects can explore new mediums relevant to the projected circumstances. This line of thinking recognises that food infrastructure is not only about functional spaces but also about promoting sustainable practices and encouraging local economic development. Jeremy Till, in *Architecture Depends*, argues that architecture is inherently contingent, shaped by various social, economic, and environmental forces.[21] This perspective suggests that architects must be willing to engage with the complexities of food systems, recognising that design is not a standalone practice but one that is interwoven with broader societal issues.

Till further elaborates on this in *Spatial Agency*, coauthored with Nishat Awan and Tatjana Schneider, where he emphasises that architects must move beyond the 'heroic' model of architectural practice and instead adopt a more collaborative and flexible approach.[22] As we look towards 2050 or 2075, it is clear that the profession must evolve to engage with new and emerging fields. Architects will need to adapt to and collaborate

21 Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (MIT Press, 2009).

22 Jeremy Till, Nishat Awan, and Tatjana Schneider, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (Routledge, 2011).

with experts across a range of disciplines. Fields like agro-environmental science will become critical as architects design spaces that support sustainable agriculture and enhance ecological resilience. Understanding the principles of biotechnology and synthetic biology will also be essential, as innovations in these fields offer new possibilities for designing adaptive, self-sustaining environments that can produce food locally and efficiently.

Additionally, architects will need to be conversant in industrial ecology to design closed-loop systems that integrate waste recycling, water management, and energy efficiency within food production spaces. The integration of machine learning and data analytics into architectural practice will also be indispensable. Architects will increasingly rely on big data to understand food distribution patterns, predict resource needs, and optimise the design of food infrastructure for resilience and adaptability. Collaboration with economists will also be crucial, as architects seek to understand the economic frameworks that underpin food systems and develop financially viable models for sustainable food production and distribution.

Till's notion of 'spatial agency' calls for a reimagining of the architect's role — one that is not limited to creating physical structures but extends to shaping social and economic frameworks through design.[23] Thus, the most significant innovations will not always emerge from the architectural drawing desk; they will come from expanding the boundaries of what architecture can achieve through collaboration, experimentation, and integration with other fields. This shift requires a fundamental rethinking of architectural education and practice, embracing a more fluid, dynamic approach that values systems thinking, ecological stewardship, and technological innovation as core competencies. By doing so, architects can play a vital role in shaping a more sustainable and resilient food system for the future.

23 Till, Awan, and Schneider, *Spatial Agency*.

While the future trajectory of the profession is certainly worth critiquing, looking back to historical and Indigenous knowledge systems provides architects with a wealth of strategies that could be adapted to contemporary contexts. For example, ancient Andean agricultural terraces, such as those used by the Inca, optimised water use and microclimates for diverse crop production. These terraces were designed to enhance local food security while maintaining ecological balance. As a result, the terraces exemplify how careful spatial planning and material use can create food systems that withstand environmental extremes.[24] Such approaches offer valuable insights for contemporary farms and gardens, particularly in regions prone to drought or flooding.

Similarly, Indigenous food systems, such as the Aztec *chinampas* or the ancient Egyptians' floating gardens, illustrate how traditional practices can be adapted to contemporary urban contexts. The *chinampas* were constructed as raised-bed plots on shallow lakes, using layers of mud, vegetation, and lake sediment to create fertile land. This method provided a continuous supply of water and nutrients, supporting intensive crop growth and biodiversity while allowing for easy water-based transportation between plots. The floating gardens of ancient Egypt utilised woven reed mats on the Nile's floodplains, which rose and fell with the river levels, ensuring crops were consistently irrigated by nutrient-rich floodwaters. Both systems optimised food production in waterlogged or flood-prone environments, demonstrating how low-tech, adaptive agricultural methods can increase resilience and self-sufficiency in urban food systems today.[25]

24 Julia Watson, *Lo-TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism* (Taschen, 2019).
25 Watson, *Lo-TEK*.

In addition to Indigenous knowledge, African American food traditions and practices offer crucial insights for contemporary food system design. Michael Twitty, in his book *The Cooking Gene*, explores how African American agricultural practices, particularly those developed under slavery, have shaped the American food landscape.[26] Twitty highlights the knowledge and resilience of enslaved Africans who brought agricultural techniques and crops that have become foundational to American cuisine, such as rice, okra, and sweet potatoes.

African American communities have long practised sustainable and community-centred approaches to food production, often out of necessity and a deep understanding of the land. These practices include cooperative farming, seed saving, and permaculture, all of which are gaining recognition today for their sustainability and resilience. For example, the tradition of Gullah Geechee farming along the Southeastern US coast, where communities have cultivated rice and other crops using traditional West African methods, showcases a sophisticated understanding of local ecosystems and water management. These practices can serve as models for sustainable agricultural design in flood-prone or coastal urban areas.[27] These spaces of production have also been sites of cultural expression and community building, emphasising the importance of place-making and local autonomy in food systems.[28]

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26 Michael W. Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Culinary History in a Old South* (Amistad, 2017).

27 Twitty, *The Cooking Gene*.

28 Monica M. White, *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

While the scope of this paper is about the reformation of the US foodscape, many lessons can be gleaned from global contexts that might inform a new, collective imagination. For example, in Paris, La REcyclerie transformed a former railway station into an urban farm and community hub, combining rooftop gardens, aquaponic systems, and community workshops.[29] This project demonstrates how underutilised urban spaces can be repurposed to support food production while fostering community engagement and education. By integrating food production into everyday urban life, such interventions can promote food literacy, reduce the carbon footprint of food transportation, and create green-collar jobs in urban agriculture and environmental education. This model also illustrates an innovative governance approach where public-private partnerships and community-led initiatives work together to manage the space, offering a potential governance model for US cities seeking to develop similar community-oriented agricultural and educational centres.

Similarly, in Singapore, Citiponics developed a farm on the rooftop of a multi-storey car park, utilising hydroponic technology to grow leafy greens and herbs.[30] This project illustrates how vertical farming can be integrated into urban environments, making efficient use of limited space while contributing to food security. It also provides employment opportunities in urban agriculture, supporting new business models focused on sustainable, local food production.

Architectural interventions in food systems can push the boundaries of traditional practice by repurposing existing spaces to serve new, sustainable functions. Rotterzwam in

29 La REcyclerie, 'Urban Farming and Community Engagement in Paris', *La REcyclerie*, 2021 <https://www.larecyclerie.com> [accessed 27 August 2024].

30 Citiponics, 'Rooftop Farming in Singapore: A New Model for Urban Agriculture', *Citiponics*, 2020 <https://www.citiponics.com> [accessed August 27, 2024].

Rotterdam exemplifies this kind of architectural ingenuity and spatial agency. The project transforms a section of the former Tropicana swimming pool complex into a thriving mushroom farm, using coffee waste sourced from local cafes as a growth substrate.[31] This innovative use of space illustrates how urban agriculture can flourish in unexpected environments, showcasing the potential for architects to creatively reimagine and activate underutilised urban sites. By applying circular-economy principles — such as converting organic waste into a productive resource — Rotterzwam not only enhances urban sustainability but also demonstrates the power of design thinking to adapt and transform existing urban spaces into hubs of local food production. This project serves as a model for how architects can exercise spatial agency to foster sustainability and resilience in urban food systems, inspiring US cities to rethink their own urban landscapes through imaginative and resourceful interventions.

However, it is essential to recognise that certain barriers may prevent innovative food system interventions from being directly transferable to the US context. The success of projects like Mercat de Sant Antoni in Barcelona is deeply rooted in a strong tradition of local markets and robust community engagement in food systems, less prevalent in many parts of the US.[32] Moreover, public policies and funding structures in Europe and Asia often provide more comprehensive support for sustainable food initiatives compared to the US, where funding for such projects can be more fragmented. In the US, investments in urban agriculture and local food systems frequently rely on a combination of private funding, grants, and public subsidies, each with its own set of complexities.[33] Navigating this financial

31 Rotterzwam, 'About Rotterzwam', *Rotterzwam*, 2020 <https://www.rotterzwam.nl> [accessed 27 August 2024]; Mushroom Cultivation, 'Rotterzwam: Urban Mushroom Farming in Rotterdam', *Mushroom Cultivation*, 2020 <https://www.mushroom-cultivation.com> [accessed 27 August 2024].

32 ArchDaily, 'Sant Antoni Sunday Market / Ravetllat Ribas Architects', *ArchDaily*, 2012 <https://www.archdaily.com/245559/sant-antoni-sunday-market-ravetllat-ribas-architects> [accessed 27 August 2024].

33 Jones, *The Green Collar Economy*.

landscape can be particularly challenging for community-based projects that may lack the resources or expertise to secure diverse funding streams.

While much attention is often placed on urban contexts, there are significant opportunities for architectural and design interventions in peri-urban and rural areas as well. In 'What Are People For?' Wendell Berry argues for the importance of reconnecting communities with their local ecologies and economies, particularly in rural contexts where agricultural practices are often most deeply rooted.[34] Architects and designers can play a crucial role in this reconnection by designing spaces and infrastructure that support sustainable agricultural practices and create more resilient local food systems. This involves thinking beyond traditional urban-centric models and considering how design can enhance the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural workers in less densely populated areas.

Investing in new opportunities for the agricultural career sector requires a holistic approach that encompasses urban, peri-urban, and rural contexts. This includes creating multi-functional spaces such as cooperative processing centres, shared-use equipment facilities, and community-focused farmers' markets that cater to the needs of small and mid-sized farmers. By integrating these spaces into rural and peri-urban landscapes, architects can help bridge the gap between producers and consumers, fostering stronger local economies and promoting sustainable food practices. Additionally, designing infrastructure that supports regenerative agriculture, such as greenhouses, seed banks, and cold storage facilities, can provide the necessary support for farmers to thrive in these areas.

Architects can also engage with the capital stack — the combination of funding sources, such as equity, debt, grants, and subsidies — to develop financially viable and socially impactful food projects that extend beyond urban centres. By understanding the economic frameworks that underpin food systems, architects

34 Berry, *What Are People For?*.

can craft projects that align with the unique needs and aspirations of rural and peri-urban communities, ensuring long-term sustainability.[35] For example, investments in community kitchens or food hubs could be structured through local equity investments and impact investors, while regional farms might leverage municipal bonds and federal grants to create financially sustainable and socially impactful food infrastructure tailored to local conditions.

Furthermore, there is a need for policy and advocacy efforts that support equitable and sustainable food systems across all contexts. Architects can work with policymakers to develop regulations that promote sustainable agricultural practices, encourage community-based food initiatives, and support diverse land use practices that benefit both urban and rural areas. This advocacy work can be complemented by engaging directly with local communities, particularly in rural settings, to codesign food spaces that reflect their unique needs and cultural practices, fostering a sense of ownership and agency in shaping their food environments. By considering the full spectrum of contexts — from urban to peri-urban to rural — architects and designers can create comprehensive solutions that address the complex challenges of food systems.

Right now, architects have the opportunity to expand their roles in reimagining food systems by embracing a holistic approach that integrates design with economic, social, and ecological considerations. By exploring new mediums of making, engaging with innovative business models, and advocating for systemic change, architects can help create food spaces that are resilient, equitable, and sustainable. This involves not only designing better spaces but also engaging with the broader frameworks that govern food production, distribution, and consumption. Through thoughtful design, creative engagement, and a commitment to systemic change, architects can contribute to a future where food systems support thriving communities and healthy environments.

35 Jones, *The Green Collar Economy*.

Transforming the US food system requires more than just surface-level adjustments; it demands a fundamental rethinking of how we structure and interact with the spaces and systems that produce, distribute, and consume food. This transformation must address the deeply ingrained colonial legacies that have shaped our current food landscapes, which prioritise efficiency and profit over resilience and sustainability.

Architects and urban planners are uniquely positioned to lead this transformation by leveraging their expertise to redesign the physical spaces and infrastructures that underpin our food systems. Moving beyond traditional roles, architects can create environments that support sustainable agricultural practices, enhance local economies, and foster community resilience. This involves designing multi-functional spaces — from urban farms and food hubs to processing centres and markets — that reflect the needs and values of diverse communities and encourage local food sovereignty. Furthermore, the role of architects must expand to include a deeper understanding of the economic and policy contexts in which food systems operate. Engaging with financial frameworks, such as the 'capital stack', allows architects to develop innovative and sustainable business models that support community-focused food initiatives. By integrating economic viability with social and environmental goals, architects can help ensure that new food infrastructures are not only sustainable but also equitable and accessible to all.

Architects also have a critical role in advocating for policy reforms that support the development of more equitable and resilient food systems. By working closely with policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders, architects can help craft regulatory frameworks that encourage sustainable land use, support urban and rural agriculture, and promote inclusive food practices. This advocacy must be complemented by direct community engagement, ensuring that the voices of those most

affected by food insecurity are heard and reflected in the design and planning processes.

Ultimately, the transformation of our food systems is a collective effort that extends beyond any single discipline. While architects can drive significant change through design innovation, policy advocacy, and economic insight, they must also collaborate with farmers, policymakers, community organisers, and other stakeholders. Together, these efforts can help build food systems that are not only efficient and productive but also equitable, resilient, and deeply rooted in the principles of justice and sustainability. By embracing a broader, more integrated approach, architects can help shape a future where food systems are a source of community strength and ecological balance, rather than exploitation and inequity. This expanded vision of the profession challenges architects to think beyond buildings and consider their role in creating sustainable, just, and thriving environments for all.

Climate Migration and Postcolonial Perspectives: Enclosure, Territory, and Rights

Malkit Shoshan

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, with far-reaching implications for human societies and the environment. A significant consequence of this crisis is migration. Extreme climate zones and uninhabitable areas are expected to grow from 1 percent to 20 percent of Earth's land in the next thirty years, potentially displacing hundreds of millions.[1]

In this context, vulnerable regions and communities, historically the least responsible for this crisis, will be disproportionately affected. By 2050, projections indicate that uninhabitable areas will expand dramatically, displacing hundreds of millions of people.[2] This essay examines climate migration through a postcolonial lens, focusing on the concepts of enclosure, territory, and rights.

The analysis draws on projects by the Foundation for Achieving Seamless Territory (FAST)[3] and insights from a course I taught in the Spring semester at Harvard Graduate School of Design titled 'Spatial Design Strategies for Climate Migration'. This course, conducted in conversation with representatives from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration

1 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

2 Kanta Kumari Rigaud et al., *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration* (World Bank, 2018).

3 FAST is an architectural think-tank based in Amsterdam and New York City that operates at the intersection of architecture, urban planning, and human rights. Through research, advocacy, and design, FAST highlights systemic violence and promotes social and environmental justice. Collaborating with communities, policy institutes, NGOs, UN agencies, and multidisciplinary experts, FAST develops programs, methodologies, policy recommendations, and alternative visions to empower local communities and improve livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.

(IOM), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), examined two significant migration patterns: cross-border displacement from Mali to Mauritania and internal displacement in Haiti from the capital city to rural areas.

Both cases are intrinsically linked to legacies of colonialism that have shaped the environmental vulnerabilities of many regions today through extensive resource extraction and land appropriation. These colonial practices have left lasting scars on the environment and disrupted local ecological balances, exacerbating contemporary climate vulnerabilities. Therefore, understanding climate migration requires an examination not only of environmental and humanitarian crises but also a deep consideration of the historical and ongoing legacies of colonialism.

Future forms of habitation and governance addressing climate migration must comprehensively recognise and rectify the historical, sociopolitical, and environmental dimensions of displacement to avoid perpetuating systemic injustices. This requires developing inclusive, pluralistic governance models and adopting sustainable resource extraction practices within the Earth's regenerative capacity, alongside restorative environmental programs. One example of such an approach is Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut Economics', which offers a comprehensive framework that simultaneously addresses environmental sustainability and social justice, ensuring that both planetary boundaries and human well-being are respected and maintained.[4]

Yet this essay explores the multidimensional challenges posed by climate change on human migration and displacement through a postcolonial lens, focusing on the concepts of enclosure, territory, and rights. It begins with a brief examination of colonial legacies and their role in shaping contemporary environmental vulnerabilities, emphasising how historical resource extraction and land appropriation contribute to ongoing ecological planetary

4 Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist* (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017).

devastation. The discussion then shifts to the implications of enclosure and territorial displacement, illustrating how these historical practices have exacerbated current climate-related displacements. Following this, the essay delves into the legal and political frameworks of rights, sovereignty, and global governance, analysing the complexities of managing climate-induced migration in a postcolonial context. Through case studies in climate hotspots such as the Sahel region in Africa, and Haiti, the essay underscores the diverse and interlinked nature of climate-induced displacement and systemic violence. Finally, it presents divergent design approaches and strategies advocating for social and environmental justice-centred solutions that address the historical, sociopolitical, and environmental dimensions of climate migration.

Colonial Legacies, Environmental Exploitation, and Conflict

The legacy of colonial rule shaping present conflicts is fueled by environmental exploitation and climate vulnerabilities. Enclosure practices during colonialism privatised communal lands, displacing indigenous communities and disrupting sustainable practices. As historian Dipesh Chakrabarty notes, colonialism laid the groundwork for the capitalist exploitation of nature.[5] This led to violent conflicts over natural resources, perpetuating instability and violence — 'climate change intensifies struggles over land and resources'.[6]

Colonial powers' exploitation laid the foundation for present-day systems of global governance and forms of human settlements. Reece Jones highlights in *From Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move* that modern borders and states emerged to manage control issues, often preserving privilege

5 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry*, 35.2 (Winter 2009), pp. 197–222.

6 United Nations, 'Five Ways the Climate Crisis Impacts Human Security', *United Nations* <www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/human-security> [accessed 10 December 2024].

for some while restricting resources and movement for others.[7] Colonial powers laid the foundations for lasting conflict by fragmenting communities and driving them into competition through various financial and governance mechanisms. These actions incited conflicts over land and resources, resulting in ongoing violence, instability, and environmental degradation.

This is evident in our case studies in the Sahel along the border between Mali and Mauritania and in Haiti. In the case of the Sahel, the imposition of arbitrary borders during the colonial scramble for Africa disrupted traditional socioeconomic and transhumance patterns, leading to persistent tensions over resources such as land and water.[8] Colonial administrations prioritised resource extraction, including minerals and agricultural products, to meet European demands, neglecting environmental sustainability and local community needs.[9] Political governance under colonial rule often favoured centralised control through indirect rule or collaboration with local elites, which contributed to political fragmentation and weakened traditional authority structures post-independence.[10] Environmental degradation intensified due to colonial practices like deforestation for timber and agricultural expansion, exacerbating ecological vulnerabilities and increasing susceptibility to desertification and climate variability.[11] Socially and economically, colonial policies reinforced inequalities and marginalised certain ethnic groups, perpetuating social tensions

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7 Reece Jones, *From Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move* (Verso, 2017).

8 James Walls, *Land, Man, and Sand: desertification and its solution* (Mac-Millan Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 126–128.

9 Michael Mortimore. 'Adapting to drought in the Sahel: Lessons for climate change', *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1.1 (January 2010), pp. 134–143.

10 Elliott P. Skinner, *The Mossi of Burkina Faso: Chiefs, Politicians, and Soldiers* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

11 Mary Tiffen, Michael Mortimore, and Francis Gichuki, *More People, Less Erosion: Environmental Recovery in Kenya* (Wiley, 1994).

and exacerbating conflicts over access to resources and political power.[12] These historical legacies continue to influence contemporary challenges in the Sahel.

In the region where our case study is located, along the border between Mali and Mauritania at the edge of the Sahara Desert, soaring temperatures and prolonged drought exacerbate enduring challenges rooted in colonial history. In 'Land, man, and sand', James Walls writes:

> In 1900 the first military columns occupied Tahoua, but the Kel Dinnik Tuareg did not submit until the end of 1901. The presence of this new authority brought profound changes, not only in society but in spatial organization. The authorities isolated the pastoralists and confined them to the nomadic zone in order to free the agriculturalists from the pastoralists' hold; the nomads were thus deprived of southern markets and cereals which were indispensable to them. Colonization brought with it a partitioning of territory which was completely contrary to the image of the land held by the Tuareg pastoralists.[13]

Jeremy Swift highlights how the colonial powers significantly altered the social and spatial organisation of the region:

> The French conquest ... set in motion the transfer of political power from many small competing local sources, based on a fluctuating balance between different traditional organizations, to central bureaucratic organizations which were inevitably less responsive to local conditions, including

12 Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone* (Heinemann, 1995).

13 A/CONF.74/14, *Case Study on Desertification: The Eghazer and Azawak Region, Niger*; A/CONF.74/14/Add. 1, *The Eghazer and Azawak Region, Synoptic Map of Desertification*; Institut de Recherches en Sciences Humaines (University of Niamey, 1977), p. 50. Quoted in Walls, *Land, Man, and Sand*, p. 117.

> ecological conditions, than previously locally-based power had been; bureaucratically-appointed people are not subject to local pressures (their constituency is the bureaucracy itself, located in the national capital) and so can remain unresponsive to the actual needs and conditions of local people and of the environment. Control over many aspects of natural resource use and conservation became vested in the machinery of central government (which however was inadequate to the task of imposing effective environmental conservation measures); meanwhile land users increasingly lost power to make decisions concerning their land.[14]

In the case of Haiti, its 'history is the history of the inhuman ways in which people have fought over the human rights of others', as Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes.[15] During French colonial rule, Haiti (then Saint-Domingue) emerged as one of the wealthiest colonies through extensive production of commodities like sugar and coffee, underpinned by a system of plantation agriculture and slavery. This economic model generated immense wealth while consigning the majority of the population to deep poverty, laying the foundation for Haiti's economic struggles after independence.[16] Following its successful revolt against slavery and colonial rule in 1804, Haiti was compelled to pay France substantial reparations for lost property, further crippling its economy for decades and diverting resources away from essential sectors such as infrastructure, education, and social development.[17] The legacy of colonial power dynamics and elite rule persisted, fostering cycles of

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14 Jeremy Swift, *Desertization in the Sahel*, Institute for the Study of International Organization (Sussex University), unpublished mimeograph. Quoted in Walls, *Land, Man, and Sand*, pp. 127–128.

15 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (Monthly Review Press, 1990).

16 Ibid.

17 Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (Picador, 2012).

political instability, authoritarianism, and corruption that hindered efforts towards inclusive governance and sustainable development.[18] Moreover, colonial practices of intensive agriculture and deforestation for plantation crops exacerbated environmental degradation, contributing to heightened vulnerability to natural disasters such as hurricanes and flooding.[19] These environmental challenges continue to undermine Haiti's resilience and development efforts. Socially, the hierarchical divisions imposed during colonialism based on race and class have endured, perpetuating social inequality and marginalisation, and hindering national unity and solidarity in Haitian society.[20]

The violent colonial histories of these regions are central to the persistent conflicts today, further exacerbating the precarious livelihoods of their inhabitants. These communities, already living in harsh conditions for centuries, now face a new wave of multidimensional displacement exacerbated by both conflict and climate change.

The impact of climate change, however, is multidimensional and intersectional, disproportionately affecting marginalised communities. Environmental activist Vandana Shiva underscores the enduring effects of colonialism, arguing that it not only exploited resources but also imposed economic systems that prioritised profit over sustainability, exacerbating gendered and racial vulnerabilities in climate-affected regions.[21] She highlights how women's impoverishment intensified under colonial rule, reflecting historical discrimination that extended from rulers' treatment of their own women to those in colonised territories. This discrimination limited their access to land, technology, and employment, perpetuating economic and political underdevelopment. These processes, they contend, reflect modern

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (North Atlantic Books, 2016).

Western patriarchy. Privatisation of land for revenue generation disproportionately affected women, eroding their traditional land-use rights.

The impact of climate change and injustice extends far beyond the Global South, Africa, and the Pacific regions. Communities least responsible for climate change bear its heaviest burdens, experiencing ongoing devastation globally. Marginalised communities in both affluent and developing nations suffer disproportionately from climate impacts. In a UN report, S. Nazrul Islam and John Winkel emphasise the cyclical nature of inequality exacerbated by climate change: 'The relationship between climate change and inequality is characterised by a vicious cycle, whereby initial inequality makes disadvantaged groups suffer a disproportionate loss of their income and assets, resulting in greater subsequent inequality.' [22] Moreover, climate extreme events expose the intersectionality of class, gender, and race injustice and more, as Naomi Klein expands, noting that our current era is marked by multiple overlapping crises: health, housing, inequality, racial injustice, and climate emergencies.[23] Addressing these interconnected challenges requires responses that are truly intersectional, recognising the interrelated nature of these crises. The intersectionality of extreme climate events exposes class, gender, and race relations, demanding a holistic approach to achieve climate justice and address systemic injustices.

The enduring effects of colonialism and ongoing conflicts exacerbated by environmental exploitation and climate vulnerabilities have significant implications for climate migration. The historical injustices and resource conflicts resulting from colonial practices continue to drive instability and displacement

22 S. Nazrul Islam and John Winkel, 'Climate Change and Social Inequality', *DESA Working Paper No. 152* (October 2017).

23 Madeleine de Trenqualye, '"It's Inequality That Kills": Naomi Klein on the Future of Climate Justice,' *Guardian*, 13 February 2023 <www.theguardian.com/books/2023/feb/13/its-inequality-that-kills-naomi-klein-on-the-future-of-climate-justice> [accessed 10 September 2024].

in postcolonial regions. The prioritisation of profit over sustainable practices during colonial rule has heightened environmental degradation, disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities. Consequently, as climate change intensifies, marginalised populations in both wealthy and developing countries are increasingly forced to migrate due to environmental hazards, resource scarcity, and exacerbated inequalities. Addressing the interconnected issues of climate change, colonial legacies, and systemic injustices requires a comprehensive and intersectional approach to achieve climate justice and support affected communities navigating climate migration challenges. Failure to do so risks perpetuating oppression, socioeconomic exploitation, and environmental degradation on a larger scale, exacerbated by the expansive infrastructure and mechanisms of globalisation, extractive supply chains, and militarisation, as we already see unfolding along, for instance, the US–Mexico border and around Europe.

The Right to Have Rights in Times of Climate-Induced Migration

Migration is a global phenomenon shaped by complex interactions between universal human rights principles and national citizenship regimes. Universal human rights, enshrined in international legal instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), assert inherent rights for all individuals regardless of nationality or legal status. These rights include fundamental freedoms such as the right to life, liberty, and security, and protections against discrimination and persecution.[24] In contrast, citizenship traditionally confers a set of rights and privileges granted by a state to its nationals, such as voting rights, access to public services, and legal protections under national laws.

24 United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (North Atlantic Books, 1948).

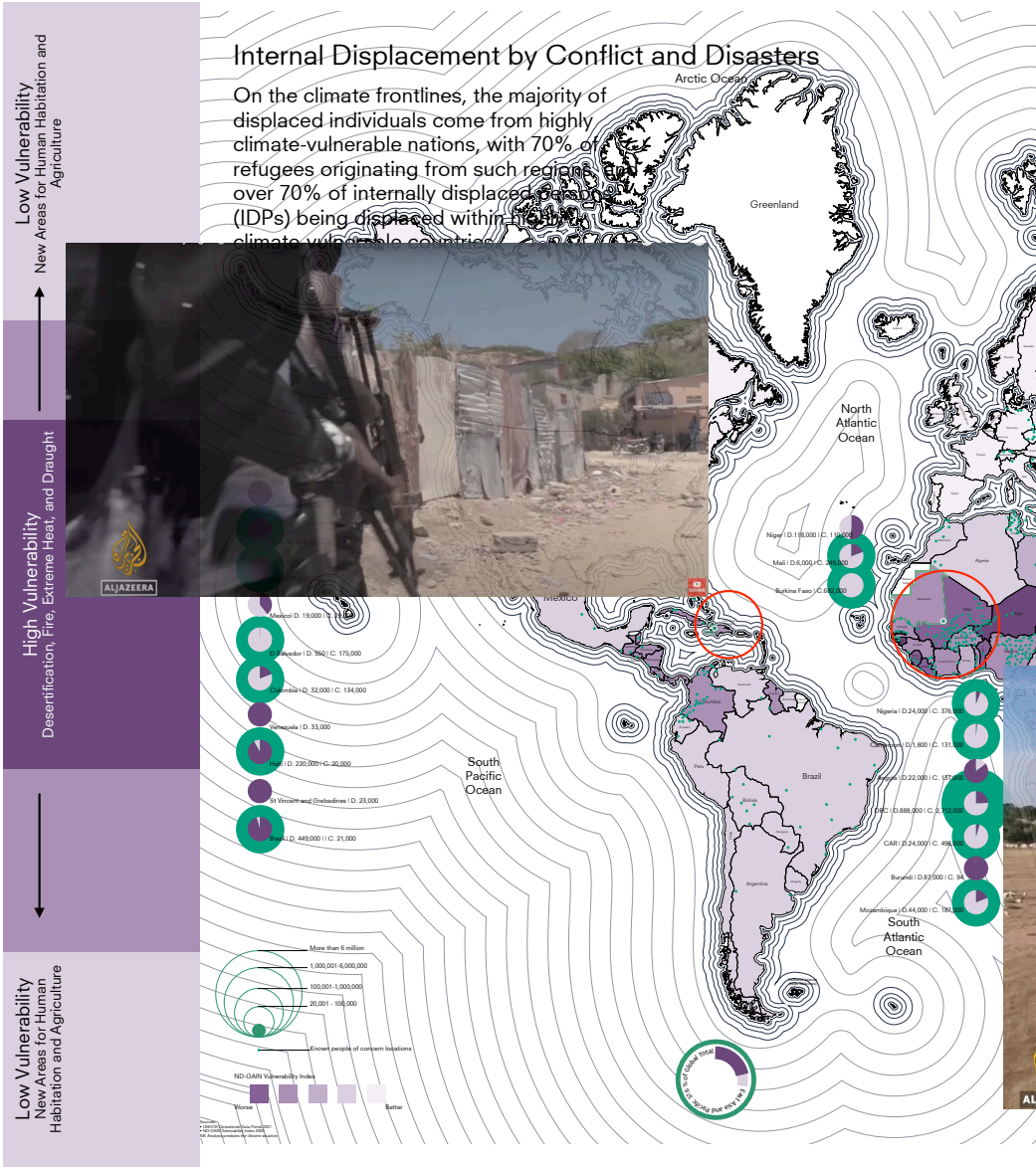
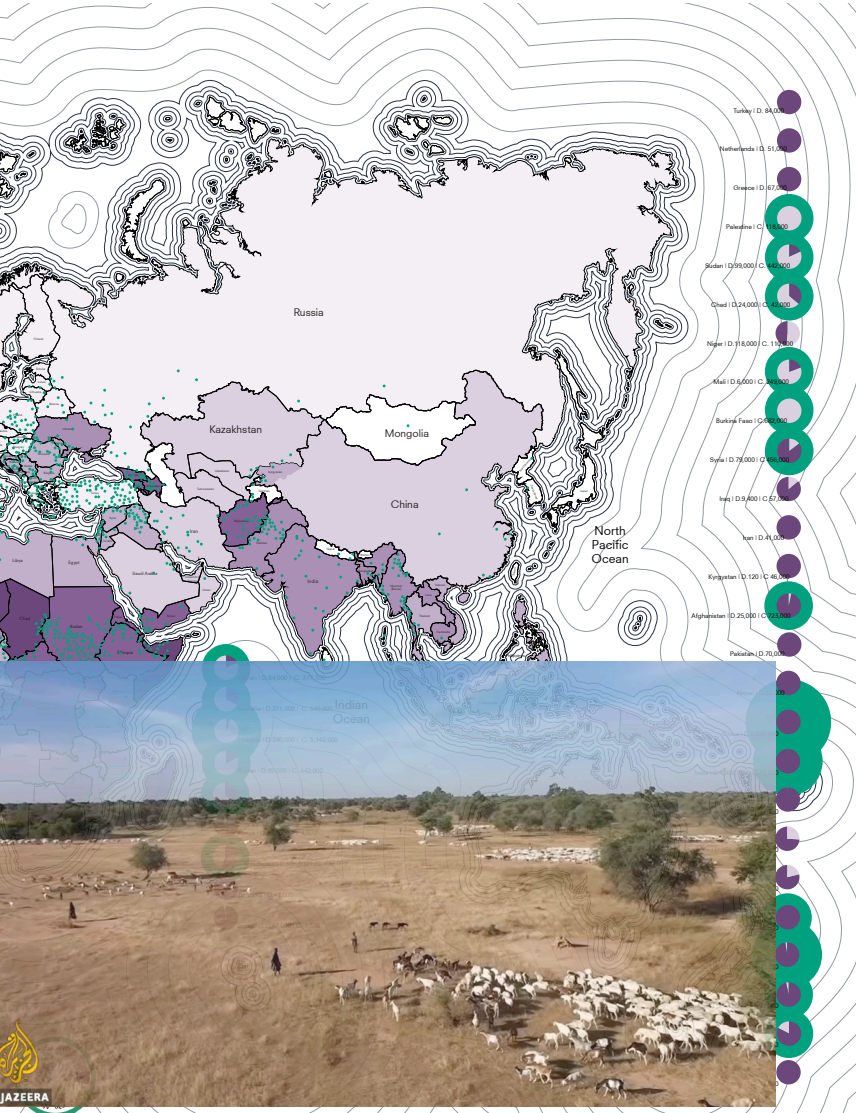


Fig. 1. Internal Displacement by Conflict and Disasters. Drawing by Malkit Shoshan/FAST.


Russia
Kazakhstan
Mongolia
China
North
Pacific
Ocean
Indian
Ocean
Turkey | D. 84,000
Netherlands | D. 51,000
Greece | D. 67,000
Palestine | C. 149,000
Sudan | D.99,000 | C. 140,000
Chad | D.24,000 | C. 43,000
Niger | D. 118,000 | C. 117,000
Mali | D.6,000 | C. 7,000
Burkina Faso | C. 56,000
Syria | D.79,000 | C. 56,000
Iraq | D.9,400 | C.67,000
Iran | D.41,000
Kyrgystan | D.120 | C.46,000
Afghanistan | D.25,000 | C. 723,000
Pakistan | D.70,000

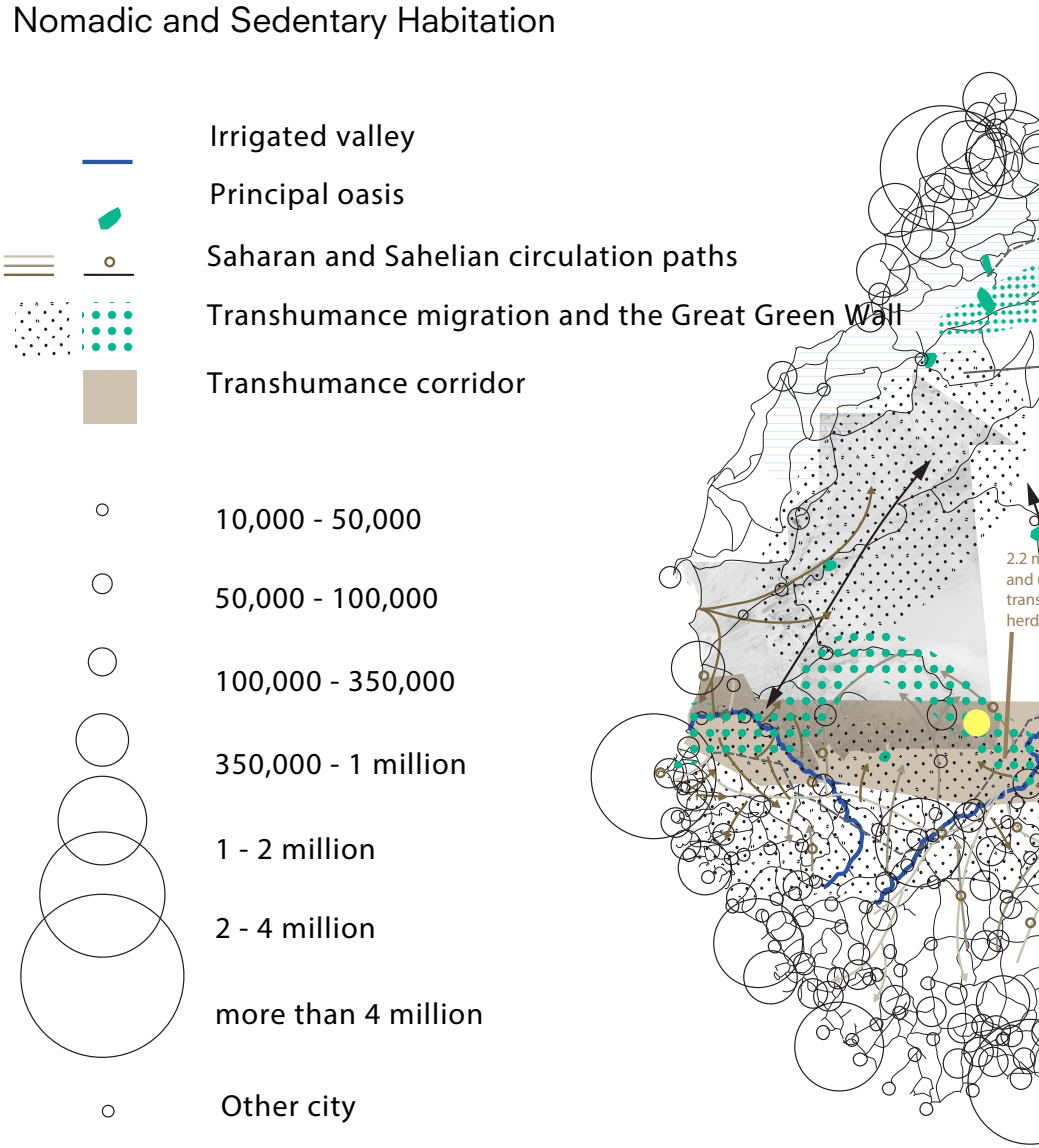


Fig. 2. Nomadic and Sedentary Habitation. Drawing by Malkit Shoshan/FAST.

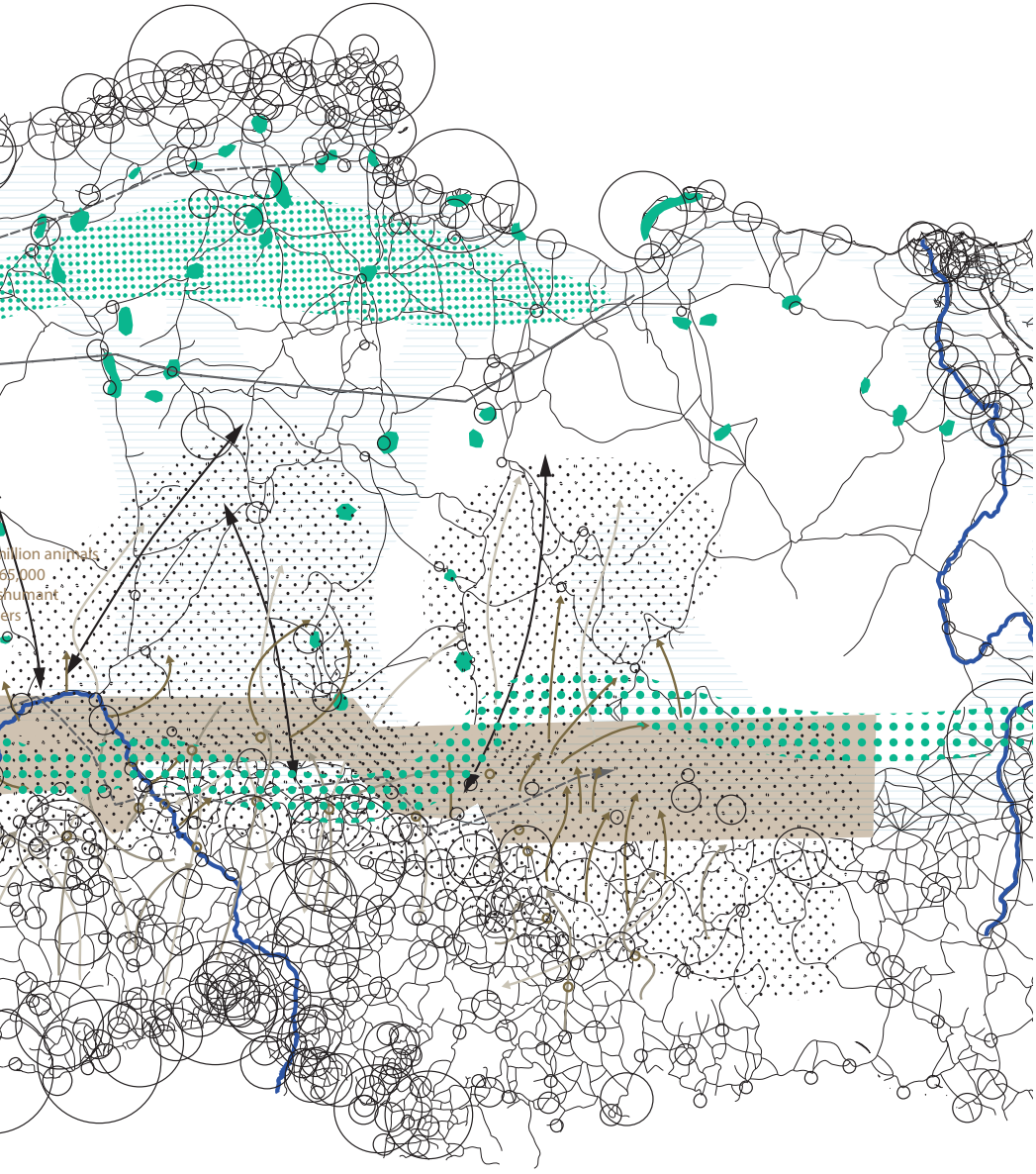

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Fig. 3. Nomadic dwellings in northern Mali. Image by Malkit Shoshan/ FAST.



Fig. 4. A mixture of sedentary and nomadic dwellings, northern Mali. Image by Malkit Shoshan/FAST.



Fig. 5. A view from Askia Mosque into the city of Gao, northern Mali. Image by Malkit Shoshan/FAST.



Fig. 6. Materiality and technology: telephone pole-powered by solar energy and adobe walls, northern Mali. Image by Malkit Shoshan/FAST.

The intersection of universal human rights and citizenship becomes particularly contentious in the context of migration. Nation-states assert sovereignty over their borders, controlling immigration and determining the rights and status of migrants within their territories. This sovereignty often conflicts with the universal human rights of migrants, especially those seeking asylum from persecution or fleeing humanitarian crises. The tension between state sovereignty and universal human rights underscores the complexities inherent in balancing national security concerns with international obligations to protect vulnerable populations.[25]

Legal protections for migrants vary widely depending on national policies and international agreements. The principle of non-discrimination, a core tenet of universal human rights, requires that migrants receive equal treatment and access to basic rights regardless of their legal status. However, in practice, migrants may face barriers to accessing healthcare, education, and legal employment due to their citizenship status or lack thereof. Stateless individuals, for example, lack citizenship in any country and often struggle to access even the most basic rights, perpetuating cycles of vulnerability and marginalisation.[26] International human rights law plays a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of migrants. Treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) include provisions specifically addressing the rights of migrants and stateless persons. These instruments establish norms and guidelines aimed at ensuring that migrants are treated with dignity and afforded essential protections under international law, regardless of their legal status or national origin.[27]

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25 UNHCR, *Tension between state sovereignty and universal human rights in the context of migration* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018).

26 UNHCR, *Vulnerabilities and marginalization faced by stateless individuals* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020).

27 UN Human Rights Council, *Protections for migrants under international*

Efforts to address migration-related challenges often involve global governance mechanisms. The United Nations and regional bodies work to establish cooperative frameworks and guidelines for managing migration flows while upholding human rights standards. These efforts aim to mitigate the risks of exploitation, trafficking, and discrimination faced by migrants, promoting inclusive and rights-based approaches to migration governance.[28]

As discussed earlier, states and borders have historically evolved over the past five thousand years to manage populations and control territories, yet the current manifestation of this system often perpetuates violence and reinforces inequalities. Hannah Arendt argued in her essay 'The Right to Have Rights' that traditional frameworks of citizenship and national sovereignty frequently fail to protect individuals' rights,[29] which is particularly evident in the context of climate-induced migration.

Climate change disregards national borders, displacing people globally and challenging existing legal and political structures. Climate migrants, often lacking recognised legal status or state protection, face heightened vulnerabilities as they seek safety and livelihoods across borders. Arendt's perspective underscores the urgent need for international cooperation and legal frameworks to ensure that climate migrants are not deprived of basic human rights or left in a state of 'rightlessness'. This necessitates rethinking the current system to provide equitable access to resources and movement, addressing systemic inequalities perpetuated by borders and emphasising human dignity in a rapidly changing global landscape.

The pressures of climate migration, however, are frequently leveraged by conservative political forces to provoke isolationist, nationalist, and xenophobic responses from receiving countries,

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human rights law (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2021).

28 IOM, *Global governance mechanisms and efforts to protect migrants' rights* (International Organization for Migration, 2020).

29 Hannah Arendt, 'The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man', in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harcourt, 1948), pp. 267-302.

driven by fears of economic strain, cultural change, or security risks. This is evident today as right-wing nationalist parties gain power and influence. Governments increasingly adopt policies aimed at restricting immigration and deterring migrants through the militarisation of physical barriers like walls and fences. These measures can lead to the establishment of detention centres, formal and informal, where migrants endure legal and illegal forms of violence, exploitation, and denial of basic rights. Such responses exacerbate human suffering and undermine international efforts to uphold universal human rights and promote humane treatment of migrants.

Navigating the relationship between universal human rights and citizenship in the context of migration demands a delicate balance between national sovereignty and international obligations. Upholding principles of universal human rights ensures that migrants — including stateless persons and asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons — can receive essential protections and opportunities for dignified living conditions. Yet it is clear that more is needed. Universal human rights can and should be expanded, and mechanisms for processing migrants should be updated to envision new forms of governance and human habitation centred on social and environmental justice and ecological restoration. Models proposed by scholars like Gaia Vince, Gloria Anzaldúa, or Kate Raworth can offer frameworks to facilitate such expansion.

Beyond Enclosure: Divergent Design Approaches

Urban and spatial design expertise holds immense transformative power, shaping environments that profoundly impact lives and livelihoods. Throughout history, design has not merely reflected but actively perpetuated socioeconomic, racial, and gender-based disparities, often marginalising communities and contributing to environmental degradation. Rooted in hierarchical and exploitative practices, design systems have deepened inequalities

and environmental harm. In our contemporary world, marked by escalating climate challenges, territorial disputes, and profound socioeconomic gaps, the design practice of human habitation must evolve into public services that centre values of social and environmental justice and ecological restoration.

Design can no longer operate in isolation from social and environmental considerations; it must instead adopt new values and methodologies that integrate diverse perspectives and foster inclusive development. Scholarships and design practices are increasingly exploring novel approaches to justice, ecology, design, and governance. In this section, I would like to highlight three such models. One examines the concept of identity and belonging along border regions, where space, culture, and governance systems often create highly segregated and constrained environments. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa challenges the binaries of bordered and Western perceptions of convergent thought.[30] Anzaldúa views the physical and metaphorical borders dividing communities as potential sites for convergence and transformation and further expands the complexities of navigating the borderland — a world shaped by machismo and white supremacy — exploring how race, language, gender, and culture intersect along the border. She presents a vision of collective consciousness that embraces divergent thinking, values multiple alternatives, and recognises the plurality of human existence:

> On our journey to a new consciousness, we must leave the opposite shore [...] moving away from convergent thinking, which relies on analytical reasoning toward a singular goal (a Western mode), and embracing divergent thinking, characterized by a holistic perspective that includes rather than excludes [...] learning to navigate cultures [...] operating

30 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books,1987).

> in a pluralistic mode. [...] It is in the potential to unite what is divided that a profound shift from dualistic thinking in individual and collective consciousness can begin — a challenging journey that holds the promise, in our best aspirations, of ending rape, violence, and war.[31]

Similarly to Anzaldúa, Homi K. Bhabha's notion of hybridity[32] refers to the mixing and merging of cultural identities and practices that occur as a result of colonial encounters and other forms of cultural interaction — not simply a blending or synthesis of different cultures into a harmonious whole, but rather a complex process of negotiation and contestation. It involves the formation of new cultural identities and meanings that emerge from the intersections and interactions between different cultural traditions. Bhabha's hybridity challenges fixed notions of identity and cultural purity, highlighting instead the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural forms. It disrupts dominant narratives of cultural authenticity and undermines the binary oppositions often imposed between coloniser and colonised, centre and periphery. Hybridity, therefore, becomes a site of potential resistance and creativity, where marginalised or subaltern groups can assert agency and create alternative forms of cultural expression.

In *Nomad Century*, Gaia Vince proposes a dual approach to governance in response to the climate crisis.[33] She advocates for both decentralisation and centralisation strategies, emphasising the importance of local action while maintaining a global perspective on survival as a species on Earth. Vince suggests that we must empower local communities to adapt locally, harnessing their knowledge and resources to safeguard against climate impacts. Decentralisation is key to resilience

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31 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* p. 79.

32 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994).

33 Gaia Vince, *Nomad Century: How to Survive the Climate Upheaval* (Flatiron Books, 2022).

in the face of planetary change.[34] Simultaneously, Vince argues for centralised efforts that unite humanity in facing planetary challenges collectively. She calls for thinking globally and acting collectively as a species. Centralised efforts are essential for coordinating global responses, sharing innovations, and ensuring equitable adaptation strategies across borders.[35] This dual approach, according to Vince, allows for tailored responses that consider local conditions and needs, while also leveraging global cooperation to develop and implement strategies that transcend national borders. By advocating for both local autonomy and global solidarity, Vince presents a nuanced governance model aimed at navigating the complexities of climate adaptation and ensuring the long-term survival of the human species amidst environmental upheaval.

The next model, tangible and aspirational at the same time, is Doughnut Economics as proposed by Kate Raworth.[36] This framework moves away from the economics of infinite growth to one that grows within Earth's capacity to regenerate, while emphasising environmental restoration and social measures to ensure the thriving of people and communities. It seeks to balance human prosperity with planetary sustainability. Visualised as a doughnut, it presents two critical boundaries: the inner ring represents the minimum social foundations necessary for human well-being, encompassing essentials like food, water, healthcare, and education. On the outer edge lies the ecological ceiling, outlining planetary boundaries such as climate stability, biodiversity, and freshwater availability that humanity must respect to avoid irreversible environmental harm.

The concept of Doughnut Economics revolves around finding a safe and just space for humanity between these inner and outer boundaries. It advocates for economic systems that are regenerative and distributive by design, moving away from

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics* (Random House, 2017).

traditional growth-oriented paradigms that often exacerbate inequality and environmental degradation. This approach calls for a shift towards circular economies, renewable energy sources, fair distribution of resources, and sustainable practices in production and consumption.

Implementing Doughnut Economics necessitates transformative policy and governance reforms. It challenges governments, businesses, and communities to prioritise social and environmental goals alongside economic ones, redefining success beyond GDP growth alone. By adopting this framework, societies aim not only to thrive within planetary limits but also to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all, thereby forging a path towards a sustainable and inclusive future. Its tangible indicators have already been integrated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and adopted by policy makers and even cities, like Amsterdam, to improve their policy framework.

'Learning from Below': Climate Hotspots in Mauritania and Haiti

> The subaltern are not only oppressed, they are also capable of generating knowledge that can challenge and reshape dominant paradigms.
>
> — Gayatri Spivak[37]

A 'climate hotspot', as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), refers to regions highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and experiencing, or having the potential to experience, significant social, economic, or political instability.[38] These areas face an elevated risk because the

37 Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313.

38 The IPCC in the *Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)* defines climate change hotspots as areas characterised by high vulnerability and exposure/responsiveness

pressures of climate change can exacerbate existing conflicts or trigger new ones. Factors such as severe weather conditions, resource scarcity (e.g., water and arable land), and forced migration due to climate events can intensify tensions, often leading to violent conflict in already fragile environments. In both our case studies in Mauritania and Haiti, colonial legacy, conflict, and climate extremes converge. These case studies, selected in consultation with the UN Peacebuilding Fund, highlight the complex intersection between climate impacts, historical colonial legacies, conflict, and contemporary socioenvironmental challenges. Each case study reveals different climate zones, complexities, and emerging migration trends and habitation patterns, expanding our understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with climate migration.

i. The Sahel and Mauritania

The Sahel region, spanning from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea in Africa, has historically grappled with environmental fragility exacerbated by colonial legacies and contemporary climate change impacts. Traditionally, the Sahel's nomadic populations traversed vast territories following seasonal rainfall patterns, practising transhumance to sustain livelihoods. However, colonial borders and extractive practices disrupted these traditions, laying the groundwork for present-day environmental vulnerabilities.

Currently, the Sahel faces unrest, particularly in Mali, causing people to flee to neighbouring countries like Mauritania. The ecological fragility, compounded by advancing desertification and climate disasters, coincides with political instability marked by military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The involvement of transnational criminal networks and foreign mercenaries, like the Wagner group in Mali, has exacerbated

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to climate change. IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Summary for Policymakers* (IPCC, 2014).

violence, leading to mass displacements.

In Mauritania, the M'bera camp has emerged along ancient transhumance routes as a refuge for Malians fleeing conflict and environmental challenges. Despite being one of the world's poorest nations, Mauritania supports a significant refugee population, with the M'bera camp housing approximately 79,656 Malian refugees. Mauritania's policies grant essential rights to refugees, promoting social cohesion and economic growth. The camp's survival depends on innovative policies to demonstrate how refugee settlements can develop into sustainable communities, fostering economic prosperity and social cohesion for the migrants, their host community, and their challenging arid ecology.

ii. Haiti: Migration Amidst Climate Extremes and Violence

Haiti, a Caribbean nation sharing the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, serves as a stark illustration of the convergence between multidimensional forms of violence, colonial history, gang activities, and extreme climate events. This reality leads to migration from urban to rural areas like Port-au-Prince to Corail and Grand Ans. Haiti's vulnerability to climate change is deeply rooted in its tumultuous history of colonisation, exploitation, and environmental destruction. Post-independence, Haiti has continued to grapple with economic exploitation, political unrest, and social inequality. These challenges hamper the country's ability to effectively adapt to climate change and build resilience. Poverty and inadequate infrastructure heighten the vulnerabilities of communities, prompting unsustainable migration patterns.

The case studies of Mauritania and Haiti highlight the urgent need for holistic strategies addressing climate change, historical legacies, and socioeconomic gaps. In Mauritania, over 75 percent of the land is affected by desertification, reducing viable agricultural land and contributing to the internal

displacement of approximately 20,000 people each year. In addition, Mauritania's Open Doors Policy attracts displaced populations from across the Sahel, forcing the country to support hundreds of thousands of migrants in an effort to reduce local and regional conflict. Approximately 33 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with high unemployment rates, particularly among youth and rural communities.

In Haiti, over 90 percent of natural forests have been lost, exacerbating vulnerability to climate-related disasters such as hurricanes and floods. This environmental degradation, combined with devastating events like the 2010 earthquake, has resulted in the displacement of over 300,000 people. Recent years have also seen an escalation of violence that overlaps with areas affected by climate disasters, illustrating how climate acts as a stress multiplier, pushing fragile regions toward collapse. Around 60 percent of Haitians live on less than $2 a day, with the country ranking among the poorest in the Western Hemisphere and facing limited access to essential services and high unemployment.

These insights inform the development of spatial strategies for climate migration, emphasising community-centred approaches that empower marginalised communities, integrate diverse knowledge systems, and employ participatory design processes. Learning from these spaces about survival and social and environmental restorative justice can inform effective spatial strategies for climate migration, addressing the intertwined challenges of environmental change, socioeconomic inequities, and regional stability.

iii. Spatial Strategies for Climate Migration: Community-Centred Approaches

Community-centred approaches are essential to empowering marginalised communities. By integrating diverse knowledge systems and employing participatory design processes, these approaches can challenge entrenched power dynamics and

promote socioecological justice. As climate-induced migration displaces hundreds of millions, exacerbating human rights violations and deepening race, gender, and class disparities, it is crucial to harness the potential of these approaches to empower displaced and marginalised groups.

Communities in the Pacific Islands and the Sahel offer invaluable lessons in resistance, resilience, and adaptation. From these communities, we can learn about migration patterns shaped by climate extremes, from rising sea levels to intense wildfires and shifting dunes. These regions, deeply scarred by colonial devastation, embody rich traditions of both nomadic and sedentary lifestyles that provide profound insights into sustainable living practices and community resilience strategies.

On a policy level, existing humanitarian and international migration protocols often create dehumanising spaces, such as camps and detention centres, that fail to embrace the richness of cultural migration. Drawing on Homi Bhabha, who highlights the fluidity and hybridity of cultural identities shaped by historical and social contexts,[39] we can develop policies and human settlement spaces that reflect the dynamic nature of cultural identities. Similarly, Arturo Escobar's *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* argues for a reimagining of design that supports the creation of a 'pluriverse', where diverse ways of knowing, being, and living coexist.[40] He critiques Western-centric design paradigms for their uniformity and hegemony, advocating instead for design practices that respect cultural and ecological diversity, foster radical interdependence and autonomy, and decolonise design processes. Escobar emphasises the importance of participatory and inclusive design, where communities actively shape solutions, and promotes sustainable and regenerative practices that support both social and ecological systems.

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39 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

40 Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Duke University Press, 2018).

Design strategies for climate migration must transcend traditional enclosures, extraction, and capitalist accumulation. They emphasise flexibility, non-extractive practices, and the creation of thriving communities within the Earth's regenerative capacity. Participatory design models allow communities to adapt to changing environmental conditions without being constrained by outdated global migration frameworks. Non-extractive practices promote sustainable resource management and biodiversity, nurturing ecosystems rather than depleting them.

Central to participatory design is the creation of resilient communities by integrating local knowledge and traditions into planning processes. This ensures cultural appropriateness and context relevance, empowering local communities to codesign solutions and enhancing resilience. These approaches centre on social and environmental justice, addressing historical inequalities and empowering marginalised communities through equitable access to resources and decision-making processes.

Adopting these approaches can improve peace, security, and development, contributing to ecological and environmental restoration. Communities in the Pacific Islands and the Sahel offer valuable lessons in understanding new migration patterns and possibilities for expanding existing frameworks. These regions, profoundly affected by climate change, exhibit migration patterns driven by sea-level rise, intense wildfires, and shifting dunes. Their experiences, rooted in rich traditions of resistance and resilience, can reshape current approaches to human settlement and migration.

In the Sahel, where nomadic and sedentary lifestyles intersect, there is an opportunity to integrate these diverse ways of life into future settlements. The region's seasonal fluctuations necessitate settlements capable of shrinking and expanding as needed. This flexibility can be harnessed in designing adaptive spaces that accommodate both nomadic and sedentary communities, fostering sustainable coexistence and resilience to environmental changes.

In the Pacific Islands, new models of socioeconomic reparation and ecosystem restoration can be developed. These islands face existential threats from rising sea levels and extreme weather events. By integrating traditional knowledge systems and modern technologies, communities can restore ecosystems and develop sustainable economic practices. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also strengthens community resilience in the face of climate-induced displacement.

Historically at the heart of colonial devastation, these regions embody resilience and resistance against environmental and social injustices. Learning from their experiences, we can develop policies and frameworks that centre on cultural hybridity, local materiality, and community-driven decision-making. This can lead to inclusive spaces that respect diverse cultural identities and ways of living, challenging colonial and capitalist enclosures.

While community-centred approaches and participatory design present promising pathways for empowering marginalised communities and promoting socioecological justice, especially in regions like the Sahel and the Pacific Islands, these strategies face challenges such as entrenched power dynamics, resource limitations, and the need for cultural sensitivity. Additionally, existing legal and policy frameworks may not align with community-driven initiatives, and scaling successful projects can be complex. Effective implementation requires overcoming resistance to change and ensuring the sustainability of initiatives.

iv. Navigating Futures: Divergent Spatial Design Approaches

In the Spring semester, I tasked my students at Harvard Graduate School of Design with reflecting on this context and proposing diverse spatial design approaches. While the sessions were pragmatic and included conversations with various stakeholders and UN agency representatives, curated in collaboration with Diane Sheinberg of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the readings

were critical and provided a deeper understanding of the complexities involved. The class was divided into two research groups: one that examined Haiti and another that focused on Mauritania.[41]

The Haiti group explored alternative futures where Haitians not only thrived in their homeland but also had the freedom to explore global opportunities. Central to this approach was an examination of Haiti's colonial legacy and the profound impact of being the first independent Black nation in the Americas on its economy, environment, and society today.

The proposals for Haiti encompass a multifaceted approach to address its historical, environmental, and socioeconomic challenges while capitalising on opportunities for sustainable development. Central to these proposals is an examination of Haiti's colonial legacy, particularly the burden of 'independent debt' and the ongoing call for reparations from France and international entities involved in historical financial arrangements. This initiative advocates for a commission on transitional justice to address these injustices comprehensively, aiming to support Haiti's socioeconomic recovery and empower its people towards self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Furthermore, the proposals emphasise the importance of understanding Haiti's natural ecosystems and their evolution over centuries, anticipating future transformations exacerbated by climate change. Strategic interventions are proposed to enhance resilience and freedom, particularly in areas affected by internal migration trends such as Cité Soleil and Corail. Efforts also focus on improving Haiti's energy infrastructure to reduce dependency on biomass and increase electrification rates, alongside initiatives to harness marine refugia like the Baradères-Cayemites for

41 The students included: *Haiti group*: Steven Li, Sophie Weston Chien, Vardan Adibekyan, Elena Castellanos, Isis Patterson, Zach Tesler, Particio Garza, Eric Shwartz, and Jess Shakesprere; *Mauritania group*: Juliana Beekenkamp, Molly Brodsky, Fatima Hamdani, Pravah Khandekar, Dora Mugerwa, Alejandra Pardini Osorio, Shariq M. Shah, Leylâ Turanalp Uysal, and Allen Wang.

economic sustainability and biodiversity conservation. These proposals underscore the need for global engagement and partnerships to support Haiti's development goals, emphasising inclusive growth and environmental stewardship as integral components of sustainable development in the region.

The Mauritania group focused on M'bera refugee camp, challenging the notion of refugee camps as purely temporary spaces. Established in 1991, M'bera has evolved into a complex ecosystem and economic hub within Mauritania. Through interdisciplinary methods including spatial analysis, critical geography, and postcolonial theory, this research aimed to identify and address power imbalances in refugee camp infrastructure. The group highlighted examples of community-led initiatives within M'bera that fostered economic activity and social cohesion, such as local marketplaces and educational programs tailored to the needs of both residents and host communities.

The proposals for Mauritania, centred around the M'bera camp, reflect a comprehensive approach to refugee management and sustainable development in the Sahel region. Emphasising the dynamic evolution of M'bera beyond its initial crisis response role, the proposals aim to empower residents and stakeholders through inclusive community engagement and long-term infrastructural planning. The first scenario, 'Routes by Design', explores migration pathways that accommodate diverse lifestyles and priorities such as food security, water access, and cultural preservation. By mapping these routes and enhancing infrastructure, the scenario aims to bolster choice and agency among nomadic and sedentary communities amidst changing climatic and urbanisation pressures.

The second scenario, '(Self) Governance', advocates for participatory decision-making within the M'bera camp, bridging the gap between short-term humanitarian aid and sustainable, community-centred development. It proposes mobile engagement structures and participatory budgeting to empower refugees in

shaping their living environments and futures. Meanwhile, the third scenario introduces the Oasis Model, advocating for the creation of self-sustaining ecological systems that harness local resources like groundwater and date palms. These oases not only support livelihoods but also serve as hubs for sustainable settlements and migration routes, promoting resilience and reducing dependency on external aid.

Together, these scenarios offer a nuanced perspective on the (im)permanence of refugee camps in Mauritania, highlighting the potential for integrated, ecosystem-based solutions to foster long-term sustainability and community resilience in the face of complex environmental and socioeconomic challenges.

Conclusions

Climate change is reshaping our world, and its impacts on human migration are profound and multifaceted. This essay has explored the intersection of climate-induced migration through a postcolonial lens, focusing on historical legacies of enclosure, territory, and rights. By examining case studies from Mauritania and Haiti, we have seen how colonial exploitation and environmental degradation continue to shape contemporary displacement patterns.

The Sahel region exemplifies the environmental fragility exacerbated by colonial borders and extractive practices, leading to contemporary conflicts and displacements. In contrast, Haiti illustrates the convergence of historical colonial violence, extreme climate events, and socioeconomic challenges, driving migration from urban to rural areas. Moving forward, addressing climate-induced migration requires holistic strategies that integrate social, environmental, and historical justice. Design and governance models must prioritise resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability, learning from diverse communities' resilience strategies in regions like the Pacific Islands and the Sahel. Models such as Doughnut Economics offer frameworks for equitable development

within planetary boundaries, emphasising the need to redefine success beyond GDP growth alone.

Moreover, community-centred approaches and participatory design processes are crucial in empowering marginalised communities affected by climate displacement. By centring local knowledge and traditions, these approaches can foster inclusive, adaptive settlements that respect cultural identities and promote environmental stewardship.

In conclusion, navigating the complexities of climate migration demands a paradigm shift towards justice-oriented policies and resilient spatial designs. By learning from historical injustices and embracing diverse perspectives, we can forge pathways towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all, ensuring that no one is left behind in the face of climate change.

In Conversation with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi



Fig. 1. A provisions shop near Ifo camp where people first encounter settlement at Dadaab. Photograph taken by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, 2011.

Nicholas Frayne (NF):
I want to begin with the theme that drives this issue of *Scroope*. The central idea of the issue is *disenclosure*, which, coming from postcolonial theory, opens up the intersection of justice and architecture, settlement, sedentarization, migration, and more. Your work on spatial violence, humanitarianism, and, most recently, on the spatial practice and politics of the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya resonates closely with the theme, given the spatial nature of what it means to enclose and to create this refugee space.

I am particularly interested in unpacking some of the core paradoxes of humanitarian spatiality you examine through Dadaab, a temporary camp that has been there since the 1990s, and which make it such a fertile space for exploring — among other things — enclosure, temporality, underdevelopment, land versus territory, and belonging.

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi (AIS):
First, I am very grateful to be having this conversation about the book, and thank you for thinking with it. I am especially grateful to talk with you, as you do your own work in Kenya on fraught histories.

Maybe I will start with the paradox that Dadaab offers the problem of architectural ephemerality. I think that ephemerality is a form of representation. It is not necessarily ontologically what we find in Dadaab.

I opened the book very specifically saying that a refugee camp is not an object. It is a historical event. One of the ways in which that event gets spatialised is through its temporality. The event may be prolonged, and the architecture may in fact be more permanent, but the aesthetics of the architecture play out an ephemerality.

NF:
And how are some of the ways this ephemerality plays out at Dadaab?

AIS:
We see this in two big ways. Number one, a displaced person may not want to imagine that they are displaced forever. They may want to imagine that they're going back home. Number two, most governments, and even the communities that are local to an area where displaced people find themselves, face burdens when a large population suddenly appears, needing care. This happens whether that community itself is doing the caring through a form of mutual aid, or there's some top-down, international effort that carries its own agendas, as is the case all over Africa. Because Kenya has historically been ready to work with Western governments, it has made a space for the international community. It's made a space for the UN in ways that have enabled this architecture of Dadaab to concretise on its border with Somalia. But that architecture can't give the appearance of being permanent.

Those two issues create a drive to the ephemeral in the architecture of the camp. This is by way of saying that we shouldn't take ephemerality as a *de facto* condition. There are agentive forces that are making it so.

NF:
It strikes me that the architectural qualities and forms of Dadaab are highly specific, yet relate more generally to vernacular architectures in East Africa, indicating another temporal linkage.

AIS:
I find looking closely at architecture is a compelling way into these spatial politics. Traditional building forms in East Africa, particularly for pastoralist communities, offer a fascinating architectural iteration of this same ephemerality. These

architectures are permanent. It's just that they happen to move well. The *tuqul*, a house form developed over generations, is intended not to be a fixed architecture. It's supposed to be able to be picked up, put on the backs of camels, moved to other locations. The dwelling itself can be dismantled in different ways. It has a very strong frame. It is also paradoxical. This set of conditions that creates the camps demands an ephemeral architecture that sedentarises the tuqul architecture in the camps.

To me, that was already a bizarre paradox that demanded looking at migration from multiple viewpoints. There's the migratory lifeway of a pastoralist learning how to build this architectural object based on hereditary craft knowledge, and there are the migratory detention spaces of governments and international bodies. Ironically, these forces sit together and coinhabit the space. In that sense they work together toward more metaphysical ends.

All of this raises the question of 'What are these architectures?' Or rather, 'What are these architectural historical forces?'

NF:
These points are beautifully illustrated in the book with the photographs you've taken of these architectural forces. The way you speak about this architecture is through a much longer history that precedes certainly the camp itself, but also stretches back across the British colonial presence in East Africa. This raises another tension between settlement and migration.

In Dadaab, the architectures have been arrested in a way; they've become sedentary. While the tuqul has the logics of a mobile migratory architecture, it fits within the logic of sedentarisation as well.

AIS:
You've used this colonial term 'arrested' and I think it's apropos. The architectures have been arrested, much like many people, and I think they have been sedentarised, again, much like many people. This is where one can look closely at a scene and understand the past; understanding what that architecture looks like in the present is the way into the past. I opened the book by asking, 'What do we learn when we look closely at a refugee camp?' I think through the architecture we can see these long histories of sudden coercion.

NF:
Coercion and carcerality bring up the wider idea of disenclosure, which invokes the adjacent ideas of enclosure, closure, and even foreclosure — all of which have architectural histories.

AIS:
I think these histories are tied to the tense relationship between architecture and land. They are tied to the practice of enclosure by the British government over hundreds of years and the ways those practices were brought into Kenya or were taken up by Kenyans. The iterative construction of territory, or the construction of property, is to me at the heart of this problem. I came to it methodologically because I was acting as an art historian, looking closely at architecture.

When we look closely at the relationship between the architecture of Dadaab refugee camps and the land that it's part of — that it sometimes grows right out of — we see the end results of what a UNHCR planner is drawing: a grid on a piece of paper. But people are growing that grid on their land. Of course, it is not legally their land.

NF:
Where did you begin with these tensions?

AIS:
It started with the central architectural paradox: when you see many, many tuquls sitting right next to each other, it is striking because they would never sit that way in any 'natural' setting.

NF:
You also write about how the refugee camp is a partition. The spatial arrangements of these tuquls reveals the emergence of partition, which is the creation of territory from land. This process produces an alien spatiality composed of tuqul architectures; partition produces particular spatialities that are strange.

I'm interested in thinking about what effects this partition space has on the people who live there. What are the sociopolitics of life in the camp? What is life like in the camp and how do people claim forms of agency amid what you call a colonial spatiality? Do they distort this 'humanitarian grid' when they grow it themselves, or what is that relationship within the camp itself between imposed colonial structures and the people themselves?

AIS:
The debate between structure and agency wasn't the debate that I took up. Rather, I was concerned with how to make use of master theories when aiming to really deal with quite urgent problems on the ground. I never felt like master theories actually resolved what I was seeing. (Although, later in the book, they helped me to theorise domesticity.)

My research was also predicated on dozens of interviews, mostly with mothers trying to forge a life for their families. Ultimately the whole book took up a more feminist approach, provincialising common Marxist arguments for reading provisional environments and prioritising lived and embodied experience when theorising.

I think people work with the spaces they are given in profoundly creative ways. While I don't presume to speak for refugees (I am not a refugee myself), I think that I witnessed profound experimentation, and not only on the level of life-saving or on the level of survival, but on the level of thought and material creation. This is not to blithely celebrate innovation in dire conditions. I truly believe in Dadaab people are living at the vanguard. At the limits of domesticity in the most extreme conditions, at the limits of sovereignty. I think that we're witnessing an avant-garde. That to me is a very important idea to hold on to because I think it speaks to what we ought to be aiming for in the ways that we think.

This vanguard no longer lies in the objects that we've trusted for so long. We really have to look to objects that we can't necessarily know, and we have to get comfortable with not necessarily knowing them. And we have to trust that what we're seeing is something that is at the leading edge of theory as much as practice.

Maybe that is too abstract, but I think that's what I saw.

Architecturally, I write in the book about partition thinking. That became a really important way for me to start understanding what I was seeing. The colonial practice of making a territory is very different from partition: partitioning occurs on the bodies of people.

The British imperial forces were particularly focused on dividing human beings and severing their social ties. They were skilled at working on the bodies of people and also their social structures. That entanglement is at the core of my question: 'What are we really seeing when we see a refugee camp?'

I believe what we're seeing is an afterlife of partitions. On the one hand, we're seeing a partition of land. Of course, a refugee camp is a border camp. It is situated on one side of a border. But that is only one piece of the story. What is set into motion is a partitioning principle that really is about the

partitioning of people, of individual lives. As Fanon analysed, partition creates a self-colonising mechanism.

Partition also lives on the level of societies as it reproduces itself over and over again, in the ways that people divide. There are many ways we can describe that. People reproduce partition spatially and socially. You're asking about the agency within a camp. While agency does not amount to something as simple as breaking the grid, there are ways in which people choose to reinforce the plan or to move outside it or do something else within it. For example, in this harsh, arid environment of the northeast of Kenya, one can effectively walk into a lush ecosystem. It was so unsettling and strange, so uncanny. These strange acts that do not fit expectations of refugee life are not quite a form of resistance, and yet how can we see them as anything but?

NF:

You framed the idea that you have this structure, this logic of partition, that is emplaced onto the land and people who not only work within the structure and reinforce it, but then they also distort it. This makes me think of some of the work that is coming out of the African Centre for Cities with Edgar Pieterse, and the work of AbdouMaliq Simone, who both write on different forms of experimentation and improvisation as agency.[1]

You can think of improvisation as a musical term where you have the metric, the beat and the rhythm, which you pick up and you play with. But you also play outside of it, you reframe it, you change the beat. These forms of agency in the camps are perhaps neither with a system nor against it, but trying to find a third way to carve out space that somebody can make into a home. Home, here, is meant as a place where one can start to build connections, forms of mobility, and new ways of surviving,

1 See Edgar Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone, *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017); AbdouMaliq Simone, *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

ultimately.

The structures of partition — and whatever acts unfold in and beyond those structures — can also be understood temporally. You distinguish between the camp as an object and the camp as an event, and you also spoke earlier about ephemerality; it seems to me that time sits within this discussion on the architecture of migration, and its long historical relations.

There is this idea that colonisation is a fixing of time, of people's temporalities, and people's ability to relate to time.[2] For example, the British were obsessed with demarcating identities through fixing and compartmentalising people's histories — this is clear during the British response to the Mau Mau movement in the 1950s. The British created detainment camps as a method of territorial production, and partitioned space, partitioned land, and partitioned populations in the process. There seems to be a relationship between the temporalities of Dadaab and colonial temporalities, which were enacted spatially.

This of course raises complex questions about what temporalities are produced and reproduced over time, and what subjectivities are entangled with that production. The temporalities of the camp seem to exist in multiple historical times, whether it's deep time or the immediate time of emergency that is mobilised by humanitarian agencies to enact this logic of partition.

AIS:

To think about this in a very basic way, life in Dadaab adheres to a curfew. The curfew is one of the readiest tools that was used during the colonial era to determine who could move where and at what time. The curfew is about mobility.

In most settings, the British set up territories of mobility, through curfews — not only in moments of emergency, but as a default. This leads one to think that all of colonial life was created

2 Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), pp. 52–59

as emergency. In Dadaab, you have the hours when the aid workers were there, and then the night. Those times are very distinct.

This led me to think in larger expanses of time. The whole book is organised according to regimes of historicity, regimes of time, including large geologic spans of time that are important to think with.

Dadaab wouldn't have existed for its thirty years without the ancient aquifer underneath it. I think that we have to link those spans of time together. If we want to be able to talk about the thirty years, we have to acknowledge this other thing that made it possible for those thirty years to happen, because without it, you don't have a situation where half a million people arrive somewhere and exist there. Without the aquifer and its timespans, they just would die out.

That's the planetary scale on which we have to understand things.

NF:
And how does the architectural — which occupies a more human, if intergenerational, scale — fit into this planetary scale?

AIS:
It's really important to me that we be able to read architectures and built environments in order to understand history. This is also about how we use architectural history to unpack longer regimes of time.

You could of course also write a history limited to how this camp was planned, settled, inhabited, used — but to do so it is really important to unpack at least the seventy-five years or so of the UN humanitarian regime. Camps like this only become possible after World War II, after the UNHCR starts to take up a program of building.

You can also unpack a longer regime of a colonial history, or even of Europeans entering Africa with the introduction of missions — missions being a crucial precedent for refugee camps in every way. (Let us not think for a minute that the refugee camp isn't a Christian mission in Africa. It absolutely is.)

There are lots of ways that Dadaab opens up larger regimes of time. We can start in the moment in Lisbon in the eighteenth century, with the introduction of the humanitarian ideal into a built environment. This is the moment when responses to disaster start to look a little like they do today. People from across Europe were shipping shelters to the royalty in Portugal, revealing a response that echoes today's.

This response reveals a partition thinking. There's us and there's them; we have, they do not. Within that thinking, a racialisation occurs. Thinking with the material and social is crucial in this book, but partition thinking has also demanded thinking on Blackness. The work of W. E. B. DuBois, Walter Rodney, and Achille Mbembe have helped me think about Blackness.

NF:
These partitions return us to enclosure, borderisation, compartmentalisation — quite definitive descriptors for conditions that can be seen in times of emergency.

AIS:
This concept of enclosure and the questions that you're asking about the temporal tie to what Simone describes in *The Surrounds* (2022).[3] Thinking with the surrounds offers a permeable way of talking about enclosure. I think *disenclosure* mirrors arguments around structure and agency, in that we can imagine enclosure and its putative opposite, disenclosure.

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3 AbdouMaliq Simone, *The Surrounds: Urban Life within and beyond Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022).

Regardless, these ideas are incredibly fruitful for us to think with as we try to theorise how we move forward in a time when most of us are living with some level of precarity. There is no longer an illusion of any place beyond emergency territory.

If you think about the construction of a camp as an emergency space, then it becomes a form of permanent impermanence, or a continuously precarious space. The camp can never exceed precarity due to the temporality of emergency. Emergency is constructing the camp as a territory.

NF:
The camp is suspended. This emergency temporality raises the question of how the past is framed and related to.

AIS:
Emergency also implies there's no past. There's no future. There's only the present. This construction of time is ultimately a way of being able to rule, of ultimately being able to control, to manage, populations. We find these mechanisms to cordon people off and control their existences in most, if not all, emergency responses.

This is bound up with a moral economy. We are ultimately unable to partition. When people do partition, they feel such trauma and guilt. They can't reconcile the contradictions.

NF:
In line with emergency territory, we have carceral space. Spaces of imprisonment are also spaces of suspension. They are often also places of bodily violence. You mentioned lived embodied experiences and the ways in which time partitions and territorial claims are impressed upon bodies. That opens up to trauma and the ways in which trauma is embodied, and it refuses language in many cases. These spaces of emergency and carcerality carry similar temporal compressions, enacted on bodies, that are

flattening or fixing time.

When there's an emergency, there are spaces created that respond to this state. In 1982, there was a coup in Kenya. In response, Daniel Arap Moi imprisoned hundreds, if not thousands, committing murder and torture across the country. That is a historically different emergency and form of carcerality than in Dadaab; these different emergencies produce varying spaces of incarceration. But the forms of temporality remain similar. Under emergency, there is a fixed or suspended temporality. Under Moi, the threat of physical violence was all encompassing, foreclosing the future as always potentially directly violent.

I think this begs the question of 'How do you rehabilitate that sense of temporality?' And is there a way to think about architecture as a means by which you can begin rehabilitating the territory of emergency and carcerality that has been historically produced?

You mentioned that land is a medium for sedimenting forms of difference and you speak of it as a palette for thinking with carcerality at Dadaab. That struck me as a very powerful way to think about architecture as a discipline that has a positive dimension to it.

AIS:

In this carceral context, I think disenclosure helps us theorise a way forward. To come to this, there is a practical need to understand the social and architectural history of imprisonment, the ways that the prison itself has been used as a tool.

As we talk, I keep returning to a larger environmental argument. There has to be a way of understanding carcerality on a larger scale than just the scale of one prison or one governmental unit. For me, entering this has involved understanding larger issues grounding Black consciousness. I have felt that the generous and generative frameworks of Black consciousness theory do a lot of this work, primarily because of the long

meditation on the racialisation of space, the racialisation of incarceration, and the imprisonment of Black bodies.

I think that that has forced an immediate thinking around disenclosure. That liberatory orientation has given us a framework of writings that have a lot to say about architecture.

NF:
It strikes me that disenclosure, as a way of thinking, is helpful because it emphasises our ability to not only just oppose compartmentalisation or borderisation or enclosure, but it helps us to emphasise the relations that are key to defining our senses of self, our senses of community, and our relationships ultimately with the land and with our own histories.

To me, a liberatory framework has to be about mobilities and transgressions, emphasising passage and our ability to shift our relations — not just what relations are best for living a good life. I mean that it is what structures our potential for movement, rather than the destination, that's important. I find the concept of disenclosure most useful at dislodging sedimented ways of approaching theory due to its infrastructural focus on mobilities and transformation from one into another. With its focus on connective tissue, it enables new relationalities to form.

AIS:
That's it. I think Nicole Fleetwood's work is really helpful on this. Her abolitionist work is not about just breaking out of the prison walls, but it really is about what you make in relation to others. Often, she looks at individual artists, but she also looks closely at collectivities, both inside prisons, and across the wall, making art through an inside-outside relation.

This is staunchly abolitionist work, and yet it isn't demanding that the walls come down. This isn't fussing with traditional problems of resistance and with power structures in the usual way. It's provincialising in that way, and yet it's very serious. She's thinking with her own family members who

have been on the inside, and so it's very personal for her, but she's also working with many artists who have been imprisoned for significant parts of their own lives.

I also want to move to another thing that I feel like you'll be uniquely positioned to discuss.

NF:
Yes, of course.

AIS:
One thing I have been struggling with is that so much of the literature that we can turn to that is abolitionist or that would even use that theoretical term to describe itself, is based in the US and it comes out of US-based critical race theory or Black studies. I personally find this very limiting. When you again turn to this chapter of Mbembe's on disenclosure, he talks about subaltern studies and Black Atlantic theory as a two-pronged movement in the academy. It's not an accident that they both arose because they have an Atlantic connection in many ways. It was the rise of a certain American academy that made the life of those discourses possible.

Yet I really struggle with this, particularly working in Africa. I think that there's a way in which I have tried in this book's citations to think around the world. I try and mobilise my citational practice as part of an effort to lift up a different discourse, but I really do struggle with how to work within this hegemony that privileges a worldview that is from the heart of US empire.

NF:
Ultimately, I think that's the biggest challenge of doing research, especially from major institutions that are historically tied to empire. For me, the way to work with this positionality is to build, as you do, from the ground. In your book you are building the story of Dadaab from people's experiences — with

those who are most embedded in the context. This idea of embeddedness and implication is key for me. While we are all implicated in large interconnected systems — capitalism, ecological crisis, imperialism — we are differentially embedded, and by engaging in these differences, new approaches to the large systems can emerge. The hegemony of imperial knowledge will not disappear overnight, and I find working directly against it to be a slow battle. Working around it is more fruitful.

Approaching the hegemony of imperial knowledge structurings requires a simple ambition: we need to try to go into an encounter openly and try to learn with the people who we're doing the research with.

For example, ideas of justice are central to my own work on the memory and materiality of sites of violence. With the question of justice, you end up with John Rawls and Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Iris Young, and the likes. You can go all the way back to Bentham and Smith. But when you're in a place and you're looking at a piece of architecture and a specific injustice, it is very clear that survivors have their own understandings of justice and injustice which diverge from the theory, even as they often use theory explicitly (especially Fanon, Freire, and Marx, at least in the Kenyan context). Going into the question of 'How am I to define justice in my own work?' requires thinking about the understandings of justice that exist beyond the academy, and asking 'How do those definitions produce a concept that is most applicable to that situation?' This concept then can be treated as one amongst many; brought into contact as an equal with Rawlsian theories, for example. The academy can be provincialised in this, no longer the only space from which theory is generated.

I find that it's all about trying to build knowledge from as localised a space as possible, and trusting that the transferable knowledge that you're hoping to create through the research will be there. Maybe this gets back to the idea of an unbordered

world that we all share: when you create very localised knowledge it will be applicable to other places because of the simple fact that we are all people in the world facing multiple forms of enclosure, carcerality, emergency, and the likes.

There is a risk in this highly localised approach, but, rather, there needs to be hope and trust that an idea will emerge that can be of use beyond that locality within which you're building knowledge. Doing research from these powerful institutions requires a hopeful leap, and setting up research as an effort to work beyond these hegemonic structures — if that is indeed possible. A third way, perhaps.

AIS:
This is why we set up our methodologies as we do. I believe in a rigorous approach to this as you've articulated, really structuring our sociality and also placing a demand on our own academic degree-granting programs, saying, 'If I'm going to do the work, it needs to be under conditions that serve all the places where I work.' One has to believe that doing the small act leads to the big change.

NF:
Absolutely.

AIS:
It's quite a thing that you can do a PhD like yours in an architecture department in 2024. It was not so long ago that yours wasn't a topic for a PhD, certainly not this drive toward uncovering roots of social justice. That was not what architecture was about!

That sea change is something worth acknowledging here. We're talking about enclosure and disenclosure; this is an act of disenclosure in a broad sense, operating in the academy and certainly in the field of architectural studies, which has had the most direct investment in the study enclosure, and its spatial

character. Although this field has also spent the most time ignoring it and yet reproducing it.

NF:
There are early roots to this idea, and I think about the work in the last century on 'architecture's public'[4] and ideas about the ethics of architectural praxis. What's different today?

AIS:
Maybe in the 1960s, this was something that architects wanted to do, but they didn't have the tools, and they certainly didn't have the apparatus within the academy to put PhDs toward this. I've been reckoning with this trajectory in a lot of different ways, as many of us have, and I think we are seeing architectural history as a field coming into its own and being able to actually address its own objects.

There was a long period during which an architectural history in the academy could not centre something either as crass or as violent as a prison. The discipline was not refined enough. Now, we have the apparatus to be able to discuss the things that really require urgent action.

NF:
As architectural history matures as a field, I wonder also about methods. When we ask, 'What are architectural methods?', we realise that they're really not codified. I think this looseness in architectural methodologies is enabling quite innovative ways of approaching the intersection of space, matter, people's lives, politics and more. It's providing a very fertile space in the discipline which makes me hopeful about architecture.

There's a lot of hope within the discipline that we can begin to use our tools to powerfully investigate things that matter beyond the strict boundaries of the discipline. We have very

4 Giancarlo De Carlo, 'Architecture's public', in Peter Blundell Jones et al. eds., *Architecture and Participation* (Taylor and Francis eBooks, 2005), pp. 3–22.

real crises that architects are part of. I'm hopeful that the ways in which we go about practising architecture within the academy and beyond it could have quite powerful implications for imagining ways out of the crises — imagining that third way between the islands.

AIS:
I think that in that sense, one lesson I learned from Dadaab was that the crisis is not only existential, but really a crisis of theory. You can do a very quick survey of critical humanitarian studies and you will find it has found its floor in Foucault's writings on the dispositive, or Agamben's very particular readings of extraterritoriality. In the latter instance, this political theorist is doing what a political theorist is supposed to do, but taking those theories and applying them directly to architecture can fall flat. I can see an exciting field of theory that also is very limited by its own floor.

When I came to Dadaab, there wasn't a way to come to it as an architectural object. I thought I would understand it as a localised, monumental architecture that would help me describe the global humanitarian system. Instead, I think I found African ways of knowing. I had to take a very grounded approach to learn from and with people in Dadaab, which brought me to much deeper theory.

Theory emerged from the ways that they thought (conditioned, of course, by how I came across their work), and the understanding that their interactions with architecture were as meaningful as a political theoretical analysis. Those things made me think differently about the capacities of architectural history. In this way, Dadaab could be a space of philosophy.

NF:
Absolutely. Philosophy has always been of interest to architects, except perhaps today, in architectural practice under neoliberalism where we use our expertise rather uncritically (for

the most part) to help the wealthiest partition land and produce space as they wish.

AIS:
All the things we've talked about in this conversation really do leave me thinking, 'Well, how else would you study enclosure except through architecture?' What we have to think of is the nature of a bounded politics today, and architecture is heavily invested in boundary-making. I think we are uniquely equipped to investigate this.

NF:
Architects are also invested in alternatives. Imagining alternative spaces is fundamental to our discipline, which I think can help us to be more than just critical about present conditions. We are well-attuned to also thinking with the future.

AIS:
I think of Irit Katz, for example, who has done this very close work on the camp,[5] but her background is also as a poet. These are things that are really important to note. Forms of creative praxis are the way we come to architecture, and more of us are coming to architecture in these different ways than ever before. I think that this will give us the means to write about the material, structural, and symbolic forms that, at the end of the day, are the things we live with in the world. They aren't just the byproduct of politics, or the byproduct of societies. They carry meaning, and are in fact the traces that people leave behind.

NF:
The idea about living-with is fundamental to this, I think. We all live with each other in a shared world, with what has been inherited, and also with the future. This makes creative practices

5 See Irit Katz, *The Common Camp: Architecture of Power and Resistance in Israel–Palestine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022).

that are concerned with these temporal links between what was, is, and is yet to come profoundly important for finding new ways of living with each other.

It's a hopeful idea that we not only inherit, and not only have our capacities to act in the present, but also are creatively producing futures and alternate possibilities. I find that very fulfilling and hopeful — even as we live amid multiple crises.



Fig. 2. Women moving through the food distribution center, Ifo camp. Photograph taken by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, 2011.

Colonial Persistence

Samia Henni

In the past few years, specifically, thanks to the demands of Black Lives Matter global movement, many architecture schools, programs, instructors, directors, chairs, and deans have promised their students, alumni, and employees to 'decolonise' their curriculum. They created ad-hoc committees, drafted antiracist reports and anticolonial protocols, organised townhalls to address systemic racism and white supremacy, established strategic lines and positions, admitted and hired specific profiles, and made their promised commitment public through official statements and speeches, which were published on their webpages. Yet, the colonial persists more than ever. Its persistence cannot be more explicit since October 2023, and the relentless Israeli war on Gaza. Its persistence is unquestioned by various universities and colleges who have censored, repressed, harassed, bulled, threatened, suspended, and sued Palestinian and pro-Palestinian students and employees. The colonial persists within institutions that, on the one hand, promised to create a more 'diverse', 'equal', and 'inclusive' educational environment, and on the other hand, have postponed or stopped their transactional promise to question 'The Colonial Order of Things'.[1]

As Frantz Omar Fanon (1925–1961), anticolonial psychiatrist and political philosopher from the French colony of Martinique (today a French department), argued in his seminal 1961 book *Les damnées de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*): 'The colonial world is a Manichean world.'[2] A world that has been historically, and is being continuously, permeated and marked by violent activities of war, occupation, exploitation, dispossession, destruction and strategic construction. A world that is segregated into compartments and characterised by a strict division between

1 See, for example, Samia Henni, 'The Colonial Order of Things', in *Architheses reader: Critical Positions in Search of Postmodernity, 1971–1976*, ed. by Gabrielle Schaad and Torsten Lange (Triest Verlag für Architektur, 2021), pp. 389–403; Samia Henni, 'Colonial Ramifications', *E-Flux Architecture, History/ Theory*, gta Institute, ETH Zurich, 31 October 2018 <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/history-theory/225180/colonial-ramifications>.

2 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by R. Philcox (Grove Press, 2004), p. 41.

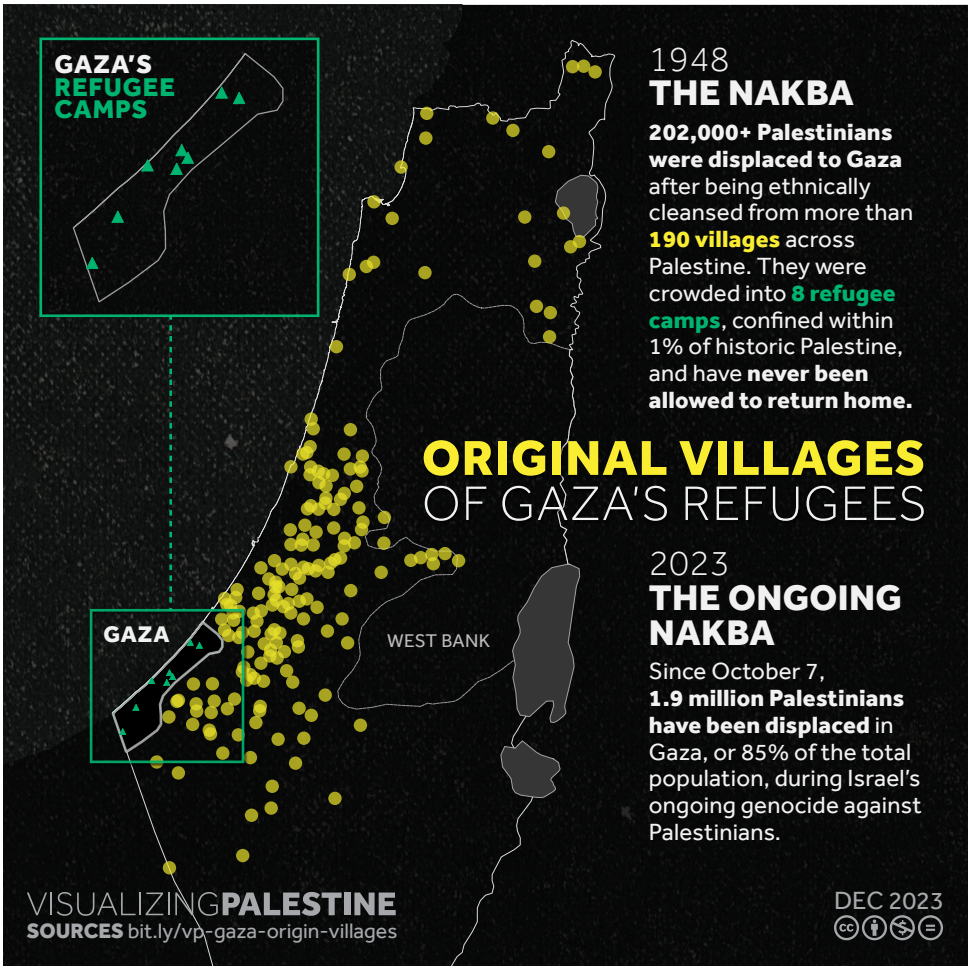


Fig. 1. Original Villages of Gaza's Refugees, *Visualizing Palestine*, 2023 <https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/original-villages-of-gazas-refugees/>.

the coloniser and colonised people, spaces, and resources. He argued that 'Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state.'[3] Fanon's analysis of colonial violence was informed by his lived experiences in colonised Martinique, France, and colonised Algeria, where he worked as psychiatrist at Blida-Joinville Hospital between 1953 and 1957.[4] For Fanon, violence is both a human (political) and a medical (scientific) notion. He identified at least three categories of violence: offensive colonial violence, defensive anticolonial violence, and violence in the international context — opening up possibilities for fundamental reconsiderations of the world order.[5]

He claimed that in the colonies, the production of the colonial space entailed (and still entails) the destruction of existing lives, buildings, and environments, and thereby the imposition of certain norms of forms of eating, drinking, living, commuting, speaking, working, building, and so on.[6] Whether it was called the 'civilising mission' in the context of nineteenth-century colonisation; 'development' and 'investment' in the context of the twentieth-century Cold War (including the threat of nuclear war); or 'urbicide' and 'scorched-earth' in today's Israel war on

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3 Fanon, p. 61.

4 See, for example, Samia Henni, 'On Frantz Fanon and the Manichean World', *Mousse Magazine,* April 2024 <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/frantz-omar-fanon-samia-henni-2024>.

5 On Fanon's definitions of violence, see 'Concerning Violence' and 'Violence in the International Context', in Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 35–106. Fanon's approach to violence and its effects is informed by the violence of the colonial world that he experienced and attempted to cure. Sometimes his work has been taken out of context and he was unfairly accused of inciting violence. However, Fanon argued that violence is the 'natural state' of colonial rule and that the colonial space is maintained through violence.

6 See, for example, Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (University of Chicago Press, 1989); Nezar AlSayyad, *Forms of Dominance on the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise* (Avebury, 1992); Itohan Osayimwese, *Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany*, Culture, Politics, and the Built Environment (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017); Samia Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (gta Verlag, 2017).

Gaza, these spatial practices maintain and reinforce a specific colonial world order. As Fanon argued, the primary encounter between the coloniser and the colonised people and their spaces was marked by violence. He contended: 'Violence in its practice is totalizing and national. As a result, it harbours in its depths the elimination of regionalism and tribalism.'[7] Architectural and spatial examples of this elimination can be found in various territories and lands across the world, including Africa, Asia, Australia, the Americas, and the Middle East. However, Fanon's critique of colonial violence incites a reflection on the relationships between 'postcolonial' studies, 'decolonial' theories, and the imperial neoliberal institutions that offer those studies. Often, the founders and leaders of those universities and colleges supported, financed, and benefited from 'The Colonial Order of Things'. If this contradiction was part of one of the critical masks of colonialist institutions, today it has become ideological and politicised, and therefore, those who teach those classes are often repressed, surveyed, and in many cases, violently harassed, or fired.

Fanon's anticolonial analysis of the Manichean world and colonial violence (both political and scientific) exposes that contradiction and reveals the mechanism of the colonial persistence. This persistence is to be understood transnationally, connecting the construction of colonial infrastructure and spaces built by colonising regimes with the destruction of lives, buildings, and environments in formerly or currently colonised places by those regimes and their allies. Such multiscale and multidirectional understanding must be informed by anticolonial, abolitionist, Indigenous, and other traditions of associating anticolonial practices with aspirations for national liberation, and social, spatial, and environmental justice. For many, those practices are performed daily as a form of existence and survival. For Fanon decolonisation is a historical process that 'cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the

7 Fanon, p. 51.

movements which give it historical form and content'.[8] Those movements are global, strong, loud, consistent, convinced, and committed. Nothing can prevent them or stop them from their quest for and defence of justice, accountability, and dignity.



Fig. 2. Six Wars Old, *Visualizing Palestine*, 2024 <https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/six-wars-old/>.

8 Fanon, p. 36.

Apostrophe Ess[1]: Meditations on Writing and Editing during a Genocide

Ozayr Saloojee

1 This title is a riff on the title (and book cover) of a remarkable text. See: Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017). While Moreton-Robinson's work is situated in the indigenous Australian world, her questions of power, property, indigenous rights and sovereignty — and their possessing and possession — are at the root of global conversations of justice.



Fig. 1. A person standing next to a car — ‘walls are meant for climbing’, 2022. Image by Dylan Shaw, via Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/a-person-standing-next-to-a-car-MLYpe12tzZE>.

A little while ago — going on almost a year now — I retracted a text that I was going to include in an academic journal. I won't relay fully what I wrote in that text (those Words[2] belong to me), but I will tell you why I retracted them, and what — I think — that has come to mean for me today, as of this writing (August 2024), as we have crossed over three hundred[3] days of genocide, urbicide, scholasticide, epistemicide, chronocide (name your choice of '-cide', and you can pick more than one) in Gaza, the Occupied West Bank, in Yemen, in Lebanon, and Syria, and and and...

Those Words were written during the first weeks of this genocide, and they were prompted in part by the broad, deafening silence of the architectural academy — a deliberate, neo-intellectual, fake-intersectional quietude tied to the geologic hyper-speed erasure of Palestinian worlds in Gaza and the Occupied Territories. Blink and a school is gone. Blink again, there goes a hospital. Blink, blink, blink, blink. A residential

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2 I don't know, really, if those words were any good, or even deserving. Nevertheless, they were meaningful and necessary words to me — so we'll capitalise them as 'Words', a proper noun. Those Words mattered, for a number of reasons, which we'll get into in the main text up above these footnotes. And during their writing, and in particular through the encounter with some of the systems of academia, many things became clear; among them was a realization that my Words would be profoundly enclosed, and therefore limited, owned, and in way — made *smaller* by their inclusion in this publication — in large part because of the entanglements with disciplinary silence. On that silence, read on, dear-reader, to the third paragraph of this text, then come back here… And, you're back — so, when the editors of *Scroope* 33 approached me, in the warm, and generous Teams faces of Jerry Chow and Nicholas Frayne, and were plural and generous in their invitation to contribute to this issue — themed around Mbembe's chapter 'Disenclosure', from his text, *Out of the Dark Night*, I felt that perhaps my Words — or some version of them — could make friends here, or at least find a tender home. See Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 42–89.

3 I've been writing THIS strange text that you are now reading, for a little while now — over a few months. And each time I come back to it (this is version, I don't know, like eight? nine? ten? Each time, the number of days ticks up, and I am struck by the violent enclosure of time that academic publications require. A while ago, it was 100 days, then 150, then 190, then 200, then 300. And then, I remember, it's more than 27,000 days, if you can agree that history did not begin on 7 October 2023.

block, a town square, a mosque, a church. I wrote those Words as a Brown, Muslim academic, with family and friends — and students and colleagues — in Palestine. I wrote them while working for institutions: the architectural world, the world of higher education — that, by and large, remained (and remain) mute on the Israeli weaponised instrumentalisation of utilities, infrastructures, and architecture, to displace, erase, and destroy Palestinian life, on the use of the architecture and planning disciplines, architectural history, and scholarship to enable the genocide and the displacement of the Palestinian people.[4]

The silence is a form of closure. It is a sealing up[5] — or an attempted sealing up, an academic silicone caulk, gorilla tape, duct tape — of the widening gaps between the steadily fraying edges of a dying empire and a supremacist world. This dying world is contained and bordered in very particular and peculiar ways. And it relies on these containments and borders to thrive, while it can, through its own greedy, grifting systems. We know this world all too well. Some of us know it better. Others know this world like their own skin. Palestine, of late, along with its attendant political, human, social, and moral ecology; urban protests; university encampments; renewed calls for boycotting; divestment from academic investment portfolios and more; have all laid bare the true scope of *this* world. And disenclosing from it, means a Glissantian *tout-monde*, a disinvestment from the world-centres that have inscribed themselves in our imagined, built, and destroyed environments, in thought, practice, and, also, in word. And so the veil is lifted, and Mbembe writes, 'for the disenclosure of the world to happen, it is necessary to detach oneself from oneself, precisely in order to confront what is coming and what, in

4 This was drawn from a 'Speak Out Letter on Palestine', authored by a group called *International Architectural Educators*, and published online on 21 October 2023. That letter can be seen here: <https://bit.ly/IAESpeakout>.

5 'Airtight seals', writes Édouard Glissant, 'were apparently the rule of the Plantation. Not simply the tight social barrier, but also an irredeemable break between the forms of sensibility, despite each one's efforts upon the other.' Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 65.

coming, causes other resources of life to spring up. This is why the Fanonian self is fundamentally opening, distension, and gap: the *Open*.'[6]

But Before We Open: Worlds

To set the stage for this — a quick reminder: I wrote an editorial.[7]

I had written editorials before, but never during a genocide. It's hard to write in general, and it's *really* hard to write during a genocide when your communities and their worlds are being erased and, in the process, institutionally exceptionalised.[8] As a South African,[9] Muslim, Brown human (not just an academic), I wanted to be seen, not just 'represented',[10] and waited for the familiar expressions of solidarity and care. Politicans and pundits offer 'Thoughts and Prayers', deploying their utterances

6 Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night*, p. 63.

7 I was coediting a journal — serving as both a theme editor and as the design editor — on a call for papers (CFP) titled 'infidelities', which was developed by Aya Musmar, from the University of Petra, and Nishat Awan, from University College London, in partnership with Menna Agha, from Carleton University. In part, the CFP noted: 'As Muslim people of colour working at the margins of architecture, art and social practice, we have always felt like infidels since we are not loyal to the discipline and its institutions, but neither are we loyal to the multiple belongings of ourselves. Yet, infidelity is neither refusal, criticality nor counter politics. It is a fertile ground that emerges through a certain discomfort with institutional power, social and moral codes, and rules that attempt to regulate behaviours. It has the potential to create transversal relations across difference.' The issue was humming along, and then, apparently, history begins in October.

8 See: Marc Lamont Hill, *Except For Palestine: The Limits of Progressive Politics* (New Press, 2021).

9 I'll get to Africa soon, I promise.

10 Ruha Benjamin, the Alexander Stewart 1886 Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, and founding director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab, observed in an address to students at Spelman College (a historically Black women's college in Atlanta) that: 'Black faces in high places are not going to save us. Just look at the Black proponents of Cop City in Atlanta's leadership class. [...] Just look at the Black woman's hand — ambassador at the UN [Linda Thomas-Greenfield] — voting against a ceasefire in Gaza.' *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=javaZtuESR4> [accessed 3 August 2024].

like a paint splatter cannon at moments of terrifying and terrible loss. Nevertheless, you want to be checked in on. Who doesn't? Maybe, in the moment, you want the black square, the black profile picture, the *pick-a-color* ribbon, the 'are-you-okay', the 'what can I do', and so on, and so forth. You want the statement of solidarity, the signed letter, the recognition, however small, that indicates you are not *only* seen, but truly *seen*. Nothing is worse[11] than when someone doesn't speak up for you, with you, in public, but tells you — privately, off-line, off-the-record — 'we're really with you, we were only joking'.[12] But there was none of that, really, in the lead up to those Words. Just four Muslim editors, working through a genocide, producing work for The Institution™. And asking our contributors — many of them in similar boats (and not fresh off them) — for their work and their labour. Brown faces asking Brown and Black and Asian and Other writers to produce works for an institution that refused to say a few words: 'we see'. This wasn't a surprise, of course. Nevertheless, it was illuminating to see the degree to which the institution will coalesce and seal itself up, in order to protect property and power and, well, *itself*. Institutions gonna institute, fam; Empire's gonna Empire.[13] There is no *tout-monde* here, only the navel-gazing of the narcissist relational self, and the glimmer and magic glamour of the sleight of hand power-up: Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity. Look here, says the institution, not *there*. See here, not *there*. These words, not *those*. Noun, verb, grammar. And I thought — and it's a small act, to be sure, but an important one — you don't see me, you don't get my Words.

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11 Actually, this is not true at all. There are a lot of worse things — infinitely worse things — but this is pretty awful, so don't do this. Just. Don't. Speak or don't. If you don't, at least own the silence. It appears to have finally been recognised as a form of disciplinary practice, after all. See also footnote 47.

12 IYKYK.

13 If it walks like a coloniser, and talks like a coloniser, it's probably not a duck. 'Probably not, no', said my youngest daughter as she read this — 'although ducks ARE jerks, but for other reasons.' H. Saloojee, South Frontenac County, Buck Lake, 9 August 2024.

So I wrote, and then retracted it, just before publication. And then, because words are worlds, I rewrote it, edited to reflect the reality of time, to reflect the *not-yet* that was absent at the time of its original writing. Here is that modified version, and edited now (with a few small, new additions in a different typeface), and some footnotes too.[14] I called it *Worlds*.

> I struggled to go about my business. I struggled to be an editor and an academic — an *African*,[15] Brown, Muslim one — during an ongoing genocide. Here, Brown people who are my family, who say the same words I do, the same prayers I fall into, the same litanies and invocations I recite; the men who look like me, with names like mine and my father's and my grandfathers', and my brothers' and cousins' and uncles' and nephews', are slaughtered, villainised, blamed, stripped naked, executed, mutilated. *But, well, you know, it's complicated. How are you doing? I hope this e-mail finds you well. I'm fine. Jesus, this is APA, not Turabian.*
>
> I struggled to fulfil my editorial duties. Be good to your colleagues. Be good to your contributors. Be good. Be good to your responsibilities, and your accountabilities. Be good. Be good to The Deadline™. Show up. Do the Work™. Wordsmith ~~the~~ the statement. Publish it. Don't publish it.

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14 1) Writing, and editing, are a form of witness. As such, they are ongoing. We know that texts are not static, and are in relation to a *tout-monde* larger than themselves, and; 2) Just as this text was edited to keep pace with the time of genocide (30 days, 50, 100, 150, 300, now 304), I know that at some point, this text will be fixed (if its published), so it's important that this witnessing is, in itself, a *tout-monde*, a disenclosure. Here, beyond these callisthenics, I think of Nicki Kattoura, writing on the futility and necessity of writing. See: Nicki Kattoura, 'A Thousand Eulogies Are Exported to the Comma: Of Syntax and Genocide', *Literary Hub*, 12 February 2024 <https://lithub.com/a-thousand-eulogies-are-exported-to-the-comma-of-syntax-and-genocide> [last accessed 19 October 2024].

15 I know I said I'd get to Africa, and I will, I promise. This 'African' was written well before the Africa referenced in Footnote 9.

Look, there's one for Ukraine.[16] *I mean, legally, we can't call it a genocide, yet right? It's not quite a concentration camp. And human shields, amiright? We have to stand up for Western values, amiright? Amiright, amiright, amiright*. As Ben said, may all the words turn to ash in your mouths.[17]

I struggled to be an editor — a Brown one — when The Institutions™ (pick your poison — political, intellectual, artistic, legalistic…) will affirm many humanities except, well, Palestine. Palestine, we know, is always the exception, and it has united a planet in two remarkable ways: One is a dying empire of greedy settler grifting, US, Canadian and European imperial and colonial munitions and the avarice-hungry desperation of power, capital and the Almighty Whitey. And Whitey,[18] he's on the moon — trying to claim

16 It's still up, as of this writing. You can read it here: <https://www.acsa-arch.org/acsa-supports-eaae-statement-on-ukraine/> [accessed 14 July 2024].

17 Ben Ehrenreich, the American writer, tweeted, on 7 December: 'Writers who are silent now: stay silent. May all words turn to ash in your mouths.' *Twitter* <https://x.com/BenEhrenreich/status/1732871048561844376> [accessed 1 March 2024].

18 Gil Scott-Heron released 'Whitey on the Moon', a spoken-word poem on his debut album titled *Small Talk at 125th and Lennox*, released by the Flying Dutchman record label in 1970. Scott-Heron's poem is a reflection on the exorbitant costs of the Apollo Moon landings, and the medical debt and poverty faced by African Americans at the time. Fifty years later, Jeff Bezos spent $5.5 billion dollars to be in space for four minutes, reported Global Citizen in 2021. See: Joe McCarthy, 'Jeff Bezos Just Spent $5.5B to Be in Space for 4 Minutes. Here Are 7 Things That Money Could Help Solve', *Global Citizen*, 20 July 2021 <https://bit.ly/SpaceBezos> [accessed 4 June 2024]. Since 7 October, 'the United States has enacted legislation providing at least $12.5 billion in military aid to Israel, which includes $3.8 billion from a bill in March 2024 (in line with the current MOU) and $8.7 billion from a supplemental appropriations act in April 2024'. Jonathan Masters and Will Merrow, 'U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts', *Council on Foreign Relations*, last updated 31 May 2024 <https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts#:~:text=Since%20the%20start%20of%20Israel's,appropriations%20act%20in%20April%202024> [accessed 6 July 2024]. Since 1970, if my maths is correct (and you can check the chart on the website above to be sure), the US has given over $230 billion in military aid to Israel. For that amount, we could have launched 41.8 Bezoses (Bezii?) into space.

that too, for pipelines and gas, probably. The only olive he knows is in his dry martini, shaken, not stirred. The other way is Palestine. From the River to the Sea.

I struggle to remove myself from a world that doesn't really want me anyway. Only my work, and the gloss and veneer of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity that Brown can bring. I think EDI is a bad joke, but no one's gotten the punchline yet. Why am I giving my world to you, so you can take what you like of it? You take an EDI polish and apply it to your face and your skin, like a shimmer cream that wipes off in front of a mirror, in the green room, after the press conference, or the song and dance. And then we are rendered as invisible as the white phosphorus you can't, apparently, see. *They have the right to defend themselves, amiright?* Talking heads nod. Numbers into the footnote. No, not numbers, never a footnote.[19] *Let it bring hope. Let it be a tale.*[20]

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19 See footnote 20 for the last words of Refaat Alareer's poem.

20 Because my Words often fail, I turned to Refaat Alareer, a Palestinian poet, author, and English Literature teacher at Gaza University — which has been completely destroyed. Alareer was murdered in Shujaiyah — the neighbourhood of champions — on 6 December 2023, the day before Ben Ehrenreich wrote of words and ash. Just a few days before his death, Alareer pinned this text to the top of his Twitter timeline.

If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself—
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up
above

Whose world do we struggle for? The predatory, animalistic, self-absorbed, silent and silencing world of capital-run-amok, of intellect-worshipped, but absent of any soul? This is not a world — the kite you made, flying up above … an angel is there bringing back love.[21] Whose world and archive do we hold up, hold dear, cast down and incinerate? Motaz Azaiza's? Refaat Alareer? Wael al-Dahdouh's? Ismail al Ghoul and Rami al Rifi?[22] The men who gather in a ruined building in Gaza, for a *majlis* of *dhikr*, and sing, جئت شرفت المدينة — *you have brought nobility to this city*.[23] The worlds of prophets buried in land under

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and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love
If I must die
let it bring hope
let it be a tale

Refaat Alareer (@itranslate123), 'If I must die, let it be a tale. #FreePalestine #Gaza' *Twitter*, 1 November 2023 <https://x.com/itranslate123/status/1719701312990830934>.

21 See footnote 20, line 17 of his poem.

22 The Israeli Occupation Forces have since murdered, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 113 journalists and media workers. See 'Journalist Casualties in the Israel-Gaza War', *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 6 August 2024 <https://cpj.org/2024/08/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/#:~:text=As%20of%20August%206%2C%202024,began%20gathering%20data%20in%201992> [accessed 6 August 2024]. You can read their names here — and I would encourage you to: <https://cpj.org/2024/08/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>. The unofficial number — as of today, now — when all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed, is much higher.

23 A group of Palestinian journalists gathered, one evening, in the ruins of a bombed building. You could see fragments of concrete, blue-tarp, torn metal. I didn't save the video, but I wish I had. It reminded me of another recent image, showing Bangladeshi students standing atop a light pole, with a Bangladeshi and Palestinian flag, in front of Louis Kahn's Houses of Parliament in Dhaka. The meetings of these two images were a study in architectural contrast: one of destruction and another of nationhood, but both a demonstration of what we know today (in its non-intellectualised fetishisation) as *ṣumūd*. These Palestinian journalists — some wearing their press vests — were hosting a *majlis* — a gathering of Prophetic remembrance (*dhikr* in Arabic, is a practice of Divine remembrance), and were reciting a particular *nashid* — a poem or song, usually lyrical — that some Islamic scholars note, was sung by the Medinan community to welcome the Prophet Muhammad into their city.

state-boots? Abraham/Ibrahim, Ishaaq/Isaac, Yaqub/Jacob, Yusuf/Joseph?

What about the world of families and friends with families and friends and worlds over there, too? The world of my Palestinian student on a West-Coast campus looking out to a river, mountains, and a sea? To another, in Ramallah with her family, waiting? To the olive trees burning under phosphorus bombs in Palestine and Lebanon? To the Omari *masjid*,[24] a 600-year shattering; today, on a Friday — on *Jumu'ah* — our day of gathering hearts in mosques.

To the mother who holds her shrouded child in a dark hospital filled with soldiers and American guns? To the grandfather — his name is Khaled — who holds his dead granddaughter — her name was, **is**, Reem — and says *you are the soul of my soul*, and wears one of her earrings on his

24 A *masjid*, in Arabic, is a mosque. Etymologically, the word is related in its root structure to the word *majlis* — gathering — and to the word *Jumu'ah* — the Arabic word for Friday, when Muslims would gather in a mosque, for the Friday prayer, to stand and worship in *jama'ah* — collectively. Bombing a mosque is abhorrent. Bombing it on a Friday is especially evil. The Omari Mosque was Gaza's Great Mosque — destroyed on Friday 8 December. Built in the seventh century, it exists now, in part, in the past-tense on Wikipedia and the internet. Kate Wagner, writing in the *Nation*, wrote, 'In times of war, we cling to art, architecture, and other forms of culture for many reasons: to show that things and people mattered, that culture was meant to endure, that the evisceration of something priceless is a shameful crime. We are shocked by losses such as the Great Omari Mosque not only because they are terrible and sad, but also because we believed that those in power might have more respect for art and for history deemed legitimate by their own institutions than they do for human life. But, of course, this is not true: If human life is worth nothing, then neither is architecture, itself the cumulative achievement of and testimony to countless human lives. In a campaign of urbicide, nothing matters. The end goal is a blank slate.' See Kate Wagner, 'What Israel's Destruction of the Great Omari Mosque Means', *The Nation*, January 2024 <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/great-omari-mosque-urbicide-gaza> [accessed 4 May 2024]. The blank slate is the key, right? Erase that *tout-monde*, and cue all those developers and politicians touting all that beachfront property soon to be available for grabs along Gaza's coast — not the least of which includes the famous political operative, noted author, and smooth operator: Jared Kushner.

green robe. What about the world of ~~the~~ the son who begs to see his father — *let me kiss him*, he shouts — and unwraps white plastic over a face that looks like mine?

Which worlds, institutions, educations, and architectures are we building now?

What is this world that is written-on and written-in, in mine, our, and your hands?[25]

See the kite — the kite you made.[26]

Opening

What, on our little blue earth, does this have to do with architecture? Everything. Every. Thing. *Tout le monde.* Why? Because almost everything is an attempt to seal us up in the usual systems, infrastructures, familiarities, canons, beliefs, grammars, words, conventions, curricula, and jargon that are institutional caulk. Institutions, and Empires, in turn, don't *like* gaps. They don't *like* openings. They don't *like* loopholes that undermine the 'apostrophe s' of their worlds and their attempted worlding. Can you start a sentence with a Twitter handle? Here goes. @BabadookSpinoza, said, recently, on Twitter that 'You don't want a better world; you want a better liar to sell you this one. You want to go back to believing the lies. But it doesn't work like that, not really. You can't unsee it. You'll never fully believe it. You'll just be useless long enough to doom the rest of us.'[27]

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25 Palestinians would write their names on their hands or arms, so they could be identified in case of their deaths.

26 See footnote 20.

27 @babadookspinoza, *Twitter*, 22 July 2024 <https://x.com/babadookspinoza/status/1815392595515670750> [accessed 24 July 2024].

Who owns the world, or the right to make it? The 'apostrophe s' of that right and property is the rub — the need to maintain the old world order of extractive racial capitalism, settler-colonial expansionism, and the shareholder's fiduciary entitlement to forever war — even if it's dressed up as something new. Empire and its lapdogs of white supremacy and grifting capitalist inhumanity is the apostrophe — the possessive carceral enclosure of every other world except its own. It doesn't matter who the captain is. It's not that its de-rigueur to pooh-pooh Kamala Harris and the Democratic Party, and there's been a lot made of the announcement that the Democratic Nominee for the next President of the United States of America selected Minnesota governor Tim Walz as her vice-presidential pick. And, it's worth remembering, that Governor Walz, after refusing to meet with Palestinian Americans for ten months, cancelled a meeting with Palestinian families when they informed his office that they wanted to discuss divestment and real solutions.[28] Voice, but only when it's expedient, advantageous; silence — a closing up of the throat, the tongue, the lips, the jaw, the pharynx — when it's not. Only certain canonical positions deserve recognition, sound, power, and words. 'If you want Donald Trump to win, say that. Otherwise, I am speaking,' said Vice President Harris to protesters who interrupted her speech at a campaign rally in Detroit on 7 August.[29] Only particular words, epistemes, only particular processes, only certain and enduring configurations of power are silence-free. And it's a smoke-screen. As Zoé Samudzi noted, 'If the health and future of your democracy is constantly hanging in the balance and held up by either a crime-bill-writing, genocide-enabling segregationist, or a giggly cop who refused to empty CA prisons because they'd lose out on the free labour,

28 AMP MN, *Instagram*, 9 July 2024 <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9Nn-z4DJfml> [accessed 6 August 2024].

29 'Here's Why Two Protesters Interrupted Kamala Harris—In Their Own Words', *Mother Jones* <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/08/kamala-harris-hecklers-protest-detroit-rally-interview-gaza-michigan> [accessed 9 August 2024].

perhaps consider you don't actually have a democracy.'[30] Only certain things speak, or or are spoken for.

Only certain universities deserve to be universities — and certainly not the universities of encampments, of Hind Hall (Columbia); Sidra Hassouna Hall, Shireen Abu Akleh Hall, Hind Hall (Harvard); Hind Hall (Berkeley); Mahmoud's Hall (Melbourne University); Gaza House (University of Waterloo); Reem Hall (Queen's University). Only certain institutions deserve to be institutions, and they will be closed up with fences, with a hyper-militarised police, with cameras, with injunctions against students and faculty — with a tolerance only for theory, but not praxis; only for abstraction, not material transformation. Sam Catlin, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at the State University of New York at Buffalo, offers, in his essay 'The Campus Does Not Exist', an initial theory, in five points, of The Campus,[31] namely that (and abbreviated here): 1) The campus is a fantasy and a media trope; 2) The campus is no institution, and it is every institution. But it is some institutions more than others; 4)[32] The essential components of the campus, therefore, are not the classroom, the library, the laboratory, or even the dormitory, but rather the security camera and the cruising police SUV; 5) The campus has essentially to do with students. […] Professors figure into campus panic only insofar as the media takes their research and public statements to indicate something about their relations to, influence on, students.[33]

These are all compelling theses, but his third thesis really hits home — and hard. He writes:

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30 Zoé Samudzi (@babywasu), *Instagram*, <https://www.instagram.com/stories/babywasu/3417688741059988701/> [accessed Monday 22 July 2024].

31 Capitalised. The Campus is not a University. 'It is the campus', writes Catlin, 'which we have collectively cathected—*not* the university, *not* higher education.' Sam Catlin, 'The Campus Does Not Exist: How Campus War is Made', *Parapraxis* <https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/the-campus-does-not-exist> [accessed 29 July 2024].

32 I skipped #3 on purpose. I'll come back to it shortly.

33 Catlin. 'The Campus Does Not Exist: How Campus War is Made'.

> The campus is the fantasy of an inside. There is the campus, and then there is the outside. On campus/ off campus. But the boundary between the campus and its outside is a permeable membrane. The quadrangle, with its gated walls, is, after all, not really where the space of the university ends. The empirically existing campus is integrated into its environs, so that it is difficult to say just when one is off campus. An *enclosure* [emphasis mine], the campus is never quite closed enough. For this reason it must be policed. There lurks always the possibility that the real world will penetrate the campus, violate the campus.[34]

The enclosure is the policing. The policing is the protection of property, and its names, and certain words, and most definitely not THOSE words. The property is power. Power must be protected. Power must be enclosed. That's The Campus, and we can project — because we are not stupid or foolish or thoughtless, that The Campus — as no institution, is also *every* institution.[35]

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34 Here's Catlin's 3rd thesis — and the citation… Ibid.

35 I use Catlin's 'campus' here in two ways: the first is his definition of it — as all institutions. It becomes a proxy for all enclosure politics, ontologies, practices, epistemologies, at all scales: relational, disciplinary, professional, diplomatic and so on. The second form of The Campus is as the academy — the so-called landscape of higher education — the university — which, as Amy Wong positions in her brilliant essay in *Parapraxis*, is not as constructive as we've been told to believe. 'The North American university — despite what the Right would have you believe of its woke mobbishness — remains the gateway into leaving important parts of your personhood behind to become the kind of person that could belong to the "we" that insists that the way we live (work) now is the only life worth anything at all.' Amy R. Wong, 'The University is Making Us Unwell', *Parapraxis* <https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/on-dear-elia> [accessed 2 August 2024]. 'That university's just a dump', declares Aunt Oumy, in Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Touki Bouki* (1973). Mambéty's character is not referencing a North American university, but I laugh (and cry) all the same, and in turn, I despair, and wonder, and hope, that another university is possible. See la paperson, *A Third University is Possible* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). The dedication in la paperson's text ('la paperson' is also a nom de plume of K. Wayne Yang. Yes! THAT K. Wayne Yang — coauthor of 'Decolonization is not a Metaphor', with Eve Tuck) is a banger. la paperson writes: 'For you, who

And therefore, all must be enclosed, lest they be encamped upon, lest they be opened. They, and their affiliates and clients and agents must be defended. These particular institutional client inheritances — schools, systems, pedagogies, processes, and so on — carried by smallpoxed boats and books and declarations from Europe and France and England, exported by American warships, dropped by Raytheon and Elbit bombs, or by false infrastructural piers, by hands raised in Global North Halls of Power and ratified by Very Important (but lowercase) words, by the Institutional Powers-That-Be, these must, at all (shareholder profit) costs, be defended, lest civilisation, and our democracy collapse.

And we know, because we are not so blinkered, and so provincial, and so small, that 'Europe is indefensible'.[36] And we nod, as the Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène says, as he leans forward in his suit, on that beach, and says 'Let's be very clear. Europe is not my centre. Europe is on the outskirts. After one hundred years here, did they speak my language? I speak theirs. My future does not depend on Europe.'[37] And we know, as Djibril Diop Mambéty shows us, and tells us, in *Touki-Bouki*'s famous scene, that 'France? Nothing good comes of it.'[38] And because Africa is not a country, we go from Mbembe's Cameroon, Sembené's and Mambéty's Senegal to Youssef Chahine's *An Egyptian Story*, where the actor Mohamed Mounir, in conversation with Nour El-Sharif's protagonist — the high-strung filmmaker, Yehia Choukry Mourad — declares: 'the world is not America or England'.[39] In Mark Cousins' 2011 documentary, *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, Chahine, in

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are the business.'

36 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review Press, 2001), p. 31. Originally published in 1950, Césaire was a poet, a writer and politician, and President of the Regional Council of Martinique (1983–1988).

37 *Camera d'Afrique: Filming Against the Odds*, dir. by Férid Boughedir, 1983. See, I told you we'd get to Africa.

38 *Touki-Bouki,* dir. by Djibril Dion Mambéty, 1973.

39 *An Egyptian Story* (حدوتة مصرية), dir. by Yousef Chahine, 1983.

response to a prompt about 'the Third World' says, 'Jesus Christ. I've been around seven thousand years … and we've proven that we were civilised seven thousand years ago. Are we so underdeveloped? That's not civilisation. Civilisation is how you contact the other people. Do you know how to love? You know how to care? This is civilisation.'[40]

Do You Know How to Love? You Know How to Care?

Writing that editorial, and not publishing, and then rewriting it, and publishing it online, then editing it, and thinking and reflecting on it here with all of you,[41] was a disenclosure, and a disclosure (of a sort). I learned, and continue to learn, the degree to which I was, am, and might still be, if I'm not careful, sealed up and closed in, and made to *be civilised* in a continuing, but more pretty (and less overt) version of John Gastian Progress. I want to resist and refuse these ontological, intellectual, and canonical sealings that tell me what questions I can and should be asking, and thinking through; that tell me what writing I can do, and what Words I can consider — or even put to paper or thought. I want to resist the sealing up of images and the tyrannies of teaching and pedagogy that demand very particular forms of drawings, visualisations, and models, of endless abstraction. I'm profoundly opposed to the sealing up in bureaucratic processes that underpin and undergird so much of the extractive institutional worlds we inhabit — and as an academic (as many of you are, or as students who inhabit the world of The Academy, you will know some of this), the landscape of higher education is, frankly, a little worrisome. It is designed, in many ways, to maintain and sustain itself, at the expense of all else,[42] including students.[43] This sealing

40 *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, dir. by Mark Cousins, 2011.

41 Thank you, by the way, for reading through those Words and these other ones too.

42 This is of course, not always the case.

43 See a post-university encampment near you. See the payment processes

up is meant to close a world that is, in many ways, secretly toxic, dressed up like the Wizard, in tokens, glamour, distractions. Professor and architectural historian, Samia Henni, describing the process of her book, *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Nuclear Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara,* writes (italics added):

> My question as an historian is, what do we do if an institution doesn't allow you to write about certain histories? Do you obey or disobey? If you disobey, then you have to find other ways to gather information, data, evidence, reports and so on. That's what the book is doing … It's *against secrecy*, as there are many things here that we can see: the landscapes, the testimonies of witnesses and survivors. For me, these are tools to *open* the conversation.[44]

This enclosure — unless we resist it — keeps us moving between the fragments of our lives.[45] In turn, these fragments are also a form of silencing that de-emphasise a continuous world, a world-anew, and in turn, we become sealed up in a world that is not ours

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for those who are asked to contribute labour to a university (and universities make it VERY hard to pay people), including requiring 'vendors' to sign agreements to, for example, not support an Israeli boycott — and of pay being withheld, unless one does sign. Consider these words — on the Columbia University website (and on many other US academic institutions websites, too): 'U.S. federal regulations prohibit the University or its personnel from agreeing to participate in any international boycott not supported by the U.S. government, such as the Arab League boycott of Israel. Violation of these regulations could result in fines being imposed by the U.S. government.' 'International Boycotts not Supported by the United States Government', *Columbia Research* <https://research.columbia.edu/anti-boycott#:~:text=U.S.%20federal%20regulations%20prohibit%20the,imposed%20by%20the%20U.S.%20government> [accessed 9 August 2024]. Agree with us, this world says — and sign it to prove your loyalty.

44 'PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE: In conversation with Samia Henni and Yasmin Abdu Bushra', *koozArch* <https://www.koozarch.com/interviews/practice-practice-practice-in-conversation-with-samia-henni-and-yasmin-abdu-bushra> [accessed 9 August 2024].

45 See Lindsay Bremner, 'Border/Skin', in *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace*, ed. by Michael Sorkin (The New Press, 2005), pp. 122–137.

— not even *close* to ours. Epistemicides, scholasticides, chronocides, genocides, urbicides… — pick a -cide, any -cide. Pick a -cide as long as it's elsewhere, not here. Those -cides (and that specific 'side') are, in turn, ways of maintaining a world, a world-order, words, and a word-order. To resist this is to resist the silencing possession — the white possessive — of a work-space, a proves-space, a mind-space, a heart-space — that this so-called normalisation demands of our allegiance, time, life, and world. This silencing, I am increasingly convinced, is a form of architectural theory, and practice.[46]

I keep (personally) returning to *Reconsidering Reparations* by Professor Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò because it's just so damned good. It's so good that I'm going to spoil it for you.[47] At the top of his text, he writes:

> Most worrying, we spend so much time and energy responding to others' mistakes that we lose the ability to distinguish their questions from our ours. While we produce constant criticism of aspects of the material economy that we don't like, we systematically underproduce or rush through scholarship on questions that are infinitely more important and worthy of our time and analysis. For example, what forms of social life are compatible with our flourishing? What are the root-causes — in a material and institutional sense, from a rigorous perspective — of our current problems, and which of them are alterable? How can we build algorithms, institutions, rules, laws, social movements or revolutions that do the altering?

And he ends it with this:

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46 But that is a text, essay, meditation, for another time, perhaps.

47 #sorrynotsorry

> Some generations plant the trees, leaving it to others to build the barrels and taste what they brew. If we can do better than this, we should. But this is enough. If we want to achieve justice, in our lifetimes, or anyone's, we should act like ancestors. For better or worse, our ancestors constructed this world in their image. We owe it to our descendants to rebuild it, in a new one.[48]

So. Build a new, open world — a new *tout-mod*e, a new *tout-civilisation* — and not just 'architecturally', either. Build solidarities. Build canons. Build *just* processes. *Just* transitions. Build citational justice and referential justice, and in doing so remember Chahine, 'the world is not America and England'.[49] And, I would add, neither is the *word*. Build a new logos. Build not just to be decolonial, but anti-colonial.[50] Build by refusing to scaffold the enclosed and enclosing world — and its words. Build bravely.[51] Build to disenclose. Build to see. Build — and write — so that, just maybe, please, we can know how to love.

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48 Olúfémi O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 208.

49 *An Egyptian Story* (حدوتة مصرية), dir. by Chahine, 1983.

50 Max Liboiron's position on being anti-colonial rather than decolonial (which has been so broadly and limply applied to everything that it has lost its meaning) is useful. In the same interview when they assert this, they also emphasise practising values-based research. I think that this is also true for writing. See: Max Liboiron, in conversation with Spoorthy Raman, 'What it means to practise values-based research', *Nature*, 7 June 2023 <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-01878-1> [accessed 9 August 2024]. I was also inspired by Liboiron's disenclosure of footnoting convention, hence my own attempt at it here in re-worlding, and re-wording. See Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2021).

51 See Cruz Garcia and Nathalie Frankowsi, 'Cowardice as Architectural Theory', *Avery Review*, 68 <https://averyreview.com/issues/68/cowardice-as-architectural-theory> [accessed 11 October 2024]. Garcia and Frankowski write: 'During times of extreme colonial violence, architectural theory that systematically disengages with the critical questions of the times functions as an accessory to these unspeakable crimes. As the necropolitical architectures of human and ecological destruction — with their settlements, embassies, campuses, and checkpoints — are deployed, no position is neutral…'

Blink. The day that I wrote the last Word — *love* — above, the official death toll in Gaza surpassed 39,722.[52]

52 As of this edit (14 October 2024), the ‘official’ death toll is 42,877. Unofficial counts (through projections by *The Lancet*, for example) have it at 186,000. Others as high as 400,000 or more. 400,000 might mean, going back to Nicki Kattoura, at least 400 commas, no apostrophe s.



Fig. 2. A sign reading ‘To Gaza’ pointing to the left in front of a bus, 2024. Image by Emad El Byed, via Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/a-sign-pointing-to-the-right-in-front-of-a-bus-Li2iIcNzKy0>.

In Conversation with Yasmeen Lari

***Scroope*:**
It's an honour to be sitting down in conversation with such an esteemed architect whose work is challenging how we think about and practise architecture that is culturally and environmentally sustainable, resilient, and responsive to the needs of local communities in the world today.

One place we can begin is with the decolonial idea of *disenclosure*, the theme of this issue of *Scroope*. Much of your recent work has been discussed in terms of its potential for decoloniality and democratisation in architecture. Would you be able to share how you've been thinking about some of these ideas about opening up architecture, both in terms of the field of architecture, and also the places that you're building for people to live in?

Yasmeen Lari (YL):
I think that because the world has changed now, the architectural profession has to refashion — if you like, reset — itself. I don't think we can carry on in the same way as we have been, or how we were trained to. Most of the time I think architects still feel that they have to join a big flourishing architectural practice to be able to design for the elite and the privileged. I think that time probably is no longer really relevant because the majority of the people in this world actually have nothing. As you know, there are disparities; there are rising poverty levels. Things are really bad for the majority of people. Why do we want architects not to be able to relate to those conditions where people want good design to be able to have a better life?

When we talk of decolonisation, I talk about three Ds — decarbonisation, decolonisation, and democratisation. All the three Ds are together. But also, I think what's important is that we also talk of three zeros — zero carbon, zero waste, and even zero charity. People can do things themselves and that leads to zero poverty, which as you know, is Sustainable Development Goal number one. If you empower people, then they're able to do

much more themselves. They just need guidance as to how they can do it.

Colonialism was all about control, and that's what we've been doing as architects all our lives. That is what I was doing for most of my life — and I think we cannot control, should not control things anymore. I think people have got to have a say in what is built for them, for their own built environment. They need to be part of it. You can't just tell them, 'We'll give you something.' Nobody really wants that anymore because people *do* have a lot of ideas and people *can* contribute a lot. I really feel that we need to start rethinking how we now take up design projects. And that also means you may have to give up your ego, because that's all about control; this is what architects are trained to do. Instead, you can be talking and working with people so that it's really co-design, co-creating, working together, rather than speaking to them from the top. By talking to them at their level, there's much we can learn from people. I've learned a lot in the last twenty years that I've been working with communities.

***Scroope*:**
You've touched on this idea that pursuing justice goes beyond just how we think about design, architecture, and the role of architects, but also involves empowering people. It's not just how we give out our expertise, but how we work with people and value them and acknowledge their dignity and agency. Decarbonisation, decolonisation, and democratisation are all interconnected through spatial justice, and that's really apparent in your work.

YL:
There are so many aspects to spatial justice, which also incorporates the social and the economic and the cultural — they're all part of spatial justice. When you look at the way some of the writers talk about it and how geography is used, there's also got to be justice in the way we apportion areas for people

to live in. The poor always get the worst possible areas, areas that will have no value basically, and then they are marginalised and never given the services that they need. At least when I was practising as an architect, I never thought about their rights — the basic human rights that everybody needs to live. We talk about that for ourselves, but do we talk about others' rights?

Pakistan is among the ten most vulnerable states — we're a frontline state as far as the climate change battleground is concerned. That means that almost every year we can expect a disaster, and in 2022 we had the most devastating one where we had something like over three million people who had been displaced. But it was not the first time — we've been having them almost every second year; it's either an earthquake or a flood. Mostly, the flood is the one that's been the most devastating. Of course, earthquakes have been too, but floods are what we have to really brace ourselves for every year, and even today as I'm talking to you, there's a whole area that is submerged in floodwater, in the countryside. This is a reality for many countries, not only Pakistan. Are we prepared to deal with this? Do we have the tools to handle it?

I'm sure there will be a disaster that will be beyond our expectation — the intensity is increasing all the time. We know that every year it's worse. But these disasters are also something that we can expect and plan for so that people are prepared and don't get displaced, because that's the worst thing — when you have to leave your home and go somewhere. There are conflict-impelled migrants who are suffering around the world, including, as you know, in Gaza. And all over the world there are so many millions of people who are displaced, who need help, and architects are not there to help them. We don't think it's our responsibility. I mean, what about a sense of justice and thinking, 'What is it that we owe to humanity?' We also need to do something; the world needs us. It's not good enough anymore to do one-off designs for the refugees. It's not good enough anymore. All this must come into mainstream architecture.

Otherwise, it won't happen.

***Scroope*:**
What you're speaking about and around is the idea of humanitarian architecture, which usually refers quite specifically to refugee camps and temporary settlements that are in response to emergencies and other specific forms of crisis. This is tied to the work of NGOs and international agencies such as the United Nations as well as governments — they are the people responsible for making the architecture, and the architects come in and enact the plan. It raises the question of how you approach the role of the architect, with our specific forms of knowledge in the context of emergency, and perhaps how you define humanitarian architecture too — because your practice is very different to what is often quite a top-down approach to dealing with emergency through the built form.

YL:
These agencies are there and they're the ones who normally spearhead all the emergency efforts. But if there were architects working in mainstream humanitarian architecture, you wouldn't be waiting for a commission or somebody to ask you. What I feel is that we should become activists now, we should become like entrepreneurs. We should say, 'Here is a problem,' whether it's an environmental problem, ecological problem, social problem, 'and we can go and help out there.' And you go and find a way to go and do that. Because it's not good enough anymore to just sometimes go and visit when a disaster happens.

My own mission is to help people learn to build in a manner where they will not be displaced when a disaster occurs. And that is, I think, the most important thing, because there's no need for us to scramble when we already know that a flood is going to happen. Why can't we prepare for it before? Except now the whole problem is becoming so huge that it's not possible, not that easy to do it. When you're working in these areas, there is a

massive number of people who have been displaced — or, they're no longer displaced and they've gone back to their villages, but they have nothing there. There's nothing but destitution there. But we are helping them to learn how to grow food, to become food-secure; how to start building from the debris and from other waste materials so they can have a climate-resilient structure; how to start mitigation measures, which has to do with plantation and digging aquifer wells, and so on. But it's not only humanitarian architecture I'm talking of. I'm talking of community development. I'm talking of eco-urbanism. This is all something that architects can do and must do.

Everywhere that I'm talking, I'm asking, 'Why aren't universities creating architectural incubators like the tech industry does?' Let's say two or three architects want to come together and take on work in, let's say, community development of an area that they live in, or bringing about eco-urbanism, looking at urban blight. Why is it that universities cannot support them? Why is it that architectural institutes can't assist universities to get funding from their building product manufacturers who are very, very rich? Why can't they support this kind of work? With two or three years, young architects like yourselves can have that support, and then just carry on and make it into mainstream work. Then you know what to do. You need some handholding, you need nurturing in the beginning, and that's what needs to be done if you want to expand the scope of architectural practice. Because once you join a flourishing architectural practice, you are lost. You will never be able to come back to something else. How will you get back to it? If the tech industry can nurture their young, why can't the architectural profession do the same, for our young people?

But the problem is also that you guys are not making a noise, you're not demanding it. You need to get out there and say, 'Look, this is what we want, why can't it be done?' It's not that there's not enough money. There's so much money everywhere. It's a matter of seeing where this funding should go and how it

should be used. So, I think if you want to do it, you should start a campaign and say, 'This is what we want to do.' What I feel is that architects have abrogated their own responsibilities. They're not there where they're needed because they've never been taught that they can do some good there.

When I first started, when the first earthquake happened, I just went there because everybody had to go, because it was something like 80,000 casualties that had happened. We had never had that kind of a disaster in the living memory of anybody, really. So I also went, like everybody. I had no idea what I could do. I'd never done that kind of work before. I'd never thought architects had to do this. I didn't know how to design for an earthquake. And we architects never knew how to work with people. We only stood our high ground on the construction site and told the contractor what to do — or consultants, or others. So I was used to that kind of an attitude, and I went to the earthquake area and it was a totally different scene. I didn't know what to do, how to do it, but I picked it up because I understood what was needed. And we just got down to work, you know, just used debris to start off with. And we got so many young volunteers from all over the world actually — young architecture students — who came to help. I think there is a huge desire among young architects and others who want to go and work in these areas, but they don't get an opportunity to specialise in something like that. It took me a long time to understand what I needed to do and how to deal with things because I had no idea. But now we know what the tools are, how we can do it; they're all there now. If you want to bring justice to society, you have to work hard at it.

***Scroope*:**
Would you be able to talk a bit about this transition in your career, when you began working in response to earthquakes, for example? How did you begin to ask these sorts of questions about architecture — because you're sometimes described as having had two careers, the first one as almost a starchitect and the

second one with the more socially minded practice that you now have.

Could you talk about how this change occurred? What were some of the challenges that you experienced as you were making this change and asking these sorts of questions about architecture? And are any of these challenges still present in your current practice now that you've been doing this for a number of years?

YL:

Well, actually, it's not true that I had two distinct careers. I had been interested in vernacular architecture. I'd written a book on windcatchers, and we'd been doing a lot of documentation of heritage, so I'd been very deeply involved in that. My husband, who became a writer, had been to Oxford and had read PPE (Politics, Philosophy and Economics). He was forced to run an insurance company, but that helped us a lot because we could get funding from it to do documentation of heritage. Before I went off to England to study, I had had a very secluded life in a sense, like all people of privilege in this country. I had no idea about my own culture. And it was right at the beginning of the time of independence of Pakistan. We'd just been decolonised, if you like — but not quite. I mean, the mindset was still the same, very much influenced by Western culture. My father had been trained by the British and so of course he was very Anglicised. I went off to England and I came back and didn't know anything about my own roots. So, it was a matter of learning everything — going into old towns, trying to see what was there and so on. That was my introduction to my own culture. And I also got to know people. I'd been trying to work with the slum dwellers, I'd done some social housing, I'd tried to understand what women's issues there were. And so I'd done all that.

But later in my life, of course, as you know, as you become more prominent, you get more commissions and then obviously they become bigger and bigger and you just carry on that way.

So I'd lost out on carrying on in that stream that I really was interested in. And a time came when I just thought what I was doing was not really satisfying. I mean, when you are a well-known architect you get full freedom to do what you want to do, so it wasn't that. I could design what I wanted, I could order any kind of material. But it was the same kind of briefs, the same kind of people — the corporate sector, a lot of money. And I also knew there was another reality in my country where people were not at all well off; they were really, really poor. And I thought, 'Well, why — why am I doing this? I can't go on like this, there must be something better to do in life than just pandering to the taste of the rich corporate sector.' And so I decided to call it a day. I thought, 'I'll write more books.' I had a lot of documentation done. My husband had been an amazing photographer and because he sold his companies, he'd retired and become a historian, and so I thought, 'Well, I'll be writing more books also.' Then of course, first, UNESCO had gotten hold of me as National Advisor and I was at the Lahore Fort where I learned the use of lime. So I feel that everything that I've done has prepared me to do the work that I do today. But I had to make the conscious decision at a certain point in my life that I didn't want to do what I had been doing. I wanted to do something else with my life, and then the earthquake happened. And then I found what I want to do, and that opened up another field for me entirely. It was amazing but it is also very rewarding. And I keep on saying this, especially to young people — when you are in the field you feel that you are never alone because there's so many people who want to help, who will come to help you. It's not money. I've never really asked for funding and now I've completely stopped raising any funding whatsoever. People will come and want to give you empathy, talk about things as to how they can be done, the expertise that's needed — and I think that's much more valuable. It's a different way of working altogether and I think I'm very happy with myself. I feel more satisfied. I feel that what I'm doing is making a difference with people's lives, you know? And all that I've learned in the humanitarian

field I'm applying to urban areas now.

I think what we need to be looking at is the context. How do we improve it? How do we see that people are able to have a better life? I mean, that's finally the bottom line. That's what I think our mission should be. Because if what we do doesn't help anybody, then it's pointless. If we do it for ourselves, it doesn't make sense anymore.

***Scroope*:**
It's amazing to hear that your journey into this socially conscious architecture as a way of practising really began with a concern for and investment in heritage. It seems almost that there's an attitude of looking into the past to find innovations in the way we approach architecture. Of course, 'heritage' is also part of the name of your foundation. Is the use of heritage and conservation to promote a more just future through architecture something that you work with explicitly?

YL:
Yeah, very much. I base a lot of my work, especially now, on vernacular heritage because I find there's what we call 'ancient wisdom' in so many things that were done and what happened over time — they knew how to work with very limited resources, and that's what we need today, right? We went through the whole industrialisation process where we damaged the planet to no end with extraction. And when we talk of colonialism, in all these colonies, so much was extracted. We hurt the planet so much, and now we need to see how to heal the planet. Architects must now design in a sustainable manner where you are conscious of the materials that you're using. When you look at vernacular heritage, you find that they've used nothing but local materials and they've found ways to make them really, really strong and comfortable. The only issue now, of course, is that with climate change and every disaster becoming so much more aggressive and worse, these structures are not working as well as before. But

I think the principles are still very relevant.

For instance, I've designed this particular bamboo structural panel. It's a prefab panel and I've taken the idea of cross-bracing from one of the structures in an area which survived the earthquake — so that panel is so strong it's incredible. We are making almost everything that we are building. There's a structure for an exhibition going to Qatar — to Doha — which again uses the same panel, but it's got a twenty-eight-foot diameter dome on it, and it's being set up there with no foundations. That little prefab panel is the key to everything, and I adapted it from an old tradition. A lot of the time they use these conical roofs and then put thatch on it. The conical roof is from deserts in my country and it works very well with people because they just take the thatch — it's so inexpensive. I mean, the structure that we're doing for the flood area, I think the bamboo structure costs only 25,000 rupees (roughly 70 pounds sterling) and then they finish it off with natural materials. So it's all zero-carbon. We don't use any material that is expensive. We don't bring anything from outside. Everything is done by hand by very simple machines. So we don't need very sophisticated equipment to be able to get the things that we need.

We need to be looking now at not only areas where you get flooding, but also urban centres and how we've designed them — and how we can go back to, let's say, medieval towns in Europe. That could give us a lot of lessons. Karachi was a brainchild of a British conqueror, who came and annexed this area and created Karachi, so it's basically a British town. So all the streets were designed in a gridiron pattern wherever they could be. We have a very small area which has a different kind of morphology, which is the original one, but everywhere else it's a gridiron pattern, and there are too many streets. So I'm saying let's take on the streets. Make them into green streets with food forests and trees and plantation, and let that become a community place where children can play. And now, whichever street I'm working on, I'm putting a small street library there. Because why should we abdicate

this whole area to cars and to vehicles when cities are for people to live in, to have a comfortable life?

But my best thing right now is this program I started in April of last year, because the number of people who had been displaced was so huge. It is a zero-charity program, so no money — I raise no funds. I give no funds to people. And we have gotten about 800,000 families so far — that's six million people — who are now food-secure, and 40,000 houses have been built; 30,000 toilets have also been built, but we need more and I think we'll get them faster now. And also, they're now building schools themselves. I'm hoping that every village — that's 16,000 villages — will get a school, because there are no schools otherwise. And I did this all without money. I don't give any money to them and I don't raise any money. But what we've done is trained people of the same area, the same kind who've gone through the same kind of issues — they become the trainers. They have this knowledge-sharing and skill-training, and it's a peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge.

It's very different than any other kind of humanitarianism. Again, when we talk about justice, it's all about empathy, solidarity, generosity, benevolence — all these humanistic values that we would all care about. So that's also possible. And these are people who have suffered from all kinds of injustices, who are now standing up and doing everything themselves, they're learning to do it. And they pay a fee to the local training expert. They pay a fee for learning, but it's so small that it doesn't matter to them, but the whole number is so large that the ones who are my trainers, who I call my 'barefoot experts', are making a huge amount of money.

***Scroope*:**

It raises the question of the boundaries of architectural knowledge. Usually, architects are considered the keepers of architectural knowledge and expertise — we go through many years of education to do this. But it seems you are really

advocating for a very different definition of what it means to practise as an architect. Within that, there's a different definition of where expertise comes from, which then begs the question of, 'Do we need architects at all in this or do we just need people who care about making nice spaces?'

YL:
I think the training of an architect is very essential for us to be able to put things together. When I was practising, there were lots of skills which I had learned. I was trained to understand the context, understand about who your clients are. In our case, the clients are these poor people, not the rich. This is what I tell my teams — we have to treat them just as well as we treat our rich clients. They are no different. We're working for them now, right? They may not have the money, but it doesn't matter. How do we do what is best for them, and to understand their requirements? I mean, this is what we do with most clients. We don't do what they tell us, but we understand what they're saying and we see that, whatever their needs are, those are met. That's what we need to do. I think we have another ability, when we have consultants, to bring about a consensus about how things are to be done. If you have your design, you have the vision, everybody has to plug into it; they can't veer off into another direction. The same is true here as well. I think the greatest ability one has is to design something that really serves a purpose well and is good design. As I keep saying, it's a fallacy to think that only the rich need good design; the poor need as much excellence in design as the rich to, because design is what makes up their lives.

My most famous product today is what is called the Pakistan Chulah, which is a stove for cooking that is made out of earth. Something like 800,000 of those have been built by rural women, by themselves. And the whole thing is that it's spread through word of mouth and peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing, and it's just taken off. And then people ask me, 'What is my favorite project?' Of course I have done these monster buildings as well.

But, you know, when I compare one of them, where maybe it's got 750,000 square feet in area, maybe it accommodates 2500 people, maybe another 5000 or 10,000 pass by it every day. And then you see 800,000 of these stoves and you multiply by seven or eight in each family. You see the difference? How many people are my mundane earthen stoves serving? That is bringing dignity to women. Plus, it brings respect for them. It frees them of many diseases. There are a lot of other values in that. And they don't get flooded.

So we have to look at things now in a different manner. I'm not proud of this monster of a building that was the largest one I designed in the early 80s. But I'm very proud of this one, which is a co-design. I can't even call it my own. Women build them, they modify them, they make them beautiful, they decorate them. It's incredible what they do. Every one of them becomes a work of art, you know. This is what it's all about. This is where architecture is giving agency to those who have no voice otherwise. No longer do you have to have iconic buildings to really make an impact. It's not necessary anymore. There are so many other ways of making an impact which can be very low-key — and does it matter? That's why we have to have a change in mindset as to what we believe an architect is, or could be, or should be.

***Scroope*:**
On the idea of impact — and you've been asked this many times in your different interviews over the last few years — what are some of the pieces of wisdom that you'd like to pass on to the next generation of young architects, scholars, and architecture students who are thinking about what kind of impact they'd like to have?

YL:
Well, I think that architects should no longer wait for commissions, first of all. Why do you have to wait for someone

to tell you that they want something done, and then you go ahead and do it? We have to find a way where architects are entrepreneurs. In a lot of my projects, nobody has asked me to do them. I've just gone ahead and done them because I felt that it was something that I needed to do. And I have never had problem in people joining hands and doing it. So I think if you become entrepreneurs and say, 'OK, there's a deficit here', whatever kind of deficit or injustice, or you want to right the wrong, this is the way to do it. I mean, you have the vision, right? Architects have the vision as to what can be done, and you work out a way by which you can muster support from around and get it done. So that's what my job is. So I think the more we become entrepreneurs, the better it will be for us. And then you can take on projects that you feel are really needed by society.

Secondly, you must remember — whatever you do, whether you take on the humanitarian course or eco-urbanism or not, please do not use high-carbon materials. You must give them up — you must remember that 40% of all emissions are because of the way we build. So, look for alternative materials. Don't wait for somebody to tell you how to do it. This is your responsibility now, you owe it to the planet. You need it for your future generations that you must reduce emissions as much as possible.

And beyond that, follow your dream — whatever you want to do, carry on.

'Absolute Beginners': The Achievement Society and the Disenclosure of the Architectural Profession

Joshua Tan

In *The Burnout Society* (2010), philosopher Byung-Chul Han declared the transition from a 'disciplinary society' to an 'achievement society' in the twenty-first century.[1] Consequently, its members were no longer 'obedience-subjects' but 'achievement-subjects'. Drawing on Foucault, Han suggested that the disciplinary society's modal verbs were *May Not* and *Should*, indicating restrictions and compulsions. In contrast, the achievement society is characterised by the 'positivity' of attaining one's potential. Its modal verb is the 'unlimited *Can*'. With the positivity of *Can*, the limits of productivity in a disciplinary society are broken. The achievement-subject works faster and harder with an 'imperative to achieve'. Rather than becoming free from domination, this subject gives oneself to a 'compulsive freedom' where they are free from constraints to maximise achievement, but this objective becomes the constraint itself. Thus, the achievement-subject auto-exploits — the perpetrator and the victim are one and the same. For Han, this 'pressure to achieve' results in exhaustion and depression: burnout.

Han's diagnosis of contemporary society may seem familiar to the architectural profession today. The positivity of *Can* bleeds into almost all aspects of practice. Burning the midnight oil is part and parcel of learning what it means to gain experience and become an architect, particularly in 'prestigious' practices.[2] Participation in competitions — many of which provide no compensation for submissions — are

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1 Byung-Chul Han and Erik Butler, *The Burnout Society,* (Stanford, California: Stanford Briefs, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2015), pp. 8–11.

2 For example, Professor Albena Yaneva's ethnographic study of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) constantly emphasised how designers would spend their 'days and nights' in the office. In particular, the production of OMA's architectural models seems to be a leading culprit for 'sleepless nights'. Albena Yaneva, *Made by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: An Ethnography of Design*, (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009), pp. 10, 26, 66, 72, 89, 91; this seems to be common practice even today according to a more recent *Architect's Journal* survey, see Ella Jessel, 'AJ Investigation: Architectural Assistants Break Silence on Poor Working Practices', (Architects' Journal: EMAP Publishing Limited, 2021).

justified not only by the possibility of winning them, but for the intellectual exercises they provide.[3] The potential for growth in an architect's career does not end as they leave the office, it continues with a plethora of side hustles — an interior design project on the side, an ideas competition with other co-conspirators, a design studio to teach, or an essay (like this) to write. Architectural production seems to be at an all-time peak. 'Fun' has been perversely co-opted by work. Exploitation is repackaged into an opportunity for personal growth in a time when unpaid internships and declining real wages are endemic to the profession.[4] As we know, this has long diffused into the academy. Staying up till ungodly hours to perfect that drawing or model is considered a badge of honour — or even the minimum expectation — in architectural design studios.

To address this, Han re-introduced the concept of *Vita Contemplativa,* or the contemplative life, to relieve what he saw as excessive action. For Han, a slowness to action and an attention to one's environment were strategies to resist the pressures of the achievement-society. Drawing on his suggestion, I argue that architects need to pair this contemplation with the *disenclosure* of the discipline through the opening of history and by putting in common collective struggles. Contemplating about our profession and discipline necessarily involves knowledge of it. By engaging with history, architects understand the forces that have shaped the discipline and the profession. To demonstrate how essential this is, I turn to the work of Manfredo Tafuri and suggest that history can provide a mode of resistance against the positivity of the *Can* by revealing the exploitation that takes place behind the shroud of disciplinary interests. Furthermore, I assert that moving from contemplation to action is also necessary to

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3 See Hélène Lipstadt, 'Are Competitions Populist? A Bourdieusian Alternative Perspective', in *What People Want: Populism in Architecture and Design,* ed. by Michael Shamiyeh (Basel: Birkhäuser Basel, 2005), pp. 133–49.

4 Richard Waite, 'Exclusive: Survey Reveals Architects Were Handed a Real Terms Pay Cut in 2023', (Architects' Journal: EMAP Publishing Limited, 2023).

break free from Han's 'paradigm of achievement'. Drawing on contemporary studies of architectural labour, I propose that addressing the positivity of the *Can* through collective efforts and labour organisation can address both the compulsions of the achievement-subject and the complicity of the architectural designer. If restraint and refusal have a place in the *disenclosure* of architecture, they must be collective.

If *disenclosure* is defined as the expansion of disciplinary interests and a resistance to the capitalist enclosure of land and the economy, the excess productivity of architects seems to have coincided with a *disenclosure* of the discipline in recent decades. More designers and students are actively exploring projects that address social injustices and environmental crises. In addition, the profession is no longer solely the domain of the gentleman elite as it becomes more inclusive to other non-hegemonic identities. These changes are perhaps most clearly substantiated by the theme of Lesley Lokko's Venice Biennale Architecture Exhibition (2023) which focused on decolonisation and decarbonisation.[5] In the past decade, the Pritzker Architecture Prize, the profession's most prestigious award, was awarded to architects who have met a particular social or environmental need.[6] While it is heartening that the discipline has pursued these urgent issues beyond its usual obsession with self-referentiality and form, this *disenclosure* of architecture does not necessarily mean that designers within these practices are able to avoid 'burnout' or exploitation.[7]

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5 Lesley Lokko, 'Introduction to the Laboratory of the Future, the 18th International Architecture Exhibition', (Venice: Venice Biennale, 2023).

6 Some Pritzker Laureates include Shigeru Ban (2014), Alejandro Aravena (2016), Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal (2021), Diébédo Francis Kéré (2022).

7 Interestingly, the same people who have been celebrated by the Pritzker Prize for their socially conscious work have become known for their alleged exploitation of students and designers. Elemental, the architectural studio led by Aravena, announced it was ending its internship program in 2019 after criticism that it relied on unpaid interns in the past. London designer Adam Nathaniel Furman posted emails that were allegedly from Ban's office offering unpaid internships. See India Block, 'Elemental Ends Internships Amid Growing Row over Unpaid

Furthermore, many clients and projects today have yet to reflect this shift of demographic in registered architects and students. As such, greater production has also enabled architects to foray into dangerous territory. One might notice the parallel rise of the profession's involvement in socially and environmentally catastrophic projects. This excess of architectural production often finds itself in service to capital as it exacerbates environmental crises under the guise of sustainability, housing unaffordability, labour exploitation, and settler-colonialism, among many others.[8] Architects seem ever more complicit in unrestrained exploitation, both as perpetuators and recipients. If one extends Han's theory in this way, the consequences of the achievement-subject's actions do not end with the auto-exploitation of the self — they are also inextricably linked with the oppression of others. The *disenclosure* of architecture must happen by addressing the positivity of *Can* if it is to transform not only in architecture's disciplinary interests, but also the profession and work of producing architecture.

The Project of the Achievement-Subject and the Contemplative Life

For Han, the formation of the achievement-subject is closely linked with capitalist relations of production.[9] Remarking on its mechanics today, Han argued that capital's violence has become 'consensual'. What is dangerous about competition today is not the competition between individuals but the 'self-referentiality' of competition. The achievement-subject competes with herself as she attempts to outperform herself over and over. Instead of experiencing the disciplinary 'subjection' of the prohibitive

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Work in Architecture Studios', (Dezeen, 2019); Warwick Mihaly, 'Redefining the Metrics of Success', (Australia: Parlour Collective, 2019).

8 See Reinier De Graaf, *Architect, Verb* (Verso, 2023), pp. ebook, 40–41; Natasha Iskander, *Does Skill Make Us Human?: Migrant Workers in 21st-Century Qatar and Beyond* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2021).

9 Han and Butler, pp. 46–47.

superego, the achievement-subject 'projects' herself into the 'ego ideal'. In doing so, she turns herself *into* a 'project' as she pursues the objective of closing the gap between her 'real ego' and 'ego ideal'. This is what enables auto-exploitation. In contrast to the negative motivation of external domination, the achievement-subject is fed the illusion of freedom — she is free to maximise achievement. Indeed, Han claimed that this type of exploitation is considerably more effective and generates significantly higher returns because it takes place without external compulsion.[10]

It is not difficult to find parallels of this consensuality of auto-exploitation in contemporary architectural discourse. The architectural 'project' has long been fetishised.[11] Rather than a singular work of architecture, the 'project' can refer to the architect's oeuvre which puts forth a certain principle of organising design.[12] This broader definition of the 'project' has a long history. Etymologically, the 'project' refers to something thrown forward. As historians Vera Keller and Ted McCormick noted, the term denoted a concept usually accompanied with an image or a plan drawing during the early modern period.[13] Refusing to submit to the material and political limitations of the time and communicating their spiritual and material aspirations were crucial to the 'project' and their 'projectors' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[14] While 'projects' were criticised for their infeasibility in the eighteenth century, the possibility of private profit and public benefits helped make their risk more socially acceptable.[15] Unsurprisingly, the investment of — what

10 Ibid. p. 49.

11 See Pier Vittorio Aureli and Peter Eisenman, 'A Project Is a Lifelong Thing; If You See It, You Will Only See It at the End', *Log*, 28 (2013).

12 Ibid. p. 74; Sarah Whiting and Peter Eisenman, 'I Am Interested in a Project of Engaged Autonomy', *Log*, 28 (2013).

13 Vera Keller and Ted McCormick, 'Towards a History of Projects', *Early Science and Medicine*, 21 (2016), pp. 426–33.

14 Ibid. p. 429.

15 Ibid. p. 435.

may be loosely defined as — capital was key to any 'project'.

This remains true today as the concept of the 'project' acquired contemporary meaning. In conversation with Peter Eisenman, the architect Pier Vittorio Aureli discussed the success of various 'projects' of architects in *Log* 28. For them, the 'project' was what the architect ought to devote herself to. Surpassing the value of any single work of architecture, Aureli argued that this was a 'lifelong undertaking' which required 'years of accumulation of things'.[16] As Eisenman noted, these 'projects' of early modernist architects relied on clients and therefore, capital.[17] Aureli concurred, observing that contemporary projects involved a massive 'financial operation'. In other words, to a certain extent, the 'project' relied on capital. But what if this formulation was turned around? What if capital relied on the 'project'? What was missing in their dialogue was how architects were themselves instrumentalised by capital as they composed their 'project' as recent scholarship has shown.[18] This drive towards formulating a 'project' presupposes the architect transforming *into* a project as Han observed.[19]

Aside from actual commissions of architecture, the architectural competition is another important site for developing a 'project'. In her chapter for *What People Think* (2005), cultural historian Hélène Lipstadt argued that competitions turned the

16 Aureli and Eisenman, p. 72.

17 Ibid. p. 75.

18 See Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Graaf.

19 In an interview with students at the Yale School of Architecture, Architect Robert A.M. Stern urged young architects to 'work in an established practice and learn as much as possible before launching into independent practice. In other words, turn off the earbuds and listen to what's being said around you, try to be at every meeting, and keep pushing your superiors to take you with them — do whatever it takes to see what's going on, to learn, and to be aware.' See Robert A.M. Stern, 'Interview with Robert Stern', in *Perspecta*, 47: Money, ed. by James Andrachuk, et al. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), p. 43.

economic world 'upside-down'.[20] By participating in them, architects could 'operate as if they enjoyed a very considerable degree of autonomy' like artists.[21] Architects were allowed to make grand gestures and, like projectors of the past, set aside the material and political limitations temporarily. As Lipstadt observed, they may not be rewarded with actual commissions but could gain the respect and admiration of their peers. While Lipstadt saw the open competition as a moment of liberation for architects, it is precisely where the 'freedom' of the achievement-subject to maximise achievement — and hence, auto-exploit, thrives.[22]

It is worth comparing the structure of the design studio — and the MArch thesis — in architecture schools to the format of the competition. Students learn by developing a hypothetical project while critics serve as jurors. The reproduction of architectural labour is predicated on this form of auto-exploitation. It is thus no accident that SCI-Arc faculty in California would recommend students take up 'side-hustles' while also committing to working long hours and going the 'extra mile'.[23]

Given how familiar Han's diagnosis must feel to our discipline, what is to be done? *Vita Contemplativa* was the closest thing to a solution that Han proposed. This concept may be traced back to Greek philosophy, but Han concentrated on Arendt's modern interpretation. In her seminal book *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt differentiated between the three categories of *Vita Activa: labour*, *work,* and *action*.[24] *Labour* was defined as

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20 Lipstadt, pp. 139–40.

21 Ibid. pp. 139–40.

22 Not to mention that this covers up the immense machinery of labour that takes place behind the awards and accolades. Behind the 'project' of an architect are many other 'projects' of her assistants in the office.

23 Katherine Guimapang, 'Controversy at Sci-Arc over Labor Practices Leads to Faculty Members Placed on Leave. Isolated Incident or a Wake up Call for the Industry at Large?', (Archinect, 2022).

24 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 7.

the activity required for biological survival. *Work* resulted in a usable 'thing' shaped by instrumentalism. For Arendt, *action* was the most important component of *Vita Activa*. Through their 'actions and speech', she argued, individuals demonstrate their uniqueness, revealing their distinct personalities to the world.[25] Towards the end of her book, Arendt suggested that modern society was replacing both *action* and *work* with *labour*.[26] It demanded its members to reduce other forms of activity into 'a sheer automatic functioning'. In other words, labour, the activity needed for subsistence, was increasingly all that was possible.

Reflecting on *The Human Condition*, Han suggested that Arendt's emphasis on *Vita Activa* was misplaced, especially when considered in the context of the late-modern achievement-society.[27] Far from simply encouraging labouring, capital *fostered* the individuality of the contemporary achievement-subject. Instead of the reduction of human activity to labour that Arendt predicted, Han claimed that hyperactivity characterised the achievement-society. This 'hyperactive intensification' led to a 'hyperpassivity' as the achievement-subject acted on every 'impulse or stimulus' in service to capital.[28]

Seen in this light, *thinking* surpassed *acting* in its 'capacity' for human *action*. For Han, the decline in ability to contemplate contributed to an overemphasis in an active life and the plight of the achievement-subject. As such, *Vita Contemplativa* required one to be both selective of their actions and in attention to things. Drawing on Nietzche's *Twilight of the Idols*, Han argued for the importance of developing deep and contemplative attention to one's surroundings by 'learning to see, to think, and to speak and write'.[29] Learning to 'see' involved becoming accustomed

25 Ibid. pp. 176–77.
26 Ibid. p. 322.
27 Han and Butler, p. 17.
28 Ibid. p. 22.
29 Ibid. pp. 14, 21.

to calmness and patience. This meant allowing for a long and deliberate observation of things — an active resistance to intrusive stimuli rather than a passive acceptance of everything.

Engaging with the Historical Project as an Architect

Alongside Han's suggestion of contemplation, I argue that we must return to history to understand the conditions we have inherited. This position is not new. In contrast to the active and operative architectural 'project', architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri proposed an engagement with the historical 'project'. In 'The Building of Tension' (2007), architectural historian Teresa Stoppani succinctly summarised how Tafuri's *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (1980) laid out this historical 'project' as a construct that remained open to redefinition.[30] Rather than being static, history is shaped by the objects it examines while also influencing the realities it deconstructs and then reconstructs. For Tafuri, there was no single linear history, but multiple threads that collided and tangled. Stoppani concludes that the objective of the historian is to trace the entanglements of the many independent histories.

Of course, Tafuri was interested in the relationship between capital and the architectural 'project'. Through his Marxist critique of capitalist development, Tafuri showed how history is an essential analytical tool to understand the conditions in which we practise. This awareness and analysis of history is precisely what needs to take place concurrently with Han's contemplation. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's 'The Author as Producer' (1934), Tafuri later argued that architecture must be examined in its loci

30 Teresa Stoppani, 'The Building of Tension - Manfredo Tafuri's Legacy: From Operative Criticism to Historical Project, between Critical Practices and Material Practices in Architecture', in *Reflections on Creativity: Exploring the Role of Theory in Creative Practices*, ed. by Hamid van Koten and Lorens Holm (Dundee, Scotland, UK: Duncan of Jordanstone College, 2007), pp. 1–17 (pp. 9–10).

of production.[31] History allowed him to understand the terms in which architecture was complicit with capitalist exploitation. In other words, Tafuri needed critical distance from practice to muster a critique of the contemporary.[32] An independent historical analysis could not be contaminated by or subservient to the objectives of contemporary practice, and its theories.[33] This is precisely why a retreat to history is crucial.

In his *Contropiano* essay 'Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology' (1969) which was later expanded into *Architecture and Utopia* (1976), Tafuri contended that the modern dilution of Enlightenment utopianism in architectural theory was connected to the rise of the 'modern movement'.[34] The fall of social utopianism in the early nineteenth century marked the acceptance of architects to the new order of the capitalist city. For Tafuri, architecture was the first discipline to accept the reverberations of the resulting commodification because it was 'directly linked to the reality of production'.[35] Furthermore, he argued that the crisis of modern architecture — the inability to achieve its demands of rationalisation in cities — stemmed from its surrender to industrial capital. He astutely pointed out that the diagnosis of crisis by modern architectural historians of his time neglected the international reorganisation of capital that took place under the influences of economist John Maynard Keynes and *The General Theory of Employment* (1936).[36] For Tafuri, this moment is pivotal as architecture relinquishes its role as the 'stimulus to the structures of production'.

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31 Ibid. pp. 7-8.

32 Tafuri, of course, later declared that 'there is no such thing as critique, only history'. Richard Ingersoll and Manfredo Tafuri, 'There Is No Criticism, Only History', *Casabella* (1995).

33 Stoppani, p. 6.

34 K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1998), pp. 6–15.

35 Ibid. p. 15.

36 Ibid. pp. 28-29; for a study on the impact of this in the Global South, see *Aggregate, Architecture in Development: Systems and the Emergence of the Global South*, 1st edn (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2022).

What followed was an avant-garde criticism that served as a tool for the capitalist world, functioning within the cycles of production rather than outside of it.[37] The consequences of this surrender extended to the modern profession, resulting in the 'proletarianization' of the architect and her subjugation *within* planning programs.[38] Tafuri argued that architects were unable to explicate the very historical developments that they were complicit in producing. As such, they rebelled against their decline as influencers of the urban environment without addressing the fundamental problems of the capitalist system.

For Tafuri, it was essential that architects were well-versed in the history of their discipline so that they could effectively implement changes for the future. This does not mean that all architects interested in *disenclosure* should now become historians. However, for *disenclosure* to happen in the architectural profession, architects must engage with history to confront the complex problems they hope to address. This means doing the unseen work of reading widely and deeply. In the achievement-society where maximising production is celebrated, this is easier said than done. If your reputation as an architect depends on your actions — an award-winning building, a prized competition entry, or a stunning visualisation — then the very acts of knowledge-accumulation and contemplation are seemingly counter-productive. That said, following Tafuri's critique, it is essential that architects do so to reclaim our disciplinary autonomy. As architect and architectural historian Sarah Whiting argued in *Log*, it is crucial for academics to be concerned with the state of practice as much as the inverse.[39] The investigations of architectural theory and history in academia must remain relevant to architects, particularly in the pursuit of *disenclosure.*

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37 Hays, pp. 30–31.

38 Ibid. p. 31.

39 Whiting and Eisenman, p. 112.

While contemplation and engaging with history are important components of *disenclosing* the discipline of architecture, action — through the organisation of labour — remains essential to tackling the positivity of *Can* in professional labour, particularly for those occupying more precarious positions. The professional gatekeeping of the chartered — or licensed — architect needs to be *disenclosed* to acknowledge the significant labour produced by (unlicensed) architectural designers that support the work of the chartered architect.[40] Furthermore, if professional associations of architects have failed to regulate unethical practices and commissions, then the collective organisation of emerging architects and designers is necessary to steer firms away from being complicit in socially and environmentally catastrophic projects.[41]

Thus far, professional associations have largely been ineffective in institutionalising much-needed changes to the working conditions of architectural labour.[42] The Future Architects' Front (FAF) criticised the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in a 2021 open letter for its failure to protect the interests of architectural designers and regulate the unethical actions of its chartered members.[43] The American Institute

40 It may be important to note that in the United States of America, non-Hispanic whites add up to about ninety-one percent of all registered architects. As such, those who hold an architectural licence (white) and those who do not (non-white) are extremely uneven, highlighting the exploitation of those more vulnerable to racial capitalism. See Betsy del Monte, 'Equity & Justice in Architecture', (Dallas: AIA Dallas, 2020).

41 In *The Disappearance of Rituals* (2020), Byung-Chul Han reflects on the disintegration of community as rituals fade away with the increasing 'atomization' of individuals in society. While Han asserts that his book is not an argument to return to past rituals, he underlines the importance of collective feelings. Is it possible to see designers not just as a collective of workers but also as associations with shared design values?

42 Bassem Saad, 'Betraying the Profession: Design Labour against Technocracy', *Failed Architecture*, 2020.

43 Future Architects' Front, 'An Open Letter to the Royal Institute of British

of Architects (AIA) has performed no better with minimal commitments to protect the wages of emerging architects and a general timidity to advocate for architects after the 1972 and 1990 antitrust directives.[44] As a result, the profession has struggled to attract and retain minorities in both countries.[45] As such, in recent years, there have been increased calls for labour organisation in the architectural profession — though this has been met with fierce opposition.[46]

In 'Betraying the Profession' (2020), writer Bassem Saad argued that a 'betrayal' and 'disidentification' of professional values is necessary because of this gross neglect of the precarious conditions designers face. According to them, the designer is 'conditioned' to identify with the professional designer class throughout their education and career in architecture. In other words, the achievement-subject is also cultivated *by* the profession. Saad described what might be considered typical of an architectural designer starting their career:

> The designer may be currently precariously employed in the lower rungs of a firm whose grip on a sustainable inflow of commissions is tenuous, but she is surely to advance with the *necessary investment of overtime, self-discipline, and self-initiated competition entries.* She must therefore identify with her boss, and both must do their part to defend the value of the design profession.[47]

Architects (RIBA)', 2021. See also Amrita Raja, 'Future Architects Front Is Campaigning to End Exploitation of U.K.'S Architectural Assistants', 2021.

44 Peggy Deamer, Keefer Dunn, and Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió, 'A Response to AIA Values', *Avery Review*, 23 (2017); Peggy Deamer, Architecture and Labor, 1st edn (Routledge, 2020).

45 Michael J. Armstrong, 'NCARB by the Numbers', (United States of America: National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, 2018), p. 58.

46 Noam Scheiber, 'Architects Are the Latest White-Collar Workers to Confront Bosses', *New York Times*, 2021; Daniel Jonas Roche, 'Snøhetta Named in an Unlawful Discrimination Suit by Architectural Workers United after Unsuccessful Union Drive', *The Architects' Newspaper*, 2023.

47 Saad. Emphasis added by author.

As ‘overtime’ and ‘self-initiated projects’ are symptomatic of the positivity of *Can,* Saad’s observation demonstrates how the auto-exploitation of the architectural designer has been internalised in architectural work through professional ‘solidarity’. Saad warned that this perspective led to a slippery slope of auto-exploitation and the dismissal of the designer’s precarious reality:

> Solidarity is presumed to exist and flourish, if at all, on the grounds of shared profession. In this sense, over-identification with a professional class of designers coincides with the tendency for designers to see their work as a ‘calling,’ and both cases end up dismissing the material realities of most design workers.[48]

As architect Marisa Cortright asserted in *Failed Architecture*, it is a mistake to treat becoming an architect as a ‘calling’ because it has justified the poor treatment of workers.[49] *Disenclosing* the profession means accounting for the precarious conditions emerging designers face. If Han’s suggestion of *Vita Contemplativa* is impossible when architectural jobs are precarious, architectural designers are overworked, and working environments are toxic, then Saad’s rejection of the profession, and call for alternative associations and organisation is a necessary next step to reduce the prevalence of exploitative working conditions. Concurrently, supporting organisations like the FAF, the Section of Architectural Workers, and the Architectural Lobby could play a crucial role in advocating for emerging architectural designers. Furthermore, the successes and failures of these organisations could be documented, creating an ‘archive’ or methodology of organising as some organisations

48 Ibid.

49 Marisa Cortright, ‘Death to the Calling: A Job in Architecture Is Still a Job’, *Failed Architecture*, 2019.

have already begun doing.[50] While this may not stop an individual from indulging in auto-exploitation, organising labour could resist its normalisation in professional settings.

Disenclosing the Profession

If the disenclosure of the architectural profession is to happen, it is necessary that architects address the positivity of the *Can* in our achievement-society. The excess productivity generated by the achievement-subject needs to be curbed to reduce the architect's complicity and self-exploitation. In this essay, I have put forth several strategies of restraint and refusal. Through Han's reintroduction of *Vita Contemplativa*, the individual must learn to be selectively attentive, refraining from hyperactivity. By revisiting the work of Tafuri, I proposed that engaging with history is a necessary step to understanding the development and conditions of our profession, particularly its relationship to capital. Lastly, by drawing on Saad's rejection of professional associations, I highlighted the importance of collective action, especially when labour is precarious. These strategies imply greater collaboration between academia and practice as well as the collective organisation of architectural labour. The disenclosure of architecture should encompass not only a broadening of its disciplinary interests but also a reconsideration of professional conditions. For this to happen, the architect must acquire both self-awareness and the capacity for action. The lyrics of David Bowie's 'Modern Love' (1983) are fitting: 'I know when to go out | Know when to stay in | Get things done.'

50 Citygroup in New York City has been at the frontlines resisting gentrification in Chinatown. The Chinatown Working Group have created their own 'archive' as a documentation of their efforts which can be used for other similar efforts. See Chinatown Working Group, 'Archive' <https://www.chinatownworkinggroup.com/archive> [accessed 21 June 2024].

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Forwards: In Conversation with the Editors

Nicholas Frayne and Jerry Chow

Jerry Chow (JC):
This issue of *Scroope* began with a word, *disenclosure* — one that we kept returning to as a title and theme. What about disenclosure did you find compelling and apt for our ambitions as editors?

Nicholas Frayne (NF):
Looking back over the last issues of *Scroope*, what we see is a shift towards the socio-political dimensions of architecture, with themes like 'Crisis', 'Power', and 'Duplicity' grounding some of our recent previous issues. While in the first decade of the publication there was a conscious choice to let the journal be guided solely by the pieces volunteered by contributors, rather than by editors' agendas, approaching architectural praxis without a clear ethical direction today is, for me, problematic. The fact is that there are serious issues we face today that implicate all of us: new injustices, ongoing colonial complicity and persistence, genocide,[1] climate emergency, and pervasive exploitation under neoliberal capitalism; the list goes on. These issues are not abstract metaphors, to reference Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's well-known article on decolonisation,[2] but produce concrete lived realities. And the production, imagination, and interrogation of the built environment is an integral part of these realities, as each article in this issue of *Scroope* has demonstrated. Our work as editors needs to engage these wider conditions that architecture sits within, bringing me to your question on *disenclosure*.

But perhaps we should begin with *enclosure*. Following recent decolonial work, enclosure is a spatio-ontological condition that characterises these violent realities and helps us understand the processes by which they are sustained. Opposing this, *dis*enclosure compels us to focus on moments of absolute

1 Forensic Architecture, *A Spatial Analysis of the Israeli Military's Conduct in Gaza since October 2023* (Forensic Architecture, October 15, 2024).

2 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1.1 (2012), pp. 1–40.

impasse, or enclosure, through an architectural lens, situating our discipline as a potential force towards shifting those moments. Disenclosure has real, serious urgency in the face of ongoing injustice, and I think this has made it a strong thematic framework for this issue. It is the groundedness of the term in tandem with its rich theoretical foundations — Nancy, Mbembe, Fanon, Memmi — that gives the concept strength as an architectural idea. Disenclosure, as a framework, seems to keep the door open on itself, remaining pertinent to our ambitions as editors to foreground the challenges that we all share, albeit in radically divergent and not always compatible ways.

When we were crafting the call for this issue, we worked to include space for questioning what the limits and thresholds of *disenclosure* might be. Did you find the submissions we received matched this effort to not only extend but critique the theme? And what might the nature of our submissions say about the place of this kind of questioning in architectural theory and criticism today?

JC:

Each of the submissions offers a slightly different reading of the theme, and I would also suggest, enacts its own kind of disenclosure. Some of them call us to action, or extend lines of enquiry into stories that have been overlooked, or even reconsider the boundaries, forms, and substance of architecture and academic work. Our intention in making space for critique in the issue was to not take the idea of disenclosure for granted, or as a metaphor, to return to Tuck and Yang. We wanted to seriously grapple with what decolonisation actually means and might look like in architecture, as well as the academic communities we are a part of. The contributions to this issue give us a glimpse of what disenclosure — as a kind of messy, difficult opening — could be, both in terms of their content and as acts of disenclosure in and of themselves. I am still returning to and rereading them, and continue to discover new things that both reaffirm and

challenge my own convictions about the discipline and its disenclosure.

I expect some of our readers will feel that the work in the issue went too far, and others that it didn't go far enough. Learning how to navigate that discomfort has been a difficult part of editing an issue like this for me. But I also believe that each piece we have included asks important and necessary questions of the discipline and invites us further into thoughtful conversation and practice. The nature of our submissions suggests that this kind of questioning in architectural theory and criticism is needed, but ought also to be constantly questioned. We can both ask questions and ask questions about those questions. As you said, disenclosure seems to keep the door open on itself. I would like to think that continuing to ask critical yet generous questions of ourselves, others, and the work that we do makes for a discipline that is more kind, humble, honest, rigorous, and open. So I hope that these submissions represent not the limit of questioning in architectural theory and criticism, but small disenclosures that open us to more questions that expand how we think about and make architecture with more curiosity and care.

Something that we've also talked about over the last few months of editing, though, is what's missing — all the voices, perspectives, and approaches that we missed, or didn't have the capacity or time to bring into the conversation. How do you reckon with these absences?

NF:

The biggest challenge that we faced with this theme was its inherent call to openness, to flexibility, to experimentation, and to platforming the gaps in our knowledges — a task that will necessarily always remain in progress. The absences produced by the act of assembling this publication are, perhaps, just as important as the contributions; the contours of architectural knowledge are defined as much by what is included as what is not. Reading this issue of *Scroope* — or indeed any architectural

publication — through the absences offers a method for seeing the limits of our own capacities to disenclose through editorial work. Were these gaps intentional, or simply a matter of circumstance? I wish, for example, that we could have had more voices from institutions in the Global South, but we struggled to get the word out to Southern universities. At the same time, we had to choose from many excellent abstracts, working with a double-blind peer review process. These circumstances and choices we made (or could not make) ultimately produced a curated view of our core theme. Attending to what is missing I think tempers any claims to total understanding, and highlights the partiality and provisionality of disenclosure at this time and place, with these people and ideas, through this particular form.

As the issue progressed, we kept finding new authors that we wish we could have included, and ways of engaging that would have added depth and nuance to the issue. I think here about Ozayr Saloojee's suggestion to us that the authors be provided with a forum to have a reflexive conversation about their collaboration. Often, contributors to journal issues work in isolation from each other; the editors have the bird's-eye view of the whole community, but authors only know at the end who their work is in conversation with. While we set in motion Ozayr's idea, we ultimately did not have the resources for it — we are, after all, pursuing this work in addition to other commitments we hold. This is a key point: the small editorial group that produces *Scroope* has its own gaps. Only those who have the time, space, resources, interest, and support are able to take on editorial work, effectively closing the door to many of our peers who have caring responsibilities, or for whom anything 'extra' is simply impossible in a very demanding academic environment. I think if we were to be fully committed to our theme, perhaps the process of editing *Scroope* itself would have been a good place to start.

Something that came up in several pieces was the role of architectural institutions in *disenclosure*. This journal is edited

by postgraduate students of architecture at Cambridge; it is produced in relation to the University, which — as pointed out by many contributors — is far from a neutral space for knowledge-production. What does it mean to you to be working on this specific theme with and from within the University of Cambridge; how do you think through our positionality at this particular time and place?

JC:

As editors, it's been an immense privilege to work with such an esteemed group of contributors, and despite working with and from within the institution, we've enjoyed a great amount of freedom to assemble the threads of conversations that run through this issue. Being Cambridge students has allowed us to move through and make connections across the academic world in an uncommon way — we have been afforded opportunities and visibility that many other students around the world do not enjoy. But our place at an institution like this has perhaps also given us a sense of responsibility about the work we do. Early on in our conversations about editing the issue, we both expressed an interest in writing that might expand what academic writing in architecture looks like, building on the ongoing work in the department to critically engage with ideas of decolonisation in the discipline, such as in student groups like UNFOLD.[3] I think we both saw the idea of disenclosure not just as a passing research interest, but a kind of obligation, in recognition of when and where we were writing and editing. Jean-Luc Nancy writes that 'space is not conquered without space conquering its conquerors as well.'[4] And although institutions like Cambridge have been complicit, even culpable, in enclosure, this suggests that disenclosure is not necessarily just an external force, but one that comes from within too, wherein enclosure begins to undo itself.

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3 See: https://www.decolonise.space/

4 Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Dis-Enclosure', in *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity* (Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 159.

This is not to say that colonialism will simply resolve itself, but to draw our attention to ways disenclosure is already happening, both beyond and within the University. This has been part of the work we have started doing in attending to the gaps as editors — to not only seek out the 'new' or stories that have been untold, but to also recognise the stories that have been under-told, the cracks that are already opening.

In your question you've couched positionality in specifically temporal and spatial terms, which reminds me of the ephemerality of our tenure as editors of this journal. As we near the end of our time here I, like you, have also been thinking about the ways we might have enacted a greater disenclosure in our work. At the same time, I don't want to lessen the significance of the contributions we have been able to include in this issue. As editors working within our own constraints, we need to make peace with an incompleteness of disenclosure. Perhaps we do this by learning to find contentment with what has been achieved in this particular time and place while remaining hopeful that the disenclosure we have been a part of will continue to open, will continue to be a way by which architecture moves forwards.

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SCROOPE 33 | 2024 | Disenclosure
Editors: Nicholas Frayne, Jerry Chow

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Editors: Fatma Mhmood, Heather Mitcheltree

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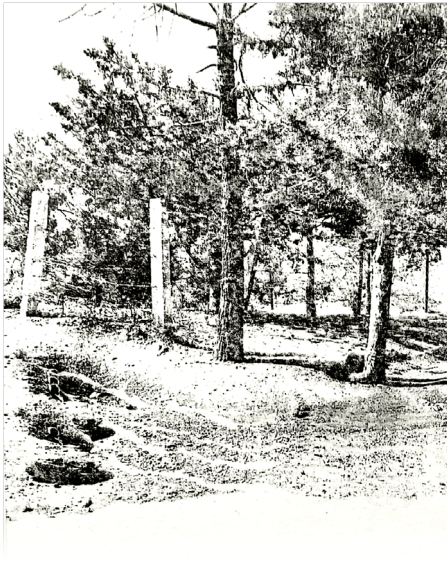
SCROOPE 33 | 2024
Disenclosure

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