

BOUW

MATERIES

Architectural Humanities  
Research Association  
21<sup>st</sup> International Conference

**21 – 23 November 2024**

Welcome to *Body Matters*,  
the 21st Architectural  
Humanities Research  
Association international  
conference at Norwich  
University of the Arts.

*Body Matters* aims to investigate notions of  
Body in contemporary architectural discourses.  
Always a fundamental in architecture, the body  
needs to be reconsidered on its own terms, as a  
creative, material and philosophical concern.

This conference aims to explore not only what  
the body looks like, how it works and performs  
and what it is made of, but also how it blurs  
its own boundaries as it resonates with the  
environment. Ultimately it will interrogate how  
bodies matter, in architecture and beyond.

Teresa Stoppani  
George Themistokleous  
Ellie Nixon

**Norwich University of the Arts**  
**November 2024**

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# BODY MATTERS

## Introduction

Beyond historical materialism and phenomenological approaches in architecture, recent new materialism thought has proposed a cross-disciplinary endeavor to confront long-held assumptions about the relationship between humans, nonhumans and the world. The material world is understood as a network of relational, non-fixed entities, always in flux and emerging in unexpected ways around actions and events.

How then can Architecture position itself and its role in these shifting and pluralist perspectives? We articulated this question to discuss it with the academic community in Architecture and beyond.

**WHICH BODY.** Architecture has always been obsessed with bodies. Its own body first and foremost. What are the relations, the differences, the articulations of building and architecture? And between the body of the discipline and the constructed body of each of its instantiations – a building, a project, a drawing. What then is the body of architecture, in the exquisite and still troublesome relationship of *arché* and *tehton* that sits at the origin of its western etymology (Vitruvius). Answers can be found perhaps by rearticulating the conversation in wider cultural and geographical, global contexts. *Arché* is multiple, movable, and ultimately untraceable – indeed a project of constant reinvention. *Techton* is pulverized in a myriad of techniques, technologies, makings and materializations, itself an ephemeral substantiation.

**WHOSE BODY.** Shelter, haven, container, envelope; home and sepulcher; social platform, hub of cultural and political exchanges, but also apparatus of control, exclusion and reclusion.... Architecture has an inevitable relation with bodies, human and nonhuman. It makes space, it constructs and constricts, it enables and accommodates life. Until a century ago architecture wanted to look like a human body and function as an organism, but then deconstruction exposed the violence of this relationship, and digital architecture started to reconfigure it in smoother and more ambiguous ways.

**WHAT BODIES.** As bodies lost their integrity, the shifting remaking of assemblages exposed their interconnectedness. Architecture was also put into question: more than container, envelope, shelter, architecture becomes a vulnerable body, a constellation of vibrating matter and resonating oscillations. Beyond separations and distinctions, bodies *and* environment, bodies *in* environment, architecture can become a manifold of mutual envelopments.

OTHER BODIES. From passive malleable material to acting matter; beyond distinctions and questions of natural and artificial, human and animal, organic and inorganic, virtual and actual: we have learned to co-exist, living multiple and intersecting lives – in our flesh, emotions, media, in uni- pluri- meta- verses. It seems we have dissolved, no longer made of cells, but of moving subatomic particles, bits of information and lies, and ultimately of energy. Then what does architecture become, do, make?

OVEREXPOSED AND FRAGILE. Extreme global events generated by anthropic activities of depredation are threatening or destroying lives and redesigning geopolitics and geologies alike. And while we live in hybrid or virtual realities and construct our digital alter egos, we are called to face, feel, and sense our very material interconnectedness with the physical world. We need to redefine our bodies, invent new boundaries, design or improvise new forms of sociality and collectivity, rethink how we inhabit and share the planet.

## Bodies Matter

If this conference were a human being, it would already be a toddler now. No longer stumbling around: walking. Even in the instantaneous networked world of the web, provoking, articulating and gathering exchanges takes time. And while we do so, the world changes, faster. A lot has happened, is happening, in the last couple of years, since we started formulating the questions that inform this congress. Responses have been as varied and open as our questions; yet they all carry, in different ways, the same energy that propels our discipline to change and remain engaged, always, with its social and political dimension. It is a responsibility.

Discipline. What discipline? Can we still proclaim ourselves practitioners of siloed knowledges while paradigms and categories in the world are subverted and exploded, and at the same time covertly re-established. In the end the outstanding key question of this congress of thinkers, scholars, designers, artists and performers is the same that the architectural humanities and the Architectural Humanities Research Association conferences keep asking, and is indeed the very reason for the AHRA to exist: What is Architecture?

What is architecture in its transforming and transformative role, that far exceeds illusory claims of permanence and stability, and the limited roles of construction and shelter? If architecture is the ‘housing of life’ – as Andrew Benjamin suggests here, bringing home (that is, to architecture) contemporary philosophy of life, from Giorgio Agamben’s to Roberto Esposito’s – architecture changes and is always already open, porous, permeable, trans-formable. The *tehton* of architecture is movable and changeable with the societies that make it and with wider environmental dynamics (and global resources). The *arché*, far from fixed in prescribed norms, is a volatile narrative that becomes itself a site of negotiation, contestation, violence even.

If we claim that the architectural humanities are not about architecture but *are* architecture, and an ineliminable part of it, the work we are called to – our responsibility – is intrinsically, inevitably, joyously multi-disciplinary. It interrogates and undoes itself as it makes itself, always looking and working ‘from the outside’ (Elizabeth Grosz).

Enter the body. Literally. Enter the body that makes, occupies and transforms architecture, and architecture becomes a relational field, of violence even (Bernard Tschumi). Enter bodies, and it is a site of contestation and conflict (Eyal Weizman). Enter time, and it is an encrustation of shared memories and slow transformations (Aldo Rossi). But we are still thinking of human bodies here.

If we embrace new materialist and posthumanist positions, it is the humanity of the body that needs to be questioned, the distinctions upon which it was constructed, and the dualisms that sustained it for centuries. Becoming other, becoming animal, becoming cyborg, becoming thing, becoming matter, the body becomes – also – architecture. Yet this loop is far from closed, as the relation of architecture to the body/bodies is dislodged from form and function, from metaphor and geometry.

More open than ever, the question of body *and* architecture, body *of* architecture, challenges the boundaries and the role of the discipline – Architecture’s responsibility.

## Body Matters

Architecture faces a crucial challenge today: to rethink the contemporary body beyond the multiple dualisms identified by Donna Haraway in *A Cyborg Manifesto* – animal/man, self/other, male/female, and so on – and reconceive both itself and the body as what Michel Foucault had called a *dispositif*, an heterogeneous ensemble with ‘the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings’ (Giorgio Agamben).

By the late twentieth century, sociologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock had identified three approaches to move beyond the dualistic thinking of the body: the phenomenological embodied ‘body-self,’ the ‘social body,’ and the ‘body politic.’ This period consolidated efforts to critique ‘naturalistic’ understandings of the body. Architectural thinking in the last two decades has primarily followed this line of inquiry when dealing with issues of the body.

More recent literature from body studies, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy reconsiders the bodily materiality as intra-active processes (Karen Barad; Lisa Blackman; Stacy Alaimo). From genes to atoms to the environment, bodies can no longer be considered as distinct categories of body-self, social body, and body politics; instead, they are entangled. For example, bacteria cannot be considered as distinct entities; the microbial is constantly altered by human, environmental and technical milieus (Hannah Landecker). These pluralist entanglements of social and biological spheres further obfuscate relations between individual and social bodies, inviting new perspectives on the political implications of ‘housing of life’ (Andrew Benjamin).

*Body Matters* offers multifaceted approaches that challenge the reductive, essentialist, exclusionary, universalist, and discriminatory limitations historically imposed on bodies (Rosi Braidotti). How can architecture respond to emerging ways of seeing the body as an entangled non-dualistic process? Through multiple perspectives, we aim to explore how architecture deals with bodies.

**Teresa Stoppani**  
**George Themistokleous**

# CONFERENCE TEAM

## Teresa Stoppani (Architecture and Interior Design, AHRA)

Teresa Stoppani is Professor of Architecture and Director of Architecture and Interior Design at Norwich University of the Arts, and lectures in History and Theory Studies at the Architectural Association School of Architecture. An architect (Italy) and architectural theorist, Teresa is an executive editor of the AHRA journal *Architecture and Culture*, cofounder of the architecture research collective *This Thing Called Theory*, and steering group member of the Architectural Humanities Research Association. Teresa's research focuses on the relationship between

architecture theory and the design process, and on the influence of other spatial and critical practices and of philosophy on the specifically architectural. Her books include *Paradigm Islands: Manhattan and Venice* (Routledge 2010), *Unorthodox Ways to Think the City* (Routledge 2019), and the co-edited *This Thing Called Theory* (Routledge 2016). Her current project 'Architecture\_Dusts' explores the undoing of form in architecture, studying its materiality (Dust, Atomised) and minor and aberrant practices (Invisibles, Monsters).

## George Themistokleous (Architecture)

George Themistokleous is an architect, writer and transdisciplinary theorist, and Senior Lecturer in Architecture at Norwich university of the Arts. He is the founder of *Para-sight*, a design research platform that explores how media affect the spatio-temporality of bodies and identities with-in contested territories. His custom-made devices and participatory multimedia installations have been presented and exhibited internationally at Future Architecture Platform (2019), Venice Architecture Biennale (2018), ACM Siggraph (2018), Acadia (2016), Museum of Architecture

and Design Ljubljana (2019), Xarkis Festival (2024), CAADRIA NU Singapore (2024). His writings have been published in *Architecture and Culture*, *Site Magazine*, *Drawing: Research, Theory, Practice*, *Cinema&Cie*, *Journal of Posthuman Studies*, *ARQ* and *Journal of Architecture* (forthcoming); he is a co-editor of *This Thing Called Theory* (Routledge 2016). He has taught at Leicester School of Architecture, Leeds School of Architecture, and was a visiting lecturer at CUINDA Bangkok, and the University of the Arts Helsinki.

## Ellie Nixon (Film and Performing Arts)

Ellie Nixon is Programme Director of Film and Performing Arts at Norwich University of the Arts. She is co-founder of La Mancha International Theatre Company (with Rodrigo Malbrán), producing over twenty-five international theatre projects, and of La Mancha International School of Image and Gesture in Santiago, Chile. The school offers professional training in contemporary theatre making, and postgraduate courses in acting, directing, teaching and Theatre in Human Development. Drawing

on a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, material engagement theory and environmental humanities, Ellie seeks to articulate the projective interplay between the sensate imagining body and the material world as a dynamic force for creative practice. She has recently published a monograph titled *Imagining Bodies and Performer Training: The Legacy of Jacques Lecoq and Gaston Bachelard*, as part of the Perspectives on Performer Training Book Series (Routledge 2024).

## Gustavo Balbela (Academic Assistant)

Gustavo Balbela de Azambuja is an artist, designer and researcher and works as designer and editor at Austral Edições. He holds a Master in Fine Arts from UFRGS's Institute of Arts (Porto Alegre, Brazil) and is a PhD researcher at Norwich University of the Arts. His work investigates, from personal perspectives, issues related to globalisation, imperialism and authoritarianism. His artistic production is developed through the creation and collection of technical images, presented in installations and publications.

His work has been exhibited in solo shows at the Centro de Fotografía de Montevideo (2019), UGM Art Gallery in Maribor (2020), Odessa Photo Days (2020), the Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Center in Budapest (2019 and 2021), and in Porto Alegre at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rio Grande do Sul and at the Pinacoteca Barão de Santo Ângelo (both 2022).

## Megan Thrift (Conference Manager)

Megan Thrift works on events coordination and communication within the Research and Knowledge Exchange team at Norwich University of the Arts, and has extensive experience in volunteer management, arts and science festivals, public engagement events, marketing and project management. Megan holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature and Philosophy from the University of East Anglia, and is currently studying for an

MA in Creative Events Management at Falmouth University, pursuing her research interests in the use of events as a tool for public engagement with creative arts research. She is particularly interested in the role events play in delivering social and sustainability impacts within diverse communities, which she hopes to explore through a range of ongoing projects at Norwich.



# Thursday 21 November 2024

[09:40-17:00] **Registration** / DSR Foyer

[09:40-10:00] **Coffee** / DSR Danish Steps

[10:00-10:20] **Introduction – Teresa STOPPANI** / DSR Production Theatre

[10:20-12:20]  
**ARCHIVE/D BODIES**  
/ DSR PT

[10:20-12:20]  
**EARTH BODIES**  
/ DS20 LT

[10:20-12:20]  
**UNSEEN BODIES**  
/ DS4

[10:20-12:20]  
**ABERRANT BODIES**  
/ DS3

[10:20-12:20]  
**MATERIAL BODIES**  
/ DS1

[12:20-13:50] **Lunch** / DSR Danish Steps

**Performance – Jinn Ginnaye: Palmyra, Kirk WOLFORD**  
/ Immersive Visualisation and Simulation Lab, Havers Road

[13:50-14:50] **Keynote – Susan KOZEL** / DSR Production Theatre

[14:50-15:00] **Break** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[15:00-16:40]  
**INSTITUTIONALIZED BODIES**  
/ DSR PT

[15:00-16:40]  
**FEMINIST BODIES I**  
/ DS20 LT

[15:00-16:40]  
**PLAY BODIES**  
/ DS4

[15:00-16:40]  
**INFORMATIONAL BODIES**  
/ DS3

[15:00-16:40]  
**INHABITABLE BODIES**  
/ DS1

[16:40-16:50] **Break** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[16:50-17:50] **Keynote – Andrew BENJAMIN** / DSR Production Theatre

[17:50-18:00] **Welcome – Simon OFIELD-KERR** / DSR Production Theatre

[18:00-20:00] **Exhibition Opening and Drinks Reception – Laura WILSON, Guted**  
/ East Gallery, Cavendish House

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## Friday 22 November 2024

[08:40-17:00] **Registration** / DSR Foyer

[08:40-09:10] **Coffee** / DSR Danish Steps

[09:10-09:20] **Welcome – Ellie NIXON** / DSR Danish Steps

[09:20-11:00] <b>SPATIAL BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[09:20-11:00] <b>PEDAGOGICAL BODIES</b> DS20 LT	[09:20-11:00] <b>FEMINIST BODIES II</b> / DS4	[09:20-11:00] <b>EXPERIMENTAL BODIES</b> / DS3	[09:20-11:00] <b>RELATIONAL BODIES</b> / DS1
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[11:00-11:10] **Coffee** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[11:10-12:30] <b>CHOREOGRAPHIC BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[11:10-12:30] <b>IMMERSIVE BODIES</b> / DS20 LT	[11:10-12:30] <b>CITIZEN BODIES</b> / DS4	[11:10-12:30] <b>CONTAINED BODIES</b> / DS3	[11:10-12:30] <b>WHOSE BODIES?</b> / DS1
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[12:30-14:00] **Lunch** / DSR Danish Steps

**Performance – Jinn Ginnaye: Palmyra, Kirk WOOLFORD**  
/ Immersive Visualisation and Simulation Lab, Havers Road

[14:00-15:00] **Performance Lecture – Andreas PHILIPPOPOULOS-MIHALOPOULOS** / DSR Production Theatre

[15:00-15:10] **Coffee** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[15:10-16:50] <b>QUEER BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[15:10-16:50] <b>INDETERMINATE BODIES</b> / DS20 LT	[15:10-16:50] <b>HOUSING BODIES</b> / DS4	[15:10-16:50] <b>FEMINIST BODIES III</b> / DS3	[15:10-16:50] <b>PSYCHOANALYTIC BODIES</b> / DS1
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[16:50-17:00] **Break** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[17:00-17:30] **AHRA Presentations** / DSR Production Theatre  
**AHRA and publications – Emma CHEATLE, Diana PERITON, Jonathan HALE**  
**AHRA Reading Group – Khaoula HANNACHI, Megan BRIEN, Soscha MONTEIRO**

[17:30-18:30] **Lecture – Meredith TENHOOR** / DSR Production Theatre

[1900-2100] **Conference Dinner** / YaIm

## Saturday 23 November 2024

[08:40-09:20] **Registration** / DSR Foyer

[08:40-09:10] **Coffee** / DSR Danish Steps

[09:10-09:20] **Welcome – George THEMISTOKLEOUS** / DSR Production Theatre

[09:20-11:20] <b>CINEMATIC BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[09:20-11:20] <b>POLITICAL BODIES I</b> / DS20 LT	[09:20-11:20] <b>POLITICAL BODIES II</b> / DS4	[09:20-11:20] <b>DISABLED BODIES</b> / DS3	[09:20-11:20] <b>MEDIATED BODIES</b> / DS1
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[11:20-11:30] **Coffee** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[11:30-12:30] **Lecture – Lucy Orta** / DSR Production Theatre

[12:30-13:30] **Lunch** / DSR Danish Steps

[13:00-13:20 and 14:00-14:20] **Gutted: Live Performance – Laura WILSON** / East Gallery

[13:30-14:30] **Lecture – Yara SHARIF and Nasser GOLZARI** / DSR Production Theatre

[14:30-14:40] **Coffee** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[14:40-16:00] <b>COLONIZED BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[14:40-16:00] <b>PHANTASMAGORIC BODIES</b> / DS20 LT	[14:40-16:00] <b>NEOLIBERAL BODIES</b> / DS4	[14:40-16:00] <b>UTOPIAN BODIES</b> / DS3	[14:40-16:00] <b>THEORETICAL BODIES</b> / DS1
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[16:00-16:10] **Coffee** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[16:10-17:50] <b>VIRTUAL BODIES</b> / DSR PT	[16:10-17:50] <b>BECOMING BODIES</b> / DS20 LT	[16:10-17:50] <b>INTRA-ACTIVE BODIES</b> / DS4	[16:10-17:50] <b>AGENTIAL BODIES</b> / DS3	[16:10-17:50] <b>ONTOLOGICAL BODIES</b> / DS1
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[17:50-18:00] **Break** / DSR Foyer and Danish Steps

[18:00-18:30] **Closing remarks – Ben Stopher** with Convenors and Guests / DSR Production Theatre



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Thursday 21 November, 13:50 – 14:50**

**Susan Kozel**

**Shimmer: Recalibrating Practices of Attending**

Somatic body practices and phenomenologies of affect cultivate nuanced modes of attention. I suggest that what they share is the ability to explore an immanent bodily 'half-light' with the potential for opening new ontologies and sensory knowledge. Grounding the concept of 'shimmer' from Roland Barthes's *The Neutral* in artistic work informed by dance, the sticky and elusive interface between the known and the unknown-yet-palpable will be explored. More than writing, acting, or speaking ourselves into being, we can attend ourselves and others into being.

Susan Kozel is a Professor of Philosophy, Dance and Media Technologies at Malmö University's School of Art and Culture in Sweden. With an international profile as a contemporary phenomenologist, she applies philosophical thought to embodied practices in digital cultures. Her

research takes the form of both scholarly writing and collaborative performance practices. Her scholarly contributions span theory and practice. Her book *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology* (MIT Press 2007) exists alongside numerous articles, book chapters, and artistic productions. She has taught at various design, dance, and media departments in the UK, Canada, and Sweden. She was on the Quality Advisory Board of the Swedish Artistic Research School, and directed the Living Archives Research Project, an extended exploration of archiving practices funded by the Swedish Research Council. She works with the Cullberg Ballet in Stockholm to explore practical methods for transmitting the bodily knowledge of dancers and is coordinating the establishment of an artistic research programme at Malmö University. Her current books in process are *Phenomenologies of Affect*, in which phenomenology is reconfigured so that it can attend to the somatic impact of technological systems, and *Augmenting Archives* addressing the use of immersive media technologies for performing memory.

**Thursday 21 November, 16:50 – 17:50**

**Andrew Benjamin**

**Architecture and Biopolitics**

Bodies are only ever contextual. They are given within forms of life. To the extent that architecture can be defined as the housing of life, architecture has a necessarily biopolitical configuration. That configuration attends the design process and is integral to judgements made in relation to that process. The aim of this lecture will be to defend the necessity of the relation between architecture and biopolitics.

Andrew Benjamin is currently an Honorary Professor in the School of Communication and Cultural Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne. He has held posts in the Australian universities.

Andrew started his career at the University of Warwick rising to the position of Professor of Philosophy, and until 2022 taught for one semester each year at Kingston University in London where he was associated with the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy. While working predominately in philosophy throughout his career, he has published extensively on architecture and taught in a range of schools including the Architectural Association in London, the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University in New York, the University of Sydney and the University of Technology Sydney.

Friday 22 November, 14:00 – 15:00

## Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos

Narcissistic Lawscapes (a multimedia performance lecture)

Law is spatialised and embodied in our cities, in our dreams, in our bodies. Law is a body in its own right, an emergence amidst other bodies, a skin that separates and connects. Law is always a lawscape, namely the tautology between law and space/bodies, irreducible to either of its elements. There is no law without space and the bodies that constitute it; and there is no space without law. This multimedia performance leads the audience and the body of law in a progressively deeper collective immersion into the stagnant waters of a narcissistic, still colonial and imperialistic lawscape.

Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos is an artist, academic and fiction author. He is Professor of Law & Theory at the University of Westminster, and Director of The Westminster Law & Theory Lab. His academic books include the monographs *Absent Environments* (2007), *Niklas Luhmann: Law, Justice, Society* (2009), and *Spatial Justice: Body Lawscape Atmosphere* (2014). His fiction includes *Book of Water* (in Greek by Thines 2017, and English by Eris 2022) and the novel *Our Distance Became Water* (Eris, 2023). His art practice has been shown at Palais de Tokyo, the 58th Venice Art Biennale 2019, the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale 2016, the Tate Modern, Inhotim Instituto de Arte Contemporânea Brazil, Arebyte Gallery, Ca' Pisani Venice and Danielle Arnaud Gallery.

Friday 22 November, 17:30 – 18:30

## Meredith TenHoor

Erasure and Repetition: Structures of Sense in Modern Materials

Theorizing and narrating histories of bodily and environmental harm stemming from the use of modern building materials is a complex task. What kinds of archives, narrators and histories can activate these stories? What theories do we need to understand how harm and violence are hidden, and for who and how should they be uncovered? What structures of sense and signification can we find in the modern building supply chain, and how do these structures contain and impact both bodies and landscapes?

Meredith TenHoor is an architectural and urban historian, and Professor in the School of Architecture at Pratt Institute. She is also editor, a founding board member, and former chair of the Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative, a group devoted to publishing and advancing collaboratively produced scholarship in architectural theory and history. Her

research examines how architecture, urbanism and landscape design participate in the distribution of resources, and how these design practices have produced understandings of the limits and capacities of bodies. She has written extensively about the relationships between food and agriculture and architectural, cultural and territorial change in twentieth-century France. Other key topics are histories of justice, exclusion and displacement in architecture and urban planning; architectures of consumption and biopolitics; and the intellectual history of francophone and anglophone critical theory. Her publications include *Toxics* (2022), *Black Lives Matter* (2015), *Street Value: Shopping, Planning and Politics at Fulton Mall* (2010), and a forthcoming book about the design history and political economies of French food systems. Her newer projects address the bodily and environmental impacts of building materials, the architectural imaginaries of environmental futures, and the career of the French architect Nicole Sonolet, who designed housing, hospitals, and villages focused around the provision of care.

Saturday 23 November, 11:30 – 12:30

## Lucy Orta

Wearable Architectures and Social Bodies

Lucy Orta's visual arts practice emerged from the social crisis of the first Gulf War in the early 1990s. Initially focusing on portable architecture with wearable capabilities, her artworks, such as *Refuge Wear* and *Body Architecture*, are autonomous mobile habitats that address the needs of nomadic populations. Influenced by urban philosopher Paul Virilio (1932-2018) and collaborating with Argentine artist Jorge Orta, she explores the social body and its potential for reconfiguration in projects like *Nexus Architecture* and *Connector Mobile Architecture*. Her research at the University of the Arts London's Centre for Sustainable Fashion, involving vulnerable communities, aims to develop visual arts methods that foster belonging and empower marginalized voices.

Lucy Orta investigates the interrelations between the individual body and community structures, exploring their diverse identities and means of cohabitation. She uses the mediums of drawing, textile sculpting, photography, film and performance to realise singular bodies of work. Her process of representing community voices incorporates co-creation and inclusive methods and she has collaborated with a wide range of people, often those on the margins of exclusion such as prison residents, asylum seekers, homeless and care hostel residents, to empower participants through shared creative practice. She has been a Professor at London College of Fashion since 2002 and is currently the Chair of Art and the Environment at the University of the Arts London, where she founded the Art for the Environment Artist in Residency Program.

Saturday 23 November, 13:30 – 14:30

## Yara Sharif and Nasser Golzari

The Body in Space: Rebuilding Homes and Lives in Gaza

In the context of Gaza, where the relationship between home and street is no longer a conventional one, the city has become a landscape of fractured structures and exposed skin. Amid the relentless destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, neighbourhoods, and homes, individuals and communities are cultivating hope and resilience through innovative spatial practices. This talk, presented by Architects for Gaza, will share some innovative reconstruction/resilient practices that emerged out of urgency and scarcity inspired by the innovative practices of individuals and communities in Gaza – practices that move beyond traditional reconstruction calling for the right to the city, right to a home and the right to resources.

Yara Sharif is a practicing architect and academic interested in design as a tool to rethink contested landscape, with a new take on architectural practice.

She sheds a light on 'forgotten' communities, while also interrogating the relationship between politics and architecture. Sharif's professional and academic endeavours span her practice at GOLZARI (NG) Architects in London and her role as a design studio leader at the University of Westminster.

Nasser Golzari is an architect and academic dedicated to social architecture and the creation of inclusive cities that advance socio-environmental ecologies within post-colonial contexts. As the founder of GOLZARI (NG) Architects in London and co-founder of the Palestine Regeneration Team (PART), Golzari is deeply committed to rethinking scarred and contested landscapes through both speculative and live projects, in line with his passion for socially responsive architecture. Currently, Sharif and Golzari are involved in research focused on self-build and the reconstruction of Gaza. Together, they co-founded Architects for Gaza (AFG), a platform dedicated to fostering hope by providing insights for reconstruction and education aimed at rebuilding Gaza. As architects, educators, planners, environmentalists, and designers, the AFG team collaborates closely with displaced families to rethink reconstruction efforts in Gaza, while also exploring critical concepts such as home, memory, and collective action.

# CONFERENCE EVENTS

## SCREENING

Matthew Benington

**Unstable Monument, Performance 1, 2, 3 (2012-2024)**

Transumption – this is the effect of magical architecture: to infiltrate one site with the aura of another, to be Greece, Rome, or Heaven itself, and yet still to be in Hampshire.

Capability Brown's early work can create this dreamlike state of disassociation, his park wall confining not just deer but a vision, like a precious gas, more dense around the house, and steadily diffusing as it spreads, but likely to burn off against the touch of reality. This is the aristocracy's vision of England: glorious and empty.

To the west and east of the estate, we can see the roads choked with traffic, the lower orders crawling home from work. They are the modern day descendants of the communities that were cleared from the land, the commoners forced from self-subsistence into the workhouse. They are reminders of the other side of the aristocratic myth, the black inverse of the Downton Mast masthead: the classification

of the lower orders that reaches its most extreme bigotry in the myth of the undeserving poor.

Matthew Benington is an artist specialising in printmaking and photography, working with themes of collective memory, gender, and land ownership. Notable projects include *Hide: The Apocryphal Archive*, an immersive folly lined with etchings of his own displaced family members and *Hide*, a sculpture set within the permanent collection of Tremeneheere sculpture garden. Ideas about ruination, public monuments, and the repurposing of former industrial spaces inform his curatorial work with *Unstable Monuments*, ACE, Truro, 2016 and *Unstable Monuments Bristol*. Matthew lives in Norwich and is part of the academic team of the BA (Hons) Fine Art at Norwich University of the Arts.

## SCREENING

Julieanna Preston and Joanna Lock

**Tryst (14.30) (2018)**

In 2018, Joanna Lock and I entered the complex maze of Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway. We inhabited a windowless room with two manually-operated ventilators and an endless supply of hoses, couplers, and pure oxygen. Our performance tuned them as responsive instruments sometimes in blissful sinus rhythm, sometimes sounding the alarm as air flow, pressure and pace reached maximum or minimum levels to adequately support the non-existent patient.

On the third day we realised that our own heart rates were syncopating with the respiration antics of the ventilators. *Tryst* emerged out of this experience, a name referencing the duet nature of the performance and the deterioration of breaths the machines sounded in response to our turning of their knobs, valves and bladders.

There were moments when we lost our breath; the ventilators exerted their agency and took the breath we thought was just ours alone. This video tries valiantly to represent that experience.

Julieanna Preston's transdisciplinary creative practice research is concerned with the agency and ethics of materiality, its relation to place, ecology and ways of being in the world. Her practice engages place-responsive live art performance, vocalisation, and performance writing. She currently teaches and supervises postgraduate students across art, design and architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Joanna Lock is interested in art practice as a tool for research and in research as art practice, in the locality and situatedness of an artist's knowing and knowledge, and in how this manifests in artistic practice. Recent work has focused on the themes of silence, the unspoken and the unheard, exploring the phenomena in multiple settings including the museum and familial relationships, as well as in literature and cinema. Joanna has collaborated with the Bergen Natural History Museum and with the Creative Centre for Fluid Territories, and her work has been staged at sites in the UK, Norway, Cyprus and Berlin.

## SCREENING

George Themistokleous  
**Operating Table, Video (2024)**

Barbed wire lines Nicosia's borderlands, marking a contested territory. Within this backdrop, *Operating Table*, installed at the 2024 Xarkis Festival inside a wood workshop near the Buffer Zone barricades, offered an 'intro-scopic' event. Positioned at the center of the room, the table appeared as a mysterious object. Participants approached it cautiously, pacing around until they noticed a head-shaped resin cavity – a deliberate "offering" inviting them to place their head within it.

Once positioned, they encountered stereoscopic images of themselves, projected from both outside and inside the space. These layered and cropped images allowed participants to see themselves in 'real' time, with their self-images displayed as doubled, fragmented, and embedded within external backgrounds. Displaced and caught between frames that split them from their selves and their environment, participants were suspended between their digital image and their embodied selves. The intro-spective event reveals the potential for affective bodily encounters and micro-shocks that

serve to challenge externally imposed identities. *Operating Table* invites reflection on the intricacies of identity within the contested space of the borderland, where the 'thin edge of barbed wire' becomes haunted by images-without-bodies.

George Themistokleous' critical spatial research investigates the role of the body within media assemblages in contested territories, particularly borderland spaces. Using custom made devices and interactive performative installations, he explores blurred hybrids of electronic and actual selves to challenge identity constructs and circuits of power. His work reactivates latent, de-automatized bodily states as affective modes that challenge normative, codified behaviors, working towards social collective modes of self-determination. George's customized devices, participatory multimedia installations, and writings have been presented and exhibited internationally. He currently teaches Architecture design-studio and theory at Norwich University of the Arts and is the founder of Para-sight ([www.para-sight.net](http://www.para-sight.net)).

## VIDEO INSTALLATION

Louis Nixon  
**Table Series 1-24 (2021-2024)**

When an object falls toward Earth, it accelerates due to the force of gravity, gaining speed as it is pulled towards the center of the earth.

In *Table Series 1-24* Nixon experiments with gravitational force to produce a set of 24 sculptures and 24 films which explore how rocks fall through space, and the effect they have when they collide with an object. In this series, a unique collection of rocks have been dropped and thrown onto stainless steel tables, which buckle differently under the weight of each rock, producing a series of "incidental sculptures." As the artist drops a rock onto each table, each action is recorded in a set of films which record the artists actions – lift, drop, walk away.

Louis Nixon graduated with a painting degree from Chelsea School of Art in 1987 and a postgraduate

sculpture degree from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1989. His fine art practice encompasses painting, sculpture, installation and experimental film, often presented as multi-media installations in galleries and public spaces. Nixon founded the collective *Space Explorations* in 1990 and, as artist, director and curator, participated in large-scale interventions in response to specific sites. Since 2001 Nixon has worked independently and exhibited widely in the UK and Hong Kong and in Italy, Serbia, Armenia, Australia, Chile and China.

## IMMERSIVE PERFORMANCE

Kirk Woolford  
**Jinn-Ginnaye (2016-2024)**

*Jinn-Ginnaye's* practice research project developed in parallel with the live Choreomusical performance *Jinn*, a collection of dance pieces exploring issues surrounding western dance performance in Islamic cultures, where modesty laws restrict depictions of the human body in public.

*Jinn-Ginnaye* approaches these restrictions as creative constraints, exploring how emergent digital arts techniques can be used to remove the body of the dancer, but leave behind the dance, and the traces of the desert in which it was created. The piece includes a dancer made of sand, smoke and fire, which scatters and reforms – taking human form only long enough to be recognized, then blowing like sand in the desert wind.

This dancing apparition has no physical body and corresponds with local legends of Jinn, and the older Ginnaye of Palmyra, from which we have derived the term Genius Loci, or spirit of a place. The immersive installation connects these dis-embodied dances to the desert architecture

used to host an orchestral concert for Vladimir Putin, just months after it was used by ISIS for a performance of the mass execution of 25 prisoners.

Kirk Woolford is a pioneer in the field of Immersive Media, creating immersive experiences and performances as a method of exploring ideas, technologies, and cultures. His work has been featured at international festivals and venues including Art Cologne, MoMA PS1, Venice Biennale, Shanghai eArts, ARCO Madrid, Ars Electronica, ISEA, and SIGGRAPH. Kirk directs the Institute for Creative Technologies at Norwich University of the Arts. He has a hybrid background with 40+ years of industry and academic experience, having co-founded and directed performance, video games and interactive media companies in New York, London, and Amsterdam.

## EXHIBITION

Laura Wilson  
**Gutted**

*Gutted* is an installation which comprises a script, performance, film, and audio-soundtrack. The work is presented within Ladybower, a large sculptural amphitheater, inspired by the two circular spillways which regulate the water levels in the Ladybower reservoir, and supply water to Sheffield.

In an immersive journey which interweaves fiction and real-life events, the narrative of the piece explores gut processes, instincts, and ecosystems, from digestion inside our bodies to landscape-scale infrastructure and archaeological digs. Bringing to life digestive processes and encouraging us to consider how we think and feel through our stomachs, the work takes the idea of the hole as both an entry and exit point, a barrier between the inside and outside; it can be a portal between worlds – it consumes, and it vomits. The artist invites you to enter the space and follow

the story of *Gutted*, while holding a grapefruit. Live readings of the script will be presented over the course of the exhibition by actress Nadia Emam and others.

Laura Wilson is a Northern Irish artist based in London. She is interested in how history is carried and evolved through everyday materials, trades and craftsmanship, working with specialists to develop sculptural and performative works that amplify the relationship between materiality, memory and tacit knowledge. Wilson's interdisciplinary and research-based works have been exhibited widely including at: The Collection, Lincoln with Mansions of the Future, UK; First Draft, Sydney, Australia; The Landmark Trust, Wales, UK (2021); The British Museum, London, UK with Block Universe; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK; The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London, UK (2018); SPACE, London, UK; V&A Museum, London, UK.

# PANEL SESSIONS

## Landlines/Seedlines

Emma Cheatle (University of Sheffield)

Angela Kyriacou Petrou (University of Nicosia)

Dear A,

Every day I look out at the land around our home, land cleared and regrown, its indigenous origins and ancient stories or 'Songlines' yet unknown to me. As far as our eyes can see, swathes of ghost gums, weeping gums, black gums, water gums, sweetgums – Eucalyptae of various species – grow in greys and pale greens, whites and reds. In our hands, we grasp frilled flowers and hard semi-spherical gumnuts.

Was it my home, or their home? I was never told they even existed. I was never told that we were £10 (or £50 by then) "poms". Now, my good friend, you send me the gumnut seeds, with their category list, in a pale paper envelope – ghost gum coloured. To the aboriginal people, they are the Yaarran, the gum tree. With over 899 other named species, the gum is integral to aboriginal culture – both quotidian: as the material of canoes, bowls, and musical instruments, and symbolic: as the marker of division between underworld, earth and heaven.

Now these seedlines connect your desk in Cyprus, back to the seedbank and lists of seeds kept in the archive in Canberra, to me here in Britain, the old Empire. The seedlines are the lineage of the trees used to afforest the Cypriot marshlands from the 1880s with water draining eucalypts, and the lines that bind us to the past peoples, their colonists from Britain to Australia, to the plantations of all other colonised countries.

I miss you, E

My dear friend,

I can no longer distinguish between my- notes- to- self and letters to you. I know only that words need to be inscribed across the page in the same way that I wonder across the spaces I am imagining, they need to be drifting and incomplete.

If I were writing to you on paper, like I used to, I would choose the lightest, thinnest sheet, the pale blue gummed paper with chevrons, that folds into an envelope. The space of the paper must be enough to hold the fluid borderless stories of the trees from which it has been cut, articulating the narratives that lie dormant in its material presence.

No enclosures are permitted in the aerogramme, but the seeds of the story enclosed are heavily crammed into this thin slice of tree. Like me, it is barely there- acceptably sendable, no bulging and no tape- only my saliva that glues together the slightest layer of the Eucalyptus camaldulensis –Biyal. My letter is empty yet filled with the lines of dispossession and disfigured sapwood, every bulging scar tells a different story. Tracing the paths of the eucalyptus forestry programmes, the letter will be exchanged between hands and stamped between nations. Following the material trajectory of the seedlines it travels untethered through to textual space uncovering lost stories and obscured landscapes.

With love, A

## Heavenly Bodies: Techno Utopias, Domesticity, and the Colonial Project

Luis Hernan (University of Sheffield)

In 2022, Elon Musk announced he would be selling his lavish properties in California and taking up residence in a small, prefabricated house in Boca Chica, the launch site for his SpaceX rockets. Musk's vision is a mythology in the key of innovation, an eschatological narrative that promises alternatives to the status quo by destroying the old to make way for a new and better order. This messianic promise of liberation is enacted in each lift-off, a violent shaking of the Earth as a billowing cloud of dust and debris covers Boca Chica in a thick stratum of sand that symbolically erases the town to make way for its new incarnation as Starbase, the gateway to the space utopia of a permanent colony on Mars, where humanity is delivered from extinction on a dying Earth.

I interpret the unsettled dust of the rocket lift off as a metaphor for the ambiguity and loss of memory that Carolyn Steedman writes about, with the past of the

site dispersed across the landscape as new narratives are forged to justify its destruction. In this paper, I ask whose bodies have been disciplined, silenced, and displaced to make way for this interplanetary utopia. Located in the borderlands with Mexico, Starbase speaks of a troubled legacy of settler colonialism that excludes the racial other, a precedent for the use of Musk's prefabricated house.

Against the mythologising of Starbase and its symbolic and material destruction of the site's past, I offer an alternative account. As the last traces of these homes, and the bodies in them, are erased to make way for the Airstream trailers and the BOXABL Casita installed for Musk and his employees, I speculate on the significance of the destruction of the past and the sort of utopia it engenders.



## Stagings of the Body as Temple: American Sports in the Modern ‘Near East’

Yasmina El Chami (University of Sheffield)

*No one can see the kind of work they are doing, the new bodies physical exercise is giving them, the new standards, the mental training they are getting, and wide horizons and Christian motives, and doubt for a moment that they are to be the leaders of their day and generation [...] from this beacon and from Robert College, this Eastern world must find its way out of darkness.* — Roland Penrose (1981)

This paper explores the little-known history of American sports education in the post-Ottoman ‘Near East’, focusing on enactments and rehearsals of ‘muscular Christianity’ within the space of two American campuses and their student body in the early twentieth century. In this period, what had started as an overtly Evangelical missionary project in the nineteenth century had transformed into a liberal, pseudo-secular project of ‘character building’ and ‘international goodwill’ (NECA – Near East College Association). Physical education, from ‘drilling’ exercises to team sports, was deployed as another tool and measure of ‘civilization,’ tasked with

transforming Eastern students into ‘men.’ The gymnasium, the athletic field, and the environment of the campus itself all became stages through and against which students were individually and collectively transformed into a civilized body. The talk traces these stagings through a reading of the photographic archive of the NECA, both as a representation of an unacknowledged history of American imperialism in the so-called ‘Near East’ and as a body of incomplete and one-sided narratives about these campuses and their students.

## Traces and Tracing

Naina Gupta (University of Sheffield)

In 1934 England hosted the second British Empire Games. The Empire Pool in London was built for the occasion. The Games were initially meant to be hosted in Johannesburg, but there were concerns about racism that prompted its move. India participated in the games, but did not participate in the swimming competitions. This is unsurprising, as swimming pools built in India were built for the British. It is not far-fetched to surmise that Indians did not know how to swim or at least weren’t trained to participate in international swimming competitions.

In 1940 Otto Koenigsberger completed his first building in the Indian subcontinent – a municipal swimming pool in Bangalore, which was then part of the princely state of Mysore. Koenigsberger gave this project little attention in his portfolio. All that is left are a few photographs and letters to his mother scattered in archives between Berlin and London. I contend that

the municipal pool cannot be read in isolation of the happenings in Britain: the era between the wars saw a proliferation of lidos across Britain as spaces of leisure and of sport. The municipal pool straddles an intriguing sentiment: on the one hand, the British were keen to use sport to “civilize” their colonies as observed by Brian Stoddart amongst others. On the other, it is impossible to believe that in 1940, when this pool was built, the British were unaware of the inevitability of independence that the country was moving towards. By 1947 India was independent. While it might not be possible to draw a direct line that connects the Empire pool with the municipal pool, nevertheless, the municipal pool, in its ghostly presence, allows for an alternative narration of the relationship between the empire and its colony, stored in the swimming body.

*This paper is part an ongoing research project supported by the RIBA Research Fund 2024.*

## And the Word Became Flesh: Typographic Bodies and Surfaces in the Archives of the Convent of Santa Maria Maddalena alla Giudecca (1557–1561)

Ela Egidy (University of Melbourne)

This historico-theoretical analysis presents archival samples from the nun compositor-printers at the Santa Maria Maddalena alla Giudecca convent in Venice. This convent was a religious community established specifically for non-virgins. The women permitted entry were reformed sex-workers and those who engaged in sex outside of marriage, whether consensual or non-consensual, or who were in a concubinage relationship. This convent, known as the Convertite, shared a common redemptive purpose with the current Casa di Reclusione Femminile, which is now a women’s prison on the same site. The research situates the convent’s historical narrative within a broader discourse of redemption and penitence, linking past and present forms of social reform.

The study examines how typography served as a corporeal practice for the nuns, intertwining their bodily labour with spiritual devotion and ritual practice. These printed works, far from being mere textual objects, bear the physical imprints of their makers, from an incidental

hair printed to the intentional inclusion of phrases like ‘by the hands of the penitent nuns’. Through an analysis of these artefacts, this paper bridges design, bibliography, and feminist theory, exploring intersections of gender, sexuality, and religious practice. The works produced at the Convertite reveal the complex interplay between the nuns’ spiritual lives and their physical labour within a confined monastic environment.

Typography makes the word flesh, and the architecture of the book exists to support this. Typography in the works produced by the nun compositors acts as an interface between the body of the page, the bodies of these women, and the disciplinary spaces of the institutions that governed their lives. Reading is a corporeal act, and so too is the setting of type. The printed books central to this study are not just historical fragments prompting reflections on the development of typography but suggest vectors for contemplating new conceptions of bodily language.

## Reanimating the Dismembered Body of the Seychelles Archive

Hélène Frichot (University of Melbourne)

Mairi O’Gorman (University of Edinburgh)

Everyday life in the Seychelles, where this paper locates its study, is animated by gossip and the telling of supernatural stories. The divisions between people, objects and buildings are blurred by the capacity of life and vitality to persist after death, directed by human intentionality in the form of *malfezans* (ill will) and *grigri* (magic). This is visible in widespread stories of the *dandosya* (zombie), through which we read the complex example of the Seychelles National Archive. The archive, which contains evidence of a history shaped by slavery, indenture, and colonial rule, has been plagued by mould, causing skin irritations, breathing difficulties, and extended claims for sick leave.

Following a series of outbreaks of mould between 2010 and 2016, which despite determined efforts kept resurfacing, the archive was packed up and distributed across several sites. The Seychelles National Archive currently resides in makeshift

quarters in Helena House on the reclaimed inner-city island of Ile du Port, at another branch on Providence Island, and at the Old Courthouse in the center of the main settlement of Victoria. In Helena House, stacks of rubber-band bound catalogue cards are piled without apparent order on shelves, while the archival materials to which they refer remain boxed and inaccessible. Furthermore, the colonial records of the islands – Seychelles was first claimed by the French, then ceded to the British – are held in former centers of colonial power, in Paris and in London.

We argue that the archive can be read as a dismembered body in the postcolonial context of the Seychelles, and we further posit that the powerful role of gossip on the islands becomes the connective tissue that creates a counter-archive manifesting the outlines of an emergent creole identity.



## Architectural Embodiment in Nature-Culture Heritage Assemblages

Annette Svaneklink Jakobsen (University of Southern Denmark, Odense)

The paper addresses the embodiment and embeddedness of architecture in nature-culture heritage assemblages. While ecological awareness and relationality between humans and other life and species are prevalent today, there is still a need for developing insight into the roles and capacities of architectural designs intended to embody environmental initiatives towards a shared sustainable development. These relational dimensions of architecture are connected to current developments within the architectural humanities that are influenced by broader philosophical and cultural theoretical turns towards new materialisms and posthumanism, which focus on exploring affective, material, and disciplinary encounters, as well as transversal becoming.

The abilities to affect and being affected defines a body, whether human, animal, or of another mode of relation (Gilles Deleuze). In this Deleuzian-Spinozist understanding, a body is defined by intensities, desires and affects. As described by Rosi Braidotti, an assemblage is, accordingly, characterised by

the relations and exchanges that flow across and displace binaries. The paper takes inspiration from these lines of thought and presents an analysis of two cases of nature-culture heritage architecture in the Netherlands and Denmark by Dorte Mandrup Architects, exploring how these two buildings become active in engaging the public in the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage area.

The paper considers architecture and architectural becoming as part of heterogenous assemblages and shows how landscape architecture, the architecture of the building and the interior exhibition design can create new transdisciplinary modes of expression or cultural narratives with local communities and actors, volunteers, natural scientists, the tide, the dikes, seals and birds. The paper is an invitation to critically consider how architecture affects and is affected in the complex relationality of heritage assemblages, when it becomes a mediator of nature-culture relations and hierarchies, as well as of discourses and desires.

## Regenerating, Reengineering, Letting Go: Wellington's 'Broken Heart'

Crystal Victoria Olin, James Berghan, Ella Knapton, Daniel Gordon Adams (University of Wellington)

In Aotearoa New Zealand's capital, Wellington, lies Te Ngākau, meaning 'the heart' in te reo Māori (Indigenous language). This once-vibrant civic centre is built on reclaimed land and has long connected the urban body of Wellington with the wild sea beyond, reflecting the interplay between human activity and the natural environment. However, a significant earthquake in 2016 fractured Te Ngākau, exposing the fragility of both the site and its postmodern vision. This rupture presents an opportunity to reimagine Te Ngākau through more culturally and environmentally attuned lenses, where land and water are seen as interconnected living entities.

This paper explores the implications of regenerating Te Ngākau, a project persisting despite broader city-wide financial cutbacks. Engaging with students from Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Architecture and Design Innovation, the research presents their responses to an online survey and their design ideas for the site's future. Students express a desire for a vibrant, welcoming "heart" that embraces diversity and

connectivity, with designs prioritising activation, creative and performative space, and green infrastructure. Some begin to interrogate the site's colonial past, celebrate Māori culture, and consider longer-term resilience, yet most remain rooted in conventional approaches, reflecting educational limitations.

In response to the *Body Matters* conference theme, this paper argues that regenerating Wellington's "broken heart" requires moving away from embodied norms and short-sighted conventions, toward a more resilient and culturally attuned approach. The site's colonial origins and vulnerable reclaimed land necessitate deeper reconsideration. By seeking wisdom from Te Ao Māori (Indigenous worldview), and ensuring this wisdom is embedded in the education of our next generation of designers – who will inherit the buildings and infrastructure we produce – the regeneration process can go beyond reengineering, to reimagine urban space as resilient and adaptable... or, in some cases, expendable in response to more extreme forces at play.

## Climate ReAssemblies: Reconfiguring Citizen Political Agency through Intra-Active Climate Futures

Renata Tyszcuk, Ashley Mason, Lena Dobrowolska (University of Sheffield)

The climate crisis continues to draw attention to the material dimensions of socio-cultural existence, in terms of how our immediate bodily actions impact dispersed global environments. Recognition of the role of the body, too, is rising within political theories of democracy and citizenship, with the capacity of a corpus of corporeality (over discrete subjects) found to have significant impact on political encounters through communication, gestures, and visceral responses. Citizen assemblies dedicated to climate change policy development have become increasingly prevalent in response to demands at both local and national levels for more active practices and more deliberative modes of citizenship in relation to climate change futures, climate justice, and energy transition.

This paper presents the Climate ReAssemblies project (Jan 2024–), in which the authors and fellow citizen-researchers are revisiting and repurposing citizen climate assemblies. The project's aim has been to collaboratively reconfigure citizen engagement with climate change policy through intra-active storytelling

methods. Climate ReAssemblies is conceptualised within the evolving framework of interactive documentary (i-doc) – a non-linear storytelling medium activated through a human-computer interface, defined as 'documentary as do-it with others citizenship' (Carina Rose 2014). The project brings together 'interactive citizenship' (Renata Tyszcuk 2019, 2022) and 'intra-action' (Karen Barad 2007), which understands agency not as an individual property but as a dynamism of more speculative relations and transformations.

In this paper, we share the ongoing process and outcomes of Climate ReAssemblies (including the evolving i-doc) to reveal how the intra-active methods explored within the project can offer the potential for reconfigurations of citizen agency within the material and immaterial spaces of democratic citizenship and policy making in response to climate change. For it is especially in such spaces of crisis, injustice and precarity that reassemblies of the agency and power of our collective political bodies matter.

## Urgency on the Beach

Barbara Prezelj (University of Edinburgh)

In the 1960s the National Trust diagnosed the British coast as being on the brink of vanishing. The perceived threat was of environmental as much as of aesthetic nature, with the coastline turning into an unregulated space dedicated to holiday and pleasure – the beach. It was argued that in order to protect the coast as the very fabric of national existence, individual (and collective) leisurely patterns of behavior urgently needed to change. The Trust saw itself as being uniquely positioned to restore what had already been disfigured by the beach-loving public and to preserve the coastline in perpetuity.

This paper traces affective underpinnings of historical and present urgencies on the British coast, in particular as they relate to the problematic of bodies – human and non-human, individual and collective – from the postwar phenomenon of mass-tourism to the present day realities of climate change. While the coastline represents the liminal ecotone zone replete with life resulting from the dynamic encounter between bodies of water and land, the beach centers the

body as a site of sensation and, in doing so, speaks to the middle scale of experience and relation.

As the coast is slipping away with the ever-increasing speed of erosion, exposing that holding the coast in perpetuity is simply untenable, turning our attention to the beach as a quintessential geography where "bodies matter" might offer us clues on how to affirm the role of sensation as crucial in navigating the challenges of eroding coasts. The paper argues that environmental urgency is as much a felt affect as it is an abstract measure, and its modulation should thus be approached as an aesthetic skill integral to contemporary landscape practice – thoroughly political, profoundly social and as something that does public work.

## Un-Earthing Bodies in Cinema

Sarah Mills (Leeds Beckett University)

The curators of the 14th Shanghai Biennale 2023, *Cosmos Cinema*, at Power Station of Art, Shanghai, propose that ‘film is a cosmic phenomenon, and that cinema is well placed as a medium to change our understanding of the universe and our place within it’ (Anton Vidokle et al.) In the exhibition catalogue proposals by German philosopher Alexander Kluge present the cosmos as a form of cinema, the index of all events which are recorded by the light traces they leave behind, and the connection is made with the early twentieth century Russian movement *Cosmism*, a precursor of transhumanism.

This paper embraces the *Cosmos Cinema* exhibition montage format to focus on the recombination of elements to produce new meanings, exploring different ways in which humanity interacts with and understands the context of the universe. How does the legacy of ‘space settlements’ in film manifest current issues of ecological, socio-political and economic crisis scenarios? The experimental films

*Urth* by Ben Rivers (2016) and *Extra-Terrestrial Ecologies* by Ralo Mayer (2018) both include footage from inside Biosphere 2, the space settlement prototype in Arizona. Both films are a cinematic exploration of past and future space which examine transformations of humans and human cultures, via what Rivers suggests are ‘temporary autonomous zones’, or which Mayer labels ‘un-earthing.’ Here the audience experiences amazement at phenomena that become apparent only in postapocalyptic time – a little part of the universe finally reaches your body.

What would an endeavor such as Biosphere 2 mean today in terms of relationships with the body and the natural? From a historical-philosophical perspective, and to follow Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben, what remains in a time that has already begun to end, or how does “cosmic wonder” overcome conflicting and overlapping ideologies on earth that really map its territory?



## Myths and Politics: Gender, Racial, and Social Class Interrogations of the Body in Historical and Contemporary Architectural Representation

Yvette Putra (University of Gloucestershire)

The body is central in architectural representation, emerging from the anthropocentricity inherent in the mythical origins and praxes of architecture, drawing and modelmaking. As a corollary, the body is essential to and ever-present in architectural drawings and models – and at every stage of every architectural process – in which the body conveys the architecture’s function, scale and mood. Architectural representation conjoins the physical bodies of the maker and the viewer with the bodies that exist in the drawn and modelled settings.

Recalling that architectural representation channels the architect’s philosophies, thoughts, and visions, the conflation of corporeal and represented bodies thrusts the maker and the viewer into the uneasy paradox of a real yet imagined world. Consequently, both the maker and the viewer participate in the politics governing such worlds. Much-vaunted examples include the drawings of Le Corbusier, with an idealized Modern man equalizing with the Modern

worldview, and the sketches of Carlo Scarpa, with their schemata evolving symbiotically with sensual female forms. In this paper I trace the presence and manipulation of the body in such historical examples of architectural drawings and models.

In the current context, the making and viewing of architectural representation are backgrounded by the prevailing gender, racial, and social class debates. Furthermore, these debates are compounded by the parallel surge of artificial intelligence, which is gaining traction but has already revealed a tendency towards bigotries. Considering these urgent challenges, I seek to not only illuminate the body in architectural representation, but also advocate for a more equitable and meaningful inclusion of the body in architectural drawing and modelmaking. To this end, I deploy my positionality – a female scholar of color – as a methodology to query the body in architectural representation.

## Replacement and the Elsewhere Monument: The White Cube Lusanga at the Giardini della Biennale

Adeyemi Akande (London Metropolitan University)  
Aleks Catina (University of East London)

*This White Cube owes us, the inhabitants and workers of the plantations, whom I represent here, a huge debt. This debt, often ignored by the art-loving public, camouflages the ugliness and cruelty behind these cleanly washed walls.* — Cercle d’Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC), ‘The Judgement of the White Cube’ (from *The New Yorker* July 2022).

This study situates the practices of replacement within the broader context of power, presence and the global elsewhere. The projected pairing of two radically different spaces – the Rietveld Pavilion at the 60th Venice Art Biennale (2024), and the OMA designed *White Cube* near Lusanga, in the Democratic Republic of Congo – offers the opportunity to question post-colonial contingencies in the representation of the body, its objectification, and its replacement.

After years of controversy, the Virginia Museum of Fine Art (USA), who legally owns the rare Pende *Diviner’s Figure of a Colonial Officer Killed in the Congo* (1931), agreed to lend the artefact back to Lusanga for the duration of the Biennale. What does the cultural significance of the power figure say about

its objectification and the angry spirit’s appropriation as a museum exhibit? How does replacement of the ritualistic sculpture, its transformation in an NFT, and its physical reappearance in Lusanga/Venice as gallery exhibit affect its cultural significance? Can an analysis of culturally embedded practices of replacement in African traditions of trans-spatiality offer a provincialized critique of objectification of the global elsewhere?

In pursuit of this question, this paper describes two artworks presented at the Venice Biennale Dutch pavilion that critically encounter tropes of western spectatorship in decolonial art and its institutional architectures. Their spectral presence in Venice demands a discussion of social practice in art and architecture that replaces bodies of cultural specificity with objects of the western gaze.

## Women’s Bodies in Urban Landscapes

Miza Moreau (University of Glasgow)

There is a re-emergence of interest in relationships between gender and urban space, especially regarding women’s inequitable representation and experiences. This interest comes after a dormancy in design and planning research and practice on how gender inequalities are reproduced in urban space. While scholarship between the early 1980s and early 2000s was prolific, this period was followed by a marginalization of feminist urbanism. Now the interest in the relationships between women in urban space is revived, with great focus being given to personal safety, drawing attention to the fragility of women’s bodies in the public realm. The more typical arguments about the importance of public space, like production of urban imaginaries, political mobilization and representation, self-actualization, and so on, have been far less considered in relation to women.

Earlier literature on women in urban space has primarily focused on how professional and government planning failed to address the needs of women, and was

sometimes even deployed as a strategy for preserving the status quo of gender inequality. Less attention has been paid to grassroots and co-production practices, especially with urban landscapes in transition. The sites that were once considered degraded, polluted, or undervalued, are being transformed through grassroots actions often led by women. The argument can be made that these sites have the potential to be terrains of novel socio-natural assemblages, but will they address the specific needs of women’s bodies, or recognize the contributions of their work?

This paper is empirically grounded in ongoing research on gender and co-production of urban landscapes in Glasgow, where in 2022 the City Council passed a motion to adopt a feminist approach to city planning and design, involving grassroots initiatives and community engagement workshops that address women’s representation, nature connections, and safety.

## Water Body: Displacement of Human and Non-Human in the Aegean Sea

Deniz Yeni, Duygu Tüntaş (TED University, Ankara)

The Aegean Sea is a significant body of water witnessing the displacement, misplacement, and replacement of humans and nonhumans. Beyond being a physical body that acts, it is also a political body controlling the relations within and across it. The archipelagic condition of its islands forms an assemblage shaped by border regimes and disputes over nautical claims between Greece and Türkiye. This critical body of water requires the notion of “body” to be elaborated and re-materialized in the context of the architectural humanities, as an untraceable notion of body in motion. Acting as both witness and ally, the water body is investigated through formal-informal, human-nonhuman, visible-invisible ephemeral substantiations.

Reconsidering the notion of the body through the Aegean Sea, the study investigates a new materialism of thought that transcends architecture into cross-disciplinary manifestations. It presupposes a network of relations with non-fixed entities, emerging unpredictably around socio-political and cultural events, denying descriptive claims over its natural materiality and function, and cutting across natural and

political borders. The sea acts as a tool of intervention in events like population exchanges and migration crises, highlighting its role in deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The study traces the misplacement of nonhuman bodies via ballast water in ships; stored in ballast tanks when ships are not carrying cargo to stabilize movement, water carries alien species that are threatening to native marine life.

Setting and repository of events and conflicts, the Aegean Sea provides a new discussion ground for the architectural humanities through the displacement and replacement of human agencies, from the population exchange after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 to the present-day migration and refugee crisis. Aiming to expand the materiality and mattering of the water body, this paper questions how it can be framed in architectural discourse, through multiple forms of care and layers of employment. By concealing acts of violence while revealing displaced bodies ashore, the Aegean Sea can offer a new interpretation of post-structuralist thought, positioning architecture as an apparatus of care.



## Architectural Bodies and Counter Bodies: Negotiating Representation and Spaces of Production in the Yenidze Tobacco Factory

Sarah Wheat (Freie Universität Berlin)

In the final decades of the nineteenth century Dresden became the center of Germany's Oriental Tobacco industry, due to its strategic location for processing tobacco from the eastern Mediterranean and Turkey. In these early decades of the industry the brunt of work to manufacture the product – sorting, processing, and rolling tobacco into cigars and cigarettes – was done primarily by women and children working at home. After 1906 tobacco companies in the city were forbidden from operating in a decentralized fashion, due in part to international competition but also as a result of the *Zigarettenarbeiterinnen* (female cigarette workers) strike of 1905.

Built two years after the strike and the formation of the *Zigarettenarbeiterinnen* union, the Yenidze Tobacco Factory remains an architectural landmark. Referred to by Dresden's inhabitants as the *Tabakmoschee* (Tobacco Mosque), the factory exterior worked remarkably well as an architectural billboard. Its exotic, orientalist facade continues to be the focal point of

scholarly engagement with the building. Less attention has been paid to the interior, which housed one of Germany's most advanced factories of the early twentieth century. Additionally, the role of the factory's 4,000 employees—most of them women—have remained largely overlooked in architectural discourse.

This paper examines the relationship between the outward image portrayed by the company – its exterior and branding image that relied on orientalist tropes – versus the ways in which the interior of the factory was a technologically modern space rife with contentious class and gender dynamics. The factory interior, especially the *Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen* (welfare spaces), can be seen as a direct reflection of women's labour power. As counter bodies that took to the streets in protest of low wages, dangerous working conditions, and unequal treatment, tobacco factory workers re-emerge as agents who substantially impacted the history of industrial building design.

UNSEEN BODIES

## Interior/ity Camouflage: Superficial Adaptations of Bodies and Architectures

Maria Gil Ulldemolins (Hasselt University)

In Édouard Vuillard's painting *Interior, Mother and Sister of the Artist* (1893), the connection between interior architecture and one's embodied interiority is brought, quite literally, to the surface. The wall is covered with a dense, dizzy wallpaper. Pressed against it, the painter's sister, Marie, in a long, checkered dress. Uneasy, she melts into the wall: pattern to pattern, body to architecture.

In this *fin de siècle* scene, Marie camouflages herself in the room. Provoked by this image and the emergence of the interior (Charles Rice 2007), this paper aims to triangulate the body with architecture (interiors), and subjectivity (interiority).

While the need for bodily camouflage may be self-explanatory in warfare or wilderness, in an interior it turns unexpected. The term, possibly from the Italian *capo muffare* for 'muffling the head' (*Oxford English Dictionary*), offers protection and interiority: the head being an identifying feature (a surface) and a stand-in

for the self (a container). Borrowing from Aby Warburg's *Pathosformel*, which plots iterative representations of embodied (e)motion, this paper-atlas will think with bodies that confuse themselves with architectural surfaces. It will incorporate contemporaries to Vuillard's imagery (Sigmund Freud, Adolf Loos, Charlotte Perkins) and expand to bodily representations and interiors from newer periods and media (Heidi Bucher, Yayoi Kusama).

By curating and clustering depictions of camouflaged bodies, this paper prods at the protective, reflective nature of architectural interiors and the decorative function of surfaces. Can they ever evidence a sort of intimate maladaptation, or even an actual threat? If an interior is one's lair, when does it, paraphrasing Louise Bourgeois, shift from a refuge into a trap?

## Diffuse Envelopes, Porous (Infra)Structures, Transitional Bodies

Peter Šenk (University of Maribor)

The long tradition of explicit, metaphorical, analogical, anthropometric, ergonomic, eugenic, textual, contextual, etc., conditionality, and the corresponding relationships between the (human) body and architecture have been questioned time and again throughout history. Technological advancement and the utilisation of tools have shaped both human action and the experience of the environment. While technology may have inspired virtual and bodily hybridisations through prosthetic devices that affect the environment, the physical (built) environment has acquired a(n organic) metabolic status, with an emphasis on (re)imagining the human and non-human habitation, engaging with it and establishing the relationship between the environment and the self.

Multiple relationships between bodily engagement in the enclosed and permeable physical envelopes and in diffuse controlled environments are presented by drawing a parallel with the concept of porous transitional architectural structures. The relationships can be traced at both urban and architectural scales. The characteristics of hybridised envelopes, porous structures and embodied experiences projected and

performed in three projects by Sadar+Vuga at the turn of the millennium are presented: the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1996-1999) and the Central Part of the National Gallery (1996-2001), both in Ljubljana, and the competition proposal for the Aomori Prefectural Art Museum (1999).

Following the methodology of "Typology of collective capsularity according to accessibility and its representation" with an additional component of embodied spatial participation, the paper discusses the relationships between the levels of envelope type, public accessibility, representation and spatial impact within the envelope. These examples are presented as prototypical spatial structures that respond to the transformative needs of the user – from the Baudelairean or Benjaminian *flâneur* to the contemporary experiential and operative nomad: beyond the architectural romantic search for character, towards the search for the contemporary embrace of the embodied experience of the participant in the world.

## Entangling Stone-Bodies of an Archaeological Site with Tools, Stories, and Interventions

Öykü Şimşek (Istanbul Technical University)

This research is preoccupied with the vulnerable positions of ruins, human-and-nonhuman things, materials and the intervention and presence of architects in the more-than-human assemblages formed in archaeological sites. Discussions drawn upon the radical relationality between humans and nonhumans have emerged recently at the intersection of architecture and archaeology. These discussions range from the suggestion of critical "unusual" rights for the monuments (David Gissen), to the reconceptualization of certain monuments as political infrastructures (Elke Krasny), to the reevaluation of human-thing relationships in the fields of both social sciences and archaeology (Donna Haraway, Jane Bennett, Ian Hodder).

In order to question and discuss the presence of architects in archaeological sites, as well as to unveil the potential of the space-making agency of many human-and-nonhuman things, the paper explores the archaeological site Syedra Ancient City. Located

in Alanya, Turkey, Syedra can be considered a site-in-transition. While archaeological excavations of the site go on, the ancient city can be visited, with some parts of it still left inaccessible to the public. In this sense, the site encompasses many phases of both ancient times and present days which, combined, depict an incomplete representation of place.

This paper proposes a tool for seeing, designing, and intervening, which, while drawing the above-mentioned incompleteness, disrupts and diminishes the site as it reconstructs it with many overlapping layers. The tool reimagines the incomplete material and social representation of place through architectural drawings of specific buildings, stories and myths told through mosaics, remnants dislocated from their original places, and encounters of daily visits, as well as speculations of possible architectural interventions on the site. Through the vulnerability of the tool, the research proposes possible incomplete interventions and speculates their positions among knotted relations.

## Crossing Between Cells: The Body-Houses of Louise Bourgeois and Santiago Ramón y Cajal

Maria João Moreira Soares, Luís Carlos Bucha (Universidade Lusíada, Lisbon)

The human body has been forgotten, as has the sheltering body of architecture. In a world in which *humans* have forgotten they are *beings*, one is challenged by an overwhelming and unstable anthropocentric paradigm. Expressed in a virtualised matter, this paradigm is disconnected from the telluric forces beneath its feet. As Walter Benjamin says in 'Franz Kafka' (1934), 'the most forgotten alien land is one's own body.' In face of this alienation, we suggest a particular revisitation of (an)other body through the notion of the Body-House, intertwining the works of artist Louise Bourgeois and neuroscientist Santiago Ramón y Cajal.

Now empty, Bourgeois's house has always been intriguing on account of its indiscernibility: here body, work and home seem to be a single entity. This entity functions like a cell, the artist's own active matter. Materialised in artistic installations, the notion of the cell, became a pressing theme in Bourgeois's work, evoking a unit of space to be inhabited. Cajal demonstrated that the brain does not consist of a continuous, interconnected cellular system, but of

discrete cells – or neurons. Neurons, in his view, are imagined as miniature versions of the self. Cajal has produced drawings of unparalleled rigour of the neuron structure, envisaging imagined scenes of a cavernous abyss occupied by "inner-worlds."

The notion of the Body-House through Bourgeois and Cajal's cells reclaims a long-lost memory that is not part of the objectified and contained dimensions of the house. It pulsates as a vibrant matter in sync within an environment of interconnected houses. Bourgeois's house itself became a cell, a place of memory. His house, in Cajal's own words, reminds one of lyrical forests, luxuriant landscapes that reside within us. In these landscapes of indiscernibility, one can imagine a network of houses converging on the ultimate house: the body as (an)other body.



## Healing Bodies in Yoga Spaces: Tactility, Intimacy, and Wellbeing

Ufuk Soyöz (Kadir Has University, Istanbul)

This paper explores the relationship between architecture and the body in yogic spaces from the perspective of the haptic sense, touch, and tactility. It argues that in yoga spaces, the healing qualities of architecture are activated primarily through the tactile modality and social qualities of the space, i.e. its community-building aspects.

The tactile modality is inherent to yoga since the yogic practices activate the sense of touch, proprioception, interoception, and bodily awareness through movement and breathing techniques. The use of architecture in yogic spaces supports the development of bodily awareness through the sense of touch; for instance, the users take off their shoes, wear lighter clothes, lie on the ground increasing the contact with the floor. The community-building aspect of touch is also part of the yogic tradition where *bhakti* yoga gurus used embrace as a ritual to encounter and connect with their devotees.

The paper examines three types of environments aligned with historical developments of yoga. First are the symbolic spaces in India, primordial and

sacred places of yoga like monastic caves and natural environments with sacred elements. Second, the functional Modernist yoga studios that emerged with the globalization of yoga in metropolitan city centers and rural retreats. Last, the home and online platforms have recently become venues for mindfulness events, especially during COVID-19 lockdowns.

The paper will focus on online mindfulness events at home as space-making practices. I will argue that the tactile modality plays a significant role in the achievement of wellbeing on two levels: through the experienced physicality of the home, and through practices like visualizations and breathwork. The paper highlights the importance of touch and tactility in yoga spaces, from traditional symbolic environments to functional modern studios and virtual platforms. It underscores how tactile experiences enhance well-being and foster community connection, enriching yoga practice beyond physical postures.

## Cancers, Allergies, Mycoses, Viruses, and Autoimmune Diseases: The Maladies of Space

Gaetano Drago (Norwich University of the Arts / Royal College of Art)

The paper explores a new perspective on assessing and (re)generating space through the entanglement of bodily conditions and spatial treatments. Advancing Adrian McGregor's concept of biourbanism, it challenges traditional perceptions of space and introduces the notions of "interconnected spatial systems" and "inhabitable apparatuses." It presents bodies as "individual pluralities": unique yet interconnected, shaping and being shaped by the environment they inhabit. This relationship reflects space as a mirror of the body, an inhabitable organism within a network of biotic and abiotic conditions.

The conditions altering the body are diseases: weakening, mutating, reshaping, destroying, and influencing its evolution. If the body serves as a host to diseases influencing its health, then the vitality of space, mirroring the body, is also affected. Diseases, both bodily and spatial, function, spread, and manifest differently. Spatially, cancers cause

cities to malfunction in diverging ways, mutating their very fabric. Allergies misinterpret the beneficial as detrimental, rejecting valuable spatial elements. Mycoses manifest as a stealthy proliferation of opportunistic designs that foster decay.

The paper utilizes urban maladies as metaphors to conceive spatial frameworks through bodily characteristics, advocating a shift from the Anthropocene to "Netcentricene." By considering space as part of a larger network of bodies, diseases, and environments, it reveals how space suffers from the forces exerted upon it by humans, and challenges design practices to rethink interventions for an interconnected, inhabitable apparatus. Diagnosing spatial maladies forecasts faults, damages, gains, and losses, offering a new way to mediate space, and shows how design can harm, spread, and heal; a novel lens is presented through which to relearn and redesign space as living matter.

## Elemental Captivity: Chemical Architecture and Its Natural and Human Entanglements

Joana Rafael (Escola Superior Artística do Porto)

The fabric of our constructed environments, whether natural or synthetic, and the energy sources powering them, are woven from atomic and molecular entities. We extract these essential elemental particles from the Earth's crust, or engineer them through advanced material science to create the infrastructures and tools enabling human habitation and the transformation of the world. From tin roofs to iron girders, aluminum structures, copper cables, chromium chairs, and neon lights, to the ominous presence of plutonium bombs and lithium batteries, chemical elements such as zinc, iron, aluminum, copper, chromium, neon, uranium, and lithium powerfully influence the physical, economic and social dimensions of our built environment, shaping the principles and practices of architecture. These elements form the material foundation of our tools, infrastructures and commodities, each carrying distinct chemical, formal and spatial implications.

Many of these chemical elements infiltrate the environment, crossing spatial boundaries, becoming airborne, flowing through waterways, forming alliances, spanning temporal scales, settling in various places, and being absorbed by living organisms. They serve

as catalysts for change, reshaping ecosystems and transforming landscapes while simultaneously influencing the wellbeing of life forms dependent on them.

Within the confines of our spaces, chemical elements exert a profound influence on the lived environment, underscoring the intricate relationship between architecture and the natural world. Navigating this intersection, this paper explores the profound impact of chemical elements on design, sustainability, and human experience. Through an interdisciplinary lens, it examines our interconnectedness with the built environment and the elemental forces shaping our lives. By challenging conventional perspectives and advocating for nuanced understandings of architectural interactions, this paper seeks to reimagine our relationship with architecture and the world around us, shedding light on the complex dialogue between architecture and the bodies it houses and shapes.

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## Mouldy Smelling History

Anna Livia Vørsel (KTH Stockholm)

There is a building in Stockholm making people inside it feel unwell. In the late 1960s, the timber construction in the building was chemically treated to prevent future rot and deterioration. Still, over time, cold and dampness have crept through the floorboards, resulting in slow material changes in the timber, and a new mouldy smell. This paper unpacks how the socio-economic and political history of construction typologies, chemical manufacturing and welfare state services are engrained within the walls of this building, and in turn, how the noses of the people inside it register it.

The building, a single-story wooden structure, functioned as a staffed playground building until 2015, when it closed due to members of staff feeling unwell. In a building analysis report, traces of chlorophenols were registered in the indoor air. Chlorophenols are chemicals used in pressure-treated wood preservation, extensively used in Sweden from the 1950s to 1978 in standardized wooden buildings. The chemicals, harmless per se, emit

a strong smell like mould if exposed to moisture, tricking noses and nervous systems into believing that it poses a risk, initiating a long list of symptoms affecting the respiratory system and the breathing abilities of bodies.

There is an interrelation between buildings and the people within them. Buildings react to the society in which they are constructed, and people react to the buildings they are in. This paper looks in detail at this interrelation between bodies and buildings through a single site. By interrogating evidence presented in the building analysis report alongside archival material, the paper unpacks the intertwined histories engrained in the walls of this building, and in turn, how this history becomes registered by the bodies inside the building. The paper argues that the complex architectural histories of buildings come into view when bodies react, and that paying attention to these bodies can reveal histories otherwise untold.

## Dying Bodies: Dying-in-Place and Design Thinking for Fragile Bodies

Annie Bellamy (University of Edinburgh)

Sam Clark (University of Cardiff)

Ageing-in-place is a well-established area of architectural interest that has found growing support within the profession, while discourse around dying-in-place remains taboo. Environments that host end-of-life care continue to be taken for granted, receiving little critical review or design attention. The concept of dying-in-place has an established literature base within care, particularly in nursing and gerontology, which defines the term as the geographical context of a person that most would assume to be 'at home'. However, in the UK, death does not always occur in a domestic setting or designated place. More often death takes place by default within clinical or institutional settings, with hospitals being the most common place of death in England (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2024).

Through this paper we explore a diversity of fragile bodies moving towards death within a variety of contexts. We consider historical settings, such as Florence Nightingale wards and proto-hospices, as well as contemporary alms housing and housing environments predicated on independent-living and active ageing. We also contemplate non-

Western contexts where cultural practices demand greater forethought around accommodating and washing dead bodies at home.

Responding to the conference theme, this paper argues that in the same manner that ageing-in-place has been translated into architectural practice, dying-in-place requires a similar interpretation to ensure that a diversity of bodies and their spatial needs can be met. We seek to understand and further develop the concept, in design terms, beyond concerns for care delivery. While recognizing the movement toward person-centered care, which looks to build on care in the community, we advocate for greater architectural awareness of the home as a potential and most desirable place of death. Dying should be intentionally supported by places that facilitate aspirational transitions; moments in which fragile bodies resonate with the environment, passing from consciousness to rest.

## Eternal Bodies: Matter, Mortality, and Memory

Jason Wiggins (Norwich University of the Arts)

My paper explores the transformation of the body after death and how this transition is memorialized and remembered. It considers the body's transition from a vibrant entity to an inanimate state and its eventual merging with the earth, highlighting the interconnectedness of bodies and their environments.

I focus on how people remember those who have passed away by creating structures that reflect their memory of the person's identity. I introduce the concept of crafting stories about the deceased to honor their memory in a process called thanatography.

The study explores the changes in the body postmortem, discussing its transformation into a new form of existence, while highlighting the ways in which this change is commemorated. Taking cues from Mark C. Taylor's work it will investigate how monuments like gravestones and cemeteries function as places for recollection and contemplation, and

perpetuate the impact of the departed on those alive. I will examine how objects like gravestones in places like Westpark Johannesburg Cemetery play a role in keeping the memory and establishing a unique legacy of people who have passed.

The paper discusses how honoring the deceased through commemoration serves to connect the absence of their presence with the lasting memories shared by individuals or communities. This ritual provides comfort to those grieving while offering a glimpse into the life of the departed individual, to ensure that their memory lives on. It is common for this act of remembrance to take place without the deceased's involvement in the process; although they may have influenced how they are remembered it is something they will never experience firsthand. For many, this type of architecture is the single most important commission they will make.

## Anybodies Matter: Situating the Anybody Conference in Buenos Aires, 1996

Cathelijne Nuijsink (ETH Zurich)

Over the course of three days in June 1996, thirty-five intellectuals from different disciplines and geographies gathered in Buenos Aires for a conference on the theme of ‘anybody.’ The conference was part of a series of ten annual multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural conferences, initiated in 1990 by the architect-theorists Peter Eisenman, Arata Isozaki, and Ignasi de Solà-Morales, and the editor Cynthia Davidson. Using an ambiguous ‘any’ compound as its guiding principle (anyone, anywhere, anyway, and so on), the series sought to facilitate a variety of cultural conversations in which philosophers, artists, writers, critics, lawyers, social scientists and architects, were invited to introduce non-architectural questions into architecture.

This paper delves into the sixth instalment of the Any Conferences (1991–2000), the *Anybody* conference, which sought to expand our understanding of the body. Each of the five panels focused on a different ‘bodily’ lens: the ideal, the political, the virtual, the formless, and the architectural, sparking one of the most heated and far-reaching debates in the entire Any

Conferences series. This paper sets out to demonstrate how *Anybody* resulted in a whirlwind of ideas and concepts in which audience and panelists discussed how architecture in the 1990s responded to questions posed by the body. It also addresses *Anybody*’s shortcomings. During the conference, the ambiguity of the word ‘anybody’ caused a misunderstanding between the Euro-American participants’ aesthetically autonomous perspective, and the political perspective of the Latin American participants, who pressingly wanted to include southern realities into the debate.

This confrontation forecasted the need for more diverse corporeal discussions and for addressing a wide range of “anybodies” in the context of real urban problems. This paper highlights how the conference significantly marked where the debate on “body” and “space” stood within the larger architectural dialogue of the 1990s, paying particular attention to the Any Conferences’ lack of cultural sensitivity by today’s standards.

## Fictional Bodies and Unknowable Architecture: The Spatial Implications of Murakami’s Strange Library

Jonathan Laskovsky (University of Melbourne)

Hélène Frichot declares the ‘relationships between architecture and meaning have been, for the most part, severed, or at least problematised’ (2005). This severance necessitates a rethinking of the *arché* of architecture; a new way of understanding the relationship between the body and architecture. A natural response is gifting agency to architecture per se through a kind of New Materialism. The challenge with this approach is that the bar has been set in the original *arché* in which the idea of agency, rooted in the human, becomes the measure, the standard against which architecture might be measured.

What I am proposing in this essay is a different approach, one that shifts the balance between the body and architecture but through a reorganisation of that relationship. It is an argument for an equality generated through the process of creation in fiction – that is, *fictioning*. In this process, there is no hierarchy or epistemological distinction between active agent

and passive architecture. I will explore this erasure through an examination of the Murakami short work, *The Strange Library*, connecting it with Sabrina Puddu and Giame Meloni’s examination of prison architecture along with Michel Foucault’s interrogation of policing, justice, and prison architecture.

I will show how the narrative speaks to not only the spatial possibilities contained within civic buildings, but also to the very foundation and operation of institutional borders, specifically the organisation of space, the restriction and the structure of prisons more broadly. Which is to say, this paper is concerned with the operation of the *movement* of the body. What is revealed is a new understanding of movement as the organising structure of space itself. Movement as structuring space places the body, the human at the centre, not as the *arché* of creation but as the very possibility of architecture.

## The Practice of Slowness: Enhancing Human Centered Design through Slow Travel

Yassin Nooradini, Silvia Micheli, Dan Luo, Yan Liu (University of Queensland, Brisbane)

In the face of urbanization and vehicular reliance, the design of urban landscapes increasingly overlooks the human-scale experiences, contradicting our intrinsic need to engage with nature and our surroundings. Despite extensive research on human perception of the urban environment related to active travel, the understanding of human-scale activities and other sensory dimensions remains overlooked. This underscores the need for research on Human Centered Design (HCD) as a transformative potential for redefining and promoting slow travel in contemporary city-making.

This paper aims to unpack the notion of “slow travel” by focusing on the perceptual dimensions of human movement. It shifts the focus from travel as a physical activity between points to valuing the experience itself. Slow travel possesses cognitive value and can serve as a strategy for human-oriented design. As Aldous Huxley explains in *The Art of Seeing* (1942), this concept resonates with the Italian concept of *lentezza* (slowness), stemming from *lente*, the lens through which we see. In the art of slowing down, our vision

expands, revealing more details of the landscape. The paper explores the relationship between the human body and the built environment through the concept of slow travel. It critically defines slow travel as a human-scale activity, and conceptualizes a novel relationship between the environment, human sensorial modality, and HCD. Additionally, the study reviews qualitative and quantitative methods, including narrative analysis and AI-based big data approaches that measure sensory experiences. These findings are crucial for architects, urban planners, and designers to enhance urban qualities that align with people’s preferences. This research investigates how HCD through slow travel can reshape cities for more inclusive, equitable, and reflective human experiences.

## Taking Space: Public Space, the Institution, and a Woman's Body

Sarah Ackland (Newcastle University)

Women have been rallying to ask why their bodies are still a political issue following the murders of Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa (2021), and Ashling Murphy (2022). This paper discusses *Taking Space*, a project that responds to this concern through an act of resistance by physically activating women's bodies via running. Using sweat as a medium, it explores the bodily restrictions women face and questions the role of the gallery within this context.

*Taking Space* is a series of three organised runs and talks inspired by Matrix's *Making Space*. It is an opportunity for women to subversively run, sweat, and take up space. Sarah Ahmed (2021) explains how institutions have set rules and expectations, determining which types of bodies they welcome and which they do not. In the gallery, sanctioned bodies are restrained, well-dressed, and perhaps even elegant. But sweaty women runners? Liberated women, suffering or exultant subjects, ambivalent objects of desire or revulsion? Likely not. Nirmal Puwar's study argues that women are seen as 'space invaders,' but why is the presence of a woman's body – her sweat and joy – so invasive? How does she take space beyond her physical

presence? I draw upon Ahmed and artists such as Guerilla Girls and Carolee Schneemann, who pushed the limits of what is acceptable in gallery spaces.

This paper tells the story of women's bodies – sweating and occupying space – raising questions about where women can expand and where they remain constricted by expectations, rules, and institutional power that extend into the streets. *Taking Space* pushes back against these constrictions. Sweat unveils more visceral reactions to bodies and serves as a method for taking space beyond the physical body.

## Understanding the Politics of Bodies in Small Spaces

Janna Lichter (Bauhaus University Weimar)

Research on global justice often focuses on race, class, and gender, but the political bodies of women are less considered. In this case study, political bodies of women are introduced as city makers who seek to resist hegemonic structures in a self-organized space. Exploring the shared experiences of six women and a bird in a neighborhood in North Beirut, I ask about the potential of multidimensional spaces in which female bodies cross temporal and spatial boundaries. This paper aims to engage with María do Mar Castro Varela's concept of Small Spaces and Françoise Vergès' framework on Multidimensionality as a critical analysis for examining the performativity of political bodies as decolonial spatial practices.

The study focuses on spaces such as living rooms, kitchens, and coffee spaces, and the interactions of bodies beyond private and public spheres that intervene in urban environments. Through relational camera work, the microcosm of women unfolds complex dimensions: exploring individual and collective spatial practices through camera practices; collecting, archiving,

and reflecting interconnected film material; opening conversations about multidimensional togetherness. Through the artistic approach, women find a common language, and the camera becomes subject of the group engaging with different voices. Through the research, a plurality of positions becomes visible, and generalized images are reduced by representing existing spaces of the diverse realities of women.

New relations emerge from considering the political bodies of women, while artistic interventions produce meaning for grounded knowledge. Women are introduced as city makers seeking resistance in times of conflict, migration, and globalization. The research makes visible a possible blueprint for a hybrid way of living together. It is an artistic, feminist, and decolonizing research on spaces, multispecies, power constructs, languages, and bodies. Exploring this microcosm, this paper considers how collective and individual decolonial spatial practices can be negotiated to rethink togetherness in global contexts.

## Reimagining the Modern Iranian Home: How Women Press Redefined Domestic Spaces and Women's Body in Iran (1964-2008)

Neda Abbasimaleki, Cagri Sanliturk, Simon Richards, Taimaz Larimian (Loughborough University)

Images matter; they have an affect; they carry significant ideological and cultural influences. Visual contents act as agents for the construction of bodies within societal settings, reflecting power mechanisms. The representation of women in advertising often creates stereotypes, contributing to a standardised view of femininity. During the Pahlavi era, the Iranian women's press played a pivotal role in promoting Western modern culture, portraying a specific embodiment of Western femininity blending modernity with traditional gender roles. The contradictory ideologies of the Pahlavi II government (1941-1978) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979-ongoing) regarding women's societal status illustrate the influence of governmentality on cultural constructs. During the Pahlavi era, women were central to the modernisation project, with the female body symbolising modernity and femininity.

This paper employs critical visual discourse analysis to investigate the portrayal of women in the Iranian women's press, focusing in particular on *Zan\_e\_Roz* (1964-1981) and *Zanan* (1991-2008). By examining the imagery from these magazines,

the paper delves into how representations in the women's press contributed to shaping narratives surrounding women's bodies and their domestic relationships, revealing governmental strategies.

The examination of printed media from the Pahlavi era reveals insights into power dynamics, modern womanhood, and domesticity; magazines explored new spatial aspects and functions, modern women's presence, and new domestic objects. Power influences consumerism, framing women as primary purchasers and fuelling home product marketing. The deliberate decision to exclude women from advertising in the post-revolution period reflects religious and cultural considerations; it evidences a departure from the consumer-driven portrayal of women that was prevalent before the revolution. This transformation not only reflects changes in societal constructs but also highlights the enduring influence of political and cultural factors on visual narratives.

## Reconfiguring the Female Body in the Cyborg at Home: Digital Interactions and Spatial Perceptions Among Chinese Women in the COVID-19 Lockdown

Yali Zhang (University of Sheffield)

The global lockdown resulting from the pandemic created a distinctive context in which digital technologies became the primary means of interaction between individuals and their surrounding environments. In China, this transition had a particularly significant impact on women, as domestic spaces became increasingly integrated with professional and digital life. This paper examines the ways in which the lockdown precipitated a transformative reconfiguration of the Chinese female body within these spaces, thereby redefining gender, identity and space. The research employs an interdisciplinary approach that intersects feminist theory, digital anthropology, and spatial studies, in order to examine the ways in which enforced domesticity and digital interactions have reshaped spatial perceptions and identities within domestic settings.

This study employs qualitative analysis, including autoethnographic practices of drawing and writing, to examine the daily practices of Chinese women during the lockdown. Judith Butler's theory of performativity

informs the examination of the ways in which identity is shaped within the context of reconfigured domestic and digital spaces. Furthermore, the study draws upon Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, applying it within an East Asian context to critique traditional narratives of gender and objectification. Notable instances include the utilization of video communication tools, which both constrained and liberated the performance of identity, thereby blurring the boundaries between professional and personal lives.

The paper posits that the Chinese female body, within the domestic and digital realms, becomes a malleable, co-constructed entity during the lockdown period, challenging traditional architectural and gender narratives. It examines how digital spaces redefine the physical and social boundaries of the body, and focuses on the intersection of technology, gender, and culture within an East Asian context, rethinking how bodies interact with architectural spaces, technology, and societal structures in contemporary, digitally mediated environments.



## Exploring the Playing Body in Isamu Noguchi's Playgrounds

Gabriela Jimenez (Norwich University of the Arts)

Between the infant's and the mother's bodies lies the first playground. The paper focuses on the intricate relationship between play and the architectural design of children's playgrounds via attachment theory. It specifically draws from the theoretical frameworks of Donald Winnicott and John Bowlby, renowned psychoanalysts who emphasized the importance of play and attachment in child development. By paying attention to the architectural principles of Isamu Noguchi, a prominent artist and landscape architect known for his innovative playground designs, the paper shows how the physical environment influences children's play experiences and emotional connections with the rest of the world.

The study employs a multidisciplinary approach (incorporating psychoanalytic theory, developmental psychology, and architectural analysis) to understand how playground design can support children's emotional well-being and social development. Central to the investigation is Winnicott's concept

of "transitional space," which posits that play serves as a bridge between internal and external reality, facilitating creativity, exploration, and self-expression.

Bowlby's attachment theory – emphasising the significance of early caregiving experiences in shaping children's attachment styles and emotional regulation – helps identify design elements that promote a sense of safety, autonomy, and belonging, thereby enhancing attachment security and emotional resilience. It is, however, the architectural analysis of Isamu Noguchi's playground designs, particularly the innovative use of form, texture, and spatial arrangement for stimulating sensory exploration and imaginative play, that gives a tangible expression to children's embodied experiences of play.

## Children's Bodies in Buildings: Narratives of (Dis)embodiment

Maria Kouvari (ETH Zurich / Sophie Afenduli Foundation)

Throughout the twentieth century—or, as Swedish reform pedagogue Ellen Key referred to, the "Century of the Child"—children have fascinated architects, designers, and urban planners within a broader material culture that revolved around the conception of a protected, happy, and nurturing childhood. The needs of children in terms of scale, space, light, and color, not to mention pedagogy and hygiene, have been meticulously studied for the design of educational buildings, playgrounds, specialized children's institutions, public landscapes, and domestic spaces across various national contexts, documented in catalogues, manuals, guidelines, and special issues on planning.

Despite their ubiquity in architectural design and discourse, children have attracted relatively little attention in historical studies of modern architecture, particularly in relation to the notion of corporeality. Drawing upon literature from the fields of art and architectural history, heritage studies, and the history of childhood, this paper discusses how the body of the

child has been embodied in the conception, production, and perception of the built environment. The analysis includes well-known design manuals that refer to the child mostly from German-speaking geographies, such as the proportion study by August Thiersch (1904), *The New School* by Alfred Roth (1950), and *Housing the Young* by Dieter Bilz (1972), and also addresses the historiography of architectures for children.

These narratives of embodiment, or respectively, disembodiment, reveal the role of the body as: target of design, visual resource, and archive. By focusing on the child, the aim is to move beyond the adult body, which dominates built culture. The discussion gains momentum in view of not only an emerging historiographical interest in the difficult past of children, one associated with warfare, child labor, abuse, and trauma, and one that challenges the master narrative of a happy childhood, but also contemporary concerns about the well-being of children and their bodies.

## La Rotonda and I: Remix

Hadas Ophrat (Independent)

Architecture can be read as a *space of action*, and holds the potential for relational human experience. Andrea Palladio's Villa Almerico Capra La Rotonda (Vicenza, Italy, 1567-1592) became the subject of my recent work as a performance artist, mediating between the ideal and the mundane, the private body and the public space. With a floorplan based on a circle inscribed in a square and four identical facades, La Rotonda confers on the Palladian Villa aesthetic values of perfection and harmonious proportions, resonating with the symbolic idea of the Vitruvian Man. The analogy between the human body and basic geometrical shapes is rooted in the assumed existence of an intrinsic relationship between man and his architectural space, expressed in the classical orders of architecture. The prominent location of the Villa Rotonda in the countryside also determines orientation and specific viewing angles.

As a performance artist I sought to establish bodily disability as opposed to building. In my performance, I collapsed on the stairway against the verticality

of the building. I limped around the building while a video camera lingered on the angle of the changing shadow cast on the gravel path. I drew a circle while using a crutch with a lump of coal stuck at its end and converted orthopedic aids into a set of drawing tools, an allusion to the architect's craft.

According to Edward Hall's interpersonal proximity theory (1969), proximity and distance are measurable values. Furthermore, actions and even emotions also have a measure. Therefore, a built space influences both behavior and action, and naturally induces also a mindset. 'Architecture space is lived space rather than physical space, and the lived space always transcends geometry and measurability,' writes the Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa. It is an *Action Space*.

## Cyborg Situations: Media Extensions for the Architect's Body

Sophia Banou, Matthew Hynam (University of the West of England, Bristol)

Architectural thinking and making have been historically attached to and conditioned by representational practices and their corresponding media, most notably of all, drawing. From the Salamis Stone (4th century BC) to medieval tracing floors and contemporary VR headsets, this paper proposes a critical review on architecture's situations within the real through varying degrees of embodied mediation. The representational dimension of architectural praxis has often been seen as a point of controversy and contestation for architecture's situation within and 'power' upon the real. Mario Carpo's (2011) positioning of architectural drawing as a distancing intermediary between the architect and their craft, offers one of the most direct of such critiques of architecture's attachment to mediation.

As the media landscape has been advancing more rapidly and drastically over the past thirty years, new grounds for architectural ideation through mediation have been uncovered. Architecture's relationship to the media landscapes that have emerged over the last two centuries have repeatedly offered fertile

ground for architectural critique and the manipulation through the conquering of new modalities of spatial perception: from the televisual aesthetics of the 1960s and 1970s (Archigram, Superstudio) to the cinematic vision (Bernard Tschumi, Diller+Scofidio). More recent digitized media frontiers have raised both techno-fetishist and techno-phobic responses about the death of drawing, most recently about the overtaking of architecture by artificial intelligence.

These 'cyborg situations' will be framed through the establishment and identification of spatial conditions within the media landscapes that architecture has and can potentially occupy. Digital media, in particular, which by default mark a shift to a covert hyperreal condition of simulation, will be examined in terms of their ability to provide new forms of representational situations. The paper will thus define mediation as an embodied condition of architectural praxis, at the same time defining media as critical, creative, extensions to the architect's body.

## Applying a Science and Technology Studies Lens to Contemporary Architecture, with Digital Humanities

Anca-Simona Horvath (Aalborg University)

Architecture, as a cultural object and as a profession that involves collaboration between multiple disciplines and stakeholders, has always been influenced by discoveries in connected fields. In the same way that developments in industrial design and manufacturing have influenced modernists at the turn of the 20th century, over the last three decades, computing has completely reshaped the practice and theory of architecture. Applying a science and technology studies lens to architecture has been less researched; however, it can be illuminating for understanding the recent history of our field. For example, mapping how scientific developments such as quantum physics or fractal geometry enter both the conceptual agenda and the practical possibilities of advanced practices for architecture can help theorize the field through a distinct critical, analytical, aesthetic, and ethical angle.

Research methods within digital humanities include corpus linguistics studies - where large corpora of texts (bodies of texts) are analyzed using natural language

processing methods. In this paper, we analyze a corpus linguistics study of texts about architecture, collected from the journal *Architectural Design (AD)*, written between 2005 and 2024 and consisting of all published articles in this period (around 4.7 million words in total). According to Mario Carpo, 'while not all things related to computational design have been published in *AD*, a large part of them have' (Carpo 2012). This makes *AD* a representative source for tracing the recent history of computation in architecture.

Within this corpus, we track words and concepts that relate to science and technology fields, and more specifically, biology, mathematics, physics, and neuroscience. Next, looking at a parallel corpus of conceptual architectural projects consisting of winning and honorable mentions from the eVolo Skyscraper Competition between 2006 and 2024, we illustrate through selected case studies how scientific ideas enter the practice and conceptual apparatus of contemporary architecture.

## Keep me! Interstitial Space: Gesture as Interruption

Dominic Xing Chen (University of Hong Kong)

The irreducible gap between the subject and its 'background,' the fact that a subject is never fully adapted to/embedded in its environment, defines subjectivity (Slavoj Žižek 2006). This paper explores the transformative potential of this irreducible gap within architectural discourse to address current social dilemmas, focusing on interstice and interruption. Both nominalized words share a common Latin etymology, *inter*, meaning in-between, but differ in their Latin affixes, with *stare* (to stand, a standing still) and *rumpere* (to break) describing two different subject states within. Combined, these two form a dynamic process: from action, standing still, and action again, revealing an oscillation hidden between states.

Concerning properties, the interstitial space is seen as a surplus gap between the skin and structure of architectural reality (Slavoj Žižek 2009), or precisely, between representational appearance and utilitarian function (Uros Novakovic 2013). Regarding processes, interruption emphasizes the actions or counteractions that emerge within the oscillating gap hidden beneath

unity, continuity, and authority (Doreen Bernath 2021). For nearly two decades, the convergence of the built environment and highly visual social media has created an interstitial space that constantly oscillates in the gaps between the physical/virtual, private/public, and inside/outside. Here, our offline participation consistently intersects with curated online self-presentation to showcase identity and socio-spatial position.

Attempting to cover up the irreducible surplus by aestheticizing spatial selfies, anchoring the illusion of ideal selves in the eternal moment of instantaneous images. Our subjectivity is deeply shaped by the gap between our symbolic appearance and everyday reality in built environments. Which leads to new narratives of alienation, isolation, and homogenization. This paper will focus on three states of subjects within interstitial spaces: "to stand" (illusion of action), "a standing still" (action without action), and "to break" (authentic action)—by discussing interruption moments constituted by architectural and artistic events or forms to elucidate the transformative potential of the gap.

## Figurations of the Informational Body: A Small Atlas

Lucía Jalón Oyarzun (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)  
Victor Cano Ciborro (The New School, New York)

Circa 1591, the Greek painter El Greco sustained a heated discussion with his copy of Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. In the pages where the Roman architect had described the figure of a male, able, and perfectly proportioned body that would come to define the history of our discipline and be immortalized by Leonardo da Vinci, we find a series of handwritten notes contending that there is no one single body; *there are many bodies*. To acknowledge this, we have elsewhere started drafting an alternative genealogy of the architectural body (Jalón Oyarzun 2017). Here we want to contribute to it by focusing on what we have termed the informational body.

We define the architectural body as the set of representations, discourses, operations, and practices that are organized around a major or predominant definition of the body. To consider the informational body, we go back to 1948, when Claude Shannon published his paper *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*. There, he proposed a definition of

information that would shape the computational era to come. Information became digital; any signal had to be matched to either a one or a zero. We consider how this transformation has shaped body standards, models, and imaginaries, shaping in turn architectural discourses and practices.

We will consider this relation through a small atlas of informational bodies' figurations, considering, among other examples, the standard body of metrics and big data, the cyborg and the technosymbiotic body, the body turned into individual and profiling datasets, the disembodied voices of Siri and Alexa, the non-playable character, and other simulational stuffing, or the CAD block and the BIM body. Moving away from mimetic relationships and figurative ways of thinking, the concept of figurations, introduced by feminist scholars Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti, provides 'materialistic mappings of situated, i.e., embedded and embodied, social positions' (Braidotti 2011).

## Bodily Memories: Exploring the Experience of Walmer Yard through Portraits of the Body in Space

Laura Mark (Newcastle University)

Moments and memories experienced within buildings are ephemeral. They do not leave visible traces, and they resist permanence. They are not part of the architect's narrative of the building. These moments are historically difficult to store in a traditional archive based on written or drawn materials, or conventional modes of representation. The idea of the body as an archive challenges this idea of ephemerality. The body has the capacity to store and to transmit knowledge, allowing an experience to survive through time.

In this paper, I will explore the process of returning to Walmer Yard, where I was Keeper for five years, and capturing photographs of myself in key spaces which held memories for me particular to my role as Keeper. At times this role took a particular toll on my body and mind, and many of my memories of the space are tied up in difficult moments. Through allowing my body to revisit these memories, I was practicing embodiment and the idea of embodied actualisation as discussed by André Lepecki. I will discuss this alongside ideas of active memory, and

the theories of archiving explored by Michel Foucault, Hal Foster, and Jacques Derrida. By re-placing my body in these spaces, I was re-enacting or re-visiting specific moments in time within my own experiences of Walmer Yard. My body creates the archive and acts as a medium for memory. The photographs serve as a talisman for my memories of the place.

## Photographing Bodies: Visitors Taking Pictures and Spatial Disruption in Art Museums and Galleries

Chien Lee (National Taiwan University)

In the past decade, art museums worldwide have successively crossed the previously strictly enforced line of photography prohibition and relaxed their visitor photography policies. Moreover, the institutional attitude toward visitors taking photographs of artworks has grown from resigned tolerance to welcoming and even encouraging. In our post-pandemic era, the public, more familiar with photography-mediated presentations of artworks during the period of heavy lockdowns and travel restrictions than at any time before, is now eager to visit exhibitions for the real things.

This paper asks how architectural spaces of art museums and galleries accommodate the co-existence of photographic seeing and direct seeing. I argue that the change in visitor photography policies has not been followed by a redesign of exhibition spaces to allow for photographing bodies. While the renovation of museums is burgeoning globally, spectacular exteriors are not matched with interiors capable of managing the bodily performances of photographing. This situation is exacerbated by failed strategic responses on the part of the institutions. Amsterdam's Van Gogh

Museum, for instance, lifted its photography ban in May 2013 and reinstated it only six months later, providing selfie walls and high-resolution images of its collection. Now, yielding to popular demand, the institution permits visitor photography once again.

This paper examines the bodily processes and performative qualities of visitor photography. Discussing this within the framework of sociology and from the visitors' perspective, it delineates the still largely ignored spatial disruptions caused by visitors' photographing bodies. Arguments are based on empirical observation conducted primarily in London, Taipei, and various cities in the UK and Taiwan, complemented by equally careful fieldwork completed in Berlin, Leipzig, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Venice, Athens, Paris, Kyoto, and Seoul since 2015. This paper emphasizes the ongoing disparity between art museums' spatial designs and the requirements of embodied photographic activity.

## Embodied Vision

Eleni Sousoni, Romanos Tsomos (Norwich University of the Arts / Yellow Cloud Studio, London)

Western culture has been dominated by sight as its main sense, employed to anchor meaning and interpret truth and knowledge. This has created a need as old as human existence for representation and manipulation of visual reality, and has given birth to several systems of perspectival representation, which placed the eye as a bodiless observer in the center of the perceptual world. An increasing separation of the self from the world, together with a multitude of technological advances, endless manipulation, over-saturation and mass production of the image have reinforced the domination of the eye, this time on a global scale, with predefined cultural needs.

Architecture has adopted the image as a tool, but in the process, it has neglected the body as the center of the spatial experience. The haptic movement of the body through considerably designed architectural space activates stored memories that can trigger existential connection with the world. In this sense, the experience of architecture lies in the meeting of space and body, not in the lines of drawings alone.

Recent VR technology promises to integrate our "virtual" body in space, providing peripheral vision as opposed to the focused vision that has turned users into distant spectators. Our work aims to study and challenge the limits of VR as a representational architectural tool that enhances experience, through a series of unorthodox experiments. Our experiments will use architectural projects by our practice as case studies, with an episodic methodology of virtual manipulation juxtaposed/superimposed on them, in order to explore whether virtual representation of architectural space needs to maintain the rules of reality unlike its bi-dimensional image predecessor. Can this tool become a new canvas for architectural interpretations and movements, or will bending the rules create disembodiment, disorientation and lack of proprioception, instead of the promised integration of our bodies in space?

## Mutable, Extensible, Implementable Bodies, and Architectures

Giuseppina Scavuzzo, Paola Limoncin (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

The ideal body, once the measure of architecture, within contemporary design culture influenced by post-human theory, has become a real and plural, multifaceted body, in which what were considered disabilities are welcomed as forms of biodiversity, neurodiversity, and not as deficits. It is a human body open to the non-human, to forms of multi-species coexistence. This body is implementable and extensible through technology, but it remains vulnerable to the ecosystem's fragility and aging. In the same way, the body of architecture and the city are perceived as vulnerable to the threats of climate change and building obsolescence.

We will present original design experiments by the authors, which focus on modular housing for neurodiversity and aging, and a selection of contemporary case studies identified as examples of spatial transformations - of interiors or facades - in which the idea of flexibility of the architectural body over time is realized. In the contemporary projects examined, the dwelling unit is no longer the housing unit, but a smaller portion of space: the

room, the threshold, the loggia, or the balcony, which - through changing spatial solutions - transform themselves according to the needs and the different sensitivities of the inhabitants, modifying the architectural body that houses them and its "face".

This paper investigates contemporary architectural design through the new forms of interaction between the human body and the architectural body. The first one generates opportunities for transformation by appropriating both internal and external space and making the second one participate in the multifaceted life that inhabits it. Reflecting on the reciprocal influence between human bodies in their multifaceted diversity, non-human bodies, and architectural bodies, brings to light new liminalities, interactions, and symbiotic relationships that can potentially reverberate in new forms of community and, therefore, of the social body.

## Body Space Workshop

**Aurelian Koch** (Embodied Space)

**Ellie Nixon** (Norwich University of the Arts)

**Amy Russell** (Embodied Poetics)

At a time when global events are stirring division between bodies, places and cultures, we are interested in exploring a mode of relating to the world that takes us out of our habitual selves to ask, how might the body blur its own boundaries to resonate with the enviroing world? How might we begin to articulate a porous relationship between “bodying”, “imagining” and “knowledging,” to reveal new insights for contesting familiar ways of experiencing and thinking about people, place and feeling? Drawing on Karen Barad’s words, how might we imagine bodies not as things or substances with clear boundaries, but as phenomena with intra-acting components?

Led by three international creative practitioners, the workshop will explore the subtle and dynamic interactions between human bodies and the built environment. Through the use of simple bamboo sticks, we will play with how they can extend lines into space to activate a resonating and reverberating

process, in which human bodies and matter are caught up in the currents and flows of mediating between inner and outer worlds, negotiating between the known and unknown, between the material and the immaterial, between the sensation and the realization, between the said and the unsaid, between the visible and the invisible, between impression and expression, between the real and the imaginary.

Looking to the future, the desire is that architectural design practice will tap into a flexible and emergent process, a way of imagining, thinking and working that can inspire, strengthen and revivify our embodied relations with the world.

*We suggest wearing loose clothing, bringing a water bottle and a desire to play and explore.*

## The Body as a Tool in Architectural Pedagogy: Global Tools' Body Workshops

Eleonora Antoniadou (Royal College of Art)

The pressing issues of today, such as ecology, globalization, technology, and social justice that are already part of the architectural education curriculum closely resemble the topics addressed by the radical pedagogical experiments of the 1970s. During that period, bodies became a tool of radical education by building ephemeral structures, discovering the countryside, leaving the typical classroom to travel, partying, protesting for better education, demanding gender equality, and questioning institutions. Global Tools, a group of influential designers, developed an innovative system of workshops between 1973 and 1975.

The group sought to explore new tools, processes, and learning methods through a series of workshops aimed at gathering embodied experience and translating these into design. The body was the central to Global Tools' investigation. Their inventory was founded on the physical essence of the body, its co-existence with other bodies, and its relation to the environment. This paper attempts to unfold the fragmented history of Global Tools and shed light on its influence and

protagonists. It focuses on the interactive aspect of the Global Tools workshops as an action of learning, and on the embodied experience the group sought, as a means to understand and transform experience into design.

Using the lens of the body, this paper will highlight the processes and learning methods employed by the group, situating their work within the broader wave of radical education in the 1970s. By highlighting the framework and ideas established by the group, this historical account seeks to raise the question of how we can be influenced by their legacy, while reintroducing the body as a tool in today's architecture education.

## Co-Learning for Climate Action: Embodied Knowledges for Political Pre-Figuration

Andrew R. Belfield (University of Sheffield)

This paper reflects on a two-year action research project in East London. *Climate Companions* (2022–23) delivered multiple co-produced civic pedagogies, embedded within the *R-Urban Poplar* project, with the aim of developing agency in learners for transformative action in the face of climate change. Positioning the researcher's activist body as direct co-learner rather than observer, creates new challenges and opportunities for embodied research methods.

Co-design and situated methods formed a community of practice (Etienne Wenger 1999) around a mutual interest in learning with and from the neighbourhood in which co-learners reside (Poplar, East London). Grounding pedagogies within place enables the potential for wider social and environmental transformation, by recognising that our everyday experience of neighbourhoods is where we most often confront injustices and urban challenges (David A. Gruenewald 2003). Starting from the everyday, enabled diverse participation and the sharing of multiple situated knowledges, predominantly in the form of skills, tacit and embodied knowledge developed through years of experience. Explorative walks (foraging, multi-species

observing, green space networking) led by co-learners enabled participants to gain new perspectives on the urban streetscape we take for granted. Through careful 'Art of Noticing' (Tsing 2015) with the body, learners gained insight into urban and climate challenges such as air quality, food justice, well-being, and their intersection with the existing neighbourhood context.

This paper presents two main findings. First, researchers 'becoming' co-learners within participatory and action-based research methodologies is a strategy for reducing knowledge hierarchies and building agency within a wider 'research' collective involved in the co-production of knowledge. Second, the paper argues that embodied and situated learning is a step towards agency for climate and civic action. Through collective learning experiences, participants reformed their understanding of the neighbourhoods in which they learned. Through thematic analysis of post-evaluation interviews and documents produced during *Climate Companions*, this paper sheds light on the impact of embodied learning on co-learners.

## Contemporary Learning Bodies: Reshaping the Body of Educational Spaces with Renewed Pedagogical Instances

Raffaella Cavallaro (Politecnico di Milano)

The paper presents a critical scientific evaluation of compactness in educational architecture, challenging conventional school building norms. It asserts that compact school buildings, far from being restrictive, hold the potential to be truly transformative. By providing efficient design solutions for contemporary learning spaces in dense urban areas, compactness opens up new horizons for content and pedagogy. It also reinterprets challenges such as limited space, budgets, energy efficiency and ecological transition, as opportunities for innovation and the experimentation of contemporary learning bodies that transcend the norm.

The notion of compact architecture is described by master architect Rafael Moneo in *L'altra modernità* (2012): 'Building within the restrictions of a more or less regular perimeter has always been a goal pursued by architects: anyone who builds knows that it is always desirable to enclose more volume in a smaller area. There is always a formal reward when working in terms of intrinsic economy.' This architectural design

approach enables a response to reality on two levels: firstly, in relation to the urban fabric and, secondly, in terms of an autonomous internal world. The horizontal/vertical relationship is a crucial morphological parameter influencing the compactness and spatial experience within and beyond the learning environment, fostering new ways and times of experiencing the school and a renewed democratic dimension.

The school building used to be a rigid structure designed to accommodate as many pupils as possible. In the twentieth century, it underwent significant changes in the definition of its purpose, its role within society and its location within the city, becoming today a dynamic entity, a space in motion that respects and adapts to the needs of everyone. The exploration of the concept of compactness aims at the development of a series of "compact school" indicators that can guide in defining the form and respecting the essence of each place.

## The Body of/in Public Space: Experiential Pedagogies in Zarqa, Jordan

Haia Ghanem (Hashemite University, Zarqa)

Public space serves as a material reflection of societal norms and practices, yet traditional architectural and planning education often overlooks the importance of relational approaches. In Jordan, particularly, the integration of academia, policymaking, and practice remains deficient, limiting the potential pedagogical impact on public space production.

The local pedagogy tends to focus on formal aesthetics while ignoring the critical agency of public space, thereby necessitating innovative pedagogical experiments. This paper centers on Zarqa, a city near Amman, characterized by poor urban infrastructure and significant challenges, to explore how these experimental approaches can better address the complexities of public space. The paper discusses an experimental course at Hashemite University, integrating situated, critical, and radical pedagogies to explore the dynamics between bodies of/in public space in Zarqa. Students engaged in role-play, each embodying a character—such as a mother with an autistic child or a Syrian refugee—interacting with public space. By tagging elements within public

space using Post-it notes, students captured the diverse perceptions and interactions of their characters. The experiment revealed that public space, traditionally seen as a unified entity, actually comprises multiple smaller bodies, each shaped by different experiences of care or neglect, leading to a collaborative workshop with Zarqa Municipality.

This paper argues that integrating innovative pedagogical approaches into architectural education offers valuable insights into the production and transformation of lived, perceived, and conceived public spaces. The experiment in Zarqa demonstrated how the performative presence of students not only served as urban pedagogy but also influenced the Zarqa Municipality to initiate a live project for further collaboration. The findings underscore the critical role of context in transformative learning, revealing how the agency of public space can shape usage patterns and management practices, ultimately proving that bodies do matter in the rethinking and redesign of public spaces.

## Beyond 'Gender' and 'Sex': Feminist Approaches to Gender, Body, Matter, and Ecologies, on the Co-Production between Discourse and Materialization

Margarita Tsomou (Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences)

The paper re-examines the category of "body" by taking ecofeminist thinking traditions as well as New Materialist feminist positions as a point of departure. The famous separation between "gender" and "sex" throughout feminist discourses is often (mis)understood as the assumption that we could distinguish between "gender" – as a socially constructed identity, as performativity or habitus, meaning something that happens through culture, signification or discourse – and "sex" – as the "pure" material physicality of the body of an engendered subject, meaning as something that is bound to nature or matter alone. But what happens in this misunderstanding is a repetition of the infamous nature/culture or matter/language dualism.

All feminisms have wrestled with conceptualizing the body, moving between ideas of the discursive performativity of gender and implications of the materiality of flesh. For example, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Paul B. Preciado inquire into the discursive mediation of corporeality and its co-production with matter. Accordingly, the body would be neither

solely culturally nor biologically determined alone, but rather a "biosocial" entity (Rosa Braidotti). Theorists of a "corporeal feminism," such as Elizabeth Grosz, have therefore conceived of the body as a 'boundary concept,' as a 'threshold category' that hovers 'dangerously and indecisively' on the borderlines of 'binary pairs' such as biology/discourse and nature/society. Thus the body could be understood as the product of a process of materialization, that changes through history and society, according to inter-relations, intra-actions between matter and meaning.

The paper applies these feminist approaches on the concept of body, matter, and ecologies in order to draw possible conclusions for a feminist spatial analysis that operates with intra-active or inter-relational methodologies in order to think new relations – between discourse and materialization, between bodies, nature, and architectural environments.

## Counterbody

Elin Eyborg Lund (Norwich University of the Arts)  
Kirsty Badenoch (Bartlett, University College London)

When we speak of the body, we first regard the self. The complex bag of emotions, organs, memories, traits and desires bound together in a thin semi-translucent skin. Yet the contemporary body reaches much further. Our contemporary self implicates everything across the world – spiritually, musically, materially; through direct or indirect engagement with mass processes of extraction, production, consumption; in trends for breakfast avocados, coffee beans and international zoom workshops. Our environmental body is vast, interconnected. It is psychologically present in every action that we individually and collectively make. It haunts us. Yet it is incredibly hard to comprehend; existing in myths, rumours and news stories, too often physically absent. We seek to examine and thicken the site of exchange between the human body and the environmental body, to connect the disparate realm between the 'self' and the 'land'. Through collective enactment with the landscape, we wish to empower the body as a locus of awareness, to create bonds between senses and sites. *Counterbody* is a collaborative performance situated along the Norfolk and Suffolk

Coast. It enacts a landscape-scale ritual across the coastline, manually shifting shingle from one side of the beach to the other, pebble by pebble. Through physically enacting the actions of the landscape, it dissolves the mediating skin between the inner and the outer self, to create environmental empathy through embodiment. The work seeks to engage with the collective body of the community and contribute to local discourse and arts' offerings beyond the academic field.

## Following a Lost Archive: Transarchitectonics of Ülker Street in Istanbul

Buse Özçelik, Aslıhan Şenel (Istanbul Technical University)

This work (re)constructs the embodied trans architectonics of Ülker Street, where the trans sex working community lived amidst conflicts with the government's "cleansing" operations, police raids, citizens' discontent, and the discriminative propaganda from nationalist-religious groups in 1990s Istanbul. Eventually, this community was dispersed and the street evacuated through systematic police incursions, displacing and marginalizing transgender bodies and sex work, and ultimately resulting in transgender murders. Before this destruction, the apartments where sex work took place underwent performative transformations: instead of using apartment entrances and calling out for their *koli* (a term from Turkish queer slang referring to someone with whom you have sex) from the windows, sex workers used backdoors, alleys, and coal bunkers. People were lifted upstairs with sheets. New indoor layerings such as dark curtains and steel door frames, were combined with discreet lighting to indicate unoccupied interiors. These spatial tactics demonstrate that trans becoming and sex working are not only bodily performances but also spatial ones.

To accomplish a bodily and spatial (re)construction in this research, we draw upon Lucas Crawford's (2015) discussion of the transgender body as an archive. Crawford proposes two modes of analysis: self-critical remembrance, and forward-looking bodily forgetfulness. This framework allows us to observe the struggles and actions of trans bodies as our interviewees navigate between past experiences on the street during the 1990s and the present, both temporally and spatially.

Through research acts such as consulting the LGBTQ archives, model making, drawing, voice recordings, and 3D mappings, along with the collaboration of sex workers from Ülker Street, a lost archive is physically (re)constructed. However, this (re)construction accepts itself to be flawed, perverted, partial. In this paper we aim to show that following a lost archive maliciously proves that marginalized bodies and spaces are still here, even though they are muted, erased, and transformed.

## The Body in Bed: Can Laziness Be Expressed Architecturally?

Tine Bernstorff Aagaard, Maria Mengel, Ida Flarup, Mathilde Lesenecal, Anne Pind, Anne Romme (Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen)

We will discuss architecture as a bed and the bed as architecture. The shy house, the caring house, the house for giving birth, the hysterical house. The house for mothers, sisters and daughters, the embroidered house. These titles name a series of houses for personalities, values, and ideas, which call for attention and acknowledgement in our time. The houses are metaphors for characteristics which have typically been associated with women, traditionally underestimated, but imbued with potential for rethinking ideas of bodies, residency, and collaboration. This presentation describes the collective making of five metaphorical houses for female inhabitants, focusing especially on the starting point of each house: the bed, and the relationship of the inhabitant to her bed.

The bed is the most important piece of furniture in life. It is possible live a life without tables or chairs, but one could hardly live a day without making use of the bed. The bed serves for rest and sleep. It provides warmth and protection. The bed is the battlefield of love and the solace of the lonely. In it, new generations

are born and in it we die. Conventions concerning the bed as an architectural element are charged with questions of sexism and cultural constructs. With a feminist frame of mind, we will account for and discuss the bed as a site of rest, pause, inactivity and laziness, and the body in bed as a force of resistance.

Situating the bed within artistic research, the essay will discuss bodies in beds understood as: a mattress, a landscape; a piece of furniture, a house within a house; a resting place, a flower bed, the compost; an ecology, a condition; a birthplace, a mausoleum.

## The Vulnerable Body

David Littlefield (University of Westminster)  
Mathew Emmett (University of Plymouth)

This paper explores the concept of the vulnerable body. It is well established that the human being in the world is negotiated through our relationships with things; that our survival is dependent on the networks within which we position ourselves. As biological entities, human health is contingent upon the microbiome of non-human life; our social, economic, and technological well-being is also contingent upon the non-human world of objects through which emerges a sense of agency and power. What happens when these networks break down? How is this breakdown, as it relates to the body within architectural space, imagined and represented?

Drawing on solo work and work produced together, we consider the depiction of the vulnerable body – the diseased and sacrificed body; the dead and disappearing body; the traumatized body. We will focus on three key projects – undertaken in Germany, Italy, and the UK – to demonstrate how the body and architectural surface can be represented when networks shift and reconstitute themselves to create an environment of vulnerability, harm, and loss.

## Eyes Without a Face

Valentina Noce (Politecnico di Milano)

Bending “the ghost in the machine” Cartesian image, technology haunts spatial corporeity with its disquieting gaze: the face of architecture is glitching. The establishment of a set of technological devices recurring in a *digital unhomely* spatial realm generates an archive of dissolved memories, by the repetition of standardized procedures that unexpectedly break, shifting perception toward ambiguity. The agency of technological devices unfolds unsettling conditions: overtaking the boundary between the natural object of the body and the technological environment. Anthony Vidler mentions the possibilities that ‘the body, itself invaded and reshaped by technology, invades and permeates the space outside’ as a language for architecture, anticipating the potential of a *techno-uncanny*.

Crowd control zebra-crossings, flickering motion-activated lights, remote-controlled levitating objects, echoing voice assistants: the pervasiveness of technological devices in built environments opens up the capability of traumatic distortions on visibility and

The paper, which will include audio as well as visual content, will consider: a site-specific response to a former military hospital; the decay of bodies and their memorial inscriptions in Bath; and an immersive installation in Rome, exploring plague and the death of St Sebastian. The bodies considered in this work are not idealized, nor even ‘normal’; they are dead, wounded, eviscerated, absent, implied, and at risk... made vulnerable due to a shift in the relationships between human and non-human. The work shows how this vulnerability is depicted via the architectural surface, evoking the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett, and Judith Butler.

on the consistency of contemporary space faciality. If the dissolving and deterritorializing of the face assumes the eye to be a black hole on a white wall, the proliferation of it, “is not a unit, since the black hole is in constant movement on the wall and operates by binarization. Two black holes, four black holes, *n* black holes distribute themselves like eyes” (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* 1980).

This presentation tests the possibility of technological solutions to operate as uncanny procedures of space, occupying the blank face of architecture with a trypophobic number of eyes. Relying on a collection of images produced by the author, the proposal renders a collection of spaces that have no recognizable specifications of references in architectural design but, because of their digital memory, set off a platform for unease. Technology can be performed as predictable, acquainted, comfortable; or as dissonant eyes with no familiar face.

## The Matter of Silence: Art Practice and Unspeakable Bodies

Joanna Lock (De Montfort University, Leicester)

I present three artistic installations which I have created for the natural history museum, in Bergen, Norway, an institution which practices various methods of “border control”, to protect its collections from the covert infiltration of pests. Drawing on eyewitness testimonies, the first of these installations features spoken word performances, situated amid taxidermized avian specimens. It dramatizes and situates historical accounts of birds falling from the sky above the museum, killed by the release of poison-gases, used to fumigate the building and rid it of pests that had infiltrated its collection. A second installation consists of a drawer filled with sticky traps, containing the captured and collected bodies of museum pests, neatly ordered to echo the display of the museum’s natural history specimens. This installation makes public, in a microcosm, the bodies that are present in the museum but are ordinarily concealed from the public gaze. A third installation is based on the sounds made by a colony of beetles – unspoken bodies – which have covertly made their home in the skull of the museum’s gigantic, skeletal Blue

Whale specimen. These insects exist unseen to museum visitors, and the sound of their stridulation ordinarily lies beyond the range of human hearing.

My research in the Bergen Museum has exposed complex institutional relationships, ultimately predicated on the suppression and eradication of foreign, undesirable bodies, whose presence represents a matter of silence and a silencing of matter in the museum. My work traces the relationship between the negation of bodily presence through silence/silencing and a concomitant material repression of physical bodies. My presentation develops the proposition that these bodies belong to an order of bodies which are not only unspoken, but unspeakable. Beyond the relationships prevailing at the museum, my work evidences similar exertions of power in the repression of other bodies, in the institutional context offered by the family. In this case also, certain bodies are marginalized, marked as illicit or “wrong” and become “unspeakable”.

## Failure to Function: On Dereliction and Urban Emptiness in Bucharest, Romania

Eliza Cristina Patrascu (University of Bucharest)

What does it mean for a building to be empty? Describing a structure as abandoned, derelict, or disused implies more than a lack of human activity; it evokes the image of a building stripped of purpose, a shell devoid of function. Such a building symbolizes failure, betraying our expectations of what architecture should be. And yet, emptiness only exists in relation to our perception of what was, what is, or what could be. It is constructed through an ongoing process of erasure that conceals layers of history, life, and possibilities. What appears empty often teems with human, non-human, and imaginary activities unfolding quietly in the spaces that remain. An abandoned building is fertile ground for things to grow in unexpected directions, threatening to spill beyond their boundaries and infect their surroundings.

If, as Donna Haraway puts it, ‘it matters what matters we use to think other matters with,’ then thinking about derelict buildings means thinking about crumbling walls and porous membranes, about constant negotiations of space and shifting topographies –

things becoming other things, changing, morphing, and adapting. A building that fails to function as expected invites us to view architecture as part of a constellation of becoming and start mapping the fluid relations it forms with other bodies.

This presentation explores urban emptiness as a glitch in the fabric of the city, challenging notions of order, usefulness, and productivity while revealing how biological and architectural entanglements co-create urban realities. Focusing on Bucharest, Romania, a city marked by ghostly structures haunted by communist trauma and capitalist disenchantment, this presentation hybridizes experimental video footage with a performance talk to question our relationship with the environments we construct. Abandoned structures become nature, political entities, spatial archives, and community platforms, prompting us to consider issues related to heritage and belonging, as well as alternative ways of cohabitation.

## Intertwining Bodies: Reciprocal Entanglements of Environmental, Human, and Architectural Bodies

Katharina Voigt (Technical University of Munich)

Throughout architecture history the human body was predominantly referred to for its physical and formal aspects. This resulted in an objectification of both human and architectural bodies, and led to the body's alienation from the relationality of the ecologies and interdependencies of the life-world. According to this perspective, a dominant and special position is ascribed to the human being in the world, which urgently needs to be dissolved if we are striving for integrative and holistic changes towards sustainable forms of planning, designing and living.

We consider the sensory and experiential human body as an integral part of environmental relations, an inclusive component of the ecological interdependencies of all living beings. Somatic, embodied or body-related practices as approaches to architectural perception and design allow us to explore and experience our bodies' embedding in the living ecologies of the world. If the human body is seen as permeable, breathing and pneumatic, it becomes clear how all sensations and perceptions

of the living world are inhaled and incorporated as *inspirations*. Human and architectural bodies then resemble each other, as it is their mutual nature to be space containing and permeable porous filter-bodies.

How does our take on ecological, social and cultural sustainability change, when it is derived from a post-Anthropocene perspective and a human self-understanding as an integral part of all living entanglements at the example of the breath? How does our experiencing of the interdependencies of our own and the world's well-being affect how we integrate our cultural practices – and in particular our activities in architectural design, conception and execution – into this world? How can the experiencing of perpetual (ex) change – as we perceive it through our (breathing) connectedness with the life-world – inspire new categories of durability, permanence and change in the architecture discipline and the designing of the future?

## Bodies, Breath, and Boundaries: Artistic Research on 'Treescapes'

Jen Clarke (Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen)

This paper responds to the imperative for broadening the methodological framework within architectural humanities, addressing the marginalisation of the living, breathing body in both theoretical discourse and practical fieldwork. Drawing on ongoing collaborative research, it focuses on work in development as part of a cross-disciplinary project called 'Agro-Forestry Futures' (AFF), which is part of a national UKRI funded 'Treescapes' project. The arts and humanities effort for AFF, which I lead, begins with archival and artistic investigations concerning landscape histories to explore future possibilities for agro-forestry landscapes. Working with artists and others, it argues for the restoration of the embodied experience and embodied knowledge to landscape design, planning, and management; not only of the researcher but also of those participants and stakeholders whose perspectives are sought through cross-disciplinary research on future landscapes.

This paper adopts an experimental format integrating text, sound, and visual mediums, to advocate for and enact such embodied practices within creative research methodologies. In doing so, it contributes to

the ongoing paradigm shift towards participatory and performative research methods, evident across the related disciplines of architecture, anthropology, and contemporary art and design. This paper presents specific examples that prioritize active engagement and 'being there'. It underscores the significance of the research process itself, framing it as a *situating* practice rather than a context for objective observation.

The paper will present 'outcomes' and processes from specific events as part of the 'Treescapes' project, work rooted in collaborative creative practices and participatory workshops, with walking, listening to plants, *shinrinyoku*, and collage making, re-working archival visual materials with youth groups. These practices and processes deepen understandings of place and demonstrate the value of embodied experience and knowledge, and transcend traditional textual forms and biases. Foregrounding bodies, breath, and boundaries in artistic research, this experimental work aims to cultivate more responsive and inclusive approaches to investigating and intervening in landscapes.

## Subterranean Feelings: Non-Human Agencies and Architectural 'Re-Worlding' in Northern Sweden

Max Wisotsky (Birmingham City University)

As Donna Haraway says, 'It matters what worlds world worlds,' and in Northern Sweden, in the area known to Swedes as Norrland and to the indigenous Sámi people as Sápmi, an evocative cultural landscape formed in delicate reciprocity between the local indigenous Sámi people and the bodies of their non-human and more-than-human neighbors has been violently re-worlded. At the center of this is the mining town of Kiruna/Giron, home to the world's largest iron mine, where 100-plus years of mining operations deep in the ground beneath the city is forcing the relocation of large parts of the city center.

This relocation forces us to face existential questions about how the architecture and infrastructure of this mine alienates nature. How its snaking tunnels and railroads, tailing dams, offices, and public facing tourist apparatuses work to unravel the manifold social, cultural, and ecological metabolisms built between these exploited ore bodies and their animate surroundings. Through the development of a site-writing practice, and the framing of theories

by Karl Marx, Donna Haraway, and Karen Barad, this work presents a story that questions the agency of the mountain herself, through the story of a paid tour and visit to the bowels of the mine.

The subterranean feelings of which the title speaks are these site-writing excerpts. A second narrative voice uncovers and explicitly celebrates the experience of both author and local – one that centers the rights, agency and unbidden desires of this embodied and animate landscape. This voice, and its narrative prose of unequivocally situated and experiential knowledge, are presented as a more honest method for capturing and offering the silent voices of our surrounding landscapes and more-than-human citizens. It works to actively and evocatively frame the impact of the mine, and its architecture and infrastructures, as problematic techno-scientific solutions of the Capitalocene.

## The Living Water Garden: Bodily Experiences in Landscape Architecture and a Green Public Sphere in China

Xinrui Zhang (University of York)

Known as China's first urban park functioning as an interconnected water purification system, Chengdu's Living Water Garden was designed by the American artist Betsy Damon for visitors to experience how nature purifies polluted river water. The adjacent contaminated river water is cleansed through a natural treatment system. A series of sculptural forms and artificial wetlands aerate water and remove pollutants. Since its completion in 1998, the Living Water Garden has become a popular park for the public to physically engage with clean river water. However, little is currently known about how the park shapes China's green public sphere through humans' active bodily movements.

This paper examines how bodies engage with landscape architecture, exemplified by the Living Water Garden, and how park users' bodily practices in the environment facilitate China's green public sphere. It problematizes sociologists Guobin Yang and Craig Calhoun's concept of a green public sphere in China as a public arena, where citizens produce and circulate critical environmental discourses, which derives from Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere. Drawing on Tim Ingold's view of walking as a process of thinking and knowing, I re-examine Habermas's definition of the

public sphere, which focuses on rational-critical debate about matters of public concern, in relation to this park. I argue that visitors' active bodily engagement with the park becomes a fundamental in shaping China's green public sphere, in a way that is not simply discursive as Yang and Calhoun maintain. Walking in the park or playing with clean water alters people's daily encounters with the nearby polluted river and incentivizes the public to reflect on the importance of clean water. They also learn how clean water is important not only for humans but also for the wider ecosystem, and its role in human-nature coexistence in an urban environment.



## Disrupting Architectural Drawing through Choreographic Practices

**Vicky Hunter** (Bath Spa University)

**Belinda Mitchell** (University of Portsmouth)

**Virginia Farman** (University of Chichester)

This workshop draws on the collaborative explorations of three practitioners from interior architecture, choreography, and site-specific dance, exploring how embodied movement practice disrupts and enlivens architectural drawing and spatial design. Through practices of inhabitation, we continually arrange and rearrange everyday artefacts such as food, tables, chairs, photographs, or pebbles on a beach; this rearrangement provides a sense of settled-in living where spaces are produced through everyday actions. Through site-based movement practice, the clean line of the architectural pen and roll of white paper is replaced by drawings/actions/movements that assemble and rearrange material relations, shifting the language of architectural drawing towards the immensity of the ordinary.

Informed by feminist new materialisms (Barad, Haraway, Braidotti), site-dance praxis and theory (Akinleye, Taylor, Brown), dance improvisatory practices (De Spain, Duck, Midgellow), and architectural and spatial theory (Massey, Manning, Rendell), the workshop draws on the facilitators' iterative dialogue developed through their exploration of LiDAR data collected from Wymering Manor – a sixteenth-century house in Cosham. Exploration of this data involved moving with scanned

LiDAR images taken from the site, displayed within the walls of the University of Portsmouth's CCIXR studio's SmartStage. Moving with the data combined with mark-making and drawing as a mode of embodied response.

This collaborative process led to research questions that frame and inform the workshop design:

How are bodies (of matter, movement, and material) entangled in this process? How does this movement practice produce ephemeral, mobile substantiations and fleeting contacts with surfaces, skeins, and materials? How does this work implicate drawing and dance in vulnerable constructions riddled with holes and vacuoles in which processes of collapse, decay, ruination, and preservation pervade?

*The session will include: an introductory overview of the facilitators' praxis; a site-based movement and drawing session (for all abilities / levels of experience); post-practice discussion and evaluation of the movement/drawing practice.*



## Wilderness Huts: Sheltering Bodies for Sublime Access and Responsible Recreation

Benjamin J. Smith (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis)

National forests provide access to sublime wilderness experiences and offer visitors healthy recreational opportunities including hiking, backpacking, climbing, skiing, and wildlife viewing. In the United States, visitation rates to national forests increased rapidly during the pandemic, and continue to increase with greater frequency than pre-pandemic levels. With increased visitation, national forests face challenges without strategies to confront the escalation of damage that comes from activities such as unconfined camping, wildfires, degradation, trash, and human waste. Measures need to be taken to not only help protect these wild places, but also to aid equitable access. Wilderness huts and hut routes provide one way architecture can contribute to the protection of, and aid in, the access to national forest environments.

While there is little architectural research on wilderness huts and hut routes, these efforts connect with other fields of study such as aesthetics and ecology. Often contrasted with the beautiful, the sublime represents an opportunity to formulate a framework to understand

examples of architecture's relationship to aesthetic qualities of mystery, solitude, and awe. The affective qualities of the sublime are not only experienced within the natural environments encountered in hut routes, but also by the precarity and dynamism within the design and use of huts themselves.

In contrast to aesthetics, the architecture of huts offers site conditions and building construction affordances to also consider ecological concerns. While the architectural imagination of huts may conjure images of Marc-Antoine Laugier's Primitive Hut to represent the basic needs of sheltering bodies from their environments, or Henry David Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond to exemplify the solitary individual in nature, or even Le Corbusier's design and personal use of his Cabanon to extricate himself from Paris, alternatives exist. The wilderness huts researched here suggest robust architectural means for aiding the protection of wilderness environments while enhancing collective experiences in these wild places.

## Atmospheric Bodies: Ruins, Grottos, Follies, Glasshouses, and Other Places of Wonder

Izabela Wiczorek (Bartlett, University College London)

The coupling of something so intrinsically shapeless and elusive as atmosphere with physicality and a certain completeness associated with bodies, might strike as contradictory. Building on my project 'The Cabinet of [Atmospheric] Curiosities: A Journey in Search of the Origins and Logic of Atmospheric Practice,' the intention of this paper is to navigate through this contradiction, challenging familiar associations. Drawing on New Phenomenology, Affect Theory, and New Materialism as conceptual lenses, we will embark on a journey through the landscape of ideas, traversing historical thresholds in search of generative capacity of natural world and perceiving bodies, exploring conditions and processes through which atmospheres appear and to which they give rise.

Within the vast collection of 'atmospheric specimens' gathered in my collection, the 'Folly', 'Grotto', 'Ruin' and 'Glasshouse' typologies, which are key to gardens and landscapes, offer the opportunity to explore the material substrate of something so elusive as atmosphere, reimagining spatial relationships and

boundaries, and decoding the essence of atmospheric body. The key proposition here is that atmospheres can be seen as both affective and material formations that define *spheres* of perceptual influence, investing places with *magic*. This idea resonates with Gernot Böhme's notion of the 'magic of materials' used in the construction of atmosphere: 'conjuring, telekinesis, the triggering of effects through signs' (1995).

Often associated with fantasies, eccentricities, and otherworldly constructions, follies, ruins, grottos, and glasshouses invoke a magical world of new meanings. Conceived as immersive environments, material assemblages, and places of enchantment animated by natural energies, they situate the notion of atmosphere in the liminal space between the imagined and the real, the natural and the artificial, the human and the non-human, the material and the immaterial, as well as a building and a garden. Atmosphere is all this, all at once. This is its contradiction and magic.

## Cabin Fever: Bodily and Psychic Transfigurations in the Dehumanizing Landscape

Matteo Zambon, Jacopo Bonat (Università degli Studi di Udine)

This paper refers to the cultural and architectural relationship between humans and the "landscape" in the collective imaginary – narrative and cinematic – where the architectural archetype of the cabin in the woods serves as a machine for the psychic and bodily transfiguration of its inhabitants. The roots of this theme can be traced back to Georg Simmel's *The Philosophy of Landscape* (1913), which reopens the debate on the objectivity of the landscape, a topic still central to the contemporary discourse on the end of anthropocentrism. The theme focuses on the issue of recognizing the landscape as a self-conscious and objective entity, capable of influencing human behavior and transfiguring the body, and serving as a metaphor for a painful and troubled desire for reconnection.

The paper is articulated in three parts that describe the process of bodily mutation put into action: 'The Cabin in the Woods (The Trap of No Return),' 'Stimmung (Chaos Reigns),' 'Dehumanization (The Corrupted Body and the Process of Assimilation).' The key focus is the desecration and mutation of the body

as a metaphor for the downfall of anthropocentric dominance in favor of a rejoining with the landscape, which is not without compromises. The cabin in the woods assumes the role of an architectural archetype, identifiable as a sort of "trap of no return," which, driven by degenerative natural forces, initiates the bodily transformative process, acting as a conduit to a new psychophysical condition for its inhabitants. The grotesque aspect of bodily mutation can be identified with the choice to be overwhelmed by the landscape entity, in pursuit of an intimate, physiological, sexual, and unsettling connection.

SHEDS  
BOODS  
BODIES  
PERFORMANCES

## Hospitable City

Anna Cooke (University College Dublin)

This paper examines the city as a workplace, specifically, the streets, thresholds, parks, and pavements that make up the public realm in the city and that act as a place of work for many workers. How does the city accommodate the bodies of these workers? Is it hospitable?

The value of different types of work is something that we continue to grapple with and that contributes to inequality locally and globally. The production and reproduction of the worker continue to come at our own cost. Nowhere is the daily reproduction of the worker more difficult and given less consideration than in the urban workplace.

Situated in Dublin, this paper studies spaces of work in the city with a focus on food delivery drivers – a workforce that is reliant on the city and exemplifies precarious and disembodied labor. As has been recently articulated, the drivers' employment conditions are highly problematic but there has been less discussion about the pragmatic and bodily realities

of their work, where they contend with weather, traffic, criminality, and so on. This paper documents the workspaces and testimonies of these workers.

The complex network of food supply, production and distribution in the city is, on the one hand, an illustration of unequal labor markets and results from our highly globalized, profit-driven food industry. On the other hand, it presents a potential to re-evaluate the importance of food, and the worker. If we envision the *Sitopia* of Carolyn Steel, where food is central and every worker eats well, what changes in the city workplace? How can the city become responsive and accommodating to the bodies of workers who depend on it? By making the city visible as a workplace, we can progress towards these pragmatic utopias.

## Diffractional Deliberative-Agonistic Spatial Politics: On Material-Discursive Pedagogies and Agencies in the Hartree Ideas Exchange in Cambridge, UK

Gustav Nielsen (University of Cambridge / University of Luxembourg)

In this paper I argue that diffractive methodology, as theorized by feminist physicist-philosopher Karen Barad in their philosophy of agential realism, offers a critical approach to study Citizens' Assemblies as potentially transformative spaces of radical democratic politics, specifically in their use within urban planning practice. I suggest that an understanding of space not as a container, but rather as a partial and agential instantiation in the dynamic becoming of the world, re-figures the Citizens' Assembly as a space of deliberative-agonistic politics in which matter, bodies and affect are always already entangled with meaning, language, and ideas as material-discursive practice.

This proposition builds on, but extends beyond, the dialectics of the historical materialisms of Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, post-structuralist, and critical theories of praxis, from Antonio Gramsci to Henri Lefebvre, Paulo Freire and Audre Lorde. I ask how learning and agency are more-than-human and embodied practices in the Citizens' Assembly. Engaging a diverse set of practices and ideas from

Anna Halprin, Arturo Boal, Ash Amin, Archille Mbembe, Leonie Sandercock, Arturo Escobar, and Olivia Barr, I perform a diffractive reading of empirical insights from the Ideas Exchange in Northeast Cambridge, a Citizens' Assembly organized by the master developer TOWN for the Cambridge City Council.

I discover pedagogical and agential figurations of matter-language-flows in the diffraction patterns and present these findings as part creative writing and part performance. The findings reveal how space, matter and bodies play a role in the deliberative process of the Citizens' Assembly, and how ontologies, epistemologies and subjectivities are differing in their entanglement as inequalities and violence in the process of cutting-together-apart. As an untimely beginning, I discuss how the methodological and empirical findings contribute to generative theory and affirmative practices of collective decision-making and co-creation in radical democratic politics, specifically within the context of urban planning and placemaking today.

## Pathosformel of Architectural Narratives, Based on Artworks by Dominik Lejman

Agata Wiórko da Câmara Caeiro (Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon)

The paper ponders on three intertwined aspects: firstly, how architecture is an example of mirror neurons' effect on one's body and mental well-being; moreover, how architecture's narrative power speaks volume about the building's intentions, though claiming otherwise; finally, how those questions can be translated into the universal language of art. The central case study of the research is the former *manicomio* (asylum) on the island of San Servolo in Venice, and Dominik Lejman's artistic intervention *Madnicity*, installed on the island in April-May 2022.

Three thinkers provide the theoretical background that contextualizes my research: the Foucauldian perception of power continues to be as topical as it has been for decades; Juhani Pallasmaa's meditations on the body and architecture don't cease to reassure us of this undeniable correlation; likewise, Aby Warburg's *Pathosformel* is a comprehensive figuration language, and seemingly the finest means of communication.

Why via Art? Pope Francis thus addressed the artists invited to the Sistine Chapel in June 2023: 'Art strives to act as a conscience critical of society, unmasking truisms.' Storytelling can be (or not) of favor to the vulnerable ones, be they interned in a mental health institution or a prison, such as, for instance, Miguel Bombarda's hospital in Lisbon and the Bentham-style Toruñ Fortress. The "peripheries of society" have been suppressed (or attempted to) for centuries; this will be discussed through the Integral Human Development principles. If artists are the inventors of places and authors of fables du lieu, Dominik Lejman challenges us with the invention of a haunting visual universe, uncanny reflections of our systems of power, and with their presence/absence in the urban imaginary (Georges Didi-Huberman).

## Underground Shelters: Body and Space in the Age of Aerial Warfare

Davide Deriu (University of Westminster)

With the emergence of aerial warfare, in the early twentieth century, the impulse to seek shelter underground ushered in a new type of urban experience. Recently, this phenomenon has returned to the fore as air raids over Ukraine's cities led to the use of basements and tunnels by civilians in search of protection. A retrospective consideration of this subject raises critical questions. How did architects historically respond to the incipient threat from the air? And how is the social production of space affected by aerial warfare?

My paper delineates a genealogy of this phenomenon by revisiting the British debate over Air Raid Precautions (ARP) in the late 1930s, when the bombing of cities during the Spanish Civil War caused major concerns over civil defence. The bomb-proof shelter scheme designed by Tecton for the Finsbury Borough Council epitomised the campaign for 'collective security' that involved architects, technicians and scientists – a structural protection effort that was foiled by the Government's haphazard ARP policy.

The transformation of the London Underground into a mass shelter during the Blitz, and the ensuing construction of deep-level tunnels for limited use, form a circular narrative fraught with implications.

By addressing the condition of civilians in the age of aerial warfare, I aim to highlight a modern conception of shelter that retrieves the primal impulse to protect bodies from external dangers. Owing to their cave-like spaces, underground tunnels may be regarded as a typology defined by use rather than by design: a 'zero-degree' of architecture which, in turn, informed the design of concrete bunkers. Read through the lens of critical theories, the transient heterotopia of London's tube shelters prompts us to consider how the biopolitics of modern warfare expose the fragility of defenceless bodies while also triggering new forms of resistance.

## Ecologies of the Underground: On the Agency of Materiality and Politics in Underground Property Rights

Alberto Reques del Río (Delft University of Technology)

Although hidden from public sight, underground infrastructures, from car tunnels and military facilities to radioactive waste storages and water treatment plants, represent critical structures in our contemporary societies, whose construction keeps on increasing worldwide. However, often approached only from technoscientific and functional perspectives, these structures are predominantly addressed in terms of their performance, construction or costs, rather than from a holistic view. Thus, subterranean infrastructures are often conceptualized as external-to-the-city, static and apolitical, neglecting the role of their political and material context in their spatial configuration.

Especially relevant for this issue, is the widespread consideration of the underground land as a politically and materially empty space – what the geographer Maria de Lourdes Melo Zurita (2020) has defined with the term *sub-terra nullius*. The governance of the underground territory is often perceived as universally

homogeneous and isolated from the aboveground dynamics. By unfolding the multiplicity of existing legal regimes involved in the ownership of subterranean land, I challenge these modern conceptions and argue that, like any other aboveground territory, the underground is constructed, owned and governed by various political technologies. These legalistic regimes emerge out of the necessities of different political economies which are intertwined with specific ways of perceiving and conceptualizing the underground, especially its material or physical properties. Thus, I seek to understand how distinctive material properties of the underground – such as its geology – and its associated politics, participate in contemporary ownership regimes. In this way, I draw attention to the multiplicity of forces and agents involved in the spatial organization of this territory, shifting the focus away from solely human agency, so that earthly entities like matter, biodiversity or time can also be considered constitutive agents.



## The Body of Architecture According to Deleuze

Tim Gough (Independent)

The context of the paper is Gilles Deleuze's concept of the body, summarized in the following quotation from his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*:

*What is the body? We do not define it by saying that it is a field of forces, a nutrient medium fought over by a plurality of forces.... Every relationship of forces constitutes a body - whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship. - Deleuze (1962)*

For Deleuze, taking his lead from Spinoza and Nietzsche, "body" is not physical, not substantial. "Body" is first of all hyper-relational, or transductive, to use Simondon's term, which means a relation where the terms of the relation do not pre-exist that relation. A body is anything that happens from a relationship between forces. So a thought can be a body: as Spinoza says, 'the body and the mind are the same thing' (*Ethics*). There is no dualism of mind and body for Spinoza or Deleuze, radical anti-Cartesians that they are.

What does this mean for architecture? It means that the body of architecture would be seen as inherently relational, which means non-physical, non-material. That is, architecture is a becoming, not a being. Eventful, not static. A multiplicity, not a unified creation. This means that there is a Body without Organs of architecture. This is a non-abstract way of thinking about architecture, which is an inherently practical nomad science. Conversely, if instead we regard the architectural body as inherently physical, that is an abstract way of looking at it that pre-figures a certain alienation, deriving at least in part from the aforementioned dualism - a dualism that Nietzsche, and Deleuze following him, named as the nihilism of the west.

## The Saints' Bodies as Design Generators of Early Christian Churches in the Eastern Mediterranean

Iuliana Gavril (Norwich University of the Arts)

The paper examines the role of saints' and martyrs' bodies in the foundation of early Christian churches (4th-6th centuries) in the Eastern Mediterranean. Instead of approaching martyria as a unified architectural corpus in which relatively strong common practices were assumed and, to a certain extent, proven (Yasin 2009), the paper will pay attention to specific differences amongst the architectural solutions for the commemoration of saints via their bodily remains. It will examine how the bodies of saints were placed in different scopic regimes within space, and in relation to the body of congregation/ faithful and with the performing clergy (in total visual contact or partially obstructed by the bodies) and will elaborate on the consequences of the sight lines and visibility for the social interaction and religious practices.

The discussion draws on four case studies that preserve enough architectural material to enable a revisiting of the scholarship amongst both central plan martyria and basilicas: St. John in Ephesus, St. Philip in Hierapolis, St. Thecla in Merymlk and St.

Michael in Germia, and Sts. Karpos and Papylos in Constantinople. The architectural/ archaeological material will be corroborated with literary texts in which the client's intention or practices of saints' veneration were detailed, while the analysis benefits from the most recent research on bodies in Byzantine studies (Veikou and Nilsson 2022).

In doing so, the paper will challenge the evolutionary development of martyria from a saint's tomb to a monumental center of burial, worship, and pilgrimage (Grabar, 1946/1949), and argue that only by paying attention to "body(ly) matters" a more nuanced discussion of regional variations in the architectural solutions of memory and veneration can be sketched.

## Interrupt: Private/Public Spaces of Queer Desire

Richard Sawdon Smith (Norwich University of the Arts)

I will discuss how in the queering of spaces (and bodies) artists make both the familiar, the unfamiliar and the unfamiliar at-home, without assimilation into a heteronormative position. As a queer practitioner I argue that being *un-at-home* is a natural state of being in the world. Queering, in this analogy is a strategic approach to reposition or alter the context of the space to invite the audience to view from a different perspective.

For Jullia Joson (2022), 'Queer spaces are designed with the intention for one's body to be, defining the need to iterate one's true identity, sexuality, and need to connect, whether that be on a physical level or through the prospect of community.' Rather than designing spaces, I look at the interruption and appropriation of existing places. Abandoned buildings and disused factories have often become queer spaces, or at least gay cruising grounds. My recent site-specific photography pays homage to earlier artists who have explored transgressive spaces like empty factories as a site of gay love. Queer artists used the abandoned buildings surrounding the piers of New York City for

their photography, not just as a backdrop, but integral to their experience and practice, representing spaces of desire, making visible sex, love and friendship: furtive, suggestive, temporal, fleeting transgressive acts, the flash of flesh, the defining of subjectivities, exploration of sexuality and confirmation of those desires or not!

Public spaces become private where different roles are enacted, a space for fantasy and the unknown. Christopher Red (1996) suggests that 'fundamentally, queer space is space in the process of, literally, taking place, of claiming territory,' and, I argue, of corporeal becoming. These acts I bring to centerstage in my photography, the gallery and the archive.

## Queering the Body of Architectural Education

Gem Barton (Royal College of Art / QuEAN)

Architecture, one of the oldest and most conservative of disciplinary traditions, is frequently resistant to creative critique, activism, and subversion of its hegemonies – the very opposite of queer theory, thinking and action. From the outside, Architecture and Queerness are very unlikely bedfellows, binary opposites even. If architecture is to be just, if architecture is to be for humanity, then architecture needs Queer-ing. To dismantle the systemic binaries inherent within the architecture discipline and profession, we must begin with education, and we must look to the future(s). QuEAN was founded to catalyze change within universities and schools, leveraging queerness as a lens to scrutinize and dismantle entrenched and uneven hierarchies within the education of the built environment.

Despite undeniable trends towards a more queer society and ongoing developments in queer studies, relatively little attention has been paid to queerness within spatial design practices since the 1990s. Recent publications (Marko Jobst and Naomi Stead

2023; Adam Nathaniel Furman and Joshua Mardell 2022), indicate a revived interest in queer spaces. This trajectory, alongside growing percentages of LGBTQ+ youth (Stonewall Rainbow Report 2022), unequivocally tells us that the education of our spatial design students must sharpen critically, rigorously, and quickly, to become more inclusive.

Queer-ing is a questioning of categorization, of normativity, of standardization. This goes far beyond queer as identity, and leaps into queer as action; into unlearning, disruption, challenge and change – how does one que(e)ry not just the institution, and the curriculum, but the processes and regulations of prescription which are stitched together with red tape? This paper is a provocation, asking how might the body of architectural education be queer-ed and to what end? Where might the responsibility, labor of change, and opportunity lie? What might be the role of the university, the governing bodies (ARB, RIBA), of the School of Architecture, of the educator, of the student(?) in its development and implementation.

## The House and the Body: Queering Architectural Pedagogy. Corrado Levi at Politecnico di Milano in the Late-1970s

Nesrin Erdogan (Middle East Technical University, Ankara)

In light of the drastic transformations across socio-political, economic, and cultural milieus, the years 1960s and 1970s were marked by intersecting opposition movements of students, workers, women, and sexually marginalized groups contesting the status quo. Amid these counter-movements unfolding around the world, the discipline of architecture and the authoritarian institutional hierarchies of educational institutions were challenged from within, as new modes and methods of teaching emerged that occasionally destabilized normative disciplinary boundaries. Italian architecture schools of this period are especially significant for their participation in this broader laboratory of relentless experimentation.

Despite the growing body of literature on ‘radical’ pedagogies, one innovative endeavor remains to be further explored: the architectural composition courses conducted by Corrado Levi, an architect, artist, collector, and prominent activist in the homosexual movements of 1970s Italy, which placed importance on questions of gender and sexuality within public and private spheres.

In search for pedagogical tools to disruptive patriarchal capitalist norms, Levi translated his commitment to the politics of experience into a pedagogical method, which he implemented in architectural composition courses at Politecnico di Milano.

This study centers on a specific course from 1976–77, titled ‘The Private is Political.’ Drawing on feminist consciousness-raising methods, beginning from personal discomfort, Levi and his students scrutinized the house as the conventional language of patriarchy with its spatial control over sexuality. Aligning with queer theory’s focus on the body and its spatial embodiment, this study is situated in both 1970s Italy and the recent call to queer architectural pedagogies, demonstrating the fundamental role of bodily inhabitation in queering architectural pedagogy during a proto-queer period.

## Bawdy Bathrooms: Que(e)rying Sex and Surveillance at Hudson’s Bay Company

Aidan Flynn (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)  
Ben Lapierre (Independent)

How does the department store figure into the shaping of Canadian identity, and how has its built environment been “put to queer use,” and to what ends? From its 1670 colonial origins, the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) is entrenched in a history of resource extraction and the exchange of goods. Often overlooked in this history is the exchange of queer sex, particularly among gay men within the washrooms of HBC department stores – made public through newspaper announcements across Canada, particularly through the publications of police raids.

By consulting archives of the Canadian newsmagazine *Perceptions* (1983–2013), law codes, and architectural depositories, we read historical ephemera against the grain and from the bottom up to re-story queer histories. Scholarship has focused on the department store as a feminine space for domestic sociability. Turning to historians, design, and queer theorists, this paper highlights the transportive potential that gay male cruising practices have on temporal experiences within the department store setting. This paper

demonstrates how these experiences in this retail arena foreground queer bodies toward new understandings of relations and alternative world-making.

How did queer bodies engage with the department store in both public and private ways? How do bodies assemble to enforce an architecture’s intended functions or demolish its constrictive walls, leaving it truly vulnerable? To answer these, we interrogate instances of queer sex and police raids within HBC washrooms, drawing on conceptions of queer space (George Chauncey), phenomenology (Sara Ahmed), and utopia (José Muñoz). Applying theory to the archival materials denoting gay sex in HBC washrooms, the paper suggests that these physical acts of encounter transform and thereby “queer” the built environment of the Canadian department store. The department store’s intended meanings and purposes are upended through its uses by queer bodies.

## Bodies, Boredom, and the Architecture of Home in The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert

Christian Parreno (Universidad San Francisco de Quito)

By the end of *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* – the cult film by Stephan Elliott, (1994) – its three protagonists, in full drag, ascend to the top of Kings Canyon, a landmark in Australia. Despite having achieved a long-held fantasy, Bernadette Bassenger, Mitzi Del Bra and Felicia Jollygoodfellow appear bored: they ‘just want to go home.’ Their boredom derives from the nostalgia of home, yet for them home cannot be traditional; it is not an architecture of static buildings. Rather, their sense of belonging resides in a moving body, a bus baptised Priscilla. Ornate and architecturally customised, it provides a space for their bodies, a place for emotional intimacy, and escape from heteronormative oppression.

This portrayal, of social estrangement and the search for a genuine abode to dwell, resonates with Martin Heidegger’s elaborations on boredom as the symptom of the modern era. In his understanding of philosophy as the active engagement with the world, the modern individual is constantly out of home. He writes, ‘to be at home everywhere means to be at once and

at all times within the whole.’ If one is not at home in the world, then boredom arises as an ontological homesickness curtailing and even dissolving the possibility of finding one’s place in the world.

Although Heidegger notably left the body out of his elaborations on boredom and homesickness, this paper addresses its presence through the bodies – drag, transgender, mechanical, architectural – in *The Adventures of Priscilla*. The aim is to explore the relationship between inhabitation and individual becoming, with boredom and homesickness as what precedes the envisioning of alternative lifestyles and their spatial configurations. In turn, this questions the role of architecture that characterizes modern living: the sensation of being neither here nor there, always waiting to arrive at another destination.

## Drawing Zero, or the Love of the Artificial Intellectuals

Doreen Bernath (Architectural Association, London)

We cannot count rain, what is in the dark nor love. As division and measurability predicates disciplinary remits, the reduction of architecture to what is “built” in the environment meant more convenient self-justification and circumscribed knowledge. The lament of Hubert Damisch on how architecture can no longer dream is further echoed in the challenge posed by today’s environmental urgencies and the profession’s own sense of being culprit yet inadequate to respond. To be more than providers of compartmentalized spaces, this enquiry begins by restaging architecture, not as population of ones where divisible, countable objects and identities form and repeat, but as part of a larger register of indivisible relations and metamorphosis.

From fluctuation, slippage, vagueness, to the possibility of architecture blotting out itself, this paper approaches architecture as condition zero, through which indivisibility and being non-identical to itself dissolves the regime of

countability which came to dominate our system of knowledge and spatial production. Between Gottfried Leibniz’s panpsychic monad, Baruch Spinoza’s transmissive affect, Bernard Stiegler’s nootechnics of artificiality, and with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s indistinct immanence, this paper traces instances of spatial zeroing as bodies that “takes-the-place-of” in the chain of countable repetition, revealing the alteration of summoning and rejecting, presentation and exclusion.

The impossible object, or the “body-in-excess” that architecture functions as, opens the access to the subject’s relation to the world, i.e. the indeterminacy and multi-agency of environmental embodiment. Moving from the Promethean to the Chthonian, and amidst the hype and fear of AI, the propositions here seek to revoke the act of zeroing, the suture that creates the intelligence, as the possible intimation of architecture to permeating rain, secrets in the dark, and living with love and pain.

## The Reproductive Body: Drawing with Self-Division

Ephraim Joris (Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam)

This paper looks at a collection of drawings envisioning architecture as an interplay of reproducing bodies; assimilating, transmuting, fluctuating, merging, splitting, revealing, collapsing, liquefying. Each drawing serves as a “reproductive vessel,” as part of a network, in which figures morph from one to another to form an ecosystem of architectural transition. Each figure is but a moment in a dynamic, ever-changing architectural transformational tale, as they observe architecture as a living entity.

The space of production within these drawings is structured by two distinct yet interconnected categories of relationships. The first category is rooted in the regimented connections found within architectural historical discourse. The second category diverges from the rigidity of the first, embracing creative processes of association and progressive mutation, reminiscent of the fluid configurations that manifest within the realm of indeterminacy. These modes of production allow the drawing to become a generative model seeking relationships between matter and body, flesh and stone,

skin, and paper. In aligning with broader discussions about the nature of reality and the emergence of existence, these drawings intensely engage in processes of transformation, embracing a variety of techniques to produce hybrid architectural vocabularies.

Drawing production spans different platforms, including digital 3D and 2D drawing, hand drawing, 3D printed model making, visual collage synthesis, and AI generative modelling as important mediators between various moments of production, blending drawing outputs into new hybrid vocabularies. The mix of methods serves as a basis for experimentation, facilitating the exploration of a vocabulary of architectural reproduction as a central design principle of indeterminacy, providing a conceptual framework where architectural drawings can be seen as dynamic, exploring the fragmented and nature of architectural (re) production; as being born from within the body; growing out of multiple organs, mingling a slow tectonic merger.

## Entanglements with Disobedient Bodies

Ivana Wingham (Architectural Association, London)

French theorist Luce Irigaray challenged Martin Heidegger’s emphasis on the element of earth as the ground for life by introducing air as the ‘first occupied’ space or environment in which the life of a body is to evolve. As body occupies air it becomes attracted to and entangled with another body but also other ex-bodies – animals, plants, rivers, seas, winds, stones, clouds, architecture, and technologies that all shape the way of body’s becoming (James Bridle 2022). Body’s entanglements with other bodies may be necessary, desirable, disobedient.

A breathing body has the capacity to adapt to or to transform spatially, however the imprints it makes in the process of becoming remain hidden in architecture. Resisting conventional static representations of architectural or environmental vision, body seems to be devoid of the unique and indeterminate footprints it creates. Receptive to time, precarious, tuning to sensations and exploring entanglements with the uncertain, the body engages with and creates its own

ecosystem of relations. If body’s acts of rebelliousness, transgression and disobedience create new footprints in relation to occupied spaces, what kind of architectural drawing and making do they deserve?

To explore air’s impalpable nature as a first occupation strategy in architecture, I present a project that engaged with the performative and programmatic nature of various *disobedient bodies*’ occupation of designated air space. The installation both performed breathing and presented disobedient performances of bodies in the air bubbles they occupied. In a later project, a series of drawings addressed the essentiality of breath to life, occupying the precarious and correlative relationship of consuming air. The drawings explore the micro-bodies surface existence and the productive insides that operate at macro scales. Revealing troublesome boundaries and hybrid thresholds, disobedient bodies resist spatially and environmentally, with alluring permanence.

## The Unreliable Body

Nat Chard (Bartlett, University College London)

The architectural program is an indispensable tool yet in some respects it obscures the purpose of architecture. While observations that the program has typically privileged bodies from a particular gender or ethnicity are legitimate, they also address people as stereotypes in the same way as the generic program, just with a greater number of stereotypes. How can the way architecture is occupied be discussed with a sensitivity to the diverse ways in which we occupy architecture, many of which sit outside the scope of the predictive capacity of the program?

This body of work is a means of searching for ways in which we might provide for and support more varied modes of engagement with architecture and the city, the indeterminate and unpredictable circumstances and situations that are such important components of our lives. The premise of the work is that architecture should take its meaning at least as much from its present occupation as from programmatic prescriptions. Rational systems look for reliability and repeatability, aspects that are (mercifully) often missing

in our relationship with architecture and the city.

The body of work under discussion is used to study this question of engagement from two positions. One is through a series of drawing instruments that search for ways of engaging with indeterminate relational structures, to stimulate a more open approach to the question of what it is we provide for in the production of architecture. The other is to ask how we might individually take possession of the given city, without altering it for others. Architecture and the city make great claims about their relationship with the human body. These projects (the older ones mechanical, the more recent biological) test these claims and ask if we can become active players in a world that respects both the collective and the individual.

## The Distended Body of Architecture, Punctured

Pari Riahi (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

This paper makes a parallel between the body of architecture and its surrounding, in the context of non-affluent Parisian suburbs, and the bodies of its inhabitants, dwelling in the social housing projects that populate those territories. It hypothesizes that both the projects and the human bodies meant to inhabit them, were and continue to be primarily considered in two modes: either as individuals or masses, devoid of all middle and other scales. These “individual” and “masses” conditions, first imagined and put in place to provide shelter by architects and policymakers, and continued to this day, have led to the creation of environments that offer little beyond these distinctly contrasting modes.

The paper discusses the Paris Plages, an initiative by the Marie de Paris, that creates temporary, beach-like leisure spaces along the edges of the river Seine, meant for Parisians and tourists alike, in parallel with the Courneuve Plage, also a temporary beach-themed recreation parc, worlds apart in northern suburb of Paris. These two similarly named temporal

installations cannot be more different. While the Paris Plages offer a playful, if somewhat anatomical reprieve from the city, the Courneuve Plage, nestled in a park and surrounded by social housing, is a remedial measure for providing provisional space for a population otherwise bound in a fixed environment.

The paper argues that rethinking these largely collective projects calls for a re-structuring of both architecture and the body, as they meet and intersect in the void (the open spaces that surround them). In focusing on gradation from one body to many, from housing the individual to the enormity of the projects articulating the collective, the seemingly inactive open spaces that surround them can be re-imagined, re-designed and reactivated. Thinking about the nature of these void spaces, may be a starting point in a radical reconfiguration that brings design back to the equation.

## Bodies of Hostility: Single-Person Housing and Architectural Experimentations in Fascist Italy

Michele Rinaldi (Politecnico di Torino)

In early 20th century Europe, modernity and social emancipation placed growing emphasis on single people within architectural discourse. Distancing from the body control and surveillance of late 19th century housing, the interwar period redefined singles as symbols of modern living. In Italy, this shift clashed with fascist policies, notably the 1927 Bachelor Tax, which sought to regulate sexuality and individual freedom. Yet, despite these constraints, housing projects for singles emerged within Italy’s architectural landscape, reflecting both contradictions and resistance to the regime’s prescriptions, and offering new perspectives on the relationship between body and domestic space in a broader European context.

This paper investigates housing projects for singles in interwar Italy, framing them as acts of resistance to fascist bodily control. Key examples include works by architects like Piero Bottoni, Giulio Minoletti, Franco Albini, and intellectuals like Rosa Menni Giolli, whose designs and articles promoted alternative relationships between the body and domestic environments. These

projects intersected considerations of sexuality, gender emancipation, and modern living. Drawing on archival research and the analysis of secondary sources, the study uncovers how these designs mediated between social norms, political pressures, and individual autonomy, offering a critical re-examination of the role of singlehood in architectural thought.

The paper argues that housing for singles in interwar Italy represents an overlooked subversion of the era’s familial and gender norms. By placing the human body in a pivotal role within the conception of habitation patterns, these projects challenge traditional family-centered housing models, enriching architectural historiography. Through an interdisciplinary approach, combining architectural history, social history, and gender studies, this research offers new insights into how body, space, and identity intersect in modern housing under repressive totalitarian regimes. It calls for a reassessment of bodily presence in architectural debates and highlights singlehood as a key element in shaping modern living.

## Choreography of Bodies and Spaces in Arrival Sequences: British Housing 1750-2020

Luis Diaz (University of Brighton)

Housing discourse tends to focus exclusively on either non-physical issues (policy, finance, tenure, social) or physical issues (typology, plan types, spatial evolution or transformation). Studies which focus on experiential issues (identity, use, everyday practices) tend to favor agency over the spatial structure. Housing, as an architectural program, blurs these categories; as well as sitting between the perceived difference between architecture and urbanism, it also joins the public and private realms. The arrival sequences in housing reflects the interrelation and interdependence of many of the categories listed above. Within this arena this paper seeks to examine the link between bodies and space and their relationship to the formation of identity (both spatial and individual).

The paper draws on Michel de Certeau’s balanced approach to the relationship between spaces and practices. This addresses the false opposition between structure and agency that often leads to the privileging of one over the other (per Thomas Gieryn’s assertion that Anthony Giddens favors

agency while Pierre Bourdieu favors structure). An examination of Alexandra Road housing estate (Neave Brown 1978) demonstrates the intertwined and variable influence of spaces and practices. A sketch overview of notable historical projects is outlined to articulate two points: a) the relationship between the identity formation of places and individuals, and b) how arrival sequences contribute to either the possibility of belonging (through articulating clear moments of transition) or alienation (through creating antagonism between the city and the home).

If bodies and things are not easily separated terms, then the choreography as a performed routine or ritual knits them together. In order to understand bodies (which body, whose body, what body) it is critical to examine the space in which it exists as a practiced thing with attention paid to the exploited possibilities, those yet to be acted on, and those that are rejected in the built order.

## Moving Bodies and Space Standards

Sam Jacoby, Lucia Alonso (Royal College of Art, London)

Housing space standards are largely based on the idea that the movement of bodies within a home can reliably describe domestic needs and uses. Combined with the standard dimensions of furniture, activity zones, and circulation spaces, these movements are used to define the minimum room dimensions and floor areas found in space standards. In England, this relationship between body, movement, and space was formalised by the Ministry of Housing’s *Design Bulletin 6 – Space in the Home* (1963), which translated the Parker Morris Committee’s *Homes for Today and Tomorrow* (1961) report on housing standards into typical daily family routines and their space requirements, based on anthropometric data and social hierarchies. This instituted the graphical convention of drawing furnished and dimensioned dwelling plans, a method still widely used to assess home usability and compliance with minimum space standards.

Challenging assumptions about housing standards, this presentation discusses our study of typical subsidised housing in England, Chile, Spain, Switzerland, the

Netherlands, and China. The project explored the lived experiences of homes by their occupants, analysed home use patterns using live-motion tracking, and created a cartography of home occupation through 3D scans, videos, photographs, and interviews. While housing standards aim to universalise dwelling design by generalising their use, this overlooks critical questions about whose bodies we are designing for. Architectural design and housing policy often marginalise non-standard bodies, households, and uses. But in a time of demographic change, where the nuclear family is no longer the household norm, we must reconsider the role and flexibility of space standards.

This presentation expands the discourse on housing standards and design by providing historical context and new data on how the moving body has shaped housing design norms – and how it continues to adapt to or resist standardised domestic space.



## A (Dual) Glossary of Tracing Kunstform: Cornice and Dantel

Sezin Sarıca (Middle East Technical University, Ankara)

In the 19th century, Karl Bötticher's theory of tectonics the concepts of *Werkform (Kernform)* – “core-form,” structural and defined by technical and ontological aspects, and *Kunstform* – “art-form” – historical and defined by symbolic and representational aspects. This paper presents the terms as a theoretical basis to elaborate on the notion of *Kunstform* and its possible definitions in varying scales and contexts: architecture and tectonics, as well as body and domestic routines. The paper proposes glossary for *Kunstform*, focusing in particular on the representations of cornices and *dantels* (laceworks).

Karl Friedrich Schinkel's book *Vorbilder für Fabrikanten und Handwerker* (Models for Manufacturers and Craftsmen) offers an interesting insight into the “modelling movement” of the nineteenth century and provides representations of *Kunstform* across various scales. The paper delves into the examples of cornices collected in this model book, to then look at *dantel* (lacework), a traditional handcraft and home object found in many Mediterranean regions, including

Turkey. Turkish *dantel* holds particular significance in marriage traditions and home decoration, and model collections in magazines featuring dantel patterns were highly popular among housewives. The patterns and photographs published in these magazines provide insights into *dantel* as *Kunstform*, illustrating its role in the bodily routines of the housewives.

The proposed glossary presents possible definitions of *Kunstform* in architectural and corporeal frameworks. The relation between cornice as an architectural element and *dantel* as a home object of culture and memory, allows for an interpretative reading of the act of “covering” and their tectonic similarities. The study proposes that the concept of *Kunstform* can be applied to both architectural elements (cornices) and domestic objects (*dantel*), to reveal how these forms intersect in the interconnectedness of design and culture.

## Unconfined, Empowered, in Motion: The Body as a Transformative Intersectional Device

Nadia Bertolino (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

This paper explores the relationship between the built environment, gender and bodily autonomy, critiquing issues that arise from biased social constructs in making cities and theorizing the emergence of a transfeminist ‘body politic’ (Michel Foucault 1979). It frames the concept of ‘bodily autonomy’ in response to the static representation of the female body in Louise Bourgeois's *Femme Maison* series (1946-47), which depicts a body that is both trapped-by and protected-within the domestic space of her own home. In Bourgeois, the female body is suffocated yet upright; however, it plays a passive role in the determination of its own self.

From the 1990s, with Jennifer Bloomer's ‘dirty drawing’ (1992) and Liz Diller's work, new modes of enquiry emerged that shifted from providing a gendered analysis of space and its multiple forms of representation, to producing spatial interventions that prioritize forms of action that challenged and subverted male-dominated modes of city making. Through the analysis of Andrea Bowers's performative

piece *Moving in Space without Asking Permission* (2022) at the Gallery of Modern Art in Milan, and the work by feminist philosopher Alessandra Chiricosta, this paper redefines the body as a liberating agent: unconfined, empowered, and in motion.

Through these lenses, the body acts as an active, transformative device capable of embracing a vision where subjects, identities, and spaces ‘are understood to be performed and constructed rather than simply represented’ (Rendell 2018). The body becomes a place to in-habit, to live-with, and -through it in a complex social, environmental and material world (Scanlon 2023). It enables collective entanglements and makes explicit exclusionary spatial practices that can eventually be subverted in favour of more equitable appropriations of urban space.

## Forgotten Bodies: Women and IKEA's Corporate Settings (1960s-80s)

Rebecca Carrai (Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence)

‘There is probably no profession in which the percentage of women holding responsible positions is so high as it is in advertising,’ wrote Mrs Ethel M. Wood in ‘Advertising as a Career for Women’ (1925). Working in advertising involved tasks such as market and product research, planning, budgeting, copywriting, and art direction. Since women were considered ideal consumers, it was often believed that female employees could more easily tap into the psychology of female buyers. Advertising thus became a key arena for women's labour emancipation. Yet, as this paper illustrates, it was also a space of subordination, with many female contributions going unrecognized, their identities, work, and bodies either lost or forgotten.

This study contributes to the discourse on the professionalization of women in the 20th century by highlighting overlooked female contributors who played significant roles at IKEA. It examines the female staff who enabled IKEA's transformation, from the 1960s through to the 1980s – from a small local furniture company, founded in Älmhult, Sweden, in 1943, into a global leader in interiors and home furnishings. Contrary

to the stereotyped depictions in IKEA's catalogues—where, for over 30 years (since the first edition in 1951), women were portrayed primarily as childcare providers or passive decorative figures—women within the company were numerous and held diverse, active roles. Adhering to Christine Frederick's “Mrs Consumer” theory (1929), namely, that women could better connect with consumers, female employees also held roles in IKEA's retail spaces; they not only influenced consumer behaviour but also contributed to corporate finances by working as cashiers, managing sales, and streamlining distribution.

Based on interviews and unpublished archival materials, this paper examines IKEA's female workforce and particularly the gap between its stereotyped image and corporate reality. It shows how women contributed to IKEA's growth not only through consumption, as often suggested, but also by participating in production, encompassing advertising, design, consumption, and mediation.

## The Metaphor of the Body as Architecture in Christine de Pizan's The Book of the City of Ladies

Penelope Haralambidou (Bartlett, University College London)

The paper will explore the metaphor of the body as architecture in medieval author Christine de Pizan's text *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405). The paper will also present in detail how the body/architecture allegory further shapes my design-led research and historical analysis of her work. In her book, Christine describes the construction of an imaginary city, a female utopia built and inhabited by women. Her work has been seen as a proto-feminist manifesto, conflating the act of building with collecting stories of notable female figures from fiction and history and erecting a thesis against misogyny. Inspired by contemporary medieval literary and religious tropes of architecture as a body, Christine alludes to the buildings populating her allegorical city as the mythical and historical female figures, whose stories her book narrates. In her work, writing about female bodies transforms into constructing female buildings to protect women from misogyny.

My design-led historical research follows the positive metaphor of the body as architecture in Christine's text. Through a series of embodied acts of redrawing and

remodelling her text, the illuminations – the miniature illustrations accompanying the text – as well as the physical object of the manuscript, I expand on existing scholarship on the relation between image and text in Christine's work. Christine's narrative starts with the arrival of three virtues bringing three gifts – a mirror, a ruler and a vessel – which she describes as measuring devices for constructing the city. They announce Christine's immaculate conception and foundation of an edifice: the birth of a city. My design reinterpretation of the genesis of the three gifts, in digital film and physical manufacturing, builds upon the metaphor of the body as architecture. The paper will present my hybrid reworking of the mirror, the ruler and the vessel.

## The Worlds of Interiors: Embodied Retellings of Lived Experience in a Mental Health Hospital

Nicola Simpson (Norwich University of the Arts)

The spatial and sensory experience of being an inpatient in seclusion, on a secure ward, in a mental health hospital is not only unspoken but it is even unspeakable. Described by one expert as an encounter between “worlds of interiors”, how can the felt inter-relationship of the human body to ligature safe light switches and handles, to windows that cannot open and doors that remain locked, to electric light that denies the diurnal rhythm, inform the decision making of clinical staff, architects and project site-managers as they design and construct a new hospital building?

This autumn brings to a close a collaborative project between the arts and mental health charity Hospital Rooms, The Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT), Norwich University of the Arts and the current Hellesdon Hospital Community, to bring museum-quality artworks and creative activities to people using mental health services. In a collaboration between the university and a Lived Experience Team, this arts intervention is being evaluated using arts-based and material research methods.

It is a creative and critical interrogation of the old and new hospital spaces by those who have and will live there and the human entanglement with each other and the furniture, fixtures and fittings.

This paper will perform this unspeakable knowledge with a multi-media performance of work made in these creative workshops: photographs, collage, assemblage, and an improvisatory sound piece that takes as its graphic score visual mark-making captured in secure clinical spaces, and utilizes field-sound recordings from the Victorian hospital site and the new Rivers Centre in Hellesdon, Norfolk. The performance will enact a transmission of embodied and polyphonic selves in interrelationship with the material and social worlds of this clinical space and narratives of detainment, illness and recovery.

## Spatial Psychotherapy: The Architect in the Clinic of Obsessional Neurosis

Tim Martin (Loughborough University)

How can architects address the needs of the body if we think of bodies as members of the mental health clinic? To draw out some of the challenges and possibilities between the architect and the psychoanalyst, this paper starts by revisiting the Architectural Association’s conference ‘Psychoanalysis and Space’, 2000, and its wish to find a systematic relation between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the practice of architecture. The paper begins by examining the claim of Mark Cousins, Anthony Vidler, and Joan Copjec that psychoanalysis cannot provide ways to design therapeutic buildings because neurosis does not have an architectural cause. Thus, architects who hope to improve the mental health of their clients can only avail themselves of behavioral or environmental psychology.

In light of this impasse, this paper questions what architects can and cannot do for those with Obsessional Neurosis, and how they might collaborate with analysts to design therapeutic environments for them. This paper covers theoretical issues raised by overlapping the architect in the position of the analyst

using Jacques Lacan’s Four Discourses. As an example of the challenges, it then presents a case study of an obsessional neurotic in search of a therapeutic home environment. In doing so, it provides a review of the structural nature of obsessional neurosis using examples from Lacan and Serge Leclair, and reviews several Lacanian psychotherapeutic techniques in comparison with the therapeutic techniques for OCD provided by cognitive and behavioral psychology. After making a detailed reading of several drawings from the case study, it proposes two new types of spatial psychotherapy and demonstrates how the design process can be assisted with AI image generation.

## ‘My Body is My Battleground’: Schreber’s Psychosis and the Crisis of Architecture

Francesco Proto (Oxford Brookes University)

Daniel Paul Schreber, a German judge who suffered from severe mental illness, has become a significant case study in psychoanalysis. His *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* provided valuable insights into the workings of the human mind and the complexities of psychosis. Schreber’s experiences highlighted the importance of understanding the unconscious mind and its impact on mental health. His delusions and hallucinations shed light on the role of childhood trauma and repressed emotions in shaping one’s psychological well-being.

Schreber’s case study becomes pivotal when examining architecture and its inability to protect one from external forces. In his memoirs, Schreber describes how he believed that architectural structures were unable to shield him from divine punishment. This illustrates the profound impact that the environment can have on one’s psychological state. The idea of architecture as a form of protection is not uncommon in cases of psychosis, where individuals may seek refuge in physical barriers to ward off perceived threats.

In elevating Paul Schreber as forerunner of postmodern subjectivity, we are confronted by architecture’s limitations in providing shelter and protection. As the boundaries between self and external space become blurred, the intricate connections between mind and environment become increasingly apparent. Schreber’s own physical extension mirrors the internalization of architecture, highlighting its inability to fulfil its timeless duties. Hence, a re-interpretation of *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* explores the profound transformation of Schreber’s body, as it becomes the battleground for a cosmic struggle between his ego and that of God. This intense conflict alters Schreber’s physical form and also seduces God himself into an act of omnipotent creativity. As architecture fails to fulfil its dual role of practicality and symbolism, narcissism emerges as the only solution to this crisis. Its inability to meet these demands is shown to have far-reaching implications, more than modern storytelling can convey.

## The Risk of Living

Andres Harvey (Harvard University)

*The Risk of Living* is a short documentary-fiction and essay film that recreates choreographies used for landmine clearance. Approaching questions about body memory and trauma, the film explores the traumatic effects of war artifacts, their footprints, and how they create precise spatial, bodily, and memory configurations.

By 2009 approximately 16.3 hectares across Vietnam were still contaminated with landmines and unexploded bombs from the Vietnam War, representing around 15% of the country's total surface area. After almost fifty years, around 40,000 people have been killed; and 66,000 injured by war munitions, mainly in the Quang Tri and Quang Binh provinces. For the farming communities and scavenger families (which have been the most affected groups) this means not only that they continue to be at risk of dying, even if the war ended years ago, but also that the space of the mine has crafted a landscape where the common use of prosthetics and the awareness of an invisible danger is defined by the risk of living as an amputated

body, as a stranger to oneself. Landmine clearance requires a slow and thorough choreography using metal detectors, chalk powder, and tapes to delimit the area that has been cleared. The essay film explores the bodily-memory and trauma of this act; the space of the minefield extends the temporality of trauma to a point where there is no safe place. The minefield is a metaphor for the fiction of sovereign territory as a safe place. Therefore, the gesture here represents the undoing of sovereignty. The search for the mine is the search to dispose of the borders of oneself. To replicate and reproduce the choreographies of landmine clearance in a "safe place" means to talk about the risk of living as an everyday life experience, as a risk of living as a stranger in oneself and in one's own home.

## An Architectural Investigation of the Tectonics of Visual Comedy in Buster Keaton's Films

Rui Ma (University of Edinburgh)

Architects should pay attention to Buster Keaton's films because Keaton's humour is mainly orchestrated through elegant bodily performances in space. In Keaton's films, architectural elements often cease to provide stability. For instance, the boundaries between interior and exterior spaces are violently breached. Houses are spun by the wind, deconstructed by trains, and facades collapse abruptly, while rotating floor plates and walls disrupt the body's orientation. It appears that the body-space relationship is no longer about a space violently occupied by a body but about an innocent body seeking escape from the often-malevolent world under the massive mechanisation and modernisation of society in 1920s America.

This research offers an architectural analysis of Buster Keaton's films, with a focus on spatial qualities such as depth, composition, and orientation. These elements are examined and extracted through visual analytical drawings and diagrams. The study focuses on the body-space dynamic in the films *One Week*, *Scarecrow*, and *Haunted House*. The arguments draw

on the work of architectural writer Will Jennings, art historian Steven Jacobs, philosopher Noël Carroll, and film theorists Alex Clayton and Tom Gunning.

Challenging the prevailing 'escapology' theory of Keaton's humour, this paper argues that Keaton demonstrates a profound engagement with the mechanical world through his comic bodily actions. The findings suggest that Keaton reveals the underlying mechanical logic of ordinary objects in both spatial and temporal dimensions through his meticulous editing and careful framing of bodily performances within space. In doing so, Keaton's comedy alleviates the anxieties of confronting an uncontrollable mechanical world.

## Clubs of Tehran In-Between Revolutions, 1963-1979: An Architectural [Hi]Story

Saman Seyff (Delft University of Technology)

Over the course of the last fifteen years of the reign of the last Shah of Iran, in-between the revolutions (1963-1979), Tehran experienced a phenomenon of Clubmania. Following the Shah-led White Revolution of 1963, the number of social and cultural clubs, quantified as 'almost 40' in *The Comprehensive Plan for Tehran* (1968), surged to over 400 clubs by 1979, ranging from conventional nightclubs to the state-sponsored Youth Palace. When, early in 1979, the Islamic Revolution brought an end to Pahlavi's regime – and thereby to the Shah's modernization campaign – most of these clubs faced destruction through intentional demolition, or were confiscated by revolutionary forces.

The clubs of Tehran were in-between spaces of complex ambitions and tensions involving top-down modernization and ideological utopias, as well as cultural polarities between modernity and tradition. This essay focuses on nightclubs, situating its investigation within the overarching cultural, societal, and architectural contexts of the city, and exploring how these nightclubs were both mirrors and agents

of transformation between the revolutions. Due to the lack of direct archival sources, my research primarily relied on analyzing indirect sources such as films, oral histories, and maps, which led to employing filmmaking as an investigative research method.

The clubs as 'cinematic bodies' act as a lens for reading the city from the inside out, as well as a medium for analyzing and presenting bodies as spatial and sociopolitical assemblages operating within the complex ambitions and tensions of modernization and Cold War dynamics. Through the lens of nightclubs, the paper examines the patronage of modern architecture in the socio-spatial transformation of Tehran, within the context of Iran's in-between revolutions of 1963 and 1979, the last fifteen years of the reign of the last Shah of Iran.

## When Architecture Stops the Wind: Indigenous Culture in Contemporary Spaces

Andrea Sosa Fontaine (Kent State University)  
Tyrone Fontaine (Independent)

Recently our children's grandmother passed away, and with the loss of her physical presence, we can no longer learn from her oral history, and instead must do our own research, with a particular focus on Ojibwe cultural practices. Through understanding ancestry, we hope to strengthen cultural identity for our children. Throughout this discovery process, we've explored cultural craft, communication, ceremony, and storytelling. However, this research has revealed that despite attempts to preserve culture, contemporary architecture creates an obstacle, where the physical structure of the building can divide physical bodies from indigenous cultural practices and teachings.

In Ojibwe teachings, there is always a connection with spirit, where spirit can exist in physical bodies, the ground, water, air, and the stars – all of it. Spirit isn't one thing, but all living things. The presence of spirit in the physical form of a body only represents a small portion of the life of spirit, where the physical body is neither the start nor end of existence. Within North America, architecture has a distinct beginning and an end, where

the beginning occurs at the first breaking of the land, to build new, and the end occurs through tearing down of physical materiality and destruction of occupiable interior space, where materials are sent to landfill.

A reconciliation of contemporary architecture with Ojibwe teachings could contribute to ongoing decolonization, where architecture holds both physical and intangible connections between body and all things living, including spirit. An original short film will be presented on the making of a traditional jingle dress and the healing movements of the body, through dance, connecting spirit to the body, outside of architecture. The film will be followed by a performative art piece that reconnects the body and cultural clothing with the wind and spirit of ancestors through the coexistence of traditional cultural practices inside contemporary architecture.

## Sensing Environments

Katrin A. Schamun (Technical University Berlin)

Every description or narration of architecture and environments assumes that spatial experience can be conveyed intersubjectively. Why does this assumption make intuitive sense? This paper attempts to expand the debate on this fundamental question, drawing from the study of architecture and urban design, and invoking the potential of philosophical descriptive models to understand spatial perception and experience. The description of this non-measurable dimension, the experience of environments, is pursued by examining cinematographic experiences of visual art, and contrasting them with processes of spatial experience. I show that the body can produce, in both nonphysical and physical-material environments, forms of corporeal knowledge, woven together from two distinct strands, both present in mediated forms.

The paper develops approaches and interfaces between architecture and moving image, drawing from the philosophy of film; it conceptually expands architectural and urban theory in order to grasp individual and personalized forms of spatial experience,

perception, and thus appropriation of space. Starting from Gilles Deleuze's approaches to affect, it applies Brian Massumi's philosophy of experiences, Steven Shaviro's work on affect and corporeality, as well as approaches from German film and media philosophy. I show how the body plays an important role in allowing access to both nonphysical and physical-material environments, creating at the same time certain forms of knowledge. It addresses the recipients, their sensory-bodily experiences, bodily self-experiences, and the corporeality within their perceptions. It shows that space is an aesthetic experience based on a complex interplay of the senses. In contrast to the object-centered, physical-static vocabulary of architecture, the paper suggests perspectives and terms for an expanded conceptualization of the experience of environments. Only with such an expansion that captures individuals in their complex, moving, and interactive physicality can we account for the spatial experience descriptively.

## Becoming Vulnerable in Common: Fragility as a Resource for Generative Urban Practices

Emre Akbil, Esra Can (University of Sheffield)  
Melissa Harrison (Urban Commons)

We are witnessing a surge in deadly border regimes and increasing hostility against cultural and corporeal differences. Growing fear and anxiety, exacerbated by pandemics, climate emergencies, and war, is driving politics of familiarity and security, pushing us further apart. Learning to face our shared bodily fragilities by engaging with stories of resilience, solidarity, and mutuality is critical for our earthly survival. This paper asks, 'How can generative urban practices use vulnerability as a shared resource to foster mutuality and care?'

Cities embody multiple worlds, some shaped by fear and anxiety toward the other, manifesting in fragmented cities where racialised and gendered bodies are segregated. Yet, cities also hold stories of care, offering a repository of tactics for confronting our shared brokenness. This 'radical vulnerability' (Achille Mbembe 2022) is intensified by colonialism, capitalism, racism, and extractive war on Earth. War, for Judith Butler, is foreclosure of vulnerability, an act of

violence that eradicates the other and dismantles the interdependencies and possibilities that vulnerability brings (Judith Butler 2004). Butler's 'mutualised vulnerabilities' could be translated into a framework of commons, as a political project of cohabitation in cities.

The paper presents two urban tales: the arrival neighbourhood in Vienna, Austria, and the ethnically divided city of Famagusta, Cyprus. These cases address the theme of fragility from a generative perspective, framing vulnerability and breakdown as preconditions for ethical relations with the multiple worlds we inhabit. The stories of *Intersektionales Stadthaus* and *Hands on Famagusta* projects demonstrate how urban and social fragilities can be mobilised as resources for urban practices. In both cases, the urban commons, as a political project of interdependence, mutuality, and care foster a generative approach for mending social breakdown due to ongoing wars, displacement, lack of empathy, and conflict.

## Re-Designing Infrastructure and Geopolitics: The Socialist Body and Aesthetics of Yugoslav Youth Labour Brigades

Nikolina Bobic (University of Plymouth)

The intent of this paper is to explore the political implications of the alternative socialist aesthetic of (in) voluntary and politicized work that was performed by the Youth Labour Brigades (referred to subsequently as the ORA - *Omladinska Radna Akcija*) in the post WWII construction of New Belgrade and railways throughout SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The ORA model signified and was implicitly connected to a creative aesthetic where construction of a new SFRY represented a theoretical and practical political project based on socialist and anticolonial ideals that had a reach beyond the country's geopolitical borders. The first ORA activity occurred in 1942, the last in 1990, and during that period over two million youth participated in these events.

Between 1947 and 1950 alone, 100,000 ORA members participated in various labour-intensive activities in New Belgrade. While the initial ORA structure evoked a 'semi-military type' of organisation of life and work, over time it became more leisure focused and less authoritarian, emulating the standards of socialist self-management.

The ORA motto remained 'Our aim is the impossible!' (*Nemoguće, to je naš cilj!*), where bodily limits were not only redefined on a daily basis during the work performed by ORA, but the growing strength of a body was used to project and invent an alternative future.

The argument will be that the reconfiguration of bodily limits and the participatory practises based on alternative ideals is a unique form of (in)tangible Yugoslav heritage, and as such is in contrast with the bodily experience of life and labour in Western contexts during that time. Moreover, the ORA process was associated with the active and productive transformation of the body, in contrast to the Fordist and later neoliberal concept of the body, which is regulated and shaped as a mode of production- a labour-intensive instrument prefigured for docility and the creation of a society that ceases to question itself.

## On Rights, In Cities

Lena Galanopoulou (National Technical University of Athens / Delft University of Technology)

The problem with rights is that they imply a disjunction from the very bodies they are meant to refer to. Rights, as external commodities to be granted or withheld, possess no greater significance than punishments, since they both embody mechanisms of control and social regulation. These mechanisms arise through a codification of individual experiences of pain and suffering into a collective lexicon of norms; a process of transforming the local and physical into abstract and universal. In this schema, the body acquires a dual identification, as an agent for systemic change and as a symbol within these same systemic frameworks, that is, a socially inscribed organ devoid of its corporeal unity.

For Slavoj Žižek, the body becomes a crucial site where the tensions between the *symbolic* (the domain of systems) and the *real* (an order that resists full symbolization) manifest. Between the physical and the abstract, the real and the symbolic, the wound and the collective trauma, this research explores the body's role within the urban fabric as critical nodes for socio-

political engagement and confrontation. More precisely, it aims to stress the connection between urbanity, pain, and injury by highlighting how local acts of resistance (the skin resisting being cut through) encapsulate the transductive essence of social resistance.

Resistance is an embodied experience that emerges from a place of discomfort or pain, against the imposition of external forces that challenge urban and bodily contexts. The city, as well as the body, serve as a locus of affective encounters, where local and non-localized systems conflict, where physical and abstract, real and symbolic boundaries intersect. Navigating between *bodies without organs* and *organs without bodies*, the research questions the rights to cities, and to bodies, by focusing on how power manifests within, between, and across bodies as sites of resistance.

## Son of a Brick!

### When the Lore of the Body Bypassed Facts at the Det Danske Institut i Rom

Angela Gigliotti (ETH Zürich)

1964, April 22nd an entire city celebrates the official visit of the Danish Royal Family for the sealing of a long diplomatic Italo-Danish path at the cornerstone ceremony for Det Danske Institut i Rom / Accademia di Danimarca. The task was clear: forming Danishness abroad occupying the only spot left in the cultural diplomatic compound of Valle Giulia, Rome, Italy. It must have seemed a task of Sisyphean proportion - with a *rétro* touch - to those commissioned Italian builders: more than five hundred thousand clay yellow "bricks" to be laid by hand. Though we can easily imagine the toils and the grieves (and the accompanying swearing) of the workers - that is what it took to embody the myth of Danish Modernism in the very same Rome where Pier Luigi Nervi, Riccardo Morandi, Luigi Moretti, and many other Italians were building another modernism.

But a myth is made to last, and so does its body, and so once inaugurated soon everybody forgot of the making and only the lore has endured almost 60 years hidden by narratives that have celebrated the facade forgetting the backbone and thus complicit the myth of a majestic

load-bearing bricks building. But hey Danish-Roman modernism, can you please take off your bricks? Tell us the secret plot of the lore, what's behind your body.

This is thus the story of a cross-cultural building Det Danske Institut i Rom (1967) where many neglected actors supported the construction of a so pervasive fiction of Danishness forged on the body that few ever questioned and more rarely verified it. That's how a backbone - that (spoiler alert!) was cast in reinforced concrete - has been kept secluded under a body of thousands of bricks for more than half a century. These Italians they made it again, this is what Danes must have thought.

## Drawing the Terrestrial: Mapping Together Political Bodies and Political Grounds

Aikaterini Antonopoulou (University of Liverpool)  
Sebastián Aedo Jury (University of Portsmouth)

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The ground as the soil beneath our feet and as the foundation on which anything built rests, has traditionally been represented as solid and fixed – a repository of meanings and memories, and a symbol of the finitude of the human being. In the context of the Anthropocene. However, any depiction of the ground that emphasises rootedness and stability seems insufficient. To break from established notions of the earth and the world as well as those of territory, land, soil, and landscape, Bruno Latour formulates the 'Terrestrial' as a new political actor – an entity that is found in continuous negotiation between the earth/land and new ways of world making.

This paper proposes representations of the Terrestrial that emerge from the political actions of people voicing their concerns about the planet's future. It is underpinned by our design-led investigations on key events of collective action organised in the streets of Glasgow at the time of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). As world leaders, government negotiators, businesspeople,

climate activists, and cultural leaders gathered at the conference centre for 14 days, Glasgow's streets got animated by marches, performances, and demonstrations. Using notation, mapping, and modelling, we construct urban representations that reflect people's concerns about co-existence, climate and social justice, and the future of Earth, as manifested in Glasgow's streets and broadcast worldwide via social media. The 'street,' the 'square,' and the 'border,' are redrawn to show the contrast of scales, interests, and consequences manifested within and beyond the conference site. The project unpacks the relationship between the political body and its (natural, urban, political) environment, by drawing together the synergy between ground and human action, and breaking from the singular, "objective" view from above.

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## Architectures of Elusion: Thickening the Site of the Protest by Allegorical Narratives of Othered Beings

Melike Beşik (MEF University, Istanbul)  
Bihter Almaç (Istanbul Technical University)

This paper explores design research tactics for understanding the plurality of micro-narratives that protest spaces embody and their physical, social, and psychological articulated connotations. Here, architecture's narrative identity tackles the 20th Feminist Night March in Istanbul through Donna Haraway's (2016) discussions of the 'thick present' in the context of political spaces, Jacques Ranciere's (2010) suggestion of fiction to tackle political impositions, along with feminist modes of storytelling including Ursula K. Le Guin's (1996) 'Carrier Bag Theory', and Jennifer Bloomer's (1993) allegorical strategies. This narrative identity employs multitudes of meanings such as abstraction, parody, and mockery; thereby challenging the existing canonical meanings that are assigned to political space. Two architectural agencies were employed as the methods of this research:

The Condenser is a narrator, a piece of minor architecture, and a speculator that operates on the micro issues drawn from the thickness of the 20th

Feminist Night March. Here, model making betrays architectural expectations and becomes the field of research and feminist storytelling, deriving meanings from neglected and othered places. The Disinherited Fitment is an allegorical drawing diptych, that expands on a case of police violence that occurred after the main protest. The diptych attunes to the disowned states of architecture by delineating a spatial critique of the hegemonic dynamics in architectures that exclude othered/marginalized bodies and forms of existence.

These design experiments engage critically with both architecture and the political dynamics of protest spaces. By revealing the spatiality of politically charged events, they offer a minor practice of spatial critique that disrupts oppressive political realities through the creativity inherent in reinterpretation. They propose a ground for questioning how architecture can disrupt traditional norms and take part in the political dimension of the 'thick present.'

## Architecture of Border Securitisation through Body Securitisation: Immigration Removal Centers in the UK and the Effects on Detainees

Dmitri Hui Ken Chong (University of Westminster)

Architecture is deployed as a political technology to detain and discipline people crossing borders in a process of border securitization through body securitization (Nyers 2003). This shift attempts to 're-border' and protect the country against perceived diminishing borders in a time of increased mobility (Andreas 2000). As a consequence, border securitization operates beyond political borders, both inwards and outwards. This is evident in the architecture. Immigration removal centers (IRCs) are dispersed throughout the United Kingdom, most notably near airports but also located in secluded parts of the country (visas and immigration).

This paper examines Yarl's Wood immigration removal center in Twinwoods Business Park as a case study. The facility shares similarities to modern industrialized livestock and meat processing sites. Yarl's Wood IRC demonstrates 'banal insidiousness' of sites hidden in plain sight that do not mask the horrors of killing but, instead, inure the dynamics of necropolitics into the everyday. This shows a carceral logic superimposing

an architectonic culturally and historically intended for animal processing onto spaces processing immigration prompting a diminishing species boundary between human and non-human animal (Morin 2018). This results in the effect of border securitization through body securitizations that animalizes detained individuals.

The architecture of border securitization through body securitization facilitates a 'process of becoming' where political technologies enforce a 'camp-specific subjectivity' (McConnachie 2018). The bodies of detained individuals entering immigration removal centers undergo a metaphysical transformation when confronted by the political body of the Home Office. They become the *homo sacer* stripped of rights and protections (Agamben 1998). This, in turn, exposes these bodies to the threat of being animalized. The key argument of this paper is that architecture facilitates this process of becoming by superimposing architectonics intended for animals (Pugliese 2020) and catalyzing the 'social death' (Patterson 2008).

## Quadrillage: Spatial Grids as Foucauldian Dispositifs

Cansu Curgen-Gurpinar (Loughborough University)

The grid – a net thrown into the space, a veil drawn over the sight, a procedure coded into the mind – is in a constant state of reproduction, vast but not limited to the field of architecture; it is embedded in every endeavor of spatial production. Recognizing the omnipresence of grids across different scales and contexts calls for an approach that acknowledges their multifaceted nature. In this paper, I propose conceptualizing grids' hard and soft skills, their regulatory, generative, and mediative capacities, and their roles in the segmentation, recognition, and registration of spaces, all of which are significant in the practices of designing, maintaining, and policing spaces.

Gridding, as a dividing practice and a *dispositif*, conditions architecture and the bodies it distributes, not only for their formal qualities but also for their informative contents. These aspects, already embedded in the Western Enlightenment ideals, are further being shaped by the conditions of historical

convergences, such as the development of modern representation techniques, the spaces of production, evolving institutions, and the methods of scientific management of docile bodies and populations. All these occur as part of significant epistemological changes. For that, I evaluate grids as historical constructions and contingencies, as problematics of segmentation, and in the subjectivation of spaces, bodies, and environments in relation to power/knowledge regimes.

Dwelling on two concepts by Michel Foucault, the *dispositif* and *quadrillage* (gridding), I will discuss the concepts' manifestations through his various texts and the reflections written by Gilles Deleuze, Michel de Certeau and Giorgio Agamben in response to his terminology. The paper suggests evaluating grids as *dispositifs* of disciplinary power/knowledge, the context of which, as seen in the post-pandemic world we live in, is far from being a historical circumstance but is very much embedded in the conditions we continue to live in.

## Astro Sacer: The Sacrificial Body Within the Architecture of Microgravity Environments

Craig McCormack (University of Melbourne)

This paper addresses the understudied theorization of the body and its relationship to architecture in the context of the space project through Giorgio Agamben's notion of the *homo sacer*. Astronauts have not historically been compared to the *homo sacer*, which is more frequently applied to those set apart from common terrestrial society, first and foremost refugees incarcerated in detention camps. However, with the heterotopic territory of outer space placing the body under the constant threat of death and its inherently compliant relationship to the built environment under such extreme conditions, this paper suggests that it is an appropriate comparison to establish. Rather than be liberated from its corporeal prison, the body in outer space loses its internal order, requiring quantization to mesh with a technological environment it is now dependent upon for survival. The artificial milieu of the space station is one of heightened regulation and careful governance, necessary to ensure the body survives and performs in careful synchronicity with the hardware that has assimilated it.

J.G. Ballard exercised the 'dead astronaut' as a recurring trope throughout several of his science fiction stories,

and appeared to realize the inevitable futility of attempting to transcend mortality and the resultant entrapment within the orbital sarcophagi of a vernacular space architecture. Ballard's allegorical astronaut was not only a critique of the space project but also questioned the impact caused by blind faith in modern progress. This paper builds upon Ballard's suspicion of techno-utopianism and reads it in dialogue with Hannah Arendt's conjecture that humanity's stature is reduced in such conditions, ultimately arguing that this diminished human is, after Agamben, the *astro sacer*. This category names the sacrificial condition of the body within the built environment in outer space, the new state of extra-planetary exception.

## Architectures of Mistrust: Suspect, Sense, Regulate, Repeat

Dirim Dinçer, Gökçe Önal (Delft University of Technology)

Grazia Tona (Eindhoven University of Technology)

Institutionalized suspicion toward border-crossing bodies is increasingly systematized by the security models of complete situational awareness. This hyper-surveillant regime relies on the seamless interoperation of inspection technologies and architectural design to manage, contain, and exclude those bodies at borders. This paper focuses on airports as one such space of mistrust and asks: how do surveillance technologies and architectural design converge in the practices of regulating borders? We respond by examining the architecture of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport as a 'suspicious infrastructure' (Simon Noori 2022) that continuously adapts itself to the state-of-the-art technologies which sense, inspect and organize mistrusted, human and more-than-human bodies *en route*.

Our argument begins with a media-elemental analysis of three sensing technologies typically deployed in airport screening: millimeter wave scanners, X-ray scanners, and CCTV. By mapping the interaction of bodies and machines, we show that inspection is a function of multiple sensing operations, each of which targets a different bodily component and results in a different bordering performance, ranging from

channeling and sorting to excluding and detaining. Examining the architectures of these interactions – gates, corridors, fast tracks, airport courthouses and detention centers – we argue that the airport integrates multiple levels of situational awareness by differentially regulating movement through architectural proximities, thresholds and features.

The conclusion presents a material-discursive framework for architectures of mistrust by weaving the operational and physical components of border control at the airport. We discuss the border(s) at the airport as a performance of interoperability between machines and architectures, where machines render bodies actionable data and architectures regulate them by reinforcing the logic of inspection. Accordingly, we formulate architecture not only as an infrastructure that accommodates surveillance, but also as an agent complicit in the construction of suspicious subjects. We thereby expand the definition of suspicious infrastructures through a performative reading of border architectures.





## A Room Without a View

Teagan Dorsch (University of Manchester)  
Nathalie Hislop (Leiths Culinary School)

In feminist architecture, bodies – particularly those that have historically occupied the fringes of spatial practice – are invited into gendered and normative architecture through their situated experiences. Invited into spaces that have originally been designed, occupied and perceived under a history of standardizing the human body – Leonardo Da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man, Ernst Neufert’s *Architects’ Data*, Le Corbusier’s *Modulor* and the *Architectural Graphic Standards*. Jos Boys and the DisOrdinary Architecture Project describe the need to challenge ableist attitudes and practices that merely force disabilities into existing environments. To be situated as other in society requires you to find, and often create and defend, your own space.

This immediately puts individuals with Fibromyalgia and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS) at a disadvantage because of the energy needed to craft their space and community of care. Fibromyalgia is a nervous system disorder that causes widespread pain, fatigue, and brain fog, along with a spectrum of other symptoms. No two people with fibromyalgia experience the same

symptoms or severity, while architecture and medicine continually disregard and underserve their needs. How can feminist architecture and the expanded field of spatial practices account for and care for people who can’t get out of bed on some days?

*A Room Without a View* recounts lived spatial experience, forced adaptation, and practices of care between a couple/artist duo managing life with fibromyalgia and ME. It documents the practices of care, adaptations, and community that have been made. The work employs Jane Rendell’s technique of site writing, the film essay, drawing, and culinary practices to critique contemporary relationships between bodies, fibromyalgia, and architectural and urban inhabitation. By focusing on lived experience and situated knowledge of architecture and disability, this work aims to contribute to the conversation about disability practices that focus on the actual inhabitants of architecture.

## Bodies Tell Barriers: Architectural Representations and Visual Strategies in the Early Finnish Disability Rights Movement

Marja Rautaharju (Tampere University)

Practices and knowledge of architectural accessibility have developed since the mid-20th century, initially as a rehabilitation response to the growing number of disabled citizens after the world wars. In accessibility historical scholarship, the rise of the disability rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s is conceived as an epistemological turn, as the connection between architectural barriers and disability was recognized under the social understanding of disability (Aimi Hamraie 2017; Bess Williamson 2019.) In Finland, the early disability rights movement, primarily organized around the *Kynnys* (Threshold) association, engaged in an accessibility discourse that critically observed the spatial construction of the welfare state. The association’s first ten years between 1973 and 1982 also marked the establishment of the first accessibility legislation in Finland.

In the paper, I further develop the recognition of the early disability rights movement’s architectural discourse by studying a selection of visual materials in the movement’s archives. In my research, I have

identified the movement’s archives as a *ghost archive* within architectural history (Janina Gosseye 2019.) I analyze three sets of images that utilize the conventions of architectural representation to communicate the objectives of disability rights activism: a series of images the activists used to communicate to a wider public the barriers that disabled people encountered in the built environment; unpublished site visit snapshots; a provocative cover illustration of an association bulletin.

The historical trajectory of architectural accessibility in Finland intersected with the history of the disability rights movement. The paper presents the movement’s imagery – which communicates architectural barriers and access through both the presence and absence of disabled bodies – as a space of disability epistemology in architecture. Within this space, architectural users who had been historically excluded produced a critical commentary on architectural accessibility and its development in the welfare state.

## Abnormal Bodies

Pablo Remes Lenicov, Pablo E.M. Szelagowski (Universidad Nacional de La Plata)

We live in a time where the dominant culture is established by mathematical formulas programmed to establish patterns of majority opinion, attacking everything that is different, denying experimentation for fear of being invisible. In the words of Michel Foucault, they are the abnormal; everything that is outside the norm cannot be framed, and is marginalized. All discourses established as true operate and circulate as such, and few question their own legitimacy. The idea of a practice within a regulated field means that different thoughts cannot exist, as they would be abnormal. Difference, instead of being a value, becomes a label that marks what is different from the norm, marginalizing it outside the possible.

Great architectures were strange for their time, somewhat familiar perhaps, but they should not have been there. That strange feeling is the sign that we are facing something new, something that we have never seen before. It is clear, however, that what is strange is not the architecture but the perception of it, the social construction of that strangeness. The normal

and conventional go out of fashion, the abnormal ones transmit a purposeful, creative, provocative action necessary for current times. We need to delve deeper into the procedures that lead our discipline to incorporate what we still do not understand today, so that new possibilities of practice can emerge. We do not make projects for selection algorithms, or to put quick labels on them. We make projects for a society that needs new solutions. As Byung-Chul Han says, ‘it is healthy to leave room for the strange.’ Becoming different allows us to move forward, not meekly repeat the correction of equals. In times of rapid change, of increasingly tragic problems, the body of the discipline needs the abnormal.

## Feeling with Crip Time

Helen Stratford (Sheffield Hallam University)

Across contemporary feminist, queer and critical disability studies, *crip* theories are developing expansive understandings of the embodied relationships that disabled “bodyminds” have with time and visibility (Emma Sheppard 2020). Outside linear, progressive time, this “broken time” brings grief and frustration, yet it also generates new ways of thinking, feeling and being in the world (Ellen Samuels 2016; Petra Kuppers 2022). Informed by enforced “unproductivity,” limited mobility and prohibitive access infrastructures, arising from lived experience of chronic pain, this performance presentation examines and asks: How are contemporary public spaces built around able-bodiedness chronically prohibitive? Further, how can we generate more “crip” understandings and constitutions of public space?

*Feeling with Crip Time* will introduce a research artefact developed as part of the research project *Public S/Pacing* which includes visits to disabled artists and peers, each exploring health and disability in different ways, and engaging in artist conversations with them. In this wider research project, the journey,

the varying demands and labor of travel, the necessity to meet online or not at all, as well as the eventual conversations, become research spaces through which to examine the presumptions of capacity and able-bodiedness that characterize and structure daily life.

Part performance, part public action, part live demonstration – including excerpts from the artist conversations – *Feeling with Crip Time* will critique normative spaces that prevent access to and enjoyment of everyday activities, by demonstrating how the artefact re-interprets them with attention and care alongside wryness and humor. Situated between the private space of the body and the public space of the conference, the presentation will examine how “slower,” collaborative and generative ways of working and knowledge-sharing can support modes of rest, self-care and mutual aid, thereby generating prototypical and joyful spaces that challenge ways of thinking which underpin much of normative design.

## **In/Valid Architectures: Specialist School Designs and the Cultural Creation of the Deaf Body**

**Nina Vollenbröker** (Bartlett, University College London)

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Architectural scholarship is being invigorated by discussions of intersectionality, a sophisticated understanding of bodily difference that acknowledges the connectedness of factors – including race, sexuality, gender – in identity formation. Still, while marginalized bodies are finally receiving long-due attention, deaf spatial authorship and experience has been attributed next to no influence on understandings of the built environment and its histories. Driven by a larger intention to bring deafness to architecture, this paper puts its focus on Donaldson’s Hospital, an early purpose-built residential school for deaf (and hearing) pupils in Edinburgh. It proposes that, from Britain’s initial concerted efforts to provide deaf education, space was always at the center of the fiercely contested national debates about what it means to be a child who does not hear.

The paper begins by highlighting that the design and construction of Donaldson’s Hospital in the 1840s was intimately connected to the full emergence of deaf children as a coherent social group, and

to the positioning of this group in relation to wider Victorian society. I use planning drawings, building warrants and board meeting minutes to argue that the building was a dynamic producer of understandings of bodily difference which essentially spatialized deaf pupils as equal to their hearing peers.

In its second section, the paper details problematic cultural shifts throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century when, amidst a growing acceptance of social Darwinism and eugenic thought, deafness became a category of oppression. It uses school logbooks and letters exchanged between Donaldson’s Hospital and national government (in the 1880s) to ask to what extent the building constituted a site of resistance – at least temporarily – and to what extent it became a receptor and reflector of narratives which ostracized and dehumanized the deaf community.

STUDIO  
BUILDING  
FORM  
C

## Self-Portrait with Building: Bodily Space of the Architect and Photographer

Toby Blackman (Newcastle University)

In 1973, Susan Sontag described photography as a 'slice' of space and time, transforming the critical theory of the photograph. As an architect, I am interested in how we circulate and inhabit, make, and remake cities, buildings, and rooms over time. As a photographer, I am interested in the situated practice of the discipline, and the spatio-temporal slice indexed in its image.

In this paper, I examine a photograph taken in 2022, *Self-portrait with Building* (the wonderful Università Luigi Bocconi in Milan, Italy, by Grafton Architects), and the superimposed, reflected image of the self-formed in situ, in camera. Drawing from the discourses of art, architecture, autotheory, photography, and site-writing – and the work of Annie Ernaux, Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Ian Borden, Beatriz Colomina, Lauren Fournier, Harriet Hawkins, Donna Haraway, and Jane Rendell – I explore how the spatial body 'constituted by and constitutive of the space it occupies' brings the bodily space of architecture 'within itself' (Ian Borden 2012) through photography.

In the expanded field of artistic agency and encounter, spaces are formed within which the body and its senses are made present for study. I am present in the space and time of the photograph – in the situated practice of its construction, and its spatio-temporal image – a spatial body 'constituted by and constitutive of' the street, the interior and the exterior of the building. In this paper, I build on Henri Lefebvre's argument that bodily space, 'is first of all my body, and then it is my body counterpart or "other," its mirror-image or shadow' (Lefebvre 1974), to reveal the ways in which situated spatial practice, the spatial body, and the bodily space of the architect and photographer – my body, my body counterpart, my other – mirror, shadow, and shift.

## Dual Body and Boundary Space: Mapping Concrete Connections with the Virtual

Tianyu Zhu (Technical University Munich)

Dating back to 1407 AD, Beijing Old City has been described as a "living organism." It preserves diverse social, economic, political and material histories while demonstrating flexibility in adapting to constant change, especially after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Residents interact with the material environment, blending the legacy of a global metropolis shaped by institutional development with re-interpretations of rules, traditions and identities in micro-scale urban spaces. This dynamic interaction between human, non-human and intangible agents transcends the immediate situations, highlighting the city's potential capacity to reshape relations and generate heterogeneous spaces.

What forces drive the production of heterogeneous spaces in Beijing Old City? What roles do different bodies play? While assemblage urbanism highlights the virtual as a source of difference, its concrete workings remain underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by investigating space-making at three locations. The concept of boundary space is introduced as a

mediating layer between the ineffable virtual and the actual, consisting of concrete (quasi-) virtual agents and relations. A mapping method is developed, based on photo diaries, interviews and planning reports, to examine the actual and virtual relations between the bodies of artefacts, outdoor objects and people.

The study shows that in historically rich urban areas, traditional culture, social orders, development policies and community ties form complex (quasi-) virtual networks within boundary spaces. These networks, exhibiting subjectivity and resilience in the midst of historical shifts, drive the creation of heterogeneous micro-spaces. Material bodies, with their dual nature of assembling in the present and connecting to the whole of the past, act as channels between the actual and the virtual. As a result, the regulatory constraints of the physical environment cannot fully suppress the creation of heterogeneous spaces, even though their forms and locations of emergence are unpredictable.

## Still Life as Selfhood: Contemporary Architectural Photography and the New Minimal Self

Chris Fernald (Williams College, Williamstown MA)

As Juhani Pallasmaa has written, a 'retinal architecture' – that is, architectural design oriented by the gaze of the camera – must be supplanted by an architecture which better accommodates the body's needs and experiences. Missing from this prescription, however, is a reckoning with the fact that an increasingly retinal culture – an 'image world' in the words of Susan Sontag – has also created retinal subjects who must contend with both the persistence of their flesh in space and a number of incentive structures which compel them to desire that every horizon of the physical world—their spaces and bodies included—should become more image and object-like. How has architecture responded to this tension?

I argue that the most common approach to styling high-end architectural interiors – that is, a "minimalist" approach which prepares architecture for the camera by selectively emptying a room of ornament, clutter, and most traces of life itself – does more than simply clear a room of obstructions to better "see" its defining features. Rather, the ubiquitous convention of what

we might call "minimalist architectural styling" has slipped its material restraints and transformed into a program for forming synthetic persons under the sway of digital mediation and late capitalism.

Examining photographs snapped and widely circulated to inaugurate the opening of storefronts of Swedish fashion house and ineffable it-brand Acne Studios as my case study, I contend that these images allow us to imagine fashioning the mutable self into a stable, unchanging, petrified object – that is, placing the ontological bounds and limits of minimalist photographic space's material and visual dimensions upon our complex and unknowable personhood. Offering a novel interpretation of an under-theorized yet ubiquitous phenomenon in architectural media, this paper divines a strange but incisive portrait of selfhood between architecture, image, and body hiding in some of the most common practices of contemporary architectural photography.

## The Built Environment and the Body in Architectural Graphic Novels

Alex Fitch (University of Brighton)

Comics and graphic novels are an insightful medium for demonstrating how bodies use and dwell within the built environment. In both short form comics and longer narratives found in graphic novels, the art and text of this form can demonstrate human occupation in ways that not only include typical architectural style drawings – including cross-sections, axonometric drawings and diagrams – but also use the story telling techniques of sequential art to help readers understand how people use the homes they inhabit. This can be found in a wide variety of comics, from genre titles such as *The Spirit* and *Spider-Man* to adaptations of novellas like Paul Auster's *City of Glass*.

In particular, the work of architect turned comic book artist Sabba Khan, and Chris Ware, who has also designed building facades, displays an understanding of how transferable skills can be turned towards the creation of beguiling graphic novels such as *The Roles We Play* (2021) and *Building Stories* (2012) respectively. Khan's work shows how the built environment can have a welcoming and / or

oppressive effect on inhabitation, while Ware's more dispassionate approach brings a diagrammatical eye to the rendering of locations on the page.

In consideration of a more intimate approach, the work of British graphic novelist Karrie Fransman – in *The House That Groaned* (2012) – shows how the use and inhabitation of buildings have an effect on the lives of people in these spaces and the direct connections between the physicality of the buildings and the bodies that inhabit them. Fransman compares the renovation and occupation of living spaces with the upkeep of bodies themselves, and how the emotional state of inhabitants can be nurtured or disrupted by the spaces they use. This paper examines the intersection between architectural drawing and comic book narratives in the work of these creators.

**Sensing and Sensibility:  
Camille Norment's Plexus and the Sounding of Occupancy**

Jess Myers (Syracuse University)

To truly understand how architecture behaves in the breathing world, architects must form and refine a sensibility, developing a meaningful relationship to the senses as it pertains to spatial thinking. For example, opening the architect's ear to sound as a prerequisite to an understanding of space entangles the architect's behavior within the spaces they hope to intervene in. It is this intermingling, as well as the displacement of the object as the sovereign center of formal spatial analysis, that can be found at play in the work of multimedia artist Camille Norment. Norment's 2022 sound installation *Plexus* explores the sonic relations between bodies and space by using feedback and resonance as a means of pushing visitors into a spatial literacy through a lens defined by geographer Milton Santos (2021) as 'systems of systems of objects and systems of actions.' *Plexus* can be read as an extension of Norment's long-term interest in "hysterical architecture," a concept that ties together questions about sound, vibration, and 19th century notions of troubled mind-body relations. Here she understands hysteria as the body at unrelenting attention, an endlessly heightened observational state.

This paper seeks to expand on Norment's concept of *hysterical architecture* by proposing the idea of *ecstatic architecture*, a condition of occupation in which the attentive listener is held on the edge of observing sounds which insist on the presence of their own being, the being of others, the built environment, and the unexecuted threat of dissolution. This understanding of the body and space is critical to pushing architecture beyond an object centered analytical framework wherein the most productive means of analysis remains the act of seeing. By developing a listening practice of observation, architects can be drawn into a more meaningful understanding of what it is to occupy space.

STUDY BODIES

## Human Shields of the Invisible

Aya Musmar (American University of Cairo)

Since the beginning of Israel's war on Gaza, Gaza's densely populated refugee camps have been used as strategic targets whose destruction was meant to facilitate Israel's land invasion of Gaza. The reasons upon which Israel relies to justify such attacks are founded in the spatial and material characteristics inherent in the refugee camp, which would consolidate the Israeli anxieties around the "unseen" in Gaza. In the paranoid discourse fabricated by Israel to defend itself, yet again, this time against accusations of war crimes, "Palestinians as human shields" is one important component of the story used to justify Israel's attempt to hunt those whom these bodies are meant to protect. In this paper, I situate this description in the extraterritoriality of the refugee camp, informed in this case by the invisible geographies the refugee camp is meant to hide, protect, or defend.

How does a nuanced understanding of the far and recent history of the refugee camp in Gaza help us compose infidel narratives that defy the excuse-ability of Israel's crimes against Palestinians and account

## Scorched Earth Legacy

Mohamad Nahleh (Ohio State University)

In Ibrahim Kanaan's 1974 book, *Lebanon During the Great War*, we come across a section entitled 'The Eater of the Flesh of Children', which discusses the emergence of famine-driven cannibalism amidst the naval blockade imposed by the Allied powers in 1915. Specifically within Jabal 'Amil (South Lebanon), reports recount the disappearance of four children from Damour, their severed heads discovered later in the dwelling of an individual who had roasted them for supper. Such accounts of child-related horrors are but a fraction of the eerie lore that continues to haunt the 'Amili nights. Yet woven into this tragic lore today are new stories of children's flesh consumed by fire, the result of Israel's indiscriminate use of phosphorus munitions during its twenty-two-year occupation of Jabal 'Amil and beyond. Southern poets have long captured this devastation in verses about 'meteoric fires' – a metaphor for the relentless phosphorus rains that ravaged both bodies and landscapes without distinction. Aiming to undermine support for armed resistance, Israel's "scorched-earth strategy" involved the destruction of roads,

for these fictions on the unseen and the invisible as important stories of resistance at once? In this paper, I drift away from a discourse that looks at refugee camps as "common" phenomena, a spatial instrument utilized to control and shape territories, and rather attend to the camp's extraterritoriality, arguing for a methodology that accounts for the intense histories exacerbated by Israel's brutality and Palestinian sacrifice to forge a life. Such a drift requires an ontological shift in the way we think with the figure of the "martyr" rather than the figure of the "human." If "human-shield" depicts the ultimate victim whose life is sacrificed to shield another, how does an understanding of "martyrdom" as an ethic of resistance defy the biopolitical classifications often imposed upon Palestinians?

bridges, homes, and agricultural fields, rendering entire regions virtually uninhabitable. While human rights organizations produce detailed reports – tracking, mapping, measuring, and verifying Israel's blatant misuse of weapons – this paper turns its focus to the deeper, lasting legacy of phosphorus on the people and landscapes of Jabal 'Amil. By demonstrating how phosphorus has already woven itself into the modern heritage of southern Lebanon (influencing songwriting, literature, and weather prognostics), I argue that we need to acknowledge a new history, especially an environmental history, that falls outside the documented episodes of territorial expansion. To read it is to stretch these colonial outbursts so thinly, so delicately that they allow for glimpses into the struggles of those dedicated to the pursuit of life in the flames of imperialism.

## Face Masks

Nishat Awan (University College London)

During the mid-2000s, Pakistani towns and cities were being regularly hit by suicide bombings as brown people paid the price for the so-called war on terror. In 2015, three quarters of all suicide attacks occurred in just three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq – and out of those only Pakistan was not officially at war. The discourse around these events in the Pakistani national media revolved around the question of who the suicide bomber was, because their motives were already assumed to be related to the brainwashing potential of so-called Islamist ideology promoted by the many variants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda operating in the region. It also served the interests of the Pakistani state to suppress any discussion on whether the drone attacks were radicalizing these young men. Instead, they promoted a narrative of the "terrorist-monster" (Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai 2002), the disturbing conflation of gender and sexuality within the discourse on terrorism. At this time, a rather gruesome phenomenon emerged in relation to the bombers that both fascinated and repelled the Pakistani public in equal measure. The belts used by the bombers were

designed in such a way that when they detonated the force of the bomb would push up so that the face of the person wearing the belt would be lifted clean off their head in one piece. While the body would be scattered their face would remain intact. This was happening with such regularity that these came to be known as "face masks" and they allowed the authorities to determine very quickly who the person was until the potential bombers realized this and made sure to look down when detonating the bomb. The temporality of violence, the face(less) martyr and the relationship between sexualized imagery and war are topics that I will unpick in relation to both the "war on terror" and Israel's current war on Gaza and the Palestinian people.

## Player on the Quantum Stage

Paul Guzzardo (Independent)

*Player on the Quantum Stage* completes a triad. This praxis trilogy begins in 2015 with *A Septic Turn in a Space of Appearance*. *The Algorithm that Ate the Street* shows up in 2019. Two defining happenings mark the intervening decade from *Septic* to *Player*: the velocity of AI technologies and the growing struggle between democracies and autocracies. While the priors delved into how digital technologies shaped our interactions with public spaces – and the stages we play on – *The Player* confronts the essence of player and body as it explores the relationship between ‘men and machines.’

The urban design praxis, Recursive Urbanism, which served as the footing for *Septic Turn* and *Algorithm*, points the way to *The Player*. Recursive Urbanism aimed to identify epistemic niches – stages where knowledge and creativity converge, nodes as anchors, grounding us amidst rapid technological acceleration. Paul Guzzardo developed Recursive Urbanism between 1996 and 2016 on the stage where media thinkers Marshall McLuhan and Walter

Ong, and those momentous makers Jack Dorsey and Sam Altman played: St. Louis, Missouri.

Like its predecessors, *The Player* takes a journalistic-witness stance, a storyteller anchor. *The Player* uses an insider’s look at the stage that set the scene for the explosion of social media and the rise of artificial intelligence. It explores how elites have controlled public spaces, making it difficult for creative communities to adapt, innovate, and redefine their practices in this worrying AI-autocratic landscape. As *The Player* critiques the decadent privileged ones (and those that do their bidding) for their failure to prepare for “the dark aspects” of social media and AI, it proposes a triage banister design protocol, guardrails responsive to the exponential scalability of computational power, and alert to changing notions of fixed spaces and static bodies.

## The Quantum Stage: The Player’s Performance for the Observer

Gustavo Cardon, Immanuel Lavery (Independent)

In his story *The Maelstrom*, Edgar Allan Poe describes a whirlpool akin to a black-hole. A fisherman, an observer, studies the maelstrom and the objects within it as he descends to oblivion in the singularity below. By working with the riptide, he escapes on one of the objects that ascends towards calmer water, beyond the event horizon. Currently, we find ourselves in a maelstrom of media, violent algorithmic currents of data, which serve as the basis for Paul Guzzardo’s *Player on the Quantum Stage*.

When brought onto the physical stage, the respective elements present in the storm and architecture undergo a quantum entanglement; maelstrom = stage, vessel = audience, singularity = projector. In being quantum, the stage exists as all potential stages – those that are experienced, dreamed, and unknown – until it is observed: Schrödinger’s stage. The architectural object might then appear to us not as a stage but rather in a new, different form with altered relationships between its elements: a partition, a pavilion, a panopticon, etc.

In this instance, the new architectural typology of the quantum stage emerges as a stage that engulfs the audience – an inverted amphitheater allegorical to a black hole. Being assembled from multiple components, it can appear in a divided state, fractured but not incomplete. To be within the boundary of the stage is to inhabit the body of the fisherman in Poe’s story. The observer, on the cusp of annihilation, watches the screens that surround them. Displayed on them are Guzzardo’s *Piranesi Scrolls*, detailing our descent into this media singularity and offering a chance of escape from its downward spiral.

## Babble Rabble Mummery Maelstorm: Glimpsing the Real in the Ruins of Language

Lorens Holm (University of Dundee)

This imaginary essay will explore the figures of the tower and the theatre in architectural thought. It will entangle them in words, as it were, which is what discourses do to things, and use these words to relate them to the ruins of Piranesi and to the descent into the maelstrom of Edgar Allan Poe.

Piranesi’s ruins constitute the hidden texture or fabric of the city, what we might call its intractable reality, what is never completely washed away by the rain, when its signifying functions have been stripped away. Poe’s image of the maelstrom – and it is presented in the story as an image, a view from a mountain summit – is the hidden texture or fabric of our media environment, which most of us experience in the form of an irresistible attraction. Lacan called this environment from which we derive our truth and pleasure, and which appears here as a cyclonic pressure, the alethosphere.

This essay will relate these figures to the psychoanalytic account of fantasy, which appears in Freud’s thought

as a mediating layer between pleasure and reality. In addition to being, e.g., office towers that are parts of commercial developments and parliaments that are parts of state capitals to which we elect our representatives, these architectural figures also operate at the level of fantasy, and it is at the level of fantasy where they are connected to each other and to the hidden grounds from which they emerge, in contemporary mythmaking. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* and ‘The Unconscious’, Freud makes clear the unintended link between phantasy and cultural hegemony; it says a lot about how the World Trade Towers appear in the cultural imaginary.

## Edifices and Orifices: Grasping Political Structures Through Architectural Representation

Stephen Steyn, Pieter Swart (Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria)

In *Monsters of Architecture* (1990), Marco Frascari clarifies the value of organismic metaphors in architectural theory. Philosophy makes use of architectural metaphors: arguments are *structured* or *foundational* and they form a *framework*. These metaphors become confused in architectural theory, where they have a literal component. Architecture relies on metaphors of the body: buildings have *footprints*, *skins*, and *spines*, and they may *face north*. Frascari focuses on the human body as the metaphorical ground of architectural thinking, but in an increasingly ecological sensibility one can think architecture through a variety of creatures, since buildings also have *wings*, *membranes*, and *fins*. Built into the nomenclature of institutions is the *making into a body* (corporation), and *making into organs* (organization), of something less tangible. They are representations of political structures.

Indigenous Southern-African architecture has long been conceived as the embodiment of social structures. Currently, the immaterial components (content) of buildings appear to be interchangeable (for resale and rental markets), meaning that the formal body manifested by building construction is

often unrelated to social organization. This paper is part of a broader study aimed at identifying supplementary directions for architectural practice to maintain form-content interactions.

In this paper, the architectural conditions of automated telephone-answering services will be contextualized as “organizational orifices” which, through spatial, response-driven sorting procedures, mediate exchanges with exteriors. The theoretical contextualization is supported by video content illustrating the complex *mouths* of selected organizations. Through anthropomorphism, contributions can not only be made to the understanding of organizations, but also to the broadening of understandings of bodies and the selves they ostensibly contain. Selves can thus be understood as more distributed than what is contained inside a skin, and the realities of our identifications with creatures, objects, concepts and other people, may be grasped in aesthetic and intuitive terms.

## Chummy Women’s Clubs and Emotional Damage of Bodies in Architecture

Igea Troiani (London South Bank University)

In the 1980s, feminist writers in architecture called out unacceptable patriarchal behaviors that excluded women. In a 1993 issue of *Assemblage* entitled ‘Violence, Space,’ Jennifer Bloomer complained about males bullying, while Beatriz Colomina recounted the disturbing story of Le Corbusier’s victimization of Eileen Gray. But some 30 years later due to shifts in stereotype performativity, “gender trouble” (Judith Butler) has emerged in a new curious form of patriarchal violence. I argue here that this phenomenon has emerged because of the increase in the number of women in the profession, and within that group, the rise of more powerful women driven by the neoliberal model of *homo oeconomicus* (*economic woman*) (Michel Foucault) needing to stay at the top.

This talk, in which I screen moving images of Gray’s drawings, is based on stories from women architects and academics in Australia and UK and members of Women in Architecture UK. It discusses how neoliberalism’s advocacy of selfhood drives competition and territoriality regardless of gender, while

simultaneously exploiting intersectional characteristics including gender, race, and class for market opportunity. In this confusing terrain of entrepreneurial competition, the hierarchical power pecking order is reaffirmed by more privileged women who hinder, gatekeep or gaslight other women, causing emotional harm.

Focusing on well-networked women architects from elite pedigree who replicate the competitive, territorial, exclusionary patriarchal behaviors they have themselves fought against, it discusses character traits unrelated to gender, including confidence and capability, lack of access to privileged capital-heavy networks (collaborators, clients, etc.), as well as the theft and undermining of ideas/work of weaker actors in architectural networks to stay at the top. The talk argues that if all bodies matter in architectural production, we need to recognize this new form of female gendered exclusionary practice and combat the rise of emotional damage that neoliberalism generates.

## Body at Work/Play, or the Coils of a Serpent

Stephen Walker (University of Manchester)

This paper uses two examples of ‘co-working spaces’: the Electric Works (Sheffield 2009) and BrewDog Waterloo (London 2022). Two architectural/cultural trends coincide here: firstly, as buildings/organisations they are paradigmatic of neoliberal working practices that blur the distinctions between work and leisure, both in their interior environments and their declared mix of working patterns. Emblematic of this blurring, both projects include a prominent helter-skelter or slide, and in their (self)publicity they foreground these features with laboured amazement. These permanent helter-skelters can also be understood in the context of temporary helter-skelter installations in Cathedrals (Norwich 2019), Renaissance Palazzi (Florence 2018) and international art galleries (London 2007, 2015; New York 2011–12).

Gilles Deleuze ends his short ‘Postscript on the Societies of Control’ by noting ‘The coils of a serpent are even more complex than the burrows of a molehill’ (*October* 59, Winter 1992, 7). In this paper I will focus on the different bodily concepts, references and models of control discussed by Deleuze (and his

collocutor Michel Foucault), exploring their tangible manifestation in these two architectural examples.

Limiting discussion to the slides and the ways in which they stage or imitate play/fun (*in situ* and through various media), these architectural sitting-ducks can be easily grasped as a gesture politics of misdirection, more mole than snake. The slides recompose a prior (historical) state of the bounded (worker) body, gathering two poles of Foucault’s ‘disciplinary societies’: the individual, sliding body of the punter and the assumed embodied audience. While attentive to this embodied formalized informality, I will also slide back towards what Cederström and Fleming identify as the gaseous body and *biocracy* that these helter-skelters seek to obscure.



## Queering Great War Island

Marko Jobst (Leeds Beckett University)

This paper builds on ‘Fictioning Great War Island’ a chapter written for *Instituting Worlds: Architecture and Islands* (Gabrielsson and Jobst eds. 2024) which used Gilles Deleuze’s text ‘Desert Islands’ as a starting point for an inquiry into the acts of fiction and fictioning (a term used by David Burrows and Simon O’Sullivan) in relation to a small, unstable river island in Serbia located at the meeting of the Sava with the Danube.

The paper consists of three textual layers. The first concerns the historical depictions of Great War Island and the provenance of its name, which comes from the island’s repeated use as a site from which to shell the Belgrade fortress. The second layer pursues a queer-inflected narrative of three bodies which find themselves, in mid-1990s, on the sandy lip of the island’s small beach, dipping into the currents of desire and phallic fixation against the backdrop of the island’s military histories – specifically those embodied in the figure of Eugene of Savoy, a quasi-queer general instrumental in the 1717 Habsburg siege of Belgrade – and the late 20th century Yugoslav civil wars and

the dissolution of that country. The third textual layer re-casts the previous two as *Die Totensinsel (Isle of the Dead)*, Arnold Böcklin’s symbolist painting (specifically its 1883 third iteration). In it, a boat carrying three figures approaches an island where architecture is hollowed out of rock. Death and its realm await inside an impenetrable grove of trees that assumes a central position on the island and within the painting.

By moving between these three textual layers, the paper offers a reading of Great War Island as a site of collapse, an insular place where architecture, landscape, and queer desire enter into relations of indeterminacy and corporeal dissolution.

## FookNote 001: What the Fook[?]

Christo Meyer (National University of Singapore)

Walter Whall Battiss (1906–1982) is widely regarded as a pivotal figure of South African art, particularly through his creation of *Fook Island* (1973–1982), a fictional utopian realm. This imaginary island, with its own inhabitants, alphabet, and currency, can be considered as a critique of the political and social climate of 1970s South Africa. *Fook Island* reflects a desire for artistic and societal escapism, challenged through the lens of art. His integration of anthropological and territorial elements into this project has left a lasting impact on generations of South African artists and architects, despite never been developed as an architectural project.

My ongoing research, titled *Fook Island [Revisited]*, explores translating Battiss’s imaginary *Fook Island* into spatial and architectural constructs. Referring primarily to Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, in parallel with Battiss’s research of rock art, this investigation involves reinterpreting *Fook Island* through theories in philosophy, narratology, and architecture. The research has produced various

drawings that incorporate site-specific commentary and territorial readings. These drawings range in complexity, yet collectively they engage in speculative design to envision *Fook Island*’s spatial constructs. By creating a navigational tool to explore these imagined territories, the research attempts to bridge Battiss’s conceptual world with architectural discourse.

The key argument of this paper is that *Fook Island*, while not originally conceived as an architectural project, can be reimagined through spatial design to offer insights into the relationship between the body and imaginary territories. By developing a navigational tool that facilitates the exploration of *Fook Island*’s fictional spaces, the research explores the intersection between imagination and physical space. The paper not only documents the creation of this tool but also critiques the implications of integrating imaginative constructs into architectural practice, contributing to ongoing discussions on spatial and creative methodologies.

## Peripheral Bodies: On the Frankenstein Periphery

Cameron McEwan (Northumbria University)

Andreas Lechner (University of Technology Graz)

*As there is no surface, the inside and the outside, the container and the contained, no longer have a precise limit; they plunge into a universal depth or turn in the circle of a present which gets to be more contracted as it is filled.* — Gilles Deleuze (1990)

CIAM’s 1951 idea of the “heart of the city,” contributed to the influence of body metaphors in architectural urban thinking. While the heart highlighted the significance of public space and resonated with debates on centrality, identity and public space, the city of today spills into the wilderness. It sprawls unruly along infrastructures, expands, and consumes ever more nature. The heart of the city was a way of thinking the coherent hierarchy of figure and ground, monuments and fabric. Today the metaphor is different: the city is hybrid, diffuse, relational. The city extends into a continuous periphery – suburbs, exurbs, fringes, edges, sprawl, infrastructures, fields, the *terrain vague*.

It is this shift to a Frankenstein body of the periphery that interests us, spatially and formally. We argue that the periphery is now the place and ecology

where most of the global population lives, loves, and often loathes. In this paper we investigate the entanglements of these conditions, their crises, typologies, enclaves, and islands. We ask how such peripheral bodies are reconfigured against collective life – of peripheral subjects and quasi-subjects, of culture and nature-culture, of imagination and infrastructure, of otherness and an ugly beauty.

We consider how the schizophrenics of the periphery can be thought bodily, i.e. architecturally, as the central aim of our theoretical and design research. We argue for ways of further transgressing not only the dichotomies of figure/ground and some of the pairings we reflect on above, but also the networked relativities of field conditions towards an involuted, ecologically informed amalgam of architecture and infrastructure.



## The Unbodying Project

José Vela Castillo (IE University, Madrid))

This proposal is an exploration of ideas about ‘the body’ elaborated by Jean-Luc Nancy in *Corpus* and other texts, touching (and touching is a key here) on the zone of contact between the body(s) of architecture and other body(s), mainly but not exclusively our body (or rather the beloved body). For Nancy, the body is not exclusively the human body: a stone is a body exposed to the outside, just as language is a material body-event. A body is first and foremost an extension, a *spacing* in which existence takes place. And this applies to architecture as well as to humans and non-humans.

This short story touches on the exposed bodies of the beloved (architecture). Memory (archiving and inscription) is proposed as the contact zone between the different bodies of the characters in the story (people, gardens, buildings, cities). The impossibility of both erasing and fully preserving the traces of memory is thus linked to the impossibility of touching the bodies, of penetrating the zone of contact where meaning (and love) happens (and flies away). What is touched always

remains outside the touching. What would it be like to have a body that erases every trace of touching?

The text uses a narrative approach to the question of the body and the corpus of architecture in relation to contemporary thinking about the body. I suggest that the body(s) of architecture and its corpus cannot be addressed without simultaneously addressing our own human body, its corpus, and the myriad of other bodies that make up the corpus of the world. I find that the key question of how we inhabit our bodies as a double that mirrors how we inhabit architecture and the world demands an urgent (and different) response.

## The Body Is the Display: On the Architect-Performer

Alessandro Pasero (Politecnico di Milano)

*[W]hile Ariadne did not build the labyrinth, she was the one who interpreted it; and this is architecture in the modern sense of the term. She achieved this feat through representation; that is to say, with the help of a conceptual device, the ball of thread. We can look at this gift as the “first” transmission of architecture by means other than itself, as architecture’s first reproduction. The thread of Ariadne is not merely a representation [...] of the labyrinth. It is a project, a veritable production, a device that has the result of throwing reality into crisis. — Beatriz Colomina (1988)*

The ball of thread displays through narrative the architecture of the labyrinth elsewhere: the body of architecture lies in the interpretation and the re-representation of it. In ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’ (1979), Rosalind Krauss addresses practice ‘not in relation to a given medium but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms.’ Looking at the body in the expanded field means to relate it with broader dynamics: its *transscularity* refers to the way architecture translates across scales of

time and space. Erasing the distance between the body of work and the body of the author, Alessandro Mendini draws a dragon as a self-portrait (*Io sono un drago*, 2006): the figure is a multi-species creature, whose aim is not design *per se* but rather design as a medium to *communicate*, he states, by learning from other fields and assembling a new operative body.

This paper proposes that it is possible to address architecture relationships through displaying operations – exhibition in a broader sense – as an intermediate space that allows the construction of a new body, one that has a narrative aim. The paper draws from a global panorama of curating and exhibiting architecture to address the “making of” new bodies by displaying others; and to investigate the relationship between the displaying and the displaced: the displacement does not simply represent the body but creates a new one.

## The Call of Things: The Hoarder’s Body that [Is] Matter

Judit Pusztaszeri (University of Brighton)

This paper discusses how bodies matter through the subjectivity of the hoarder, exploring the potential agency of matter through the hoard and the (spatial) relationship between the vibrant matter of the hoard and the body of the hoarder. Following Jane Bennett, I see hoarders as ‘differently abled bodies’ with ‘special sensory access to the call of things.’ There is a blur between the boundaries of body, space, and architecture, where the hoarder forms an intimate bond with non-human bodies, so much so that their body grows together with objects forming an extended skin. There is a shift with the boundaries of self, a visible reversal where things stop being presented in the hoarders’ space and the hoarder becomes the exhibit against the backdrop of her accumulated piles of things.

This skin is a threshold, a porous entity, where the hoarder happens to the world and the world happens to the hoarder, countering cartesian dualism. Aligning with Rosi Braidotti’s interpretation of Gilles Deleuze’s work, the body of the hoard is an inter-

embodiment, an ‘in-folding of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects,’ (Rosi Braidotti), a concept further underpinned by Didier Anzieu’s *Skin-Ego*. I will talk about the role of matter growing into a formation, an all-encompassing landscape no longer elevating individual memories onto a pedestal but creating a complex, idiosyncratic overall terrain for new forms of memory. It is through this terrain that the hoarder navigates, carving space led by the pull of the agency of matter.

This paper offers a view of the hoard as defying ritualized daily life, to explore non-linear modes of “construction” through matter and see architecture as manifold, making space for unscripted action. It explores the margins of bodily experience to question existing and propose alternative spatial practices.

## Architectures for Unseeable Bodies

Kirk Woolford (Norwich University of the Arts)

It's paradoxical that the one thing most re-constructions of the past lack is human bodies. The obvious reason for this is that architecture, buildings, and artefacts can be reconstructed from empirical remains, whereas we have far less direct evidence for how people looked and moved. Clothing can be reconstructed from historical evidence, but soft bodies disintegrate and movement is fleeting. This paper will use loss as a starting point for a discussion of "unseeable bodies," and how architecture, performance practice, and creative technologies can be combined to see and show these bodies. The paper will present case studies of projects developed with architects, archaeologists, musicians, dancers, composers, et al, and be supported with a work-in-progress exhibition of *Jinn Ginnaye: Palmyra* at the Norwich University of the Arts Immersive Visualisation Lab in Havers Road.

The bodies and projects to be presented include: *Lost Bodies: the Motion in Place Platform*, studying how movement, stratigraphy and embodied responses to landscape provide insight into material evidence, and

past architectures. *Phantasmagorical Bodies: Pepper's Ghost*, on how scenography and stage architecture present immaterial bodies in *Ex Machina* by Diller + Scofidio, *Me the Machine* by Imogen Heap, and *The Golden Line* by Michael Price. *Unwanted Bodies: Jinn*, exploring perception and presentation of women's bodies in Islamic culture, and how the architecture of Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island provides a space for communication and exchange. *Unforgettable Bodies: Jinn Ginnaye*, addressing bodies of victims and assailants at the sites of murder and atrocities, Palmyra's link to the concept of *genius loci*, and the architecture used to host an orchestral concert for Vladimir Putin, just months after it was used by ISIS for a performance of the mass execution of 25 prisoners.

## Drawing the Invisible: Visualizing Architectural Proxemics

Glen Wash Ivanovic (Manchester School of Architecture)  
Shinya Miyazaki (Fukuoka University)

Developed by Edward T. Hall in the 1950s and 1960s, proxemics studies the way in which people use and perceive space in relation to others in different social contexts. While the origin of proxemics was mainly defined by social science theories of spatial behavior, in this paper we introduce the idea of Architectural Proxemics, investigating how spaces, bodies and human behavior affect each other. We propose an approach for drawing and visualizing proxemics in different public settings by introducing a methodology for generating maps of people's personal spaces interacting in and with the built environment.

Through a series of case studies in two streets in Shanghai and the traditional Shadow Garden in Suzhou, China, we tested the proposed methodology, creating visualizations of both mapped real-life situations and fictional scenarios. By using a tool called Activity Counter Maps (ACM), we were able to explore and analyze the relationship between the organization of the studied spaces and human behavior, and the interactions which they generate.

The resultant images proved fruitful in depicting and revealing some of these engagements.

Additionally, we present alternative representation techniques for the generated maps, exploring their potential as a quantitative starting point for qualitative, expressive, and exploratory analysis, resulting in images and models that reveal a variety of complexities about the relationship between body and space. Finally, based on the findings of these case studies, we discuss the potential of the introduced methodology and its possible applications for advancing architectural research and design.

## Augmented Dreamscapes: Architecture, Body, and Theater

Ulrike Kuch, Oliver Proske (Bauhaus University, Weimar)

"Imagination" describes the capability of human beings to envision possible worlds through images. The most fruitful time for this imaginative process is during dreaming, when we compose and speculate on the basis of our experiences and what we maybe have perceived, perhaps even unconsciously. In our dreams, we create fantastic architectures and envision ourselves immersed in them (as, for instance, in Christopher Nolan's film *Inception*).

A technology that seems to bring dreams to life is Augmented Reality (AR). While we remain connected to our physical surroundings ("in the world"), virtual elements extend our perception. We interact with these images, our environment, and the individuals around us, allowing us to construct our imaginative experiences.

The proposal is an experiment inspired by a paper that reflects on the cooperation between Oliver Proske and the Berlin based theatre group Nico and the Navigators, and the architecture theoretician Ulrike Kuch regarding the AR theatre piece *Verrat der Bilder (Betrayal of the*

*Images*). We will explore the realms of dream and reality, of imaginative, physical, and virtual architecture, as well as the experience of bodies in different worlds. What is our subconscious image of a fantastic world? How would we design architecture based on our experience? How do technological tools like Magic Leap glasses allow us to work with our imagination? Finally, what concept of body and architecture do we embody while experiencing Augmented Reality? What is our body?

The paper presents a reflection on this process in the form a glossary that establishes terminology and shows the interweaving between terms, as well as the relationships across theory and practice, architecture and theatre, reality and imagination – all revolving around "the" body.

## Fluctuating Bodies of Care: Nurturing Mutual Care among Human and Non-Human Bodies

Aslıhan Şenel, Bihter Almaç (Istanbul Technical University)

Our research takes off from how a women's hammam provides intimacy and relationality among a more-than-human conglomeration of bodies. We try to re-imagine traditional women's hammam as a feminine and more-than-human care space, a wet and hot undoing of architecture, where care nurtures in instances of vulnerabilities, inconsistencies, and irrationalities. Such an understanding of the hammam renders its architecture beyond dualities like private-public, personal-collective, intimate-formal, and material-immaterial. Being aware of the possible oppressive social-spatial practices that impose gender roles and bodily norms in a hammam, we propose that the care practices in the traditional hammam allow agency for bodies and the building.

Drawing from feminist theory, and in particular from its commitment to the material-discursive figurations of the body, we argue that the traditional understanding of architecture tends to suppress material and immaterial qualities that display disorderliness and change. This suppression is often paralleled with

how female bodies stay unmarked. Yet we draw attention to those insignificant, messy, irrational qualities of the traditional hammam, and try to trace them in contemporary places of female body care, to find possibilities of emancipatory embodied caring experiences. We speculate on how feminine care spaces of traditional hammams can provide new imaginations for nurturing mutual care among human and non-human bodies. Our practice, which maneuvers somewhere between a text, a performance, and intimate gestures of architecture, is an ongoing design research around collaborative fabricating, exhibiting, and performing of what we call 'Fluctuating Bodies of Care'. Initially taking place in the context of the Care Pavilion during the London Design Biennale 2023, our practice embraced intimacies between subjects and objects of design through the liquefaction of materials, sticky and slippery contacts between materials and bodies, continuous bodily interaction, incompleteness, fragmentation, dependency among bodies of human, water, heat, etc., and through stories of lived and imagined care practices.

## On Hybrid Bodies: Critical Interfaces that Bridge Architecture and Cyberspace

Manou Van den Eynde (KU Leuven, Brussels)

This paper seeks to integrate the concept of 'hybrid bodies' into architectural discourse by drawing from cyberfeminist perspectives. It explores how digital culture reshapes our understanding of body and space, aiming to incorporate these insights into current architectural paradigms. Emerging technologies and visual media introduce novel representational tools, which now significantly impact architectural design. Architects, although easily seduced by the speed and aesthetics of these digital tools, lack a techno-critical approach to assess the implications, limitations, and ethical issues that these digital technologies present. The digital imagery architects consume, and produce is transformed into 'realised renders,' blurring the boundaries between simulation and physical reality, and rendering our surroundings increasingly hyperreal.

The merging of the digital realm and the physical realm, both in the built environment and the body, presents a phenomenon still poorly understood in architecture. However, researchers and artists in the field of cyberfeminism have investigated the

discriminatory nature of cyber-systems, which reflect societal biases, as well as their emancipatory potential. Moreover, the body has been conceptualized as a hyperobject or a geopolitical territory – a fundamental framework with boundaries imperceptible to the eye. Therefore, to reconceptualize the body, it becomes imperative to rethink space itself.

This paper proposes that the architect's body can become a critical interface in mediating between digital and physical reality – and in understanding how to operate at this intersection. When embracing the dematerialized essence of digital tools, the ultimate interface becomes the human body. This paper establishes the theoretical groundwork for subsequent research-by-design, where wearables, as an extension of the architect's body, investigate the hybrid character of the body and built environment, emerging as a critical interface between physical architecture and cyberspace.

## Mimetic Spaces: Staging Nature at Botanical Gardens

Séverine Marguin, Jamie-Scott Baxter, Inès Gartlinger (Technical University Berlin)

In our contribution we take the figure of the *body* as bodies of botanical knowledge in rapidly changing worlds marked by mass extinction of non-human species, the urgency to decolonize, and advances in digital and biotechnologies. *Matters* are of concern, of fact, and of care. With this, we orientate our concerns toward the concept of space and reconsider what this socio-material category, so central to architectural knowledge, means in times of rapid transformation. Grounded in refiguration theory, we mobilize the idea of *mimetic space* to consider the uncanny relations between matters of fact and fiction in the careful staging of botanical knowledge and the ways in which it inscribes spaces of botanical gardens in Rio de Janeiro, Edinburgh, and Berlin.

Ethnographic site visits, expert interviews, and analytical drawings show to what extent staging stories about Nature reveals a plurality of tensions in these spaces of Nature that we describe as mimetic. The comparison between the gardens allows us to problematize the circulation of Western

techno-scientific botanical knowledge and pin down the ways in which power and (bio)politics are materially inscribed in the spatial experience.

## Fertile Matters: Women's Worldings in Greece's Mineral Springs, 19th Century to Today

Lydia Xynogala (ETH Zurich)

Greece's mineral springs attract women who visit them annually to treat various gynecological ailments, often linked to infertility. In colloquial Greek, the broad term used to indicate disorders of the female reproductive system is *mitrika*. *Mitra* is the womb, while *mitera* is the mother; and thus the medical condition is acoustically very similar to the act of mothering. Infertility has been a matter of social concern in Greece since the 19th century, and an anxious state turned to various remedies to address the issue. This paper discusses the significance of the state-built hydroclinics in locations of mineral springs through a new materialist reading of female bodies and mineral matter.

In the 19th century the first state-built bath building in the island of Kythnos was created by the monarchy as a space for treating the queen's infertility. Aidipsos, a prominent bath town in Evoia with a long tradition of women visitors, is said to be named after the female genitalia (*aidoio* means "vulva"). In 1955, the report on the proposed hydrotherapy building in Aidipsos by the Hydrology Chair at the University of Athens

recommended the construction of rooms for the treatment of gynecological conditions, noting that 'the illnesses that concern the female reproductive system are of great social interest.' The development of healing springs around the country was seen by the state apparatus as an answer to these concerns.

Thinking with Karen Barad, and through the intra-actions of female bodies with minerals in space, this paper revisits spaces for healing in Aidipsos, Kythnos, and other locations in Greece. There, mineral waters and their benefits became matters of community care. Drawing from archival material, field work, oral histories with bathers, and video, I juxtapose scientific and architectural transformations with corporeal memories and the worldings they produced.

## Structuring Spaces for the ‘Organism-that-Persons’: From Merleau-Ponty to Arakawa+Gins

Jonathan Hale (University of Nottingham)

While not directly inspired by the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the work of the New York artist/writer/designer collaborative Arakawa+Gins nevertheless suggests many illuminating connections, especially to the philosopher’s famously complex concept of the primordial *flesh-of-the-world*. For Merleau-Ponty this is the shared fabric of materiality in which we, as bodily entities, participate and remain perpetually enmeshed, despite our attempts to dissociate ourselves from it in the name of a more-or-less illusory sense of independent selfhood. This is also the realm that more recent posthumanist and ‘New Materialist’ thinkers – as well as the *Body Matters* original call for papers – have described as a continuous “network of relational non-fixed entities.”

The paper includes a short series of critical case-studies focusing on built examples from the increasingly architectural later work of Arakawa+Gins, including the metaphorical interior landscapes of the Mitaka Lofts apartments in Tokyo, alongside the literally landscaped ‘Site of Reversible Destiny’ at Yoro Park in Gifu. Each site provides a seductive

arena of affordances for interaction, out of which a sense of space, time, and subjectivity can emerge. As a further elaboration upon these architectural potentialities, I will also briefly analyze a piece of original contemporary performance directly inspired by the work of Arakawa+Gins: *Puzzle Creature* by UK company Neon Dance (2018), whose production process I witnessed directly as an ‘academic-in-residence.’

The paper asks to what extent a designed environment might support the emergence of embodied subjectivity – what was once described by Arakawa+Gins as the process by which “an organism persons” (Gins and Arakawa 2002). Both sets of works – the designs of Arakawa+Gins and the choreography of Neon Dance – offer provocative examples of what Merleau-Ponty described as the ‘solicitations of the world’: hyper-architectural environments that invite bodily engagement with a view to enhancing the perceptual spectrum – and even extending the temporal span – of human life.

## The Status of the Body in Purist Plasticity

Marko Ristić (University of Belgrade)

This paper explores the notion of plasticity within the discourse of Purism, reflecting on how the meaning of corporeality inherent in this notion relates to the movement’s key premises. In the context of neo-classicist tendencies in post-First World War French art, Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Édouard Jeanneret emphasized the significance of plastic reality as the sole domain enabling the creation of “pure” art. In their view, neglecting the laws of the physical world leads to an “art of allusions,” where the essence of an artwork is derived not from its plastic base, but from secondary, symbolic conventions.

However, for Ozenfant and Jeanneret, the perspectivism of plastic experience offers only fragmentary knowledge, because it fails to empirically grasp the whole of a plastic entity. They emphasize the necessity of reconstructing “total plasticity,” which becomes possible only through the intellectual organization of primary, experiential cognitions. This represents an intelligible detachment from experiential continuity and the immediacy of the body. Such activity of the

mind is not aimed at diverging from the physics of plasticity, but rather at expressing its universal laws beyond the mere appearance of plastic objects.

The process of *purification*, understood as the transition from an empirical to a formal approach to plastic reality, will be used to explain the ambiguity of the notion of plasticity in Purist discourse. The movement’s approach to the question of the body will be analyzed by starting with the polysemy of the substantive *la plastique* used by Jeanneret and Ozenfant, which, in addition to referring to modelling and sculpture, also introduces meanings such as “the form of the body.” In this context, the paper will seek to explain how such an “organic” view of the body relates to the movement’s evolutionary definitions of the purification of corporeal objects.

## From Objects to Bodies: Redefining Architectural Agency

Jennifer Raum (Bauhaus University, Weimar)

Architectural theory has long centered on the relationship between the human body and architecture: the body traverses, inhabits, and observes architectural spaces. Rooted in ideals such as the Vitruvian Man or Francesco di Giorgio’s ‘City as Man’, and further shaped by Enlightenment thought, the (male) human body has served as the idealized model for the organization, structure, and aesthetics of architecture. We have anatomically fixated the object “architecture,” alienated it from its environment, and thus positioned architecture in an artificial, seemingly rational state – one in which seemingly lifeless architecture serves the needs of the living.

This paper advocates for extending architecture’s traditionally human-oriented lifespan in order to acknowledge its impact on our changing environmental conditions. A body-oriented ontology could free architecture from the confines of the anatomical theatre and the spectator-object or subject-object dichotomy, concepts that have long dominated architectural theory but are now insufficient to meet the challenges posed by the climate crisis. Karen Barad’s concept of *intra-actions* and Stacey Alaimo’s

*transcorporeality*, as well as other posthumanist and new materialist perspectives, maintain that it is becoming increasingly urgent to move beyond structural or human-centered phenomenological interpretations of the architectural body. Climate science, already operating with broader temporal dimensions, could expand the architectural vocabulary.

The inhabitable layer of the Earth’s surface may indeed be remarkably thin, as Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel have pointed out. Yet, the Earth is also incredibly dense and teeming with bodies – both human and non-human – engaged in constant exchange with one another. Emphasising the interrelationships between bodies within a processual ontology could potentially lead to more dynamic and interconnected practices in architecture, where the built environment is viewed as an active participant in the Earth’s ecological systems. Such an approach acknowledges the ecological imbalances caused by architecture, imbalances we have often externalized by framing architecture merely as an object.

## Beyond the Evental: Body, Architecture, and Culture at the Sharjah Architecture Triennale 2023

Jasmine Shahin (Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation)

The paper investigates the effects of architectural experience on 80 design students’ understanding of UAE tradition and its embodied meanings. It is based on the students’ observations and responses to a visit to the Sharjah Architectural Triennale 2023, which housed a diversity of artistic installation in three different architectural settings, an old boys school, an old marketplace and an old slaughterhouse. The paper is grounded in phenomenological hermeneutics in the way that it seeks to position architectural experience within a set of dialogical relationships between the students and their direct traditional milieu.

The paper investigates the effects of the Sharjah Triennale’s architectural setting on the perception, participation and experience of the students, as disclosed by their own descriptions and candid photographs, questioning whether and how the event had any transformative effect on the students’ understanding of the event’s rather “ordinary” space. The paper analyses the students’ responses as provided through a questionnaire, and the photographic

content they captured during the trip. The paper argues that while the Sharjah Triennale 2023 did indeed succeed in fulfilling much of its promises in creating a universal space for artistic expression, its architectural settings failed to deliver an embodied experience of traditional spaces or effectively propose future prospects for their social reuse. The investigation suggests that such drawback is resultant from the inconsistency permeating current Arabian definitions that position transience and change on a similar scale, ignoring the temporal frames encircling each of them. The paper attempts to portray this through a phenomenological hermeneutic framework, which takes for its subject Martin Heidegger’s notion of ‘boding forth’ and Hans-George Gadamer’s trilogy of ‘Play/Symbol/Festival’ as means for discovering the different body/space relationships that affect the structures and patterns of architectural experience.



## Collective Housing for Prisoners: The Over-Amstel Penitentiary by Pot & Pot-Keegstra

Elena Martínez-Millana (Delft University of Technology)

This paper critically examines how Dutch architect Jacoba Froukje Pot-Keegstra (1908-1997) and her husband Johan Willem Hindrik Cornelis Pot (1909-1972) designed collective housing for prisoners. From the beginning of their architectural practice, they specialised in developing housing for ‘target groups’ of people who live alone and collectively, such as the elderly and the young. The design of collective housing for prisoners was the culmination of their career devoted to non-family collective living and it reflects a wider debate about what housing is, i.e. the extent to which domestic services can be shared.

This paper points out that this theme has not been given sufficient attention in architectural historiography and it analyses the Penitentiary Institution Over-Amstel in Amsterdam, commonly known as Bijlmerbajes (1972-1978). This prison was developed at a time when the Netherlands was at the forefront of thinking about how prisoners should be housed in a more humane way, being an outstanding example

of implementing new policies to facilitate their rehabilitation. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Pot-Keegstra, the first woman architect to graduate from the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam (1936), is also arguably the first woman to design a prison.

This high-rise prison shows the intertwining of prison and housing architecture in the 1970s; its spatial arrangements did not differ much from those of the typical residential floor plans and did not even include bars. Before its opening, it already had many detractors, both from society at large and from specialists, with numerous protests. Its recent demolition, except for the tower inhabited by women prisoners, comes as no surprise (2019). This paper does not let this project fall into oblivion, analyzing the most relevant aspects of its contributions, and emphasizing the domestic spatial conditions that shaped the lives of the prisoners.

## Dynamic Interactions: The Fluid Nature of Space-Bodies

Esra Yüksek, Aslıhan Şenel (Istanbul Technical University)

The paper explores the concept of *space-body*, a hybrid or cyborg-like entity that represents the dynamic and relational nature of spaces as they are continuously reconstructed and experienced. It examines how space is shaped through interactions among various actors and actions, and how these interactions contribute to the creation of spatial ecologies.

The study focuses on two distinct spaces: the Tarlabası Solidarity Kitchen, a community kitchen in a diverse Istanbul neighborhood, and the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, a long-established institution. By analyzing these spaces, we aim to illustrate how space-bodies are constructed and transformed through the engagement of actors and actions within them.

The Tarlabası Community Kitchen exemplifies a fluid space-body that evolves through its diverse and changing practices and relationships. It serves as a site where immigrants gather, interact, and build a collective identity, continuously shaping its spatial ecology. The Istanbul Archaeology Museum, despite its static

physical structure, shifts in its space-body through the actions and narratives of its visitors and staff, reflecting subjective interpretations and experiences.

This study analyses the temporal practices of the community kitchen and the museum, the changes their bodies undergo, and their different states of being. In the process, it endeavors to create temporal images of the space-body with multimedia mappings made of photographs, sketches, and texts. With the specificity of the actions in these two spaces and moments, instantaneous recipes of the space-body emerge, and situated knowledge is produced.

## Bodies, Buildings, and the Meaningful Experience of Space: The Case of Nicosia, Cyprus

Christina Kleanthous Papademetriou (National Technical University of Athens)

Architecture is more than just buildings; it reflects the dynamic relationship between people and their surroundings. To fully grasp this interaction, we must explore the cultural and psychological dimensions shaping people’s experiences of space. The human connection with architecture extends beyond the physical realm – it is emotional, psychological, and sensory. Sensory perception plays a crucial role in shaping our individual experiences, yet existing research lacks a holistic framework that captures these complex relationships.

This study uses Nicosia’s Old Town and its residents – differing in age, gender, culture, and profession – as a primary case study. Participants were asked to contrast the buildings they grew up in with those they frequently experienced in Old Nicosia. This approach highlights an intersection of neuropsychology and architecture, revealing how human evolution, language, spatial navigation, memory and imagination interconnect with our perceptions and behaviors

within physical spaces. Employing interpretative phenomenological analysis, the study explores how sensory experiences, and cultural contexts influence our interpretation of space. The goal is to uncover the intricate, contextual aspects of architectural interaction and human experience through a work-in-progress that aims to address the transactional nature of architecture. By focusing on how communities engage with their surroundings, how architecture impacts society is ultimately disclosed. The research aspires to contribute to environmental psychology by presenting a framework that acknowledges not only the perceptual but also the existential and emotional dimensions of our interaction with the built environment.

## Educated Bodies: Three Recent Pedagogical Experiences in Architectural Education

Endriana Audisho, Urtzi Grau (University of Technology Sydney)

Educated Bodies explores the challenges faced by architectural education in the context of recent global shifts, including the urgency to forefront decolonial design methodologies and critical environmental thinking. Amid recent events, including the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and the Deaths in Custody movement in Australia, and in pursuit of a fight against social injustices, many architectural schools have recently undergone a transformation to welcome decolonial design methodologies and practices. The arrival of these discourses has coincided with the urgent call to address the climate crisis. Welcoming these bodies of “the other” and of the “other-than-human” into architecture schools has encouraged pedagogies that have realigned the field of architecture with its socio-political dimension.

A ghostly presence connects decolonial desires and the new climatic regime to the continual redefinition of the field of architecture. Much as colonialism is founded on extractive practices on the body of the other, the climate emergency is grounded in

modernity’s inability to consider other-than-human bodies. Bodies also define every reincarnation of architecture. Whether it is called user, rendered people, subject, inhabitant, masses, Vitruvian man, modular, scale-figure, or cyborg, each version of architecture designs a body, or the body designs its architecture. Our case is no different. Welcoming the other or the other-than-human into architectural education not only requires a welcoming institution; it requires to re-imagine it, to redesign it. This transformation is already happening – not by chance far from the usual centers – and has engendered new pedagogical models.

This paper showcases three recent experiences that have imagined pedagogies for these “other” bodies: the African Futures Institute, the wave of Pedagogies of Solidarity emerging around the attacks on Palestine, and the intermittent *La Escuela Nunca y otros Futuros*. By examining these recent architectural pedagogies, this paper aims to prompt transformation in architectural education, locating the classroom as the catalyst for disciplinary change.

## A Temporary Architecture: Scoring, Listening, Touch, and Breath

Ben McDonnell (Norwich University of the Arts / Goldsmiths University of London)

This paper draws on the author's practice(s) of composing with graphic transcriptions, scores, music making and teaching, to position music composition and performance as a temporary architecture that can make space for intra-actions of bodies, spaces and materials. The presentation will focus on a series of graphic scores which draw on the body as a metric for enabling musical performance, particularly focusing on breath and touch.

The scores are studies in working together both with and within the material of the space the work is performed in. The compositions de-center individual virtuosity and require little a priori knowledge. They don't demand a particular orchestration or ask for a high level of technical fluidity. Instead, they propose an open and adaptive structure, while still supporting those working within it. The intentional ambiguity of this form of notation gives space for interpretation, depending on the particular circumstances of the performance. After the performance the structure ceases to exist, it can be renegotiated, unfurled and articulated to better suit

those inhabiting it next time it is performed. Through the post-human philosophy of Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad, the author positions performances of his work as a site for dialogic discussion between participants (audience and performers) and the materiality of the space the work is performed in. Drawing on Dennis Atkinson's (2022) work the paper suggests that the dialogic intra-actions of the performance are 'not simply a space in which separate characters interact with blocks of established knowledge but an evolving assemblage of practice.' Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythm Analysis* (2016) posits rhythm as a tool for societal analysis. This work extrapolates further, asking what other musical qualities of the 'evolving assemblage of practice' could be – what could the timbre or harmonic structure (for example) of bodies, space and material in relation be?

## Blurring Bodies in Construction: Women Builders and Makeshift Environments in Zeytinburnu, Istanbul

Arzu Kusanlan (Architectural Association, London)

This paper focuses on the blurred boundaries between *her* bodily matter and architectural material, revealing the intertwinement of shelter-making and body-making instigated by migrant women involved in the construction of buildings in the Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul during the 1950s and '60s. The particularity of such a material-corporeal building culture persists in today's Zeytinburnu, evident in the material-constructional relation between its residents and the characteristic urban grain. The paper reevaluates the contribution of migrant women builders, who have been almost entirely unacknowledged in Istanbul's urban history and the developmental accounts of the Zeytinburnu district, by reconsidering construction processes: how these women coexist with architectural materials, how their actions shape matter, the techniques used, and how the buildings they create become a part of their bodies.

Drawing from my research on migrant women who built collectively with their families and neighbours while on the move, this paper evidences their modes

of blurring bodily actions with the assembly of environments, emerging through their immediate and tacit knowledge of transformative matters. Even if they came from a highly patriarchal society, there was no social division during the construction. These women changed the buildings over time by bringing different materials to a new assembly as a form of collaging. Their house, made and shared together, grew over time like a womb, thus blurring the assumed distinction between construction and inhabitation.

Work opportunities in factories after the Second World War led to a large migration from rural areas of Anatolia to Istanbul. Using leftovers from the textile industry in Zeytinburnu, she worked with the colours and properties of the threads to transform carpets, curtains, and different kinds of covers. Often done rapidly overnight in a bid to remain, and often being moved as authorities and rules change, the temporal-material dynamics of living in construction, inhabiting while transforming, and building while moving are reflected in the blurring of the builder and building bodies.

## Sensing Space: Environmental Qualities and Human States

Veronika Mayerböck (Independent)

The 'Sensing Space' method evolved from several choreographic and performative practices collected over the past 20 years. Understanding atmospheres as interaction of 'environmental qualities and human states' (Peter Zumthor), it takes a somatic approach to architecture at the interface between body and built space, exploring the role of body, movement, (inter)action and senses during the process of attunement to a built environment.

The paper describes the method's multiple layers across enactive perception, observation, and reflection that connect various states of bodily awareness with reflective practices bridging sensation and its abstraction processes into spoken language, writing and mapping of experienced qualities in taxonomies. This allows to challenge perception and reflection of made experiences along guided tasks on (inter)action, perception, improvisation and navigation in space. Fostering multisensory experiences leads to multimodal insights, calibration of focus and awareness, resolving boundaries, discovery of unfamiliar perspectives,

and a more intuitive response to stimuli. It's about connecting on a deeper level through feeling and sensing rather than thinking space as a rational concept. Orientated along principles of 4E cognition, this practice has been applied in teaching it as a sort of preparation for embodied design and design thinking in lighting and architecture education.

Created for "unlocking" minds and opening our bodies for observation, fostering attunement to our environment in a sense of "empathy", the method aims to connect participants with the surrounding and its atmospheric qualities by engaging all our senses, to foster direct judgement away from vision and an enhanced proprioceptive way of attention.

'Sensing Space' happens in the "now," increasing our threshold of sensitivity for different qualities in architectural environments and empowering the body to reconnect with our built environment allowing a more empathic approach to design.

## Embodied Materials: Integrating Six Viewpoints Methodology into the Architectural Design Process

Carina Rose (Independent)

The paper provides an overview of the Six Viewpoints theory, and investigates the integration of experiential embodied movement practice into the architectural design process, exploring the potential of this interdisciplinary approach to develop ecological and social sensitivity and innovation in design. Six Viewpoints is an improvisation movement language and method for creative composition in space developed in the 1970s avant-garde arts scene in New York by choreographer, dancer and teacher Mary Overlie. The Six Viewpoints or "materials" (SSTEMS) – Space, Shape, Time, Movement, Emotion and Story – provide 'the lexicon of daily experience' from which to make art, in a horizontal and non-hierarchical language, where SSTEMS are equal partners in creation, and the artist is "observer/participant" rather than "creator/originator." Conceived for the performance arts, the method provides a distinctive educational and creative framework to explore the interplay between the body, space, and design. Overlie developed guided movement exercises with SSTEMS to engage the individual "observer/

participant" body in its shared agency of creation with other bodies, other matter and the environment. In these improvisational instructions, each material can be isolated and reintegrated in creative combinations to discover new relationships that encourage a surrender to our intrinsic state of continuity and co-composing where everything and everyone is a collaborator. Particular to Overlie's method is what she calls the "interrogation of the materials," which has much in common with the architecture design process. As architects, we work with SSTEMS often without the awareness of how our manipulation of them affects our body and impacts the planet.

My current research, based on 10 years of training and practice with Six Viewpoints as a movement artist, investigates the synergy between these practices and an experiential embodied movement and psychophysical practice for the architectural design process integrating this methodology.

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