



MEDIATING MATTER(S)

ARCHITECTURE + BODILY AFFECTS

**The school occupies unceded
non-Treaty, Algonquin
Anishinaabeg territory.
Acknowledging the legacies
and atrocities that this
occupation implies, we are
committed to transforming
our spaces, programs, and
practices through honourable
and respectful engagement
with Indigenous peoples,
land-based knowledges,
and holistic approaches
to architectural and urban
design. We take seriously
our responsibilities as
architectural educators,
historians, practitioners,
and students. Therefore, we
seek to engage with social,
political, and environmental
concerns critically and
inventively through our
programs, community-
engagement studios,**

research labs, design-build projects, and funded Directed Studies Abroad opportunities. Our conversations encompass ecological care and collective well-being, with sustainability and social justice at the forefront. Through collaborative learning and research, we work earnestly to serve and build trust with diverse communities, near and far. Our aspiration is to cultivate creativity, hope, and resilience together.

Anne Bordeleau
Director, ASAU
Carleton University



Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada



Mediating Matter(s): Architecture and Bodily Affects is the third edition of the triennial symposium series **Agora**, organized by Carleton Research | Practice of Teaching | Collaborative (CRIPTIC).

CRIPTIC (<https://criptic.org>) is formed by PhD candidates and students, Post-Professional Master (MAS) students, and faculty from the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. CRIPTICollaborative, founded in 2019, pursues research in the humanities with a diverse research agenda that reflects the interests of the collaborators through the Practice of Teaching in academic settings in architecture.

Held over the course of October 23–24 2025, the international symposium is collaboratively organized and convened by Dr. Federica Goffi (CRIPTIC Chair), PhD students Ushma Thakrar and Ahmed Elsherif (CRIPTIC Co-coordinators, Events), and Dr. Menna Agha (CRIPTIC Faculty Advisor).

The event is complemented by three masterclasses for doctoral students that are held by the keynote speakers, Dr. Samia Henni (McGill University, Canada), Dr. Aya Nassar (Durham University, UK), and Dr. María González Pendás (Cornell University, US), the day before the start of the symposium.

The exhibition, *Performing Colonial Toxicity* by Dr. Samia Henni, is organized in collaboration with Dr. Menna Agha.

Mediating Matter(s): Architecture and Bodily Affects is made possible by the support of the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism (ASAU), the Carleton Immersive Media Studio, the Faculty of Engineering and Design (FED), and Carleton University. We are grateful to our sponsors, which include the Ottawa Regional Society of Architects (ORSA), and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC). A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connection Grant also supports the event.

We acknowledge Dr. Audrey Girouard, Associate Dean Research, FED and Philam Nguyen Faculty Research Facilitator, FED for their advice while preparing the SSHRC Connection Grant proposal.

We are grateful for the support of Anne Bordeleau, Director, ASAU throughout the preparations for this event. We also thank ASAU Digital Craft Technician Steve MacLeod for audiovisual support, Kyle Bustin for the exhibition installation, and Janet Perras, Jenelle Williams and Holly Klein-Swormink for their administrative support. Our gratitude goes to Maria Cook, ASAU, CU, Christopher Moise, Chair, ORSA, the Ontario Architectural Association (OAA), and Giovanna Boniface (Chief

Implementation Officer, RAIC, for their support in disseminating news of this event. We thank the Carleton graduate students who, in different roles, supported the realization of Agora III.

The convenors' gratitude extends to the forty scholars worldwide who acted as blind peer reviewers. Their work has been crucial in ensuring the selection of papers.

Finally, we are honoured that seventeen scholars worldwide are joining us in this event along with the keynote speakers, Dr. Samia Henni, Dr. Aya Nassar, and Dr. María González Pendás.

The Co-convenors of *Mediating Matter(s)*
Agora III Symposium | October 23–24, 2025

Federica Goffi | Ushma Thakrar
Ahmed Elsherif | Menna Agha

PROGRAM

Thursday, October 23

9h30 **REGISTRATION + COFFEE**

10h00 **WELCOME**

10h30 **Keynote lecture** **THE ELEMENTAL CITY** pages 5–6
Introduced by Menna Agha
Geopoetics of the Urban in Revolutionary Flux
Aya Nassar

11h40 **Session I** **MNEMONIC MATTER(S)** pages 8–14
Moderated by Anne Bordeleau

11h45 **Listening to Landscape**
Thi Phuong-Trâm Nguyen

12h05 **Homesick: Architecture as Malady**
Camila Mancilla Vera [Zoom]

12h25 **Roads Architecture: Enacting Bodily Practices of Resistance and Repair**
Alisha Kapoor [Zoom]

12h45 **Session roundtable**

13h00 **LUNCH**

14h00 **Session II** **PARTICULATE MATTER(S)** pages 16–24
Moderated by Ushma Thakrar

14h05 **Dust Ecologies: Bodies, Labour, and Environmental Collapse in the Cement Industry**
Vyta Pivo

14h25 **Embodied Deficit: Bauxite Waste, Energy Depletion, and Unbreathability in Jamaica**
Valeria Guzmán Verri

14h45 **Breathing in Dust: Preserved Particulates of the Alaska Highway**
Desirée Valadares

15h05 **States of Sulphur: The Material Movements of Vancouver's Yellow Stockpiles**
Alina Debyser

15h25 **Session roundtable**

15h45 **COFFEE**

16h15 **Keynote** **COLONIAL TOXICITY** pages 25–26
Introduced by Ahmed Elsherif
Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture in the Sahara
Samia Henni

17h25 **Vernissage** **PERFORMING COLONIAL TOXICITY**
Samia Henni

18h30 **SPEAKERS' DINNER**

Friday, October 24

REGISTRATION 9h30

pages 28–36

GENDERED MATTER(S)

Session III

10h00

Moderated by Menna Agha

Liquid Closets, Evaporated Bodies 10h05
Evan Pavka

Bad Enough Feminist: A Reflection on the 10h25
‘Crisis of Democracy’ from the Point of View of a
Political Economy of Urban Space (The Special
Case of the Techno-Capitalism Adaptation of
Caring Spaces)
Beatriz V. Toscano

The House of the ‘Good Man’: Masculinity, 10h45
‘Civilization,’ and Domesticity in Brazil
(1870–1920)
Pedro Beresin Schleder Ferreira [Zoom]

‘Third World Women,’ First World Violence: 11h05
Making Homeplace in Zürich Between the 1980s
and 2010
Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk [Zoom]

Session roundtable 11h25

LUNCH 12h00

pages 38–43

STRATAL MATTER(S)

Session IV

13h00

Moderated by Ahmed Elsherif

Cross-Sections of a Stratified Ground: 13h05
The Red Earth Buried, Extracted, Shaped,
Fired, Discarded
Oya Yeşim Armağan Atacan

Along the Seams of Global Exchanges: 13h25
Lime, Cement, and Global Construction
Regimes Along the India-Bangladesh Border
Samarth Vachhrajani

Gold Mining and Its Legacies 13h45
Merve Bedir [Zoom]

Session roundtable 14h05

pages 45–46

CONCRETE COSMOLOGIES

Keynote

14h25

Introduced by Federica Goffi

Bodies and Colonialities of Labour in the
American Construction Site
María González Pendás

COFFEE 15h25

15h40 Introduced by Federica Goffi	Session V LABOUR MATTER(S) pages 48–54
	15h45 Thermoplastic, Movement, and Markings: Labour as an Infrastructure of the Street in Hong Kong Sony Devabhaktuni [Zoom] 16h05 Embodied Spaces: The Resistance of Bailundo’s Constructions in the Contemporary Built Environment Yolana Lemos [Zoom] 16h25 Global Tools: The Architect as a Constructor Eleonora Antoniadou [Zoom] 16h45 Session roundtable
17h15 Moderated by Ahmed Elsherif Ushma Thakrar Menna Agha + Federica Goffi	Roundtable MEDIATING MATTER(S)

CALL FOR PAPERS

MEDIATING MATTER(S) ARCHITECTURE + BODILY AFFECTS

Mediating Matter(s) seeks to unpack, contest, and subvert normative relationships between matter and bodies within architectural practice and discourse. This call asks: How does the mediation of matter(s) through architecture and by architects (broadly understood) normalize certain modes of being while undermining others? Expanding contemporary discussions on how the scales, movements, animacy,¹ and vibrancy² of matter unevenly affect and act on, through, and between diverse bodies as well as how such bodies are objectified, thingified,³ reduced, and transformed into a labor force, our goal is to engage in a conversation that probes architecture's complicity in rendering "some beings as more human than others,"⁴ and marking all of us who "cohabit in the space of the undercommons,"⁵ as "ontologically empty."⁶

The aims of Mediating Matter(s) are twofold: to explore how architecture's "orderly arranging of materials and bodies"⁷ affirm the discipline's violent legacies of exclusion and how bodies that fall beyond dominant norms of the human disrupt these configurations through non-normative entanglements with matter. This call hopes to bring together work from a broad range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to explore the intersections of architecture and urbanism with critical new materialism and colonial, subaltern, disability, queer, gender, sexuality, Black, and Indigenous studies, and welcomes papers that respond to the following topics:

ON

What are the effects of architecture's organizing of matter on various bodies? In what ways have architecture's material flows inscribed colonial, racist, sexist, and ableist legacies on and into the surface and substrata of the earth?⁸ How have architectural practices of material sourcing, extraction, construction, and discard reshaped the bodies of those who physically enact these processes? In what ways do constructed differences between the bodies of workers affect and disrupt assemblages of labor and architecture?

THROUGH

How do architectural material and architecturally generated matter unevenly enter and traverse through diverse bodies? How do flows and transformations of particulate matter within and through surfaces and subsurfaces of bodies materialize and/or disrupt the myths of hierarchical differences of being? How does architecture reconfigure atmospheric and environmental matter to support normative modes of being and hinder

1

Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).

2

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)

3

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1950), 42.

4

Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Humanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 4.

5

Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), 6.

6

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World* (New York: New York University Press, 2021), 1.

7

Achille Mbembe, *Brutalism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024), XII.

8

Kathryn Yusoff, "Inhuman Matters IV: Modernity, Urbanism, and the Spatial Fix of Whiteness," in *Geologic Life: Inhuman Intimacies and the Geophysics of Race* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024), 401–437.

those praxes that exist outside of its logic? How does architecture facilitate or hinder the flow of (toxic) matter through varying bodies, producing narratives that maintain, reproduce, and/or disrupt dominant onto-epistemologies? How does architecture orchestrate the transformation, depletion, and/or negation of bodies?

BETWEEN

How have architectural assemblages of matter mediated relationships between human and non-human beings? In what ways has architecture directed flows of matter to sever connectivity and affinity between diverse bodies? What solidarities have been formed around matter and working with matter, and what forms of bodily intimacy with matter have disrupted the exclusionary legacies of architecture? In what ways have non-normative modes of relationality or kinship between all those who live in “the undercommons”⁹ altered the flows of architecture materiality and matter?

INTO

What have been the roles of architects and architecture media and representation in inventing, accepting, and resisting less-than-human labour practices by which some beings have been transformed into a workforce? How have representations of architecture communicated with and presumed the existence of a dehumanized and de-skilled labour force? What is the difference between a tool and an instrument, and what transforms a maker into a labourer? Which industries of architecture have relied on labour (de-humanized, de-skilled, or otherwise), and what are the mechanisms and the processes of invisibilization of labour by which it remains undervalued in architecture—as if drawings translated themselves into buildings and the lines that separate design and construction ended within construction drawings, details, and specifications?

⁹ Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe and Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), 6.

THE ELEMENTAL CITY

GEOPOETICS OF THE URBAN IN REVOLUTIONARY FLUX

AYA NASSAR

Keynote lecture
Thursday October 22, 10h30
Introduced by Menna Agha

Durham University
United Kingdom



Azza Ezzat, Route 10 (Detail), 2025.
© Azza Ezzat.

In this talk, I ask what an elemental poetics of the city might feel or look like by developing a notion of an elemental poetics of the urban. Drawing on independent films from the Middle East and North Africa, I want to trace how these renditions employ the elemental geographies of the urban (earth, water, fire, air, dust, cement, etc.) in approaching their city as revolutionary subjects. I understand the films (and similar accounts) as poetic experiments of approaching the city during a revolutionary decade. Yet, they do not foreground the revolution, and they step away from the impulse to document and preserve the revolts. Through developing the notion of an elemental poetics of the urban, or the elemental city, my aim is two-fold. First, I want to approach the city through its elemental geographies to probe its political ecologies in a way that troubles the tension between the built and the environmental inherent in the term built. Second, I want to reflect on the material, affective, and poetic entanglements that make up the city as the subject admits a revolution. My suggestion here is that this poetics disinvests from foregrounding a resistant subject (or what might we expect a resistant subject to look like) without giving up on the geographies of the revolutionary city.

Aya Nassar is an Assistant Professor of Human Geography at Durham University. She is an interdisciplinary scholar in between Politics, Urban and Political Geography, and Middle East studies. She writes about questions of memory, archiving, (geo)poetics of space, infrastructure, and affective and material aspects of cities. Her research has focused on post-colonial/post-independence Cairo, the aesthetics and poetics used to represent and depict Arab cities, and space and memory work in Egypt.

MNEMONIC MATTER(S)
revisits the question of
memory in architectural
culture, yet, lets it oscillate
between visual, sonic,
oceanic, corporeal, and
affective rhythms. At a time
when architecture continues
to racially orchestrate the
exhaustion, depletion, and
negation of bodies, the
papers in this session dwell
on counter gestures and
mnemonic instances of
potentiality, embodiment, and
intimacy forged through and
around matter.

Mnemonic Matter(s)

Thursday, October 23, 11h40 to 13h00

Thursday, 11h40

Session introduction

Anne Bordeleau

Thursday, 11h45

Listening to Landscape

Thi Phuong-Trâm

Thursday, 12h05

Homesick: Architecture as Malady

Camila Mancilla Vera

Thursday, 12h25

Roads Architecture: Enacting Bodily
Practices for Resistance and Repair

Alisha Kapoor

Thursday, 12h45

Session roundtable

Moderated by Anne Bordeleau

LISTENING TO LANDSCAPE

THI PHUONG-TRÂM NGUYEN

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 11h45

Université de Montréal +
Université de Québec à Montréal
Canada



Émile Gsell, View of the flagtower and junks from across the Saigon River, Cochinchina (now Vietnam), between 1865 and 1867. Collection Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, PH1981:0589:070.

The “Listening to Landscape” project aims to build new historical narratives around images, sounds, and landscapes. The research uses the event of transliteration of the Vietnamese language to imagine a place of exchange acknowledging and recognizing the distance between the known and the unknown, the projected and the remembered. During the seventeenth century, the Portuguese Jesuit Francisco de Pina (1585–1625) took part in the transliteration of the Vietnamese logographic language to the Latin script. The transliteration involved the transformation of the language structure, inherited from the Chinese characters, where each word was a drawn character, into a phoneme structure based on units of sound. While the signification remains, can the exchange between image and sound reveal other forms of meaning and lead to the idea of a shared imaginary? The transliteration of the Vietnamese language was a key moment in the development and the colonial history of the country. Can part of the lost heritage in the transformation of language take shape anew? I argue that the passage from image to sound in language possesses a resonance in space. The research title is drawn from Tina Camp’s book, *Listening to Images*, in which she reflects on the role of archival images and questions what kind of voice they can have today.

Within her research for the “sonic frequencies” in archival images, she questions “modalities of perceptions, encounter, and engagement,” where “listening to images” is a space-making gesture.¹

¹
Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 3.

This research engages in archival research and the practice of filmmaking and sound-making to explore the intricate relationship between landscape, sound, visual, and spatial culture in Vietnam and Portugal. The Vietnamese filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-hà wrote about the idea of travelling trans-culturally as “[l]iving at the borders means that one constantly threads the fine lines between positioning and de-positioning.”² Vietnam and Portugal are two narrow and linear countries set against a continent and facing an infinite horizon: can their seascape situation act as a metaphor for the dialectical relation between image and sound and draw out a shared visual and sonic language for the felt to discuss contemporary issues about migration and displacements? The search across multiple forms and temporalities blurs the borders between different forms of knowledge to find a new sonic and spatial vocabulary for kinship. Can we listen to images as we listen to landscapes? Can the act of listening to foreign sounds tame distances to find what we can hold in common?

²
Trinh T. Minh-hà, *Elsewhere, Within Here: Immigration, Refugeesim, and the Boundary Event* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 54.

Thi Phuong-Trâm Nguyen is a trained architect in Canada and holds an MA in Architectural History and Theory from McGill University. She is currently teaching studio and drawing at Université de Montréal and UQÀM. Her doctoral research in Architectural Design at The Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL) titled “Anamorphosis | Drawing Spatial Practices” addresses the temporality of the gesture of looking by operating within and beyond the field of architectural representation to question our relation to image-making and thinking across history. Her practice-led research work explores different modes of attentiveness to the perceived to build a spatial practice through drawing, filmmaking, and writing.

HOMESICK

ARCHITECTURE AS MALADY

CAMILA MANCILLA VERA

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 12h05

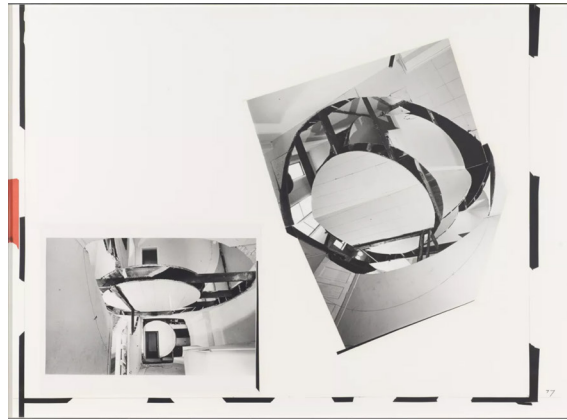
University of Nebraska—Lincoln
United States



Gordon Matta-Clark, *Circus—The Caribbean Orange*, 1978. Enlarged Cibachrome (silver dye-bleach) print, 100.3 x 75.9 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, object no. 373.1998.

Circus—The Caribbean Orange was exhibited in *The Shaping of New Visions: Photography, Film, Photobook* (16 April 2012 – 29 April 2013). In this collage, Matta-Clark activates the human presence within the space and applies coloured tape to highlight—rather than conceal—the incision. © 2025 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Two types of photo-works illustrating different approaches to the juxtaposition of images. The panel on the left—Gordon Matta-Clark, *Artist's paste-up for Circus* exhibition catalogue, 1978, gelatin-silver prints and coloured masking tape on mat board, 20 × 30 in. (50.8 × 76.2 cm), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of the artist, acc. nos. 2096/696—conceals the boundary between the two photographs to create the illusion of a single, uninterrupted image. In contrast, the panel on the right—Gordon Matta-Clark, untitled celluloid collage for *Circus or The Caribbean Orange*, 1978, cut positive-film strips, coloured gels and tape on clear acetate, c. 11 × 8 ½ in. (28 × 21.5 cm) as measured by the researcher. © Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark researcher. © Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark Archive, May 2024.



1
Frances Richard, *Gordon Matta-Clark: Physical Poetics* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 79.

2
Regarding the idea of “homesickness” in the Modern period see Helmut Illbruck, *Nostalgia: Origins and Ends of an Unenlightened Disease* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 25.

3
Illbruck, *Nostalgia*, 91.

4
Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl, and Bill Sherman, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), 491.

5
Gaston Bachelard, *Earth and Reveries of Will*, trans. Kenneth Haltman (Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications, 2002), 13–25 + 51–52.

Camila Mancilla is an architect, an interdisciplinary artist from Chilean Patagonia, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She earned her PhD from the Washington–Alexandria Architecture Center at Virginia Tech, where her research merged architecture, design, and visual arts through cutting techniques—collage, photomontage, and assemblage—to explore architectural theories and the physical and emotional impact of space. Her work engages themes of memory, identity, and cultural rituals. Exhibited across Europe and the Americas, she has taught in Chile and the US and is a registered architect in Chile, working independently and with various institutions.

The scalpel—that paradoxical instrument of controlled violence—wounds only to heal, cuts only to reveal, destroys only to reconstruct. In the hands of the architect and artist Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978), this surgical metaphor materializes as artistic praxis, transforming architectural cutting and “undoing” into a poetics of absence.¹ His photo strip collages represent a response to absence—both architectural and corporeal—during a critical period following the death of his twin brother, Sebastian Matta, in 1976 and amid his own declining health. This paper examines how these photo-works articulate what might be termed an ‘architecture of homesickness’—a creative reconfiguration of space and memory engaging with questions of loss and embodiment.²

Unlike his earlier architectural interventions, these collages incorporate the human figure, suggesting a search for presence within absence. The methodological analysis focuses on four instruments essential to Matta-Clark’s process: photo strip film as the primary material, the light table as the illuminative substrate, the scalpel as a precision cutting tool, and coloured tape as a visible binding agent. Together, these form what I describe as an ‘alchemical instrumentation’ that enacts a transformative sequence paralleling ancient architectural rituals.

Matta-Clark’s nocturnal sessions of collage-making exemplifies what Helmut Illbruck identifies as nostalgia’s “vacillating semiotic character” that follows “a logic of retroactivity.”³ By deliberately highlighting discontinuities through coloured tape rather than concealing them, Matta-Clark acknowledges the impossibility of seamless reconstruction while asserting the creative potential of fragmentary vision.⁴

The translucent quality of these film collages, requiring illumination to be fully perceived, materializes what Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) terms “material imagination”—a thought emerging through direct engagement with substance and resistance.⁵ These works suggest that homesickness—for lost places, absent others, or one’s diminishing wholeness—need not be merely pathological but can become a creative practice that acknowledges fragmentation while asserting the possibility of meaningful reconfiguration.

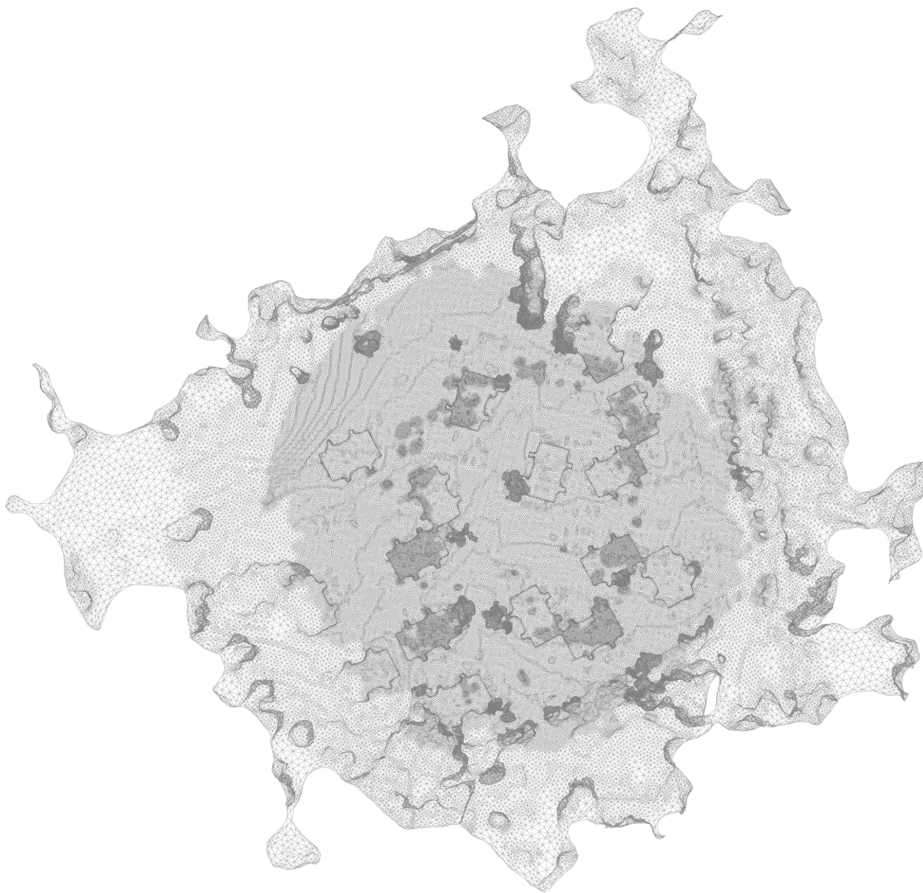
ROADS ARCHITECTURE

ENACTING BODILY PRACTICES FOR RESISTANCE AND REPAIR

ALISHA KAPOOR

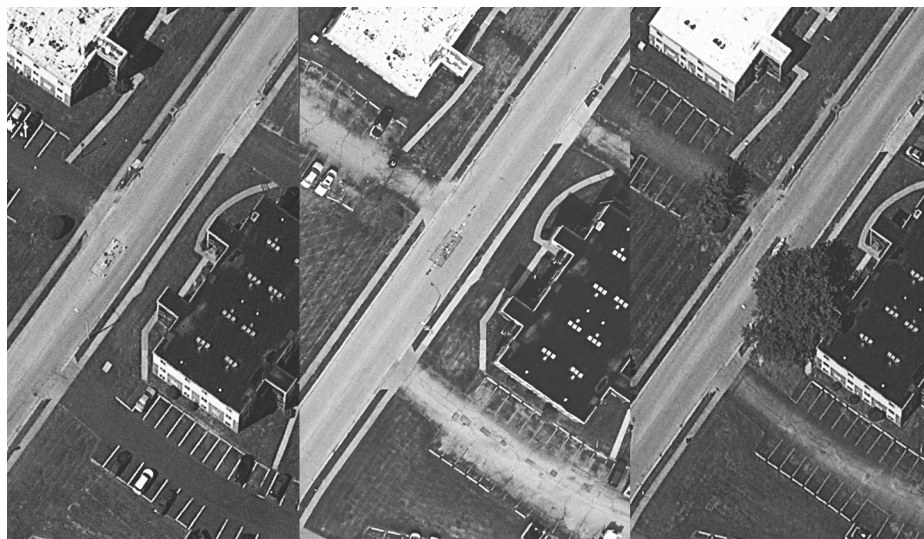
Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 12h25

Independent Researcher
United States



Alisha Kapoor, Flattened, mesh view model of
Canfield Drive, Ferguson, Missouri, US, made
with photogrammetry, 2019. 3D textured
mesh, 10cm x 10cm. © Alisha Kapoor.

Aerial images of Canfield Drive, Ferguson, Missouri, US, on August 23, 2015, May 6, 2018, and September 25, 2021. © Google Earth.



¹
"Map of Michael Brown's Final Moments,"
BBC News, November 27, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-30213508>, accessed May 24, 2025.

²
Madison Holcomb, "Michael Brown's loved ones hold memorial in Ferguson to honor his legacy and call for justice," St. Louis Public Radio, August 2, 2024, <https://www.kcur.org/news/2024-08-02/michael-brown-ferguson-memorial-10-year-anniversary>, accessed May 24, 2025.

Alisha Kapoor is an architectural designer, researcher, and lecturer working in New Hampshire. Her work focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to counter-memory activism—through computational textiles and archival material—calling attention to the phenomenological limits of the built environment and foregrounding alternative histories forged from lived experiences. She has written and exhibited solo and group work for *Trans Asia Photography, Log, Harvard Urban Review, Pidgin Press*, Harvard GSD Kirkland Gallery, Toronto's Design Festival, and elsewhere.

Although dismissed as insignificant or placeless, roads are sites of latent socio-political tensions, fraught with conflict and ongoing negotiations on labour, extraction, displacement, and surveillance. One such road, Canfield Drive, Ferguson, Missouri, US, where Officer Darren Wilson fatally shot eighteen years old Michael Brown on August 9, 2013, atop the double yellow lines, is a site of counter-memory with residents continually resisting their erasure and cleansing from dominant spaces.¹ On May 21, 2015, per request by the Brown's family, the city excavated and repaved a section of the road where he fell, its dimensions resembling that of a burial plot. Each year, aerial images show the community rebuilding a memorial at this commemorative marker, engaging in place preservation amidst the grave mishandling of justice.²

As such, my research investigates other bodily practices that tend to a place's lived experiences and re-centring them onto Canfield Drive for a detailed study. I turn to qualitative methods, including narrative analyses of testimonies and primary sources on construction, use, and exclusion, with spatial analysis of road usage and memorial practices. I discuss the phenomenological limits of roads—forged from local knowledge rather than prescribed planning—to demonstrate how these commemorative landscapes are made visible through embodied participation. I describe how places like Canfield Drive elude authorized stories and formal policies as their memories and materiality are made and remade through socially determined rituals. In turn, these performances of memory create place attachment, transferring local histories and counternarratives across participating groups, thus making space for restorative acts when mourning and inducing tangible connections to the past.

In the end, this paper contributes to a broader understanding of infrastructures' spatial expressions of violence—from the harm done to people to the ruination of places—advancing the counter-publics' agency in disrupting the flows of power by using bodily practices to reconstitute designed boundaries and behaviours.

PARTICULATE MATTER(S)
probes the built environment
in loose sets of fine-grained
and discrete elements
and aggregates. Moving
between geological, earthly,
and airborne particulates
and traversing organs,
nerves, and bodily systems,
the papers in this session
attend to an array of micro-
cartographies that uphold the
legacy of architectural praxes.
Collectively, this group of
papers makes visible how
architecture pieces together
colonial, racist, and ableist
assemblages of matter,
bodies, and affects.

Particulate Matter(s)

Thursday, October 23, 14h00 to 15h45

14h00

Session introduction
Ushma Thakrar

14h05

Dust Ecologies: Bodies, Labour, and
Environmental Collapse in the Cement
Industry
Vyta Pivo

14h25

Embodied Deficit: Bauxite Waste, Energy
Depletion, and Unbreathability in Jamaica
Valeria Guzmán Verri

14h45

Breathing in Dust: Preserved Particulates
of the Alaska Highway
Desirée Valadares

15h05

States of Sulphur: The Material
Movements of Vancouver's Yellow
Stockpiles
Alina Debyser

15h30

Session roundtable
Moderated by Ushma Thakrar

DUST ECOLOGIES

BODIES, LABOUR, AND ENVIRONMENTAL COLLAPSE IN THE CEMENT INDUSTRY

VYTA PIVO

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 14h05

University of Miami
United States



Thomas Edison's (1847–1931) cement plant covered in cement dust, ca. 1920s, New Village, New Jersey, US. © Courtesy of Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

The mass production of cement in the early decades of the twentieth century gave rise to new ecologies of dust. Focusing on the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, the birthplace of the US cement industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, the paper examines how cement particulate matter reshaped local built environments as well as the bodies of the residents. As cement plants burned limestone to produce what in the 1940s and 1950s used to be called ‘modernizing magic,’ they routinely released smoke mixed with cement dust that travelled up to a four-mile radius. Photographs of cement plants reveal an environment heavily laden with cement dust (see image above).

Cement dust coated the ground, the machinery, and the rooftops, making the air seem dense with particulate matter. The unrestrained circulation of dust particles caused severe respiratory ailments in workers, including silicosis, pneumonia, and asthma. Workers who handled cement mixed

with asbestos faced a particularly grave risk, as asbestos fibres moved inside the lungs, causing permanent scarring and eventually resulting in mesothelioma. Extraordinary amounts of cement dust did not only affect humans. Animals and plants also absorbed toxic levels of the matter and died. Postmortem examinations of cows, for instance, revealed substantial cement particles accumulated in their stomachs.

The management of persistent dust demanded significant and thankless labour of care. Women were regularly expected to clean streets and house interiors and care for ailing workers. As cement dust became increasingly pervasive, communities took women's expanding labour for granted and viewed their growing work as a regular, expected, and inevitable part of their daily routines.

The paper shows that cement dust played a dual role for working-class residents of cement manufacturing towns, offering a means for economic improvement while concurrently subjecting them to deplorable work and living conditions, epitomized by the pervasive dust in quarries, manufacturing plants, and homes. The rigid boundaries between interior and exterior, home and industry, blurred as cement permeated every aspect of workers' lives.

Dr. Vyta Pivo is a scholar of the intersecting histories of material lifecycles, construction labour, ordinary landscapes, and climate change. Her forthcoming book, *Cast in Concrete: How the US Built Its Empire* (University of Chicago Press), traces the history of the US cement and concrete industries and their global and transplanetary expansion. The book examines how concrete structured not only architecture and infrastructure but also labour, culture, and political systems that deepened global addiction to this material of modernity. Pivo's research has been published in various academic and public-facing outlets, including the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (JSAH), *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE), *Architectural Theory Review*, *PLATFORM*, *Psyche/Aeon*, and others. Her research has received support from the National Science Foundation, Andrew Mellon Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the MacDowell Fellowship, among others. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Miami School of Architecture, Pivo was a postdoctoral scholar with the Michigan Society of Fellows and assistant professor of architectural history at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan. She earned her PhD in American studies from George Washington University; an MA in architectural history from the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London; and a BA in studio arts/architecture from Wesleyan University.

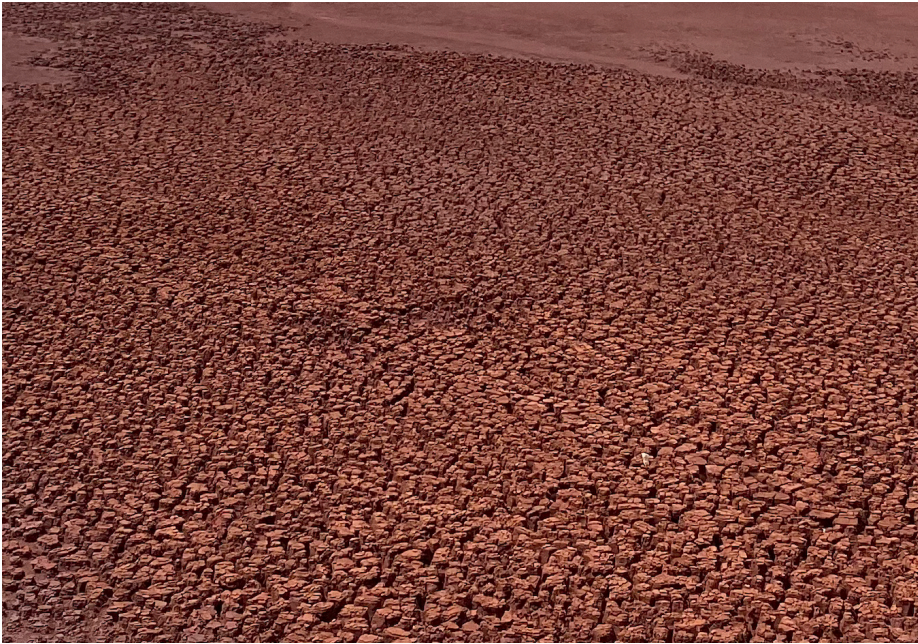
EMBODIED DEFICIT

BAUXITE WASTE, ENERGY DEPLETION, AND UNBREATHABILITY IN JAMAICA

VALERIA GUZMÁN VERRI

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 14h25

University of Costa Rica
Costa Rica



Bauxite residue lake close-up, Nain, Jamaica,
May 2023. © Valeria Guzmán.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the island of Jamaica has been reconfigured not only through the construction of highways, hospitals, government buildings and residential projects but also through sugar production and minerals extraction. The implementation of concessional loans, public-private ventures and private investments between the Jamaican government and Chinese banks and companies has escorted and guided this reconfiguration. By analyzing the spatial and material imbrications of Sino-Jamaican agreement-making in the bauxite industry in rural Jamaica, this paper explores and questions the critical tasks for architecture when dynamics of unbreathability are unfolded, particularly when contestation and refusal disrupt the making of these territories. Since the 1940s and 1950s, alumina has been extracted from open-pit mines on Jamaican soils rich in bauxite to produce aluminum. During the refinery process, red slurry residues high in alkaline and heavy metals are deposited across large portions of land: this red material, when dry and unattended, as has been the case at the refinery bought by the Chinese

1
Françoise Vergès, "Racial Capitalocene: Is the Anthropocene racial?," August 30, 2017, Verso Blog post: <https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/blogs/news/3376-racial-capitalocene>, accessed June 7, 2025.

2
Françoise Vergès, "On the Politics of Extraction, Exhaustion and Suffocation," November 7, 2021, *L'Internationale* online, https://archive-2014-2024.internationaleonline.org/research/politics_of_life_and_death/195_on_the_politics_of_extraction_exhaustion_and_suffocation/, accessed June 7, 2025.

company Jiuquan Iron and Steel (Group) Co. LTD (JISCO) in 2016, rises up as fine particles and is carried by wind flows. An unbreathable territory unfolds when soil is transformed by extractive dynamics into noxious red particulates that reach skin and eyes or enter lungs and bronchi, water tanks and surrounding houses, crops, and pastures.

Imbricated through the colonization of the insular Caribbean and the racial Capitalocene,¹ the 'economies of suffocation' implemented within these spatial and material dynamics of unbreathability interact both with the ever-growing pressure for bauxite-residue disposal space across the planet and with the fact that one of the major global end uses of aluminum across the world is the construction industry.² Our examination of these territories that defy borders and enter bodies draws on onsite visits, situated scientific accounts, key Jamaican newspapers, media and official reports of surrounding communities' protests and demands, as well as the government's capacity to ensure that the company met its obligations in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Valeria Guzmán Verri is a researcher investigating spatially relations of infrastructural space, aesthetics, unpayable debt and the planetary. Professor at the School of Architecture at the University of Costa Rica, she also teaches in the Society and Culture PhD Programme. Her more recent publication: "Inherited obligations and architectures of debt" examines the financial and ethico-political connotations of debt in the Jamaican built environment. She holds a PhD in Histories and Theories of Architecture from the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London and a Diploma of Architecture from the University of Costa Rica.

BREATHING IN DUST PRESERVED PARTICULATES OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY DESIRÉE VALADARES

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 14h45

University of British Columbia
Canada



1970s Vintage, steel can, Murdoch's Yukon
Alaska Highway Dust, 4 5/8" x 3 1/2". Etsy.

In the summer of 2024, ‘SanDiegoVintage,’ an Etsy seller, listed a can of “genuine Alaska Highway Dust” in their Etsy Shop. Classified a “rare find,” this 1970s souvenir from the Yukon, a territory in northwest Canada, was priced at USD 60.02, plus shipping and handling from San Diego, California. The can’s label features a permanent special deal, “\$2.00 off Regular High Price,” that no longer applies. The product listing reads: “vintage steel can of AUTHENTIC real deal Yukon Choice brand Alaska Highway Dust! Can is 4 5/8" x 3 1/2". In excellent condition. Will ship worldwide.” The label instructs its owner to “[r]elive that exhilarating thrill of driving the Alaska Highway” by “[s]tand[ing] in front of your electric fan on a hot day and pour the contents of this can slowly into the whirling blades.” A product guarantee by Murdoch’s Limited assures that “[i]f after eating a tin of this genuine Alaska Highway Dust you are not satisfied [...] we will supply you with another tin at cost” (see figure above).

This can, for all its apparent absurdity, is an object of curiosity. While monetizing and miniaturizing the regional airspaces of northwestern Canada, it invites its owner to inhale or ingest dust — a fine, discrete

matter with a variable composition and mutable form. This embodied and performative encounter with 1970s Alaska Highway dust begs the question: What does this can of dust as an archival object tell us about US and Canadian cultural imaginaries of a former military road?

In this paper, I perform a close reading of this satirical souvenir of the Alaska Highway, a 2,450 km bi-national route and former military road built in 1942–1943 that traverses northern British Columbia, southern Yukon, and Alaska. By centring elemental geographies—rust, dust, and air—along the route, I speculate on particle pollutants and their bodily affects. I show how settler anxieties of land loss, erosion, and climactic upheaval manifest on the Alaska Highway despite this infrastructure's promise of permanence, stability, and connectivity.

Desirée Valadares is an Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in the Department of Geography and a Faculty Affiliate in Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies. Her research focuses on the cultural memory and infrastructural imaginaries of Second World War infrastructure, including wartime confinement landscapes and former military roads. Her published writings have appeared or are forthcoming in *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal*, *RACAR: Revue d'art canadienne* | *Canadian Art Review*, *Aggregate: Architectural History Collaborative*, *Radical History Review*, *Change over Time: An International Journal of Conservation and the Built Environment*, *The Funambulist*. Her editorial contributions are featured in the *Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians* (2020–2025) and *The Avery Review* (2020–2021).

STATES OF SULPHUR

THE MATERIAL MOVEMENTS OF VANCOUVER'S YELLOW STOCKPILES

ALINA DEBYSER

Paper presentation
Thursday October 22, 15h05

Independent Researcher
Canada



Covered bulk sulphur storage on the north shore of the Burrard Inlet. North Vancouver, BC, Canada. © Vancouver Express/Pugstem Publications, 1970. City of Vancouver Archives, AM1667: CVA 134-194.

The striking yellow sulphur piles along Vancouver's North Shore and Port Moody, Canada, are an iconic and ubiquitous feature of the waterfront and hold a place in the local imaginary. A byproduct of oil and natural gas refining, sulphur is transported from Northern British Columbia and Alberta. It is held in open-air stockpiles at Vancouver Wharves and Pacific Coast Terminals before being shipped internationally for use in agriculture, vulcanized rubber, cosmetics, and other applications.

Appearing static and contained, the sulphur piles obscure a more complex material movement. The trails of sulphur hint at broader networks



Sulphur piles seen from the seawall.
Vancouver Wharves, North Vancouver,
Canada. © Photo by author, 2025.

of the interplay of extraction industries, rail and maritime transportation, and international trade. Yet, human labour and bodily interactions with sulphur are invisibilized and detached from public perception. The process is increasingly restricted and mechanized through conveyors, ship loaders, handling systems, and surrounding infrastructure that shift the sulphur from one mode of transport to another and contribute to the visual absence of bodies at these sites.

With a focus on Vancouver, this paper explores these tensions and in/visibilities through site visits, archival research and existing oral histories, contemporary cultural commentary, and artistic expression of the sulphur piles. I draw from scholarship on geographies of labour and logistics and engage debates in volumetric and elemental geographies to better trace sulphur's journey across various realms—land, air, sea, and the subsurface—as it moves across Canada's western provinces and beyond in the Pacific Ocean. Mediating this matter requires following processes of extraction, refining, transit, and stockpiling while also speculating on the bodily effects beyond the surface-level image of Vancouver's sulphur piles.

Alina Debyser completed a BA in Human Geography and Geographical Information Science from the University of British Columbia in 2025. Her research interests include cartography, volumetric, and oceanic geographies, and tracing the spatial flows of material movements. She published "Sand as Shifting Territory: Sand Extraction and Land Reclamation in Singapore" in the *Trail Six Undergraduate Journal of Geography*, 2022–2023. She served as the editor-in-chief of *Trail Six* 19, 2024–2025.

More recently, she has been engaged in mapping the afterlives of decommissioned ships through the geographies of shipbreaking and tracing flows of sulphur as a tar sands byproduct. She is also interested in data sculpture and creative forms of data visualization.

COLONIAL TOXICITY

REHEARSING FRENCH COLONIAL RADIOACTIVE ARCHITECTURE IN THE SAHARA

SAMIA HENNI

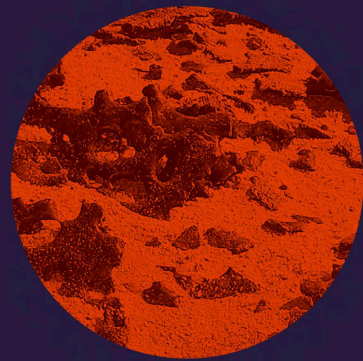
Keynote lecture
Thursday October 22, 16h15
Introduced by Ahmed Elsherif

McGill University
Canada

Between 1960 and 1966, the French colonial regime detonated four atmospheric atomic bombs, thirteen underground nuclear bombs, and conducted other nuclear experiments in the Algerian Sahara, whose natural resources were being extracted in the process. This secret nuclear weapons program, whose archives are still classified, occurred during and after the Algerian Revolution, or the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962). This lecture introduces three forms through which these histories and stories have been publicly exposed: a series of translations of testimonies of nuclear victims, a traveling exhibition *Performing Colonial Toxicity*, and a published book titled *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara* (2024). It will focus on this printed manuscript that brings together nearly six hundred pages of materials documenting this violent history of France's nuclear bomb program in the Algerian desert. Meticulously culled together from across available, offered, and leaked sources, the book is a rich repository for all those concerned with histories of nuclear weapons, engaging at the intersections of spatial, social and environmental justice, as well as anticolonial archival practices.

Samia Henni is a historian and an exhibition maker of the built, destroyed and imagined environments. She is the author of *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (2017, 2022, EN; 2019, FR) and *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara* (2024, 2025, EN, 2025, FR). She is the editor of *Deserts Are Not Empty* (2022, 2025, EN; 2024, IT) and *War Zones* (2018). She is also the maker of exhibitions, such as *Psychocolonial Spaces—Act 1*, Ar/Ge Kunst Bolzano, 2025–), *Performing Colonial Toxicity* (Framer Framed, If I Can't Dance, Amsterdam; gta Exhibitions, Zurich; The Mosaic Rooms, London; Medi Lab, Brown University; DOC Paris; Bethanien Berlin; Carleton University, Ottawa, 2023–), *Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria* (Zurich, Rotterdam, Berlin, Johannesburg, Paris, Prague, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Charlottesville, 2017–22), *Archives: Secret-Défense?* (Ifa Gallery, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, 2021), and *Housing Pharmacology* (Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020). Currently, she teaches at McGill University's Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture in Montreal.

COLONIAL TOXICITY: Rehearsing French Radioactive Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara



SAMIA HENNI

Samia Henni, *Colonial
Toxicity: Rehearsing French
Radioactive Architecture and
Landscape in the Sahara*
(Amsterdam and Zürich: If I
Can't Dance, Edition Fink,
and Framers Framed, 2024),
cover design by François
Girard-Meunier.

Gendered Matter(s)
Friday, October 24, 10h00 to 12h00

10h00
Session introduction
Menna Agha

10h05
Liquid Closets, Evaporated Bodies
Evan Pavka

10h25
Bad Enough Feminist: A Reflection on the
'Crisis of Democracy' from the Point of
View of a Political Economy of Urban Space
(The Special Case of the Techno-Capitalism
Adaptation of Caring Spaces)
Beatriz V. Toscano

10h45
The House of the 'Good Man':
Masculinity, 'Civilization,' and
Domesticity in Brazil (1870–1920)
Pedro Beresin Schleider Ferreira

11h05
Third World Women, First World Violence:
Making Homeplace in Zürich between the
1980s and 2010
Khensani Jurczok de Klerk

11h25
Session roundtable
Moderated by Menna Agha

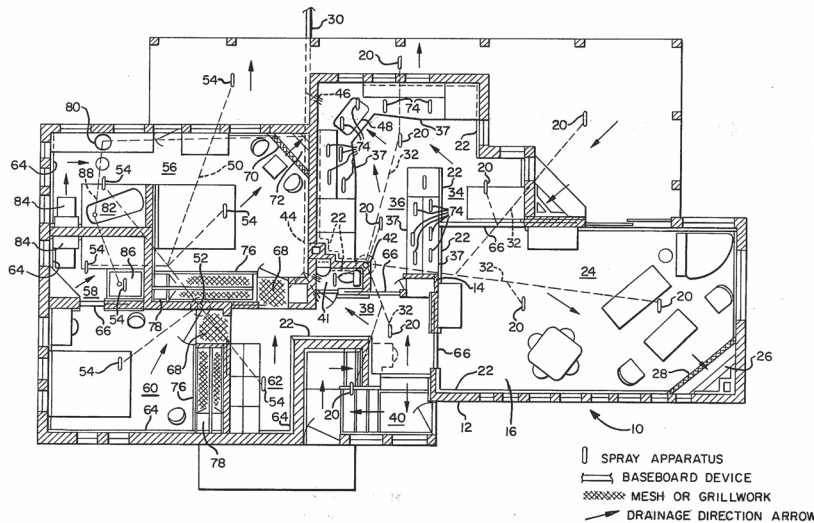
Dwelling on the uneasy threshold between materiality and corporeality, GENDERED MATTER(S) probes the many gestures through which architecture manages to stitch together the sexed and gendered facets of both. Seeking to redress these legacies which label certain bodies as deviant and without value, the papers in this session attend to minor, queer, (Black) feminist, and non-normative planes of relationality and entanglements.

LIQUID CLOSETS, EVAPORATED BODIES

EVAN PAVKA

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 10h05

Toronto Metropolitan University
Canada



Floor plan of Frances Gabe's Self-Cleaning Building Construction, US Patent 4,428,085, sheet 1 of 6 (January 31, 1984). © United States Patent and Trademark Office.

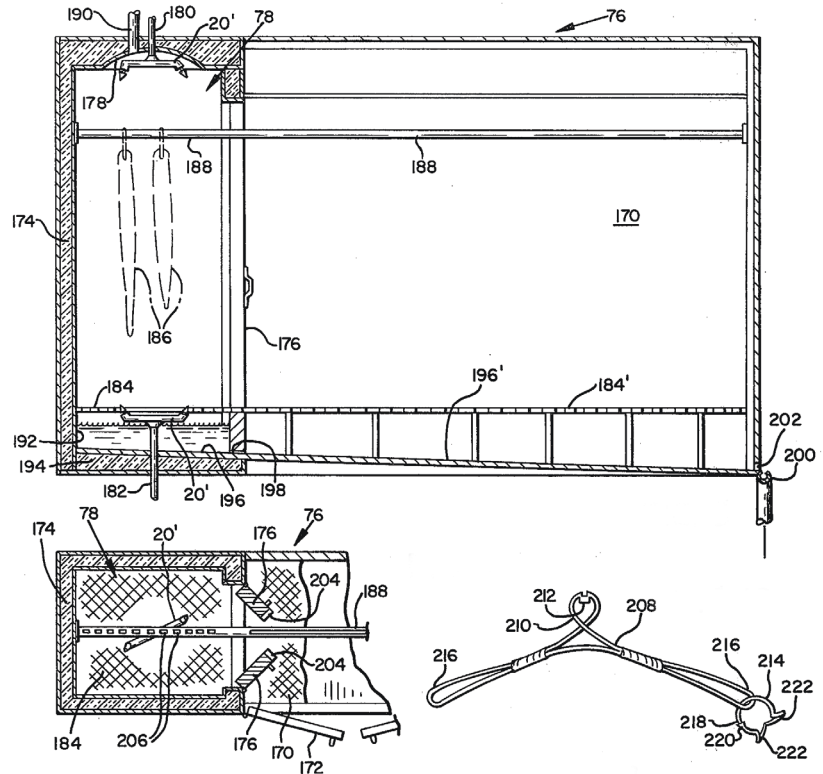
For queer and trans-identifying individuals, the closet and the washroom are two critical material and metaphoric sites corresponding to public and private constructions of the self.¹ Whether containing or eradicating, they are “subject objects” bound to the supposed stable borders of bodies and buildings.² While aiding in enforcing normative ideas of gender, sexuality, and reproduction, they further participate in establishing the order and flow of material—storing or flushing—that runs parallel to the uneasy edges between various bodies and matter. What happens when they merge? What human and non-human borders are blurred or redistributed? What might the interrogation of such spatial/material slippages offer in reconsidering the edges between interior, environment, and bodies within the context of the domestic interior?

By examining the hybrid closet-washing machine, the “clothes-freshener” from the patented Self Cleaning House (1984) by American inventor Frances Gabe's (1915–2016),³ and the interior renovation Evaporated Rooms (2011) by Swiss architect Philippe Rahm,⁴ this paper explores the fluid bodies, borders, territories, and entangled matter within these “liquid” closets and their subsequent “hydrocommons.”⁵ Gabe's closet is addressed in the context of the greater domestic proposal that sought to

1 See Henry Urbach, “Closets, Clothes, Disclosure,” *Assemblage* 30 (1996): 62–73 and Lucas Cassidy Crawford, “Derivative Plumbing: Redesigning Washrooms, Bodies, Trans Affects in ds+r's Brasserie,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 61, no.5 (2014): 621–635.

2 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 78.

3 Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 102.



Section view of "clothes freshener," closet plan and elevation of custom hangers from Frances Gabe, Self-Cleaning Building Construction, US Patent 4,428,085, sheet 3 of 6 (January 31, 1984). © United States Patent and Trademark Office.

4
Philippe Rahm, "Evaporated Rooms, An Apartment for a Young Doctor," *ARQ*, Santiago 89: 36–41.

5
Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 22, 41, 95 + 99.

Evan Pavka is an Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. His writings on art, architecture, design, and contemporary culture have appeared in various popular and scholarly publications including *Azure*, *AN Interior*, *The Architect's Newspaper*, *Article*, *Canadian Art*, *Canadian Interiors*, *DAMN*, *Disc*, *Field*, *Icon*, *idea journal*, *Infection*, *Lunch*, *Pidgin*, *Plat*, *Pool*, *NUVO*, and *-SITE*, among others. His creative and scholarly work has been presented in Banff, Brighton, Chicago, Detroit, Gimpo, Montreal, Ottawa, Oxford, Toronto, San Francisco, Stockholm and Vancouver. He currently serves as Associate Editor of the journal *Interiors: Design/Architecture/Culture*, and routinely contributes to national and international platforms.

radically transform a conventional suburban home into a ballet of pipes, valves, and drains enmeshing liquid matter—soiled objects, excretions, cleaning agents, and microorganisms—with the built environment in hopes of transcending gendered expectations of labour and family life. Rahm's reconfiguring of the domestic interior through atmospheric properties is then taken up as similarly indivisible from its post-war building. Here, the contained and enclosed wash closet (tied to the greater architectural body through plumbing) is the only room unable to dissolve or evaporate. As such, gendered and sexualized anxieties surrounding its queer occupant manifest in the exposed closet positioned along the opaque washroom plumbing wall, concealing and revealing the workings of the body. In each, aspirations to evaporative normative ideas of gender and sexuality through interior architectural interventions are halted by the indissolvable binaries enforced by an existing architectural framework as well as the physical spaces of the bathroom and closet. However, both provide insights into entangled wet matter condensing at the edge of buildings as well as bodies that may work to erode such binaries.

BAD ENOUGH FEMINIST

A REFLECTION ON THE
'CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY'
FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF
A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
URBAN SPACE (THE SPECIAL
CASE OF THE TECHNO-
CAPITALISM ADAPTATION OF
CARING SPACES)

BEATRIZ V. TOSCANO

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 10h25

University of Applied Science, Saarland
Germany



Woman pumping in car with a Double
Electric Breast Pump by Dr. Brown from
Tiffanie Graham and Catherine Pearson,
"What It Really Takes to Breastfeed a Baby,"
The New York Times, November 30, 2022.
Image pixelated by author, 2018.

Door sign for designated nurseries/diaper changing room at the University of Applied Sciences in Düsseldorf, Germany. © Image by author, 2024.



This paper pertains to a critical analysis of the ‘ergonomic’ interventions of the infrastructures of care. As a design-own material feature whereby body parts can be grafted onto the seat and the task at hand, ergonomics enables nimble simultaneity, thus facilitating a cost-effective spatiotemporal coexistence of tasks; for the present discussion, this applies to productivity and reproductive tasks, where the caring body is rendered a mere tool.

Beyond its broader definition as the positive facilitator of a body-equipment alliance, my focus lies precisely on the ergonomic modifications of workplaces with their entailed promoting rhetoric of unbothered office hours: for, what are these devices enabling and, most importantly, WHERE? In the absence of the material conditions for freedom of choice, my argument is an attempt to uncover ergonomics’ political entanglements; as by tethering caring bodies (nursing and child-rearing) to productivity, I argue, ergonomics appears to close the gap between reproductivity and time debt.

This presentation aims to provide clues about the ‘material, practical and multifunctional’ coexistence present in co-working/co-living spaces, nursing-enabling smart office furniture, and mobile stations for efficient breast-feeding, as it may be mimicking the same kind of spatiotemporal compression inherent to the processes of capital accumulation in the ratio body-capital-labour—ultimately the focus of a Marxian critique of techno-capitalist societies. Within this stance, intimacy (the lack thereof) and the spatiotemporal compression of multitasking bodies that comes with this ergonomic adaptation stand as the markers of societies increasingly dominated by the logic of monetary value production.¹ Within a broader scope, this case against the techno-adaptation of care/working spaces is intended as a further expansion of some recent work.

1

Hélène Frichot, Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami, eds., *Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems* (Basel, Birkhäuser, 2022), 17 + 26.

2

Nancy Fraser, *How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet—and What We Can Do About It* (London, UK: Verso, 2022), 119.

Beatriz V. Toscano is a junior professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Saarland, Germany, at the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering. Toscano has been a guest lecturer at Columbia University in New York, the University of Texas at Dallas, the Higher Technical School of Architecture of Seville, the University of São Paulo’s and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, among others. Her recent publications centre on neoliberal urban planning (“SoftPower,” *Euro-American Journal of Historical and Theoretical Studies of Politics and Law*, 2017), gender and urban planning (*La Invisible*, 2017), precarity (*Kadmos*, 2017), urban tourism and revolt (“Städte zu verkaufen,” with Kike España, *sub|urban*, 2019), the militarization of urban space (“Fortress City”, *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung*, 2022) and urban planning and biophilia (“Ecosofías Urbanas.” *Astrágalo* 32, 2023).

THE HOUSE OF THE 'GOOD MAN' MASCULINITY, 'CIVILIZATION', AND DOMESTICITY IN BRAZIL (1870–1920)

PEDRO BERESIN SCHLEDER FERREIRA

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 10h45

Escola da Cidade
Brazil



José Ferraz de Almeida Júnior (1850-1899),
"Cena de Família de Adolfo Augusto Pinto"
[Scene of Adolfo Pinto's Family], 1981. Oil on
canvas, 106cm x 137cm. Source:
Pinacoteca de São Paulo.

This presentation investigates how, between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the diffusion of new patterns of masculinity and domesticity in Brazil was linked to a project of the national elites to 'civilize' the Brazilian nation. In this period, Brazilian intellectual and political elites sought to transform the recently independent colony into a 'civilized,' white, and industrialized nation. To that end, they problematized the national population and drew up projects to reform it. Within this context, the 'good man'—an idealized white, virile, Christian, moralized, disciplined, and 'civilized' man—emerged in the imagination of these elites as the key agent of this

‘civilizing’ process, who would be responsible for establishing ‘order’ and promoting ‘progress’ in society.

Aware that the making of ‘good men’ depended on moral and social formation, the nation’s educators—intellectuals, doctors, politicians, moralists, writers, and editors—wrote, translated, published, and disseminated male prescription texts and books, through which they sought to spread new standards of virility, manhood, productivity, discipline, and morality in Brazilian society. Among the topics covered in those books, family life and bourgeois domesticity were central concerns. They were analyzed, problematized, prescribed, and normalized to serve as instruments to control, discipline, and regulate men’s pleasures, affections, imagination, desires and aspirations. By analyzing these books and texts, as well as architectural interiors of the period, this presentation explores how the spread of bourgeois domesticity in the urban middle and upper classes was articulated with the ambitions of these elites to guide and order the energies of the subjects in favour of their ‘civilizing’ project for the Brazilian nation.

Pedro Beresin Schleder Ferreira holds a Master’s degree (2017) and a PhD (2023) in History of Architecture, Urbanism, and Urbanization, both by the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP). In his research and writing, he has principally explored São Paulo’s urban history and the cultural history of domesticity in post-colonial Brazil. Since 2017, he has been a History of Architecture professor at Escola da Cidade—School of Architecture and Urbanism. There, with other professors and students, he integrates a research platform dedicated to investigating the relations between colonialism, racism, and gender issues with material culture and architecture in South America.

‘THIRD WORLD WOMEN,’ FIRST WORLD VIOLENCE

**MAKING HOMEPLACE IN
ZÜRICH BETWEEN THE
1980S AND 2010**

KHENSANI JURCZOK-DE KLERK

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 11h05

ETH Zürich
Switzerland



Treffpunkt Schwarzer Frauen, Zürich, ca.
1990s. © Gertrud Vogler.

In the context of Switzerland, ‘Third World Women’—more specifically, Black foreign women—like many other non-nationals, seek stability amidst forces of unhoming. One aspect of stability is having access to social, economic, and political resources afforded to one through nationality. This is one of the most catastrophic instruments for excluding, oppressing, and pacifying non-nationals. Combined with the isolating conditions fuelled by everyday racism, this hostility presents serious hindrances for marginalized groups trying to construct cultures of belonging. Within architectural discourse, explorations of othered forms of kinship are nascent yet promising, considering rainbow, chosen, queer and polyamorous families, amongst others. All of these forms of kinship disrupt

Treffpunkt schwarzer Frauen,
Manessestrasse 73, Wiedikon, Zürich, 2011.
© Dudli Hanspeter. Baugeschichtliches
Archiv der Stadt Zürich (BAZ).



¹
Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 146.

²
bell hooks, *yearning, race, gender, and cultural politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 41–49.

³
hooks, *yearning, race, gender, and cultural politics*, 42.

Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk is an architectural researcher and designer from Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the founder and creative director of Matri-Archi(tecture)—an association that hosts a network of African and diasporic spatial practitioners dedicated to learning about entangled histories, realities, and imaginaries through spatial expression.

Khensani is also a doctoral fellow at the gta, ETH Zürich, where her PhD focuses on remembering the forms of kinship that Black foreign women have constructed to make liveable geographies for themselves in the wake of racial-sexual violence in Zürich since the 1980s. Through her multidisciplinary approach, Khensani mobilizes visual, written, and sonic expressions to remember histories untold and imagine possibilities yet to unfold.

Her practice positions architecture as a spatial storyteller.

gendered hegemonic dependencies underscored by the idealized nuclear family unit, which, in Switzerland, prevails culturally. Echoing Katherine McKittrick's scholarship on *workable geographies*,¹ this paper asks what forms of kinship have Black 'Third World Women' constructed to make *liveable geographies* for themselves in the wake of racial-sexual violence in Zürich since the 1980s until today?

This paper will dwell on textually and visually reconciling stories in which 'Third World Women' have constructed cultures of belonging between the 1980s and early 2000s in Zürich. Methodologically, this contribution will depart from, center and work through the oral histories of some Black foreign women who arrived in Zürich between the 1970s and early 2000s under various circumstances, all of whom at some point encountered the Treffpunkt Schwarzer Frauen ("The Meeting Place for Black Women"). The Treffpunkt Schwarzer Frauen (1993–2010) was a grass-roots project in Zürich that provided a meeting place and resource centre for Black foreign women in Zurich that allowed often isolated women to access a wider constellation of social and cultural infrastructure, all at once facilitated by the provision of physical space.

The paper argues that such socio-spatially entangled places are architectures of solidarity or what bell hooks (1952–1921) calls homeplace (1990),² wherein a sense of belonging for Black women is (in)formed by the spatiality of convening, conviviality, and fellowship. Using hooks' formulations as a prompt, she writes, "however fragile and tenuous [...]" the construction of the homeplace has "a radical political dimension. [...] one's homeplace [is] the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist,"³ this contribution will ultimately offer a meditation that proposes to understand such projects as safe space infrastructures and further reflect on their spatial dynamics and imprints.

Stratal Matter(s)
Friday, October 24, 13h00 to 14h25

13h00
Session introduction
Ahmed Elsherif

13h05
“Cross Sections of a Stratified Ground:
The Red Earth Buried, Extracted, Shaped,
Fired, Discarded”
Oya Yeşim Armağan Atacan

13h25
“Along the Seams of Global Exchange:
Lime, Cement, and Global Construction
Regimes Along the India-Bangladesh
Border”
Samarth Vachhrajani

13h45
“Gold Mining and Its Legacies”
Merve Bedir

11h20
Session roundtable
Moderated by Ahmed Elsherif

STRATAL MATTER(S) carves routes and lines of inquiry across and through the manifold layers of the earth. The papers in this session question the ways in which architecture not only fuels the slicing cogs of extraction but also stacks geo-corporeal deposits and affects upon one another. In parallel, this group of papers attends to subterranean planes of agency and minor formations, aiming to unsettle subject matter.

CROSS-SECTIONS OF A STRATIFIED GROUND

THE RED EARTH BURIED,
EXTRACTED, SHAPED, FIRED,
DISCARDED

OYA YEŞİM ARMAĞAN ATACAN

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 13h05

Istanbul Technical University
Turkey



Aerial image of stratified ground in Menemen, Izmir, Turkey; a key settlement in the Gediz River basin. The exposed red clay deposits, among the largest in the region, supply contemporary Menemen pottery. Red traces mark excavations for the Northern Aegean Highway initiated in 2019. As the soil was cut, layers of clay emerged, revealing the buried strata of terra rosa that continue to shape local ceramic traditions. © Google Earth, 2023.

This research examines the strata-biography of the Gediz River and its sedimented soils as life-forming matter in Western Anatolia, Turkey, investigating how geological movements, architectural processes, and material production practices shape and transform one another across multiple temporal and spatial scales. Drawing from Elizabeth Grosz's

Terracotta funerary mask of a woman (5th century BCE) from the Aeolian Necropolis of Neonteichos (Yanikköy) Menemen, adjacent to the Hermos (modern Gediz) River, Izmir Culture and Art Factory Izmir, Turkey. Likely mourning offerings, these masks were buried for centuries and were unearthed during salvage excavations amid Northern Aegean Highway construction. They persist within the stratabiography of the Gediz basin, alongside shifting architectures of burial, extraction, and transformation.



¹
Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 13–43; Nigel Clark, “Politics of Strata,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 34 (nos. 2–3): 215; and Nigel Clark and Kathryn Yusoff, “Geosocial Formations and the Anthropocene,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 34 (nos. 2–3): 3–23.

concepts of stratal politics and strata-biography,¹ the study frames the river’s shifting terrain not as a passive substrate but as an active agent in architectural and cultural formations. The ongoing redistribution and reformation of terra rosa through sedimentation and erosion challenge anthropocentric views of architecture as a solely human-driven practice. As the Gediz River continuously carries and deposits terra rosa, it mediates interactions between geological processes and human practices. Through these encounters, terra cotta emerges at the intersection of earth-formed structures and life-forms, where raw clay undergoes transformation through cultural engagements.

The study examines how terra rosa moves between states—buried, extracted, shaped, fired, discarded—tracing its role in human and nonhuman entanglements along the river. From Lydian-era bricks and tumulus tombs to Neolithic ceramic traditions, contemporary Menemen pottery from the Izmir province, industrial brick production, and extractive operations, the research follows the material’s shifting modalities, revealing how architectural and material practices emerge within and through the clay-rich red Mediterranean soil that constitutes the ground of Western Anatolia. By tracing these transformations, the study also seeks to uncover the historical and contemporary actors who have mediated these material shifts, examining how their engagements with terra rosa have shaped and been shaped by its changing states. Engaging with Deleuze-Guattarian notions of stratification,² this study interrogates how the relations of architecture and matter complicate human-centred narratives of design and construction. Terra rosa’s transformation across states and infrastructures disrupts rigid disciplinary boundaries between architecture, geology, and cultural history. Ultimately, the research proposes a geo-material reading of architecture, arguing that the earth is not a passive background, but an agent that co-produces spatial and material conditions over time.

²
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 40.

Oya Yeşim Armağan Atacan is a research assistant and PhD candidate at Istanbul Technical University, Department of Architecture. She completed her master’s degree at ITU in 2022 with a thesis titled “Gendered Spatial Mobilities: Negotiating Spaces of Home and Work.” Her current research examines rural futures and alternative ways of inhabitation in the countryside geographies of Türkiye. She is particularly interested in how architecture’s temporality, materiality, and agency shape its entanglement with modern capitalist thought and nature.

ALONG THE SEAMS OF GLOBAL EXCHANGES

LIME, CEMENT, AND GLOBAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMES ALONG THE INDIA- BANGLADESH BORDER

SAMARTH VACHHRAJANI

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 13h25

University of California Berkeley
United States



Limestone mining in East Khasi Hills, along the India-Bangladesh Border, Meghalaya, India, 2023. © Photograph by the author (2023)

This is a familiar story: a perilous location of global trade, expropriating Indigenous lands, relying on exploitable labour, ruining local ecosystems, and legitimizing delusions of economic growth and development.

Confronting this familiar reality, it questions how architecture and its underlying economy of building construction materials have become a non-lexical medium for consorting global capitalism and authoritative



Limestone-carrying trucks travelling toward the India-Bangladesh Border Checkpost. © Photograph by author (2023).

1

Along these lines see, Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

2

See two important ethnographies on the India-Bangladesh border by anthropologists Malini Sur, *Jungle Passports: Fences, Mobility, and Citizenship at Northeast India Bangladesh Border* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press) and Sahana Ghosh, *Thousand Tiny Cuts: Mobility and Security Across the Bangladesh-India Borderlands* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023).

3

On mobility, the work of Mimi Sheller is pertinent to my research. See, Mimi Sheller, *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes* (London and New York: Verso, 2018).

Samarth Vachhrajani is a PhD student in architecture history, theory, and society at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds a Master of Environmental Design (M.E.D) from Yale School of Architecture and a B.Arch from Iowa State University. He has published in the *Journal of Architecture Education* (JAE), *Yale Constructs*, *Pidgin* (Princeton SoA), *Paprika* (Yale School of Architecture), *Datum* (Iowa State University), and *Bnieuws* (TU Delft) and was recognized by the *Avery Review* in their 2021 Essay Prize. He is also co-editing the 58th issue of *Perspecta* (The MIT Press, 2026) entitled "Sweat," which provokes an urgent assessment of mutually constitutive crises of climate, migration, and labour. He has participated and presented his work at various venues, including the Canadian Center for Architecture, the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale, TU Delft, Yale Macmillan Center's Program on Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Humanitarian Response and UC Berkeley's Social Science Matrix.

power. It is a story along the seams of global exchanges, where national borders have swollen into lucrative economic corridors and where the economic logic of architecture allows globalization—as an all-pervading imperial system—to proliferate on the ground.¹ Reflecting on an ethnographic encounter of being caught amidst a fleet of limestone-carrying trucks along the India-Bangladesh border, this story brings attention to the global cement manufacturing industry and limestone mining in the Indigenous regions of Khasi and Jaintia hills in northeast India. It shows how a global cement corporation swaddles a European multinational corporation, international financial institutions, authoritarian government schemes, resource exploitation, border militarization, and environmental change in a single place.

This paper attends to how architecture and the construction industry mediate global capitalism and punitive forms of political rule. It argues how the seams of global trade, like the India-Bangladesh border, are sites from where a form of economic imperialism—co-joining econometric and authoritarian power, bolstered on precedents of colonial appropriation and extraction—is assuming its shape. It brings attention to not only the political economy's global scale that fortifies architectural production but also the situated experiences—social, cultural, and political—that are lived and negotiated on either side of the India-Bangladesh border.²

The seams of global trade that buttress contemporary global construction regimes are central to understanding how architecture serves as a material and spatial medium for forcibly conforming or rather distorting bodies and territories for global capitalism. Therefore, this story traces the prevailing ideologies that undergird architecture—land expropriation, extraction, territorial sovereignty, and material economy—and the forms of power it casts for capitalist (over)accumulation. It asks—how do borders immobilize people but keep capital mobile?³ What logic prompts looking at a mountain and only being able to calculate its mineral worth? It observes how the contemporary global order and infrastructures supporting it are organized and mediated along the seams of global exchanges.

GOLD MINING AND ITS LEGACIES

MERVE BEDİR

Paper presentation
Friday October 24, 13h45

EPFL Architecture
Switzerland

On February 13, 2024, at approximately 14:28 local time, a significant landslip took place on the Çöpler Gold Mining Site's heap leach pad in İliç, Erzincan province, Turkey. The incident in which nine miners went missing was described as a "landslide" by the state authorities and the joint venture company Anagold based in the capital city, Ankara. But the partner of the mine, Denver, Colorado based SSR Mining Inc., announced to the US NASDAQ stock exchange that "a large slide occurred in the heap leach area."¹ By calling it a "landslide," the incident is "naturalized," thus negating the institutional culpability and transferring the responsibility outward towards the environment, as well as reducing the incident to probability and coincidence. Independent researchers reported that this incident, however, could have been predicted, and thus it would have been preventable.² Therefore, it cannot be named a natural disaster.

¹ "Çöpler Incident," SSR Mining, updated May 6, 2025, <https://www.ssrmining.com/2024-copler-incident/>, accessed May 25, 2025.

² "Toprak Kayması Değil Yığın Liçi Felaketi," Mekanda Adalet Derneği (MAD), <https://mekandaadalet.org/toprak-kaymasi-degil-yigin-lici-felaketi/>, accessed May 25, 2025; TMMOB Maden Mühendisleri, <https://www.maden.org.tr/icerik/maden-muehendisleri-odasi-49-doenem-olagan-genel-kurulu-sonuc-bildirgesi-20240304113>, accessed May 25, 2025; and P. Büyükakınar, A. C. Carrillo-Ponce, M. B. Munir, E. Karasözen, H. Tanyas, D. Ertuncay, A. Palliath, and T. Gorum, "Seismic, Field, and Remote Sensing Analysis of the 13 February 2024 Çöpler Gold Mine Landslide, Erzincan, Türkiye," *The Seismic Record* 5, no. 2 (2025): 165–174, doi: 10.1785/0320250007.

Heap leaching areas are where millions of cubic meters of rock extracted from mines are washed with a solution that includes cyanide and heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury and cadmium. Even when operated flawlessly, leached gold mines cause contamination of the surrounding soil, surface/underground waters, and air with these materials. In Çöpler, heap leaching is spread over a large, uninsulated area next to one of the tributaries of the Euphrates River, where it is impossible to prevent the spread of chemical pollution. Therefore, the health of the local community and a wider region along the river remains under threat.

This paper focuses on the Çöpler Mining Site. It traces gold as matter, the mining process, the infrastructures and networks of architecture that support the mining of gold, the output of gold mining, and the workers and communities impacted at this site. The idea is to spatialize and understand the mining incident through publicly available information and clarify that the incident is not a natural event and that it is more than a "landslide." In addition to transparency in all public disclosures and practices for the sake of public health, this paper also demonstrates and advocates the necessity to stop leached mining practices.

Merve Bedir is an architect. Her work focuses on infrastructures of hospitality and mobility. A secondary line of research refers to the collective intelligence and imaginaries of the landscape. Bedir holds a PhD from Delft University of Technology and a BArch from Middle East Technical University in Ankara. She is a co-initiating member of the Kitchen Workshop in Gaziantep, and the Center for Spatial Justice in Istanbul. Bedir co-chaired the Rethinking Partnerships panel of the United International Architects Conference in 2023. She has written for *Harvard Design Magazine*, *AD Magazine*, and *The Funambulist*, among others. Bedir taught at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne-EPFL Architecture, Hong Kong University, and Columbia GSAPP, New York/USA.

CONCRETE COSMOLOGIES

BODIES AND COLONIALITIES OF LABOUR IN THE AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION SITE

MARÍA GONZÁLEZ PENDÁS

Keynote lecture
Friday October 24, 14h25
Introduced by Federica Goffi

Cornell University
United States



Cubiertas Ala worker, name unknown, walking down a shell under construction in Mexico City circa 1958. Courtesy of Félix Candela architectural records and papers, 1950-1984. Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

Amidst the formwork waiting for the liquid concrete, workers erected a cross. The gesture is hardly extraordinary given that the building under construction was a church: The Chapel of Nuestra Senora de la Soledad in San Jose del Altillio, Coyoacan, Mexico, by Félix Candela (1910–1997) and Enrique de la Mora y Palomar (1907–1978), in collaboration with Fernando López Carmona (1921–2018), built by Amerindian workers in Mexico City in 1958. In wood and ephemeral, the cross was intended to fulfill the symbolic and functional needs of the building-to-be, offering divine inspiration for those laboring on site. More tangibly, the cross served as structural inspiration, helping designer, Spaniards Félix Candela, solve the only element of the roof—one of his already renown thin-concrete shells—subject to compression. God, that is, appeared to be busy at work in this construction site. But what are the implications of this cross when we consider the colonial relations of labor that were actually here at work?

This lecture begins with the worker's cross to revisit the historiography of thin-shell technology, a highly innovative system of design that made literal waves across the Americas during the mid-twentieth century, and argue for the racial and religious implications of what I call the 'coloniality of labour.' Drawing from a photographic, bureaucratic, and material archive of labour, I have already argued for the embodied and racial coloniality ingrained on the shells—where a white technical elite extracted value from indigenous craft, knowledge, and bodies while promising redemption in the name of Hispanidad. This lecture expands on this archive and this argument to show how building sites also helped workers resist such extractive dynamics and gain long-deferred labor rights. It will argue, moreover, for the ways in which laboring bodies have been made present and absent in architectural artifacts and histories to meet such colonial and decolonial ends. The intervention takes cue from postcolonial theorists who have challenged historians to better unearth the remnants of empire in racial and capital relations of labor. They have also asked, however, that we explore the religious implications of colonialization; that we question the politics of Christianity imposed and the supernatural beliefs erased in the onwards march of modernization as evangelization as secularization. To neglect the gods, they warn, only replicates colonial epistemologies. Indeed, in shell building and as I will further suggest, elite designers from Mexico to Uruguay imagined building rituals as religious rituals; bodily rituals, in fact, they thought could translate evangelization and exploitation into “cosmic development.” Workers, in their turn, also saw to shape their own indigenous cosmologies in concrete.

Cubiertas Ala worker, name unknown, walking down a shell under construction in Mexico City circa 1958. Courtesy of Félix Candela architectural records and papers, 1950–1984. Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

María González Pendás is an assistant professor in the History of Architecture and Urban Design Program at Cornell University. Recent publications include a co-edited special issue for the journal *Grey Room* titled “Pious Technologies and Secular Designs” and the essay “Labor Un:Imagined” for *SAH*, and she organized the international symposium with the same title in 2024 together with the exhibition *Who Built Cornell?* Her forthcoming book, titled *Holy Modern*, studies the entanglements of architectural work with evangelical dreams of imperialism and fascism in the mid-twentieth century. She has taught at Cooper Union, Vassar College and Columbia University, where she received her PhD and was also a member of the Society of Fellows in the Humanities. Her research has received grants from the Society of Architectural Historians, the Graham Foundation, and the Fulbright, among others.

Labour Matter(s)
Friday, October 24, 15h45 to 17h10

15h40
Session introduction
Federica Goffi

15h45
Thermoplastic, Movement, and Markings:
Labour as Infrastructure of the Street in
Hong Kong
Sony Devabhaktuni

16h05
Embodied Spaces: The Resistance of
Bailundo's Constructions in the
Contemporary Built Environment
Yolana Lemos

16h25
Global Tools: The Architect as a
Constructor
Eleonora Antoniadou

16h45
Session roundtable
Moderated by Federica Goffi

LABOUR MATTER(S) brings the corporeal politics of labour to bear on architecture culture and legacy, which maintain and reproduce colonial, racial, and ableist norms of embodiment. Moving alongside and against techniques of corporeal violence, the papers in this session probe labouring bodies not only as sites of struggle but also as sites of resistance and worldmaking. Collectively, these papers map out moments of potentiality and affinity beyond the depleting strokes of normalcy.

THERMOPLASTIC, MOVEMENT, AND MARKINGS

LABOUR AS AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE STREET IN HONG KONG

SONY DEVABHAKTUNI

Paper presentation Friday
October 24, 15h45

Swathmore College
United States



Highways Department road workers pouring heated yellow thermoplastic into an application unit. Hong Kong, 2023. Photo by author.

Imaginations of infrastructure are often framed by a monumental scale or by narratives of development and construction that end with a work's completion. These imaginations cast infrastructural systems as discrete networks that allow for the movement of resources or bodies: pipelines, highways, and bridges. Such an imagination becomes inadequate when we look more closely at aspects of the urban environment—such as the street—where multiple networks come together to work in coordination.

The street also reveals the ways in which each of its different systems



Highways Department truck with yellow and white thermoplastic heating drums. Hong Kong, 2023. Photo by author.

depend on construction and maintenance for their functioning. This, in turn, brings to light the vast network of human effort that is another thread woven into the streets' multiple infrastructures.

This paper takes the street in Hong Kong as an exemplar of such overlapping networks: an infrastructure of infrastructures. To explore how this way of thinking about infrastructure puts physical emplacements into relation with human networks of support, I consider the labour implicated in the installation of thermoplastic road markings through a close reading of Hong Kong government regulations and reference documents. Markings begin as plastic pellets that are heated to 200 degrees Celsius. Workers using screed boxes filled with molten material manually draw lines or curves onto marked surfaces to define movement. This coming together of human labour, petroleum, energy, and the fabrication of the civic realm can be understood through a framework of an infrastructure of infrastructures that brings together physical and human emplacements. Where these two types of infrastructures are most often considered apart —the former studied by engineering, architecture and planning, and the latter more recently considered in the social sciences and humanities—I want to insist on their imbricated and implicated relation. I consider Lauren Berlant's writing on infrastructure and the commons,¹ as well as AbdouMaliq Simone's articulation of people as infrastructure,² to put forward an argument for the role infrastructure plays in holding the world together. It is this role, I argue, that potentially also makes infrastructure critical to the re-articulation of this social world from its seeming stasis and solidity into a new set of relations.

¹ Lauren Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no.3 (2021): 393–419.

² Simone AbdouMaliq, "Ritornello: 'People as Infrastructure'," *Urban Geography* 42, no.9 (2021): 1341–1348.

Sony Devabhaktuni is an Assistant Professor in the Art Program at Swarthmore College in the US. His research focuses on urban infrastructures and collaborative design processes, with a particular concern for how economic, social, and political intensities overlap with imaginations of space. His writing has appeared in *Future Anterior*, the *Architectural Theory Review*, *Places Journal*, *Platform*, *CCA Web-journal*, *Public Culture*, *Global Performance Studies*, and the *AA Files*. His book *Curb-Scale Hong Kong: Infrastructures of the Street* (2023) uses drawing and writing to describe the social and material relations that articulate the street as a shared realm. With John C.F. Lin he is the author of *As Found Houses: Experiment from Self-Builders in Rural China*, awarded the 2021 RIBA President's Medal for Research.

EMBODIED SPACES

THE RESISTANCE OF BAILUNDO'S CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY BUILT ENVIRONMENT

YOLANA LEMOS

Paper presentation Friday
October 24, 16h05

Universidade Lusíada
Portugal



The relationship between Bailundo's dwellings and animals. Bailundo, Huambo, Angola. © 2024, Yolana Lemos.

The colonial imposition of Western architectural principles, which contributes to the homogenization of culture and architectural practice, has led to the marginalization of native building practices and the knowledge systems they embody. In Angola, during the Portuguese colonial period (1575–1975), the introduction of new materials and

Examples of construction and living in the surroundings of Bailundo, Huambo, Angola.
© 2024, Yolana Lemos.



architectural models not only altered the country's physical landscape but also the knowledge systems they embody. In Angola, during the Portuguese colonial period (1575–1975), the introduction of new materials and also its social dynamics and the way people inhabited space. This problem persisted in the post-colonial period when decontextualized constructions using non-local materials radically transformed the landscape and extinguished ways of appropriating space and nature. It is evident the contrast between the visually oriented Western approach in architecture and the embodied construction methods of the region of Bailundo in Angola, where the process of building with earth engages the whole body and is deeply intertwined with the local environment and cultural traditions.

Bailundo's traditional construction offers a critique of these imported solutions that prioritize visual aesthetics, aligning with the approach of architecture that is an extension of the body rather than architecture as an object. This approach not only emphasises the importance of embodied experiences but also the cyclical and dynamic relationship between the body and space-time, addressing how matter is organized in such a way as not only to serve a structural function but also to facilitate a sensory and bodily connection with the built space, which begins right from construction. The act of moulding and shaping the earth with one's hands and body creates a direct, physical connection between the builder and matter, fostering a sense of intimacy and ownership over the construction process. This knowledge is not just intellectual but also physical, as it is encoded in the movements and practices of buildings. The body becomes a repository of ancestral knowledge that contributes to a sense of continuity and belonging.

This communication explores the concept of embodied spaces through vernacular constructions in the Angolan region, where self-construction prevails. Reflecting on and learning from different thinkers and philosophers, this study aims to determine how the construction practices in Bailundo could feed Angolan architectonic thought and challenge predominantly Western architectural paradigms. By highlighting the sensory and bodily dimensions of buildings in Bailundo, one expects to explore the interplay between matter, bodies, and space, examining how these constructs mediate through architectural practices and the role of the discipline in perpetuating or disrupting exclusionary legacies.

Yolana Lemos (Luanda, 1995) is an Angolan architect who graduated in Architecture from Lusíada University, Lisbon (2018). Lemos holds a master's degree in architecture from the same university (2019). In 2020, she co-founded Banga Collective, whose main objective is to develop architectural projects and interventions that intersect with different areas, such as visual arts, sociology, or philosophy, using mixed media. These works seek to promote Angolan culture within contemporary architectural thought and theory. The collective's project "Soba Eternal" (2023) has been part of the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale. They also took part in the 13th São Paulo Architecture Biennale with the project "Oku Tumala Oku Tekula" (2022). She also participated in 2022 in the 12th Annual International Conference on Architecture, in Athens, Greece, taking the theme of "Afrofuturism as a New Narrative for Angolan Architecture."

GLOBAL TOOLS

THE ARCHITECT AS A CONSTRUCTOR

ELEONORA ANTONIADOU

Paper presentation Friday
October 24, 14h25

Royal College of Art
United Kingdom



Superstudio, Sambuca Val di Pesa, Florence, Italy, 1974. © Archive Adolfo Natalini.

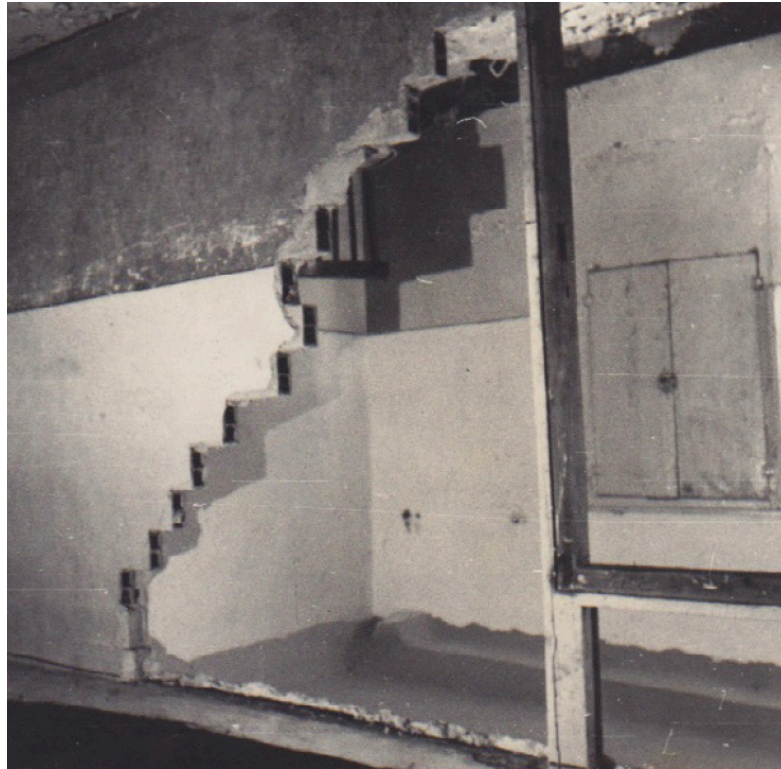
In the history of architecture, the communication between constructors and architects has taken different forms, from oral instructions to construction drawings, and even today, it uses mediators and project managers. This distance between design and implementation has dehumanized labour and created a gap between architects and matter.

During the 1970s, an influential group of Italian architects established Global Tools,¹ an innovative system of workshops aiming to experiment with arts and crafts and learn architecture through unlearning. The group was active between 1973 and 1975. Five research and working groups were formed between the members of Global Tools, functioning independently but always closely to each other with several overlaps in methods and practices. The connecting link of all groups was the physical essence of the body, its co-existence with other bodies, and its relation to the environment.

¹
Valerio Borghonovo and Silvia Franceschini
eds, *Global Tools 1973–1975* (Istanbul: SALT/
Garanti Kültür AŞ, 2015).

One of the groups was Construction, also described as de-construction.

The group manifested 'minimal technology' and the revaluation of the connection of tool and hand working with elementary and craft techniques.



Construction session, The wall,
Sambuca Val di Pesa, Florence, Italy, 1974.
© Archive Ugo La Pietra.

2

Valerio Borghonovo and Silvia Franceschini
eds., *Global Tools 1973–1975* (Istanbul:
SALT/Garanti Kültür AŞ, 2015), 25.

Eleonora Antoniadou is an architect, an educator and a PhD Candidate at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in the UK. Her research focuses on bodies as learning tools in architectural pedagogy, and she explores the possibilities of learning from the radical pedagogies of the 1970s. Her PhD thesis examines the use of bodies as a method in architectural pedagogy. In searching for answers to the pressing topics of ecology, technology, globalisation, and social justice, her thesis looks to 1970s pedagogies where bodies served as a method for deschooling pedagogies. Since 2012, she has been an architecture educator holding the position of Senior Lecturer with teaching experience at several Universities internationally. She is the founding director of the architecture practice Superside Studio. Her work and various collaborative projects have been awarded, published, and shown internationally, including at the 16th and 17th Venice Architecture Biennale, the Architectural Association's Gallery, the Design Museum London, the Copeland Gallery, the Benaki Museum Athens, the Point Gallery, and Thkio Ppalies Cyprus.

According to the Construction Group, minimal technology refers to the disconnection of any thinking and making process from any pre-existing technological filter, material creation, cultural dependency and methodological medium. The re-examination of craft techniques² became a tool for the group to promote early sustainability and environmental consciousness and to enhance creative thinking through manual labour. The goal of the Construction Group was to revisit existing designing and representation tools that were considered vehicles of cultural conditioning and overcome the fear of making a mistake.

This paper aims to revisit global tools experiments, especially the Construction Groups workshop, as an act of learning and responding to critical questions such as: How can architects today bridge the gap between manual labour and design? Is the body the vehicle for achieving this? How can we engage with non-normative entanglements with matter through construction?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AbdouMaliq, Simone. "Ritornello: 'People as Infrastructure'." *Urban Geography* 42, no. 9 (2021): 1341–1348.
- Abraham, Lyndy. *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *Earth and Reveries of Will*. Translated by Kenneth Haltman. Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications, 2002.
- . *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Berlant, Lauren. "The commons: Infrastructures for troubling times." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016): 393–419.
- Borgonuovo, Valerio and Silvia Franceschini, editors. *Global Tools 1973–1975*. Istanbul: SALT/Garanti Kültür AŞ, 2015.
- Camp, Tina. *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1950.
- Chen, Mel. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.
- . *Intoxicated: Race, Disability, and Chemical Intimacy Across Empire*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2023.
- Clark, Nigel. "Politics of Strata." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34, nos. 2–3 (2017): 211–231.
- Clark, Nigel, and Kathryn Yusoff. "Geosocial Formations and the Anthropocene." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34, nos. 2–3 (2017): 3–23.
- Crawford, Lucas Cassidy. "Derivative Plumbing: Redesigning Washrooms, Bodies, and Trans Affects in ds+r's Brasserie." *Journal of Homosexuality* 61, no. 5 (2014): 621–635.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Fraser, Nancy. 2022. *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet—and What We Can Do About It*. London: Verso.
- Frichot, Hélène, Adrià Carbonell, Hannes Frykholm, and Sepideh Karami, editors. *Infrastructural Love: Caring for Our Architectural Support Systems*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2022.
- Ghosh, Sahana. *A Thousand Tiny Cuts: Mobility and Security across the Bangladesh-India Borderlands*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2023.
- Grosz, Elisabeth. *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- hooks, bell. *yearning. race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990.
- Hutton, Jane. *Reciprocal Landscapes, Stories of Material Movements*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Illbruck, Helmut. *Nostalgia: Origins and Ends of an Unenlightened Disease*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012.
- Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.

- Marston, Andrea. "Metabolic Strata, Corporeal Sediment." *Environmental Humanities* 15, no. 3 (2023): 159–173.
- . *Subterranean Matters: Cooperative Mining and Resource Nationalism in Plurinational Bolivia*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Brutalism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Minh-hà, Trinh T. *Elsewhere, within here. Immigration, refugeeism and the boundary event*. New York and London: Routledge, 2011.
- Moten, Fred, and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe and Port Watson, New York: Minor Compositions, 2013.
- Neimanis, Astrida. *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.
- Rahm, Philippe. "Evaporated Rooms, An Apartment for a Young Doctor." *ARQ Santiago* 89 (2015): 36–41.
- Richard, Frances. *Gordon Matta-Clark: Physical Poetics*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019.
- Sheller, Mimi. *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes*. London and New York: Verso, 2018.
- Singh, Julietta. *Unthinking Mastery: Humanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Sur, Malini. *Jungle Passports: Fences, Mobility and Citizenship at Northeast India-Bangladesh Border*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021.
- Tsing, Anna. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Urbach, Henry. "Closets, Clothes, disClosure." *Assemblage* 30 (1996): 63–73.
- Vergès, Françoise. "Racial Capitalocene: Is the Anthropocene racial?," *Verso Blog*, August 30, 2017. <https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/blogs/news/3376-racial-capitalocene>.
- . "On the Politics of Extraction, Exhaustion and Suffocation," *L'Internationale online*, November 7, 2021. https://archive-2014-2024.internationaleonline.org/research/politics_of_life_and_death/195_on_the_politics_of_extraction_exhaustion_and_suffocation/, accessed June 7, 2025.
- Wajcman, Judy. *Feminism Confronts Technology*. Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation, An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337.
- Yusoff, Kathryn. *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

- *Geologic Life: Inhuman Intimacies and the Geophysics of Race*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2024.
- . “Geosocial Strata.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 34, nos. 2–3 (2017): 105–127.

**Mediating Matter(s):
Architecture and Bodily
Affects is organized by
CRIPTIC and co-convened
by Ahmed Elsherif, Ushma
Thakrar, Menna Agha, and
Federica Goffi.**

CRIPTIC Chair

Dr. Federica Goffi, PhD, is a professor of Architecture at Carleton University. She served as the Co-Chair of the PhD and MAS Programs in Architecture at the ASAU, Carleton University (2017–2025). She is author of *Architecture in Conversion and the Work of Carlo Scarpa* (Lund Humphries 2025). Her book, *Time Matter[s]: Invention and Re-imagination in Built Conservation: The Unfinished Drawing and Building of St. Peter's in the Vatican*, was published by Ashgate in 2013. Her recent edited volumes include *The Routledge Companion to Architectural Drawings and Models: From Translating to Archiving, Collecting and Displaying* (Routledge 2022); *Marco Frascari's Dream House: A Theory of Imagination* (Routledge 2017); *InterVIEWS: Insights and Introspection in Doctoral Research in Architecture* (Routledge 2019), and the co-edited *Architectures of Hiding: Crafting / Concealment / Omission / Deception / Erasure / Silence* (Routledge, 2024) and *Ceilings and Dreams: The Architecture of Levity* (Routledge 2019). She is the editor of *And Yet It Moves: Ethics, Power, and Politics in the Stories of Collecting, Archiving and Displaying Drawings and Models* (2021). She holds a Dottore in Architettura (University of Genoa, Italy). She is a licensed architect in Italy.

CRIPTIC Co-coordinators

Ahmed Elsherif is a PhD student in Architecture at Carleton University. His interests, grounded in and moved by land-based struggles, center around anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, and anti-racist critique of architecture and design culture. Prior to Carleton, he pursued his graduate studies at Iowa State University and undergraduate studies at Alexandria University.

Ushma Thakrar is a researcher, editor, and, currently, a PhD student in Architecture at Carleton University. Her doctoral research explores the intersecting environmental, social, and infrastructural histories of dirt, hygiene, and caste in India during the early 20th century through a decolonial lens and has been supported by SSHRC's Canada Graduate Scholarship and the Canadian Centre for Architecture. She has previously worked as an editor and researcher at arc en rêve centre d'architecture, the Remail Modern, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

CRIPTIC Mediating Matter(s) Faculty Advisor

Dr. Menna Agha is an architect and researcher. She is an associate professor of Design and Spatial Justice at Carleton University. Menna holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Antwerp and a Master of Arts in Gender and Design from Köln International School of Design. In 2019/2020, she was the Spatial Justice Fellow and a visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon. She is a third-generation displaced Fadicha Nubian, a legacy that infuses her research interests in race, gender, space, and territory. Among her publications are: *Nubia still exists: The Utility of the Nostalgic Space*; *The Non-work of the Unimportant: The shadow economy of Nubian women in displacement villages*; and *Emotional Capital And Other Ontologies of the Architect*.

