



Ellie Laycock, *Artworks of Resistance/Signs of Development*, 2020

AH 379

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM AND THEORY

Instructor: Ben Barsotti Scott

3 Credits.

How do contemporary buildings and spaces reflect and respond to globalization, late capitalism, the climate crisis, and calls for social and racial justice? We'll look at key examples of the architecture of the past thirty years, focusing on the politics of design and the theoretical concepts and debates driving the production and interpretation of specific buildings, spaces, and sites.



dir. Todd Haynes, *SAFE*, 1995

PART 1: ARCHITECTURE'S INSIDES

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Hostile Architecture

to read before class:

Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles" (1992) in *Variations on a Theme Park*

David Harvey, "A View from Federal Hill" (1992) in *The Baltimore Book*

Karen Abrams, "[Hijinks in Harlem: The Whiteness of 'Place'](#)" (2017) in *Avery Review*

peruse: Interboro, *The Arsenal of Exclusion & Inclusion* (2016) (on reserve)

class time: Introduce project 1

Week 3: Pleasure Space

to read:

Ivan L. Munuera, "An Organism of Hedonistic Pleasures: The Palladium" (2017) in *Log*

Nathan Friedman, "[Diagram of the Amorous Search](#)" (2016) in *Scapegoat*

Andrew Pasquier, "[Nightlife Architecture: From Times Square to the Spectrum, What We Get Out of Going Out](#)" (2019) in *Pin-Up*

Office for Political Innovation, "[Pornified Homes](#)" (2016) or J Soto, "Memories of the Sutro Baths" (2016) in *Original Plumbing: The Bathroom Issue*

peruse: *Night Fever: Designing Club Culture, 1960-Today* (2018) (on reserve)

Week 4: Architecture and Sex and the City **due: Project 1 pre-proposal**

to read:

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public" (1997) in *Critical Inquiry*

Neil Smith, "Which New Urbanism? The Revanchist 90's" (1999) in *Perspecta*

Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Sexuality and Space* (1992)

optional reading: Sharon Egretta Sutton, "Resisting the Patriarchal Norms of Professional Education" (1996)

peruse: Diller Scofidio, *Flesh* (1994) (PDF)

class time: guest speakers, Leandra Burnett and Sarah Murphy (Front/Space)

Week 5: Domestic Space

to read:

bell hooks, “Black Vernacular: Architecture as Cultural Practice” (1998) in *Art on my Mind*
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Michael Moon, “Queers in (Single-Family) Space” (1994) in *Assemblage*
Maria Kaika, “Interrogating the Geographies of the Familiar” (2004) in *IJURR*
Anthony Vidler, “Theorizing the Uncanny” (1992) in *Theorizing a New Agenda*

optional readings:

Mabel O. Wilson, “(A) Way Station” (2000) in *The Pragmatist Imagination*

peruse: Dolores Hayden *A Field Guide to Sprawl* (2004) (on reserve)

peruse: [McMansion Hell](#)

class time: film, *SAFE* (1995) (1h 59m)

Week 6: Carceral Space

to read:

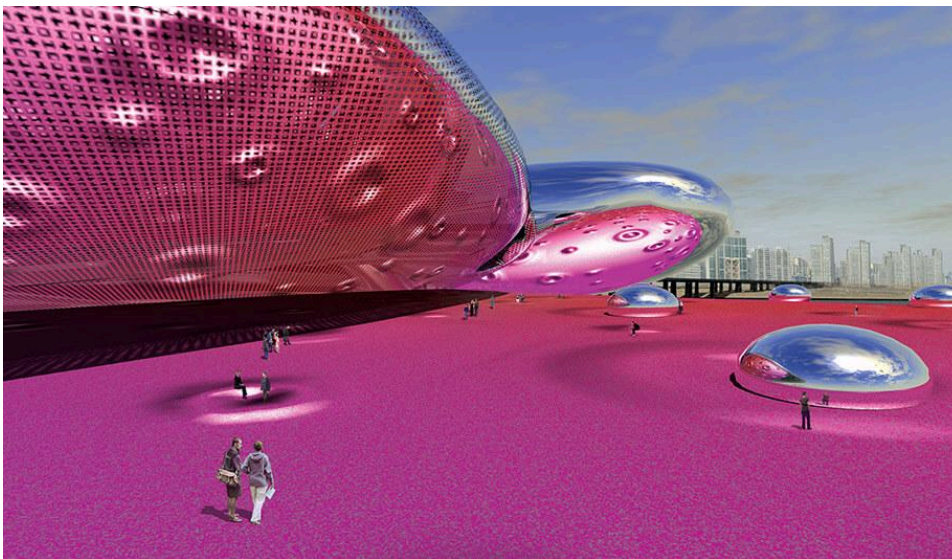
Katherine McKittrick, “On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Space” (2011) in *Social & Cultural Geography*
Brett Story, “Community Confinements: Social Control in Everyday Life” in *Prison Land: Mapping Carceral Power Across Neoliberal America* (2019)
Tings Chak, selections from “Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention” (2014)
Harold W. Nichols, [“Prison Outside the Box”](#)

optional readings:

Michelle C. Potts, “Regulatory Sites: Management, Confinement, and HIV/AIDS” (2011) in *Captive Genders*
Rashad Shabazz, “Carceral Interstice: Between Home Space and Prison Space” (2015) in *Spatializing Blackness*
Amber Wiley, [“Schools and Prisons”](#) (2015) in *Aggregate*

peruse: online exhibition, [Solitary Watch: The Architecture of Solitary Confinement](#)

class time: film, *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes* (2016) (1h 30m)



Acconci Studio, *Performing Arts Center For A Floodable Island*, Hangyang River, Seoul, South Korea 2005.

PART 2: ARCHITECTURE'S OUTSIDES, ARCHITECTURE'S BOUNDARIES

Week 7: Appropriation, Expropriation, and Availability

to read:

Ignasi de Sola Morales, "Terrain Vague" (1995) in *Anyplace*

Rem Koolhaas, "Junkspace" (2002) in *October*

Ginger Nolan, "From the Boudoir to the Boxing Ring: Or, How Architectural Theory Justified 'Gym Crow'" in *Theory's Curriculum* (2020)

Rick Noack and Sandra Mehl, ["This is a Food Bank Now': Workers Seized a McDonald's in France."](#) (2021) (online)

optional:

Alan Berger, "The Production of Waste Landscape," in *Drosscape* (2006)

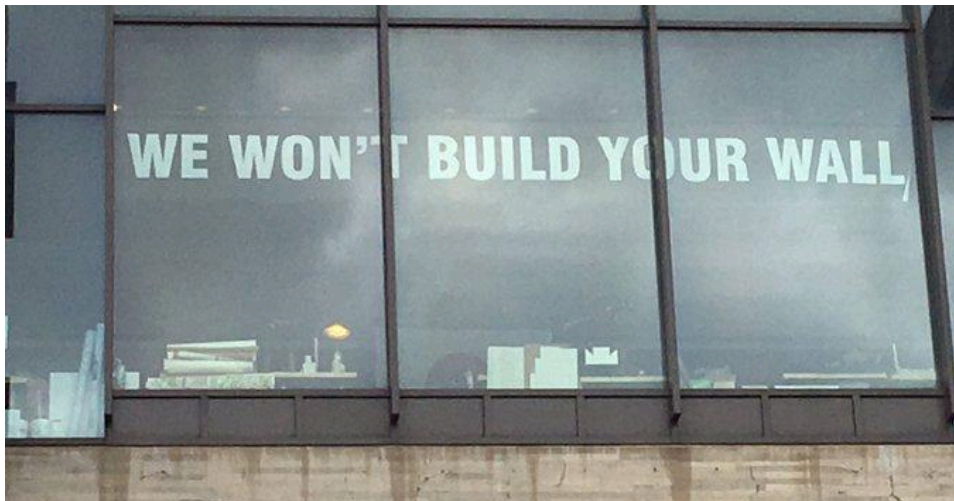
peruse: [The Available City](#), 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial **or** [Strategies for Public Occupation](#), 2011 at Storefront for Art and Architecture **or** [Trummerkind](#) (2003–07) (online)

Week 8: Mid-review

PROJECT 1 DUE

Introduce Project 2

Week 9: SPRING BREAK



installation at Yale School of Architecture, November 2016

Week 10: Boundaries, Borders, Security

to read:

Rem Koolhaas, "Field Trip: (A)A Memoir: The Berlin Wall as Architecture, 1993" (pub. 1995) in *S,M,L,XL*

Esra Ackan, "Open Architecture, Rightlessness, and Citizens-to-Come" (2020) in *Race and Modern Architecture*

Irit Katz, ["Anti-Collage Cities in Israel-Palestine"](#) (2021) in *Architectural Review*

peruse: Rem Koolhaas/OMA and Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL* (1995) (on reserve)

peruse: Hilary Sample, *Maintenance Architecture* (2016) (on reserve)

class time: guest speaker, Julie Shapiro (Bad Little Brother)

Week 11: Boundaries, Borders, Security *due: Project 2 selection*

to read:

- William J. Mitchell, "Boundaries / Networks" in *Constructing a New Agenda* (2003)
Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "On Humanitarian Architecture: A Story of a Border" (2017) in *Humanity*
Eyal Weizman, "Seeing Through Walls: The Split Sovereign and the One-Way Mirror" (2006) in *Grey Room*

optional:

- Hito Steyerl, ["How to Kill People: A Problem of Design"](#) (2016)
Ivonne Santoyo Orozco, "Liquid: The Present of Architectural Theory" (2020) in *Theory's Curriculum*

Week 12: Smoothness and Difference

to read:

- Foreign Office Architects, "The Digital and the Global" (1996) in *The Digital Turn in Architecture*
Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: The Denationalizing of Time and Space" (2000) in *The Pragmatist Imagination*
Patrik Schumacher, "A New Global Style" (2009) in *The Digital Turn in Architecture*
[Douglas Spencer, "The New Agenda for Architecture" and "Architecture and the Market" in *The Architecture of Neoliberalism* \(2016\)](#) [available online through MICA Decker Library]

optional:

- Alex Wall, "Programming the Urban Surface" (1999) in *Recovering Landscape*
Manuel Shvartzberg Carrió, ["Complexity and Contradiction in Infrastructure: On the Schumacher-Trump Hegemony"](#) (2017) in *Avery Review*

Week 13: Smoothness and Difference *due: Progress set, project 2*

to read:

- Lucas Crawford, ["The Crumple and the Scrape"](#) (2020) in *Places*
Mario Carpo, "The Participatory Turn that Never Was" (2017) in *The Second Digital Turn*
Greg Lynn, "Blobs, or Why Tectonics is Square and Topology is Groovy" (1996)
Andrew Holder, "On Sufficient Density," (2016) in *Log*

class time: guest speaker, A.L. Hu (Dark Matter University, Queer Agenda)

class time: introduce Part 3



feminist architecture collaborative (f-architecture), *Cosmo-clinical Interiors of Beirut*, 2018

PART 3: ARCHITECTURE'S WORK

Week 14: Collapse and Resistance

to read:

- Andrew Herscher, "Unreal Estate: An Introduction" in *The Unreal Estate Guide* (2012)
Dan Hoffman, "Detroit, Capital of the 20th Century" (2003) in *PRAXIS*
Brenna Bhandar, "[Organised State Abandonment and the Meaning of Grenfell](#)" (2018)
Daniela Sandler, "Living Projects: Collective Housing, Alternative Culture, and Spaces of Resistance," in *Counterpreservation* (2016)

peruse: [Andrew Herscher, *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit* \(2012\)](#)

Week 15: Collapse and Resistance

to read:

- prole.info, "Development and Decay" in [The Housing Monster](#) (2012)
Edge City Collective, "[Counterinsurgency and the Policing of Space in Ferguson](#)" (2014) (self-published)
Reinhold Martin, "[Occupy: What Architecture Can Do](#)" (2011) in *Places*
Bassem Saad, "[Betraying the Profession: Design Labour Against Technocracy](#)" (2020) in *Failed Architecture*

optional

- Antonis Vradis & Dimitris Dalakoglou, "Spatial Legacies of December and the Right to the City" (2011)
Maria Theodoru, "Architecture's Critical Context: The Athens Activist Experiment," in *Critical Architecture* (2007)

peruse: prole.info, [The Housing Monster](#) (2012)

Week 16: LAST DAY OF CLASS

[Present Project 2](#)