PAPRIKA!

NOT URBAN

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DO YOU READ ME? is a recurring column that uses humor as a way of cutting through academic jargon while thoughtfully communicating something about the discipline of architecture. It is situated at the intersection of punditry, poetry, and absurdity.

QUIZ: DO MY PARENTS UNDERSTAND MY STUDIO PROJECT?

KATIE COLFORD

1. When you explained your studio project to your parents, did you use the word "metaphorical"?
2. Was their response "It's modern, but I like it!"?
3. Did they ask a clarifying question to which you answered, "Oh, well, we don't really need to think about those kinds of things..."?
4. Were the scale figures what impressed them the most?
5. Was the phrase "Yes, it does have to do with architecture" required? (*Does* your project have to do with architecture?)
6. Did you try walking them through the project by tracing the circulation on the plan, then give it a shot with the model, then go back to the plan, only to regret having started the conversation at all?
7. Did showing them a GIF backfire miserably?
8. Was the exact drawing that wowed your studio critic precisely what caused the most confusion to your parents?
9. Were there tears?
10. Did you feel the need to suggest they read Hegel first?
11. Is there a "blurred boundary" in your project?
12. Do your parents know more about plumbing than you do?

If you answered yes to any of the above, your parents do not understand your studio project. But do not despair! There is one final question:

13. With God as your witness, is there a front door to your building?

Yes? Congratulations. You have communicated with your parents.

EDITORS NOTE

The *Yale School of Architecture* might as well be called the *Yale School of Urban Architecture.* Over 80% of the American buildings studied in YSoA's Introduction to Modern Architecture course last fall were located in one of the USA's ten largest cities at the time of construction; on a global scale, this metropolitan trend was even more pronounced: buildings in Paris, London, Berlin, Hong Kong, Shanghai. Like at every architecture school, there are plenty of course offerings in Urban Design, Urban Planning, and Urban Studies. Courses in Rural Design, Planning, or Studies? Not so much. And though it has a nice ring to it, Suburban Studies hasn't caught on either.

So what to make of this implicit association of architecture and urbanity?

By 2050, we're told, 68% of the world population will be living in urban areas. Is this a license to continue focusing on architecture in cities, or is this an assumption that merits debate? Defining characteristics of our time - rapid densification, climate change, a global pandemic, economic disparity, and political unrest - equally impact both urban and not urban contexts. So, as designers, should our responses to these crises focus so heavily on the urban context? If not, how can we meaningfully extend our understanding and reach beyond the 'polis'?

Does this association of architecture and urbanity imply a 'universal ground,' an idea that all contexts can be approached similarly? Do the habits we engrain in ourselves when regularly designing for urban areas transfer well to designing in 'Not Urban' geospatial contexts? To what degree do we consider the intersection of differing geographies and cultural systems in our thinking? How are the architectural elements we borrow from suburban, rural and 'natural' environments impacted by implicit political, social, cultural and environmental biases? As designers, how can we excavate the diversity of the 'Not Urban,' and be inspired by it in a manner that rises above copypasting, fetishization, and romanticization?

ON PEPPA PIG'S HOUSE IN PARADISE

JERRY CHOW

The American suburb can be described as many things: political project, carbon form, economic apparatus, cultural organism, etc. More generally though, we might understand the suburb as a landscape of idealism, a space shaped by–and shaping–an idea of a life that is to be desired. For many, the idealism of the suburb is wrapped up in desires for space, quiet, safety, ownership, and community (among many other things), though aspirations for a better, more ideal life are also present in characteristics of the suburb that are often considered negative, like uniformity, repetitiveness, and exclusivity. Understanding the suburb as a product of ideological goals and ambitions demands that we look beyond its stereotypical image (read: architecture) and contemplate the intentions that give rise to and permeate its constituent spaces and forms. Why the single-family home? Why a lawn? Why so many cars? And most pertinent to this issue, *why not urban?*

Crossing an ocean (or even just stepping into any number of living rooms within this sprawling suburbia) might bring us face-to-face with another landscape of idealism, where "muddy puddles"[1] are far more of an idealised[2] form than they might typically be in the American suburb. While the domiciles of cartoon British pigs may not immediately present themselves as worthwhile objects of serious intellectual inquiry, it is interesting to note that both the American suburb and, by and large, the urbanism of animated children's television shows–*Peppa Pig*[3], for example–share an interest in a similar kind of idyllic idealism[4]. I would argue that this is not merely coincidental; their common idealism of the pastoral landscape belies a deeper desire to give form to a "good" life, one that is bound up in an imagination of what landscape is, can be, or ought to be. In both, the image of the bucolic is employed as an ideal setting for the lives of humans and pigs alike[5].

A further probe into the idea of idealised architectures within idealised settings might lead us to Joseph Rykwert's *On Adam's House in Paradise*, in which the concept of the primitive hut is followed through architectural history. Like the houses of American suburbia and Peppa Pig, the theorized dwelling of the first man also takes place in an ideal(ised) setting (i.e. Paradise). For Rykwert, the notion of a first house[6] continues to hold sway because it suggests a kind of purity or honesty; it is a "reminder of the original and therefore essential meaning of all building for people."[7] This is an architecture that perfectly mediates between man and landscape while both remain in an ideal, not-yet-corrupted state–it is a condition that is held up to be replicated, or at least to be worked towards. The idealism of the primitive hut carries a degree of weight across time because it suggests that there is a way in which we should build, a fundamental architectural ethic that should govern our work. Although a slightly different kind of idealism, the pastoral ideal that underlies the production of much of suburbia and children's television operates in a similar manner. It too is an ideal that suggests that there is a certain way in which we should build and live, a certain way in which we (as humans, and as cartoon pigs) should experience the world around us.

However, I don't intend this brief article to be a condemnation of idealism–or, for that matter, the idea of the "primitive hut" (which of course too often finds itself wrapped up in thorny interpretations). Instead, I would suggest that idealism is inescapable, and that a certain critical cognizance of what our idealisms and "first houses" (to borrow Rykwert's term) are is therefore necessary. In other words, it is incumbent upon us to be aware of what kinds of future(s) we think are worth designing because we will always, invariably work towards *something*. The pastoral ideal of the American suburb is not an inert ambition, and I would argue that its presence in *Peppa Pig* is not meaningless either; Rykwert's essay suggests that idealised types and forms persist and re-emerge with force throughout time. As such, it would be irresponsible to not recognize the idealisms we ourselves hold–be they urban or rural, from our childhoods, or rooted deep within time. Whether we labour in pursuit of an urban or a *not urban* idealism, or perhaps even one that transcends this dichotomy, it is important that we are clear on the nature of our idealism. As Rykwert notes at the end of his own essay, "Paradise is a promise as well as a memory."[8]

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1. The desirability of this kind of squalor might be contrasted with that of the industrial city, from which many suburbs were constructed as an escape.
2. Idealised and not idealized, of course, in deference to this article's porcine protagonist.
3. I should probably mention that I don't (usually) make a habit of pondering the cultural implications of *Peppa Pig*, but my interest is certainly piqued when *CNN* reports, "Peppa Pig appears to have trolled Kanye West." In the since-deleted tweet, @PeppaPig reportedly quips, "Peppa didn't need to host listening parties in Mercedes-Benz Stadium to get that .5🎤🐷," apparently in reference to "Peppa's Adventures: The Album" receiving a score of 6.5 on *Pitchfork* compared to Ye's "Donda" receiving only a 6.0.
4. In *Pastoral Capitalism*, Louise Mozingo draws an ideological connection between the suburb's pastoral ideal and Britain, tracing its origin to aesthetic theories of eighteenth-century Britain (hello, Peppa). Regarding the American implementation of this ideal, Mozingo writes that "[Frederick Law] Olmsted employed the term pastoral instead of the beautiful or picturesque to evoke a familiar, tranquil, and cultivated nature as a counterpoint to the city" (Mozingo, 10). See Louise A. Mozingo, *Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011).
5. We would also do well to ask to what purpose it is employed, but that is perhaps a question that exceeds the bounds of this article
6. *"[R]ight because it was first"* (Rykwert, 1). See Joseph Rywert, *On Adam's House in Paradise* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972).
7. *Ibid.*, 192.
8. *Ibid.*

EVERY APARTMENT HAS ITS OWN 24 ACRE FARM WHICH ITS INHABITANTS TAKE CARE OF AFTER THEIR 9 — 5 JOB

PAUL MEUSER

RURAL ARCHITECTURE AND ACCUMULATED TIME

BRIAN ORSER

Architecture requires capital. Accumulated capital has a tendency to gravitate towards wealthy urban settlements, but it also surfaces throughout the landscape in complex patterns which reflect urban investment in rural resources. A large geometric swath of green in a 21st-century-dust-bowl landscape is a vivid upwelling of Capital's coveted 'waters of life.' A "rustic-modern" villa in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, also reflects urban activity. Capital changes the entire landscape.

It is along the largest flows of capital that we can watch the most high-cost architecture under construction, like thirsty willows growing along a riverbank. But sometimes we find architecture growing in unlikely places, like the bright green moss hanging off darkly dampened earth, by which an observant country-dweller can immediately identify groundwater coming to the surface.

Is a lack of capital investment the reason good architecture is rare in rural America? Certainly reinvestment in rural areas, or more broadly the question of rural wealth, is central to the architectural potential of *rurality*.[1] But this reinvestment must strengthen *rurality* rather than replace it with urban culture. Rural architecture depends on "developing rural areas rurally – rather than urbanely."[2] So, experimental investing and innovative types of real property are good tools for creating the conditions for architecture in rural society. These methods are better for fertilizing the financial ground than a vanity-box building that is instagrammable and "Oh, so avant-garde." Attracting urban attention is not an aligned method for "developing rural areas rurally." It is known that architectural projects can effectively attract further investment. But my objective is not to reproduce the Bilbao effect in every small town and city throughout the landscape.

Inserting "world-class" metropolitan culture ("Culture") into rural areas is not the answer. Neither is packaging rural culture and its products for urban consumer markets. The dominance of urban architecture has historically been a reflection of the dominance of urban culture. The problem of rural architecture is fundamentally a problem of rural culture. Understanding and cultivating local culture must be a core method of rural architecture. Many of us have heard stories in which some magic combination of architecture, art, and "Culture" has transformed a far-flung place (Marfa, Texas comes to mind), and so has "put it on the map." But to my eye inserting something "world-class" into a rural town seems more like building a Super-Mario-portal to the city than giving architectural form to a place and so enhancing local identity. The aim of rural reinvestment cannot be to erase the distance between the rural town and the city. Rural architecture must be legible to rural people. So, bringing the city to the countryside seems a pretty weak solution. And the inverse is also true: commodifying, modernizing, translating or packaging rural materiality, rural labor, or rurality itself, for urban consumption cannot be the basis of a robust economic and aesthetic practice of rural reinvestment.

The persistent flow of culture from urban to rural is based on a self-fulfilling myth that rural life is of the past and urban life is of the future. Even those who promote rural life often frame it in nostalgic terms, a call to recover a lost past. The linked problems of rural culture, rural development, and rural architecture hinge on confronting this modern theory of time. Since the early stages of modernity, a directional arrow has been repeatedly drawn from rural society to the metropolis, aggressively pointing from the former to the latter. This arrow is *time*, *progress*. The rural is *past* and the metropolis is *future*. In between these two ends of the arrow is a string of places moving more or less quickly into the future. In other words, instead of compartmentalizing reality into a grid (space) overlaid with a system of values determining the worth of the real contents of each cell (like our system of *real* estate), radical modernism chose not to assign values in this way but instead made a gradient of reality across time, with the least reality in the past and the most reality in the revolutionary future.

To see the arrow from past to future plainly, look at Adolph Loos's two-faced walls, which present a crisp English suit to the abstract, metropolitan world while embracing the home's domestic life with sensory delights and earthly things of the past.

For a growing number of us, the myth of the urban future is hard to recognize as such, because the myth is already our reality. The concentration of resources, capital, and educated people in cities is both cause and effect of a self-fulfilling story that the city is where creativity blossoms. And the brain drain of architectural talent from every corner of the country to a few urban centers is a key factor in the weakness of rural architecture in America.

Critical regionalists like Alex Tzonis, Liliane Lefaivre, and Kenneth Frampton, have explored an architecture of place, as an alternative to an architecture of progress, or *zeitgeist*. The theoretical contributions of this work on "place" are significant. Still, I suggest that replacing a system of time with a system of place replaces one extreme with another. Instead of thinking of place as opposed to time, it might be useful to theorize two (or more) kinds of time coexisting. On one hand, the idealized time of *progress*, on the other hand, the material time of *accumulation*. While progressive time moves always from the many towards a novel synthesis, accumulation grows through horizontal deposits of variously formed and many-storied matter. Accumulation does not move *towards* any guiding light; perhaps it does not *move* at all.

Hegel, who systematized the dominant modern theory of progressive time, describes the World-Spirit "working ever forward (as when Hamlet says of the ghost of his father, "Well said, old mole! canst work i' the ground so fast?") until grown strong in itself it bursts asunder the crust of earth which divided it from the sun, its Notion, so that the earth crumbles away."[3] Hegel's World-Spirit, embodying progressive time, is a mole trapped in the earth, seeking the light of its "Notion," or ideal form. By contrast, the architect who works with accumulated time is a different sort of mole who does not seek the light but who, in Bataille's words, "hollows out chambers in a decomposed soil repugnant to the delicate nose of the utopians."[4] Place is thus the compost of deposited time. If *zeitgeist* literally means *time-spirit*, then perhaps place is a *time-body*.

A theory and practice of matter might form the basis for a rural architecture. The alternative to the *city* is not the *country*;[5] the alternative to the city is *matter*. But remember, matter is the very stuff of the urban, too.[6] So, if the urban-rural distinction cannot be a distinction between ideality and materiality, what is the key difference? It is a difference of habits, practices, systems of value. Therefore, rural architecture hinges on rural architectural methods and forms of labor which enact this theory of accumulated time, through care and attention to what came before and what our actions will bring about. Perhaps rural architecture requires slowing down and observing layers of accumulated life, listening to stories, digging in the soil, watching the days go by for a while.

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1. "Despite the varied discourses of the regional sciences, the possibility of adhering torurality as a development pathway remains largely unexplored." Quoted from Chigbu, Uchendu Eugene. 12/01/2013. "Rurality as a Choice: Towards Ruralising Rural Areas in Sub-Saharan African Countries." Development Southern Africa (Sandton, South Africa) 30 (6): 812-825.
2. Chigbu, Uchendu Eugene. 12/01/2013. "Rurality as a Choice: Towards Ruralising Rural Areas in Sub-Saharan African Countries."
3. Hegel, G. W. F. Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. by E. S. Haldane (1892-6).
4. Georges Bataille, "The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix Sur in the Words Surhomme [Superman] and Surrealist," in Visions of Excess Selected Writings, 1927-1939, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. by Allan Stoekl, with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 32.
5. "Country," which like "territory" is a colonial conception of a paradoxically picturesque yet extractive landscape.
6. This suggests that a rural architecture is possible not just in the "countryside" but can be practiced in cities too, reversing the flow of culture between capital and territory.

MIDDLENESS

JOSH GREENE

An in-between implies another suggests an
other sibling a sister who gets under
your nerves for telling your father you snuck
out of the house; and the young one, your brother
who sits with that smile and charm that makes you forget
the jam he spilt all over the aisle just moments before
But alas!
for I do not tattle nor spill any goods,
mostly unnoticed but always alive, I live in the   middle   of sequence

And when you're angry or triggered
when someone merges to your lane
it's never your pinky, for he's gone
to market or your thumb who's too
tired from scrolling and tapping
one waits for a band, while the other is famous
but we have no name for the one who boasts all the height
for it's defined by nails on either side
central and useless, a finger resides in the   middle   of proximity

And when inscribing documents of utmost importance
with letters so tiny you must search for
your glasses for freshly printed pages
and ink blots who linger, it asks for my full legal name
Of course!
essential to democracy, and the fulfillment of
contracts, I eagerly scribe the name of which I do not frequently use
the name which is often reduced to a letter, forgotten altogether,
hidden from those who don't know me intently, intimately,
essential but hidden, a name that proclaims the   middle   of importance

And when we're past our prime
beyond the age where our friends all get married
and go out to the bars to see a new show
but not yet wise and respected
with grandchildren to spoil and
checkers to play rather I spend
my days thinking of the car I should buy
or the vacation I would take
I am close to a crisis for occupying the   middle   of time

But the most confusing of all
is when I am so far in-between that I cannot perceive
an edge of a volume or the presence of mass
instead I see nothing for miles and miles
just fields of corn that feed all the cows
and nourish my body all lined up
in nice little rows
in the   middle   of nowhere

DOLLAR GENERALIZED ANXIETY AND A CASE FOR RURAL PLANNING

BENJAMIN DERLAN

The urban-rural divide has historically been one of radical cultural, economic, and lifestyle differences. But the mechanization of farming in the first half of the 20th century, the advent of mass media, and the consumerification of rural America has blurred and bridged this divide in unexpected ways. I think of how the "rural" has shifted under the feet of people like my grandmother: she grew up on a subsistence vegetable farm in Alaska, West Virginia; today, most of her food and necessities come from chains like Chick-fil-A and Dollar General.

Dollar General, the chain store that sells processed foods, clothes, laundry detergent, and other cheap necessities, feels representative of the state of our country now: both rural and urban. 17,000 stores pepper the continent, some only miles apart even on country roads, a trend that has led multiple news outlets (NPR, The Guardian, Vice, ABC News, the Wall Street Journal) to declare Dollar General's "take over" of rural america. These claims have real authority: often the only store for miles, Dollar General now has more locations than Walmart. The proliferation of Dollar General, though, is only one symptom of the greater "take over" of rural land through consolidation by corporate interests.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines rural as what is not urban–that is, after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left.[1] With its cultural legacy stripped, "rural" is defined simply as the lack of development (or space on the map yet to be developed). Policies reflect this sentiment, either ignoring "rural" areas entirely or investing in infrastructure to develop them. As such, the cultural particularities of rural America are mostly fictions of nostalgia. This begs the question: what spatial and economic models might yield *a new definition, specific to the countryside, for a more sustainable future*, one beyond the current one being written by the growth-based market?

As precision robotic farming, server farms, Amazon deliveries, and Dollar Generals continue to spread, the countryside might quickly become a post-human landscape of e-monitoring and drone operations, sprinkled with Marie-Antoinette-style play-farms of the wealthy. In short, as the agricultural economy continues towards high-tech, low-labor solutions, we may well be in danger of losing traditional understandings of "rural" altogether. As such, rural land has perhaps become the single most important place to gain a foothold on curbing the radical privatization of space, and a preview into coming problems of automation and job loss– the singular battlefield for economic degrowth and ecological well-being.

Policies such as the Green New Deal draw from our agrarian history (the Farm Security Administration, CCC, and WPA all worked to improve rural infrastructure). But this focus seems lost in the contemporary socialist visions of urban luxury. Dappled with buzzwords like "green jobs," this dream is enticing for city-dwelling leftists, but will require far more fleshing out to not feel tone deaf or fall on deaf ears of GOP-claimed rural conservatives. And if, like me, you're skeptical of the power of policy to enact *any* change which might actually support and elevate workers, then the case for investing our labor into rural design is all the more potent. Over the past century, black agricultural landowners have lost over 12 million acres, most of that ending up as investments on Wall St.[2] Rural places have always been contested, and often violent: slavery, corporate oppression, child labor, ecological destruction–all perpatrated in the name of capital. If policy has failed to regulate the market time and again, then communities must work at the grassroots to plan a different path.

I gently posit that, as designers, we must support a move towards thoughtful rural planning. Through collaborative planning, the Dollar General could be replaced with its predecessor, the General Store, and the private industrial farm could fall to communal ownership and cooperative profit-sharing. As a largely unexplored field, many questions arise. How does one practice rural planning? What scale might it operate at? And how can rural planning be guided at the grassroots, by self-sufficient and self-governing rural communities rather than extractive financial groups? How are we to preserve the countryside without luddism? And how can we value our farmers rightfully (historically wildly exploited and undervalued laborers)? I'm not sure where answering these questions might lead, but I know if we are to begin to try, we must first recognize rural space as more than what's "not urban." Rural communities are not voids waiting for development, but rich spaces worthy of study and protection.

Perhaps it's the very idea of a "rural-urban divide" that's our biggest enemy. The challenges of the rural poor are not so different from the communities of the inner-city: lack of access to healthy food, a collapsed economy, and years of disinvestment by the government plague the urban-rural spectrum. I can't help but think about my grandmother again, who moved to my hometown, a small city, when she married my grandfather. He opened his own convenience store in the early '70s, a precursor to Dollar General in many ways. By '93, it had been pushed out of business by chain stores. The storefront has since sat vacant, the brick facade slowly crumbling, while new Dollar Generals continue to go up nearby. Is the fate of Derlan's so different from that of the rural general store or the metropolis' corner deli?

Wherever we end up practicing architecture–the city, the country, or somewhere in between–there will be real estate speculation, ugly developments, and Dollar Generals. If we hope to fight these interests, we must zoom out and unite regionally, nationally, and globally to design systems that challenge the market, or exist completely outside of it; systems that will necessarily stretch the length of the rural-urban spectrum. We've seen generations of architects' confused attempts to engage the rural, from Broadacre City to the back-to-the-land movement of the 60s and 70s. Having traversed these flawed attempts, now is our chance to reclaim the land, labor, and politics of the countryside, not as an escapist utopia but as a grasp for survival.

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1. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/acs/acsgeo-1.pdf
2. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/09/this-land-was-our-land/594742/

REMEMBERING THE ARCHITECTS' SMALL HOUSE SERVICE BUREAU

ANDREW BRUNO

Architects need to take more seriously the detached house, and the suburbs of which the house is the constituent element. We've always flitted around the margins of the building industry, using houses for relatives or rich acquaintances to express our manifestos or as stepping stones to larger commissions. But whether we like it or not, most housing units in the U.S. are single-family houses, and giant developers like David Weekley Homes continue to build millions of houses in the monocultural subdivisions that define the American built environment. Architects are rarely involved.

Ironically, the era of the American mass-market house started with the massively popular pattern books of landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, whose collaborations with architect Alexander Jackson Davis helped to popularize the notion of the detached single-family house in a bucolic setting.[1] The age of the architect-led mass-marketing of small house designs culminated decades later with the Architects Small House Service Bureau, an organization of architects who provided mail-order plans to homebuilders in an attempt to promote quality architectural design in the early days of the mass-produced home. The ASHSB existed for less than 20 years and has subsequently been nearly forgotten[2] –it merits only passing mention in the major histories of American suburban development. But in its earnest attempt to harness the techniques of contemporary mass-media, the ASHSB is a useful reference to architects who hope to attain a broader relevance today.

In the 1920s, the housing market was being transformed by mass-production. While mail-order building plans had been available since not long after the days of Downing's pattern books, in the early 20th century companies began to offer full-on mail-order houses, including working drawings, all building materials and often a means of financing the purchase. The mail order house was a radical innovation in the commodification of living space, and it largely cut architects out of the process of designing small houses.[3]

The Architects' Small House Service Bureau was created to address what many architects viewed as the deficiency in stock plans offered by the major mail-order house companies. Endorsed by the AIA in 1919, by the late 1920s the ASHSB had regional offices throughout the country and a robust publishing operation that reached prospective buyers through magazines and pattern books.[4] The crucial difference between the ASHSB and a mail-order house company like Sears was that the ASHSB sold only working drawings from which a local builder would bid on and ultimately build the house.

Though it couldn't match the resources of the large mail-order companies, the existence of the ASHSB reveals that at least some architects understood that architecture's best hope was to reach people where they were. And it did – at its peak the ASHSB was reaching two million people per week.[5] But a quick comparison between the 1932 Sears catalog and the 1929 ASHSB publication *Small Homes of Architectural Distinction* reveals house designs that differ in degree, not kind.[6] The illustrations, descriptions, and plans are almost interchangeable. Undoubtedly the ASHSB houses are somewhat more rationally planned and more adventurous in massing and materiality. But did anyone really think this was enough to compete with Sears' infinitely better resourced and more comprehensive operation?

As Dolores Hayden writes in *Building Suburbia*, the ASHSB also suffered from an attitude of architectural elitism that foregrounded an idea of 'correct style.' Hayden quotes one ASHSB member lamenting that he "[sees] Colonial, English, Spanish built in New York, Florida, Los Angeles, Minnesota…"[7] Ironically, the 1929 pattern book put out by the ASHSB is replete with suggestive references to locations connoted by its houses' styles, but it never makes concrete recommendations about locating a specific style of house in a specific region. The tension then is palpable between a disciplinary desire on the part of ASHSB members to preserve an idea of regional stylistic appropriateness on the one hand, while tacitly accepting on the other that the house-buying public had no desire to accept these constraints. This was not a new struggle for architects; we often feel that we should be the creators rather than followers of popular taste.

The AIA withdrew its endorsement of the ASHSB in 1934, with the official reasoning that a stock plan service constituted undue competition with local architects. There remained a conflict between members who viewed the design of small houses as a civic duty and those who believed that architects should be solely focused on large-scale apartment buildings, but proponents of the small house were in the minority.[8] Hayden estimates that only a few thousand houses were ever built with ASHSB plans.[9] Despite its ultimate failure, can we learn from its ambitions? It's possible that the ASHSB failed because it didn't provide a radical enough alternative to the stock plans of Sears and the other mail-order companies, and was too obsessed with architectural style. But it was willing to play on the field of mass culture in a way that architecture typically isn't, and for that alone it's worth remembering. Today, as alternative living arrangements like co-living and multi-generational housing are proliferating, architects again have the opportunity to stake a claim in the creation of these spaces. Maybe a first step is to study the mass-marketing techniques through which housing is sold by developers and to use those techniques to promote alternative visions of a more collective life. Or maybe we should just start making pattern books again. RIP ASHSB.

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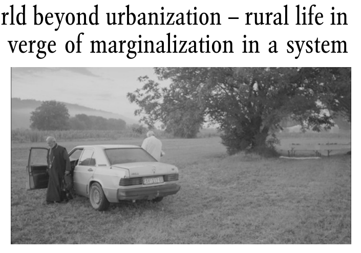
1. Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*.(New York: Random House, 2003), 26
2. Lisa M. Tucker, "The Architects' Small House Service Bureau and the American Institute of Architects," *ARCC Journal* Volume 6 Issue 2 (2009): 66-72. Tucker's essay offers a brief history of the ASHSB and explores the relationship between the ASHSB and the AIA.
3. Hayden, 97-125. Dolores Hayden's seminal book *Building Suburbia* contains an entire chapter devoted to this phase of American housing production, entitled 'Mail Order and Self Built Suburbs.'
4. Tucker, 66
5. Tucker, 68
6. *Small Homes of Architectural Distinction* (New York: Harper, 1929)
7. Hayden, 117
8. Tucker, 69
9. Hayden, 117

COUSIN'S FEAST

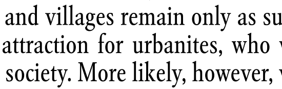
ALEKSA MILOJEVIC

"And these women – they think about nothing else but city lights!" says Mr. Mića's cousin cynically, while arranging the last pieces of cutlery for the banquet in honor of Archangel Gabriel, alone, and worried if his wife will find liking in his cooking and feast preparation, and if she will ever return home at all. With him sits Mr. Mića, silently listening to his cousin's endless rambling.

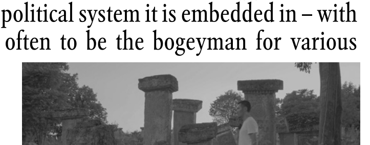
This is the opening scene of a road-movie-docufiction, that follows an alien character through his exploration of a world beyond urbanization – rural life in the Balkans, stagnating existence on the verge of marginalization in a system of transition, family bonds beyond emigration, and a predominantly male world. He is forced into a journey through – to quote Iggy Pop – *the city's backsides*, in an ordinary vehicle, with an unknown man, and a destination that is no more.



What is also no more, is the continuity of a millennia-old rural civilization, or less oxymoronic, rural culture. Peasantry has been declared dead, and only remnants of it prevail in certain parts of the world, while in other parts agriculture is already highly mechanized, and villages remain only as suburban settlements, or serve as disneylandified attraction for urbanites, who wish to delight in the idea of a bygone, *primitive* society. More likely, however, villages remain deserted, or, at its best, as weekend-destinations for the descendants of the one generation that left peasantry behind – until these get fully absorbed into global dynamics too, and forget the ties to their very own ancestral mud. In the village in the above mentioned short film, the men are preparing the festivity amidst a field. Their choice of location might hail from the once communal act of ploughing and harvesting, and socializing – fields, pastures, and orchards were once central locations of their families' work and communal engagement. Today, the fields around their banquet are most likely machine-worked by one single person engaging in large-scale agriculture, even in southeastern Europe. Almost everyone else is gone. If it wasn't for their memory, they could have easily chosen a restaurant, a park – their children might already do so.



With the abolition of *savage societies* and *peasant societies*, and their remnants integrated into *industrial society*, the *community* bound together by common norms vanishes and is replaced by the formal construct of *civil society*, in which self-interest is the primary justification for membership. German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies classifies these conceptually as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* – former has historically often been labeled as reactionary and in conflict with innovation. Peasantry was most likely to remain aside from global dynamics, difficult to approach and proselytize, suspicious of the wider socio-political system it is embedded in – with particularly the land-owning peasantry often to be the bogeyman for various ideologies due to their reactionary stance towards change. Other than the ever-growing city's dweller, who is an emancipated individual within a formal societal construct that aims to ensure social security, economic growth, and rationality, but who remains alienated from the *Gemeinschaft*, a collective identity based on communal action, kinship, sentiment, and mythology – a concept which will remain as archaic idea known from literature and historicist films one day. Some might view these developments as a necessary step to a larger process of revolution: Karl Marx claimed the countryside's subjection to the bourgeoisie's rule to has rescued millions, billions, from rural isolation, by drawing them into cities for industrial work – a necessary step towards a social revolution in which the proletariat overthrows the bourgeoisie – but peasantry would be one of society's reactionary factors, that in a class struggle would only fight for saving its own status as fraction of lower middle class.



After feudalism, fascism, communism, and capitalism, Mr. Mića's cousin's main concerns are still his runaway wife, the pears and plums in the fruit garden he fosters, and the priest's belated arrival to bless the feast banquet. His children will already have more urban concerns. This might be the reasoning in Patrik Schumacher's mind when he would call the focus on the countryside a waste of time, along with his understanding of the rural as culturally retarded, and capitalism as driving force for the establishment of urban high culture. Schumacher quotes Marx and Engels to support his assertion about the rural's *communicative poverty and cultural retardation*. This reinterpretation of the *Communist Manifesto* extends Marx' critique of peasantry's political nature to a critique of its cultural value. Despite these differences, in both cases the countryside is deemed an obsolete factor. In 50 years, no one will be left in villages – more precisely, no *peasants* will be left (suburbanized villages shall not be our concern) – and architecture shall be profitable. Hence, the millennia-old rural-urban continuum might run the risk of being discontinued – yet the often-envisioned *end of history* will probably not arrive, and civic society might not be the definite form of human coexistence. If we shall be concerned with the continuity of rural civilization, or its hypothetical reemergence in some future history, we might consider stepping aside dry academia, scientific analysis, and profit – established architectural practice – and consider how to tie back to some of the longest lasting cultural identities, and to acknowledge its defining contribution to our contemporary identities. The entrance of rurality-related vocabulary into everyday speech, at least in Europe, witnesses a rather derogatory stance of the wider society towards the countryside: *peasant* as slur. Mr. Mića, his cousin, and the alien protagonist will go down in sociological books that might elaborate on the circumstances of a vanished world, but it would require the continuity of tradition and mythology for their *Gemeinschaft* to sustain, and these were, if practiced, passed down by more abstract means, personally, and without mediator. But the wife of Mr. Mića's cousin will not return to the village, nor will their children, who by now live in Oslo and Helsinki, where they might keep celebrating Archangel Gabriel, or they might not.

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"TOO ZOOMED OUT"

BENJAMIN FANN

Charles and Ray Eames' short film, *Powers of ten--a film dealing with the relative size of things in the universe and the effect of adding another zero*[1], runs through scales ranging from the quark at 10^{-16} meters to the universe at 10^{24} meters. The imagery scales in and out but always centers on two individuals picnicking in a Chicago park. Scales of observation and analysis in architectural design and planning can productively happen between the 10^{1} and 10^{5} meter scales depicted in the film, but when does zooming out too far affect meaningful analysis? Once the two picnickers are visually lost to the viewer, is the fact the lens is centered on them enough to say the film is about them?

As the world becomes more globalized there is a need to broaden and diversify what architecture has traditionally seen as sufficient analysis. Using the two picnickers in the *Powers of Ten* film as an example: without the initial imagery of the two experiencing the park, the understanding of the urban landscape at the progressively zoomed-out images, while visually compelling, would have lost much of its relevance. While architectural pedagogy is trying to determine what designing for the human condition truly means, it is important that multiple scales work together to provide enough of an intentional understanding of place before generating analysis and design.

The tendency to try to understand unfamiliar spaces in architectural studies means the world's urban, suburban, and rural spaces are often first approached formally–through plan in Google Maps–at a generally zoomed-out and noncommittal scale. The experience of the cultural and human relationships tied to these spaces are reduced to patterns of poche in order to produce easily digestible diagrams (often the first formal analysis includes identification of void spaces or any formally interesting patterns that may suggest a grid).

The use of form to analyze space is not inherently problematic, but misinterpretations happen when perceived relationships gleaned only from a zoomed out formal analysis of plan are applied as absolute. Nuances of different cultures will often reject the blanket interpretations of society through form alone. An unbuilt lot within a city can be many things depending on cultural context. While unpopulated in a zoomed out view, that lot could be where the community's children play sports. It could be the local meeting spot for the community to have weekend farmer's markets or gatherings. In the same vein, the streets interconnecting neighborhoods may look intertwined in plan, but the reality may be that the same streets could divide and separate class and race. Ultimately, there is a need for more - more intentionality, more empathy, and more specificity when looking into and/or designing for a new environment. The two picnickers ground multiple frames of scale within a film on the vastness of the universe. The usage of a "zoomed-out typology" to analyze and communicate the experience of the world's spaces is only valid as a starting point.

1. Eames, Charles, and Ray Eames. 1978. Powers of ten--a film dealing with the relative size of things in the universe and the effect of adding another zero. Santa Monica, CA: Pyramid Films.

LINGERING CITYISM AND COUNTRYSIDE ENTRAPMENT

GEORGE PAPAM

Flipping quickly through their power points, in separate presentations this past September, both Norman Foster and Karen Seto paused to emphasize their metropolis slide: bird's-eye views of New York and Shanghai, respectively. Against these backgrounds, each lecturer proclaimed some variation of the outrageous statistics on how many cities the size of the former or the latter need to be built each year to house the rapidly urbanizing world. To be sure, they both underscored the crucial role that the architect will need to play in this story. This emphasis on urbanization that begets new city-making, that in turn necessitates architectural labor for the creation of ever more built space belies a conflation–one between the city and the urban–that prevents us from meaningfully responding to the question of the Non-Urban. Presenting in the school of Architecture, Foster, an architect and urban designer, picked downtown Manhattan for his metropolis slide, an iconic city-core with familiar connotations around the globe. Preparing her slides a few blocks away in the School of the Environment, Seto, a geographer and urbanization scientist, chose a rapidly urbanizing assemblage in Southeast Asia. Despite the different connotations with which these examples are invested–the traditional 19th century city of the West and the emerging and sweeping agglomerations of the developing world, respectively–both of the arguments presented to the students serve to render *urbanization through cityness.*

The "city" and the "urban" have been replacing one another in texts and imaginaries for some time now. That is, the quality of the "urban" is persistently equated with a single, distinct and bounded settlement typology. Perhaps most characteristic is the persistent belief that the evidence of the "urbanizing planet," is primarily based on statistical demographic accounts of population concentration in cities–the familiar quote repeating that "by 20XX, Y% of the population will be living in cities".[1] Furthermore, contemporary processes of urbanization are typically addressed almost exclusively through the lens of the city, despite the fact that they arguably produce more forms than the city alone. Urban studies, Urban sociology, Urban geography, and Urban political ecology, all display a persistent focus on the city, something that scholars are now calling a "methodological cityism," that is no less than an epistemological bias.[2] There is a growing consensus in urban studies that the city is a problematic analytical category, one that fails to explain the many ways that urbanization has exploded in peculiar forms; examples of this can be found within logistics cities such as Basra in Iraq, cities in the scale of the territory such as the NEOM project in Saudi Arabia, discontiguous megalopolises such as the BosWash, cross-border hinterlands of extended urbanization such as those in the Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia complex, or highly-networked countrysides such as, well, Switzerland.[3] The proliferation of uneasy terms for the "quite urban"–the peri-urban, the extra-urban, the super-urban–, and the necessity to define the urban through its negative–the non urban/ the other than urban– are both arguably symptomatic of a crisis in the "urban=city" model, possibly part of an ongoing paradigm shift. In light of the above, the concern of this issue could be reframed: the problem is not one of "urban fixation," but rather one of "lingering cityism".

Most architecture schools, despite claiming authority in the organization of space beyond the scale of the building, remain attached to historical readings of the city/ urbanity and its others, struggling to follow the relevant discourse. Admittedly, the fundamentals and the key thinkers must be read; but how much time do we spend studying the evolution of city-making versus the ongoing debates that try to make sense of the built environment as we currently experience it and within which our designs will be performing? A logical explanation for this may be that in many Western curricula urbanism is taught either by trained architects with experience in urban design, or mostly, by trained architects with a phd in the history of architecture. How often do we see geographers, sociologists, and political scientists teaching these classes? (Note that in the schools in which this is the case, this is also where urban theory is coming out of architecture schools–Harvard GSD before Brenner left, UCLA, ETH among others). But further, we could even argue that architecture schools self-consciously avoid this critical reframing of urbanism: We choose to remain stubbornly entrenched within our current frame of thought, because within it buildings still seem relevant enough.

This persistent cityism unavoidably influences the view of the city's negative as well; the two are interconnected. According to Hillary Angelo this "folk cityism" perpetuates parochial and romanticized understandings of nature and the pastoral, assuming connections between decentralization, a sense of community, organic products, and the color green.[4] "Folk cityism" begets "folk pastoralism." Even when some manage to see beyond these biases, and notice the contemporary highly automated environments–the agro-industrial landscapes, and the building-machines that breed and preserve organic matter–they still mispronounce their finding as the "countryside."[5] (Maybe this is why Koolhaas's piece in the catalog booklet is full of questions.) But the center-pivot irrigation mesmerizing patterns we see on many of our friends' desks these days, are not the countryside. Rather, they are the manifestation of the rapid urbanization of the rural: artificial, industrial, striated, mechanized landscapes, suggesting specific forms of social organization, with their owners being embedded in complex tertiary relations of production, and managing their irrigation system or controlling their tractors through satellites and big data.[6] To overlook these ideas is to overlook other forms of urbanization: Benjamin Bratton's dark factories, Keller Easterling's El Ejidos, Nancy Couling's energy producing offshores, or Martin Arboleda's mining hinterlands.[7] But it's all so difficult to see and work on, as the city as a hegemonic analytical category has swollen to eclipse meaningful renderings of its others.

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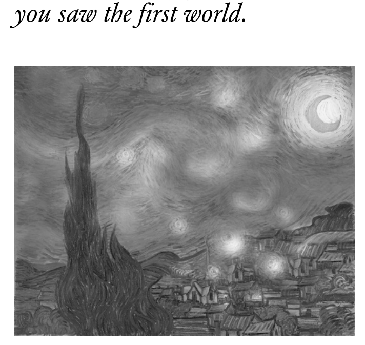
7. See Bratton, Benjamin H. *The Terraforming*. Moscow: Strelka Press, 2019; Easterling, Keller. "El Ejido," in *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and Its Political Masquerades*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005; Couling, Nancy, and Carola Hein, eds. *The Urbanisation of the Sea: From Concepts and Analysis to Design*. Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2020; Arboleda, Martín. *Planetary Mine: Territories of Extraction under Late Capitalism*. Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2020.

HOW TO BUILD A CITY[1]

HUY TRUONG

Step 1
Take a final look. The city begins at the end. The end forgets the stories in your bygone eyes, when you saw the first world.



Step 2
When the stars aren't looking, loosen the clouds beneath their feet. Build tall walls to break them as they fall.

Step 3
Gather around the fading of their fragments. Their light will keep your tired dreams awake.

Rearrange their constellations.
This freedom is our final ritual.

1. Kelsey Johnson, "Is the Evening Sky Doomed?," New York Times, August 17 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/17/opinion/sunday/light-pollution.html.

REGIONAL PRACTICE, AGAIN

GUSTAV NIELSEN

Today, we work in cities and dwell in suburbs, sometimes the other way around. We consume energy that travels from rural industrial sites, including offshore wind farms, to our downtown homes and offices. And seated in fancy restaurants, we enjoy food that has been produced at farms in the countryside. Our urban and non-urban environments are intimately tied and should be considered together when designing for a changing climate and society. To do just that I will argue that Regions offer a meaningful plane of inquiry for architects and planners and that they represent an ideal arena for a more democratic and de-carbonized future of spatial practice.

Regions are hard to define, but Ethan Seltzer and Armando Carbonell suggest thinking of them as "functional territories" with clear centers and fuzzy edges.[1] Characteristics that define Regions are multiple and include ecological systems, economic and political conditions and social and cultural traditions. Essentially, Regions always consist of overlapping factors that describe shared interests and ecosystems.[2] Therefore, Regions are complex and attempts at their planning have episodically appeared in the US as dubious grand political projects or academic fetishizations since the early 20th century like the infrastructural New Deal projects and the early versions of the *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*.[3] In the midst of the social and environmental movements of the 1960s and '70s ideas by thinkers like activist and journalist Jane Jacobs and landscape architect Ian McHarg converged into what has been called the rebirth of regional planning in the US.[4] They laid the foundation for contemporary discourse and practice focused on issues like smart growth, sustainability, equity, landscape conservation, economic development and climate change.[5] So clearly, a call for a Regional practice is nothing new. But since the potential for true democratization and stewardship has yet to crystalize, and the interest of architects in this scale of design seems stagnant, it is ripe for interrogation again. By positioning Regional planning practice within the theoretical framework of what has recently been coined Open Democracy by political scientist and Yale professor of political science, Hélène Landemore[6], it might be possible to rethink its current relevance.

No single governmental body, at least in the US, has political power over Regions.[7] In the words of Kathryn A. Foster: "Regions are 'of the many,' shared territories containing multiple independent units, each with power to plan and act for part, but not all, of the whole. *There is no region of one's own* [emphasis added]."[8] At a time where both state and market struggle to respond in a meaningful way to challenges of inequity, climate change, political unrest and public health crises, it seems worth exploring the potentials of a third form of governance by civil society actors such as individual citizens, community organizations and NGOs, the "people". Not only does the absence of a single political authority present an opening to new forms of governance but also, by definition, the Region exists, at least theoretically, as a common ground from which to start collective action. Landemore's Open Democracy describes an ecology of direct and representative models that can formalise this collective action. Amongst models such as online deliberative polls[9] and various crowdsourcing methods, the citizens assembly appears as the most potent model. Citizen assemblies reject electoral processes of elite politicians and are instead based on striated random selections of citizens who act as a legislating bodies on a case by case basis where rotation over time and random selection lends legitimization, accountability and responsiveness to the decision-making process.[10] Citizen assemblies used as a tool for Regional planning could be a step toward a more democratic spatial practice where the architect and planner performs the role of expert, educator and citizen equally. It would be an organic process of undoing the status quo that preserves the siloing of practices and expertise.

Beyond the democratic forms of governance that Regions invite in the US, their scale and "fuzziness" also afford meaningful governance of larger natural ecosystems. When James Corner ends his essay "Measuring Land" by referring to the Jeffersonian grid as: "(…) an illusion of human order, a screen behind which lies the unceasing cry of the wild."[11] or, when he carefully traces the "broken, disconnected and straying gridlines" caused by compass defects from the magnetism in the ground across the Ozark Mountains, he unearths the disjunction between the bounds and stretches of natural ecosystems and what today constitutes political jurisdictions and property boundaries. In contrast, the nature of Regional boundaries are dictated by the ecosystems and are necessarily better at governing them in a meaningful way. Shared resources and infrastructure can be governed by Citizens Assemblies much like the civic cooperation that, according to Elinor Ostrom, constitutes a more economically viable governance of our common pool resources than the market and the state can offer through excessive regulation or privatization.[12] Frederick Steiner suggests, that the work of landscape architect Ian McHarg during the second half of the 20th century offers many lessons for ecological regional planning today.[13] One of the lessons comes from his early conception of natural and man-made landscapes as layered systems and his studies of their interplay which proved crucial for the development of the Geographic Information System (GIS).[14] In the hands of a small elite, GIS has been used for the advancement of private ownership models, structures of oppression and natural resource extraction but as an open information model (much like Wikipedia) and through education and open access, GIS seems to hold promises of a more equitable and sensitive practice of stewardship in the hands of the many. Recent efforts in critical cartography is a good example of this practice of stewardship through plurality.[15] Combined with the legislative power of the citizens assembly, critical cartography can be an effective tool of civic governance.

With GIS being just one of many open access tools that exists today, the foremost task must be to democratize their access. Democratization can happen on many scales but the Regional scale offers an interesting combination of political and ecological possibilities to start from. In its aftermath might follow another architectural practice as well, one which is both truly democratic through increased participation and shared governance but also de-carbonized as a result of a newfound relationship to natural environments and land which is not based on individual ownership but by collective stewardship.

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2. Ibid
3. Hise, Greg. 2009. Whither the region? Periods and periodicity in planning history. Journal of Planning History 8(4):295–307.
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5. Ibid.
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12. Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp ??-??)
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14. Ibid.
15. See for example the work of: https://criticalcartography.com/

THE LATENT IN-BETWEEN

LINDSAY DUDDY

America's patchwork landscape of urban and rural evokes bacteria in a petri dish - growing and shrinking throughout history. But unlike the petri dish, the boundary or "edges" of these areas are not defined by the limitations of the dish. It is here, at this threshold, that we begin to understand the complexities of this boundary, causing further speculation into the limitations of a simple contrast between urban and rural.

As a student in Cleveland, Ohio, I recognized the effects of heavy industry on the area's growth and on the contemporary community's urban condition. Many abandoned industrial structures littered the city as both testaments to the prosperity of the area's industrial past and symbols of exploitation, waste, and environmental degradation. Most of these structures have long since been abandoned, leaving behind exquisite forms embedded within vast expanses of toxic contamination. As the Cleveland area continues to reclaim its urban core and the vibrancy of the surrounding exurbs, industrial sites fragment the growth of the area, dividing neighborhoods, townships, and limiting direct access to Ohio's natural landscape. In an effort to challenge the way in which we think about the boundaries of an urban area, we can look to these industrial zones, which often function as a stark physical boundary between urban centers and "rural" enclaves, as spaces of opportunity.

This industrial boundary has the potential to transform from a hard 'edge' to a space of mediation in which the definitions of urban/rural/suburban and the industrial/natural begin to blur. Furthermore, as we question what constitutes the "urban" and "not urban," we can do so with sustainability in mind. Often viewed merely as the thoughtful management of environmental resources to preserve ecological balance and mitigate the deleterious effects of urban expansion and industry, sustainability also includes the preservation and rehabilitation of our existing built environment - especially buildings and spaces that contribute to contemporary culture and highlight the complexity of the American landscape.

So, recognizing that these sites are ideal opportunities to preserve the knowledge of the implications of the region's industrial heritage, remediate the environment, and diversify the public realm, how might they serve as a point of mediation and linkage instead of fragmentation? To start, we might look at spatial interventions such as Sloss Furnaces (Birmingham, Alabama), Gas Works Park (Seattle, Washington), Mason Trestle (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania), and Carrie Blast Furnaces (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). In each case, the industrial landscape, once a vital element of American economies, takes on an entirely new function as an intermediary, blurring both physical and visual boundaries by merging a "natural, rural" material with urban industrial relics.

The edges of the petri dish might be definitive, but the boundaries of the "urban" and the "not urban" are constantly in flux. Many of these boundaries have been drawn both in our collective consciousness and on a physical map. By reframing these perceived "edges" through the revitalization of industrial zones, we can slowly begin to dissolve these physical and cultural boundaries, softening and obscuring the way in which we characterize and classify the urban, and in doing so, the "not urban."

ANAMNESIS AS A TOOL TO RECONSTRUCT (NON)URBAN SPACE

ARETI KOTSONI

Within Greece, Crete's inner land is full of deserted villages. Numerous settlements were abandoned primarily because of the urbanization processes that followed World War II. People abandoned their houses due to poverty and unemployment. Today, the remains of the houses testify that life once existed there. Residents fleeing for the cities led to urban transformation, shrinkage of villages, and changes in urban and rural labor forces. Recently, however, this trend was reversed. The economic crisis in Greece opened the opportunity for people to return to villages and work in the agricultural sector. A significant portion of the new residents are immigrants who moved to Cretan villages to work on the land. Incomers bring their knowledge, memory, and hands-on experience and use them as tools for the revival of the Cretan settlements. By improvising interventions in the built environment to make it more functional, immigrants alter the character of Cretan villages synthesizing old and new cultural elements, using their anamnesis.

Anamnesis (ἀνάμνησις) is the Greek word for remembrance or reminiscence. Anamnesis activates traces of collective nostalgia and provides an entry point to the pressing issues of migration, spatial memory, and urban transformation. It begs the question: how might anamnesis become a methodology for architects and designers to reactivate abandoned spaces?

Anamnesis is not a tangible architectural tool, but it can strongly influence the formation of (non)urban spaces. It can recreate several iterations of memory traced in space – in this case, a palimpsest in Cretan villages. The process of anamnesis captures compounding interactions across neighborhoods, cultures, and time. Characteristics of Cretan villages that are difficult to reproduce include spaces that live in people's memory, architecture without architects, functionality over aesthetics, and authenticity.

Crete is the most populous Greek island with 634,930 people (in 2019). During the 1970s, the Cretan economy was centered around olive production, which despite rapid technological developments and lifestyle changes, remains today, along with tourism, as one of the two primary economic resources of the island. A typical example of a small-scale Cretan landscape of olive production is in the village of Anoskeli, at the outskirts of Chania, Crete. Like other Cretan villages, Anoskeli was highly impacted by urban-rural resettlement and is now repopulated due to new work opportunities in olive production. Anoskeli's architecture was locals' handiwork blending with the natural setting, synthesizing vernacular and new organic forms. The residents' expertise, tools, and knowledge, and the specific location and morphology of the place guided the process of building a home. The houses were and continue to be in the state of becoming.

Incomers repopulating Anoskeli's village bring their own memories, reshaping the existing space. Architects are almost excluded from this reconstruction process as no building permits are needed for small-scale interventions. Even if the new inhabitants need larger-scale interventions to alter the existing shelter, residents prefer to hire engineers who usually cost less than architects. This decision results in a particular typology, as the attention is shifted to the space's functionality rather than its aesthetic quality.

My family's house in Anoskeli started as a single 20-square meter room and ended up in a two-floor building of over 100 square meters. Initially, my grandparents and their two children were living together, sharing the same room. This room included only two beds, one for the parents and one for the children, as well as a small living room. The bathroom was an individual small concrete cell that included a basin and a sink, located outside the house. The kitchen was also located outside the house and was often shared with other families.

Figure 1. My mother running outside her house.

These housing typologies and their expansion to the non-private space blurred domestic and urban space boundaries. Wealthier families owned more amenities and shared them with less privileged ones. This mentality and way of living continue to be central in Cretan villages, as people leave their house doors open and the flow between private-public, inside-outside, and personal-collective is continuous and uninterrupted. My mother's house in Anoskeli, is a paradigm of this way of collective living and reflects how the dipole of public-private space was shaped and altered over time. When my mother was born, the single room was not enough to house the whole family, and my grandparents added another room to the top floor of the original structure, to fit all the family members.

Figure 2. The courtyard which was transformed into an additional room.

The ground floor, which initially included the two beds and the small living room, now consists of a kitchen and a dining hall. None of the houses contained interior staircases when they were first built, so upper-level rooms are only accessible from the outside. The tools and methods used to (re)construct these houses were solely based on their financial capacity, knowledge, functionality goals, and environment-specific characteristics. Aesthetics were unconsciously shaped during this process and gave the Cretan settlements their one-of-a-kind character. This transformation process took place and, in fact, continues to do so in Cretan settlements to meet the needs of newcomers and their growing families.

Figure 3: My grandmother and her friends collectively cooking in an exterior kitchen, reflecting the interconnection of the public and domestic space in the village.

What has anamnesis to do with all the above? The built environment of Cretan villages and the knowledge and beliefs of its inhabitants reflect the collective memory of the place. Incomers bring their anamnesis, their nostalgic memory, shaped primarily by understanding places, spaces, and dwellings they have visited in the past. Authenticity in Cretan villages reflects the genius loci and vice versa. The conscious and unconscious interventions in the built environment of the Cretan villages transform not only the actual space but also its aura. This palimpsest of human memory unconsciously gives life to the shrinking Cretan villages without altering their authenticity.

Figure 4: the kitchen that was added later to the interior of the house.

THE BOB STERN BOYS' CLUB LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS:

PERI-URBAN HETEROTOPIAS: THE BRECHTIAN MEGALOPOLIS AND THE POETIC OF THE BANAL IN LATIN AMERICAN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

LAO DUCINQUE

HASTINGS HALL NOV. 23, 6:30 PM

From Mumbai to Rio, informal settlements account for 25% of the world's urban population - and 80% of such areas exist in the Global South. With no legal right to their land or existence, these urban settlers bear the brunt of climate catastrophe in hastily constructed, unserviced, peripheral cities.

Lao DuCinque proposes a new reading of these ad-hoc infrastructures as a Brechtian stage set, constructed with a placeless materiality and relentless spatial logic that provokes unproductive paternalism – an ontological machine built for alienating privileged observers. To the Western eye, each tarp-swaddled shanty instantiates an Aristotelian Universal of suffering, of intellectual poverty, of the foolish proletarian rush towards miserable megalopolises. From the voyeurism of slum tourism to self-congratulatory proposals for housing prototypes (forever unoccupied), this not-quite-urban space occupies the frustrating void between neoliberalism's obsession with the city and its face-saving mechanisms for neutralizing unattractive urban poverty. It is a necessarily resultant (dare I say liminal?) condition of global capital's exploitative steamrolling of rurality.

Co-founder and principal of Brooklyn-based studio Atelier XÆ A-XII, DuCinque's work grapples with urban dialectics through etchings, large-scale machine-assisted drawings, and interactive sculpture. His work *Under The Table and Dreaming: Phenomenologies of the Unseen* was displayed at the 2019 MoMA "Young Architects in Practice" exhibition. In this talk, DuCinque describes the ideation, creation, and meaning of his renowned *UnSlum Heroes* mobile sculptures, built with discarded materials requisitioned from Rio's Cidade de Deus favela. Between the introductory slide and the concluding one, DuCinque will not once mention the issues at hand but focus exclusively on his own art, life, ideas, and conception of post-praxis architectural work.